

Local Anti-War Protests Continue

by Chris Ladd
MANAGING EDITOR

While the war in Iraq continues, so do protests in Saratoga Springs against the U.S.-led military campaign. Laurie Dawson, a member of the steering committee for the Saratoga Peace Alliance, estimated that 150 demonstrators attended the group's weekly protest last Saturday, a figure she attributed to strong feelings against the government and warmer weather.

Saratoga Springs Assistant Chief of Police James Cornick couldn't confirm Dawson's numbers, but said that protesters hadn't to his knowledge caused any disturbances in town or led to stepped-up patrols during the Saturday protests.

The Saturday demonstrations have been taking place on the corner of Lake Avenue and Broadway since last fall, prompted by the Bush administration's push for regime change in Iraq, and the near constant build up of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf region.

Lucy Struever '05, who recently attended protests in New York and Washington D.C., in addition to demonstrations in Saratoga, gave her reasons for attending the protests: "I think it's morally wrong... I feel like by taking a preemptive action against Iraq, we're valuing their lives so much less than we're valuing ours. As the number one superpower in the world, we have more of a responsibility to be fair in how we value other people instead of our own."

"I went to a bunch of protests in New York mostly because I was just randomly there," said Aubry Crossan '03. She said she respects the protestors, but questioned some students' motivations. "I feel like a lot of college kids just like to protest everything," she said. Crossan added that she thought it was certainly



Protesters march downtown in this mid-february rally.
skidnews photo

good and important for citizens truly against the war to make their voices heard.

Libi Weymouth '05 is president of the Skidmore Young Republicans Assembly (SYRA). The group has raised a giant white banner in Case Center that reads "support our troops" in black, foot high, lower-case letters. "[going to] such a liberal school," she said, "I kind of expected [protests] like this to happen, especially when things happen that don't go along with traditional liberal values. I think everyone is entitled to say what they want, but I think it's too bad that 25 percent of the American population isn't behind our troops. If they're not going to be sent back, I think we should stand behind them."

Dawson said she thought it was important to separate "support for the troops from the disagreement with the government that put them there." If the government were truly concerned with the well being of its troops, she reasoned, they would provide free health care to veterans,

and do more to ensure their well being after conflicts had finished. In a recent budget proposal, the Bush administration included significant cuts in benefits for what it calls "high income" veterans (those earning \$30,000 a year or more), prompting criticism from some Democrats.

Justin Cranchaw '03, who said he's been "back and forth" on the issue of war, doesn't see any problem with the protests in town. "I think it's fine, I think it's great. I don't think there's any problem with the respect for the troops."

The Saratoga Peace Alliance, formed last July, plans to continue its Saturday morning protests. According to news reports, senior military officials now expect the war to last anywhere from several weeks to several months, owing to stiffer than expected Iraqi resistance. In a March 27 press conference, Bush said the war would go on "as long as it takes" for coalition forces to achieve victory and liberate the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein's rule. 