

**Alice Pfeifer '13 was appointed the 2010 Women's Lacrosse Team "Keeper of the Kohn"
Her assignment was to learn about Peter and tell a story about him before every game.**

Middlebury v. University of Vermont

February 27, 2010

Peter's real name is Myron Gutman "Peter" Kohn. He was born in Baltimore in 1930 and graduated from the Park School in 1954. He began as a field manager for Park the year he graduated and later managed the U.S. teams, the All-Star game teams, various club teams, and the U.S. National team. Thanks to Coach Jim Grube, Peter came to Middlebury in 1981 as an equipment manager and quickly became a beloved member of the men's (and women's) lacrosse teams.

Peter said that Middlebury was the first time he truly felt comfortable. He once said, "I suddenly discovered that I wasn't fighting the world anymore. I realized I had found my place." Middlebury was the place and the community that allowed Peter to be himself and he loved it dearly.

Middlebury v. Hamilton

March 6, 2010

Years ago, Peter went to London with the men's lacrosse team. The weather was terrible, their game didn't go as planned, and the atmosphere was generally unpleasant. Finally on the bus, the team waited as the lights came on and Peter stood up, having prepared his usual speech. Immediately the mood was lightened. Peter had found a piece of chocolate cake in his bag and, in the dark without utensils; he managed to stealthily enjoy his cake. By the time he stood up to speak, Peter was wearing his chocolate cake all over his face.

Middlebury v. Bates

March 13, 2010

In the fall of 2005, while the rest of the team was running Chipman, the injured players did an alternative bike workout. Before they could start however, Coach DeLorenzo ran into the weight room and told the bikers, "we need to go find Eileen" – the boys had stolen her right before spring break. DeLo thought Eileen might be hidden at Peter's house so the group of them drove to his house to look for her. Peter was really excited to see them all at his house but they didn't want to tell him why they were there. While DeLo tried to distract Peter, keeping up a constant conversation with him and moving conveniently from room to room, the girls looked in drawers, under tables, and even in the oven. In each location, including the oven, were old newspapers and stacks of photographs. Peter was a packrat; every photograph he had of a friend or a player was special to him. After twenty minutes of raiding his house, the girls saw people running down Chipman (his house was on the way back from the run) and, of course, one of the players recognized DeLo's car. The search group didn't find Eileen anywhere in his house and decided to tell Peter why they were; he said "Oh she's in the garden," but it was only the neighbor's pink flamingo lawn ornament. His house seemed in many ways like his brain – brilliant, special, and cluttered. He put value in every thing he ever collected just the way that he saw something beautiful in all of the players that he got to know over the years.

Middlebury v. Wesleyan

March 20, 2010

Not too long ago, Rachel was at a senior's graduation party when Peter stopped her on her way out of the door. He wanted to make sure she knew that he could tell how big of a heart she has because of how she cares for all of us. He could see that she really loves being there for us. From Rachel's position, to hear that from a man with the largest heart possible was truly remarkable.

Middlebury v. Gettysburg

March 23, 2010

Peter had an uncanny ability to remember players' names. If someone ever walked up to him and called him "Myron," he responded with their middle name without missing a beat. Peter could recall starting lineups from

games in 1992 and every other year. He always knew players' best games and strongest moments. Let's give Peter a game to remember.

Middlebury v. Buffalo State

March 26, 2010

A couple of years ago, during an inspirational speech to the field hockey team, Peter needed a quick sip of water to clear his throat. He grabbed the closest bottle to him and proceeded to drink in his Peter Kohn manner. (Chase provides an accurate visual). Needless to say, the girl whose bottle he borrowed wandered by the equipment room soon after, requesting a new water bottle.

Middlebury v. Connecticut College

March 27, 2010

One summer a few years ago, player Dave Campbell and a few teammates took Peter mini-golfing in Maryland. Peter set himself up at the first hole and whacked the ball with his characteristic enthusiasm. It bounced off of every available surface before it miraculously landed a hole-in-one. With his usual humility, Peter grumbled, "well now I never do that." He was never one to flaunt anything. Later that day, the crew went to dinner. Much to the dismay of their waitress, Peter ordered clam chowder and a hot chocolate. In that humid Maryland summer weather, only Peter could stand to eat such a meal. Suffice it to say that eating with Peter was a trip.

Middlebury v. Babson

April 1, 2010

Several years ago during a practice with the men's team, the Keeper noticed Peter lying flat on his back to the side of the field. Afraid that he had dropped dead of a heart attack or something of that nature, the Keeper rushed to his side. Everyone held their breath while he approached Peter and were endlessly relieved to hear Peter mumble, "well I was just taking a quick nap." On today, April Fool's Day, I'd like to think it was Peter's version of an April Fool's joke.

Middlebury v. Colby

April 3, 2010

Many people don't know that Peter was actually born a Jew. Through connections at various summer camps, which passed him along to more and more camps, he met several participants in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and was subsequently exposed to Christianity. Additionally, Peter's close relationship with Brad Corrigan, who is very open about his faith, led him to reconsider – in his own way – his religion. Peter once asked Brad if, since he didn't go to church, he was a worse person because of it. Brad's response was this: "religion lies in your relationship with God, not in any book or building." With this idea as his base, Peter was a kind of humanist. He believed in the goodness and abilities of human beings, in their positive spirits, and in their sincerity. And for these qualities that he saw in those around him, Peter constantly thanked "God and Jesus." Always together. Before games he would sometimes say, "let your character and dedication stand out brilliantly" – a direct challenge given to each player, which embodies his humanist worldview. The Peter Kohn Award, part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, honors the following: "a member of the lacrosse community who best represents the scripture 'Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.'" So, in the spirit of Peter's wishes, let's play this game with dedication and character, but always with the "greater love" for others, which allows us to play as a single being, as a complete team.

Middlebury v. Bowdoin

April 10, 2010

On the morning of Lindsay McBride's graduation, she found herself standing with Katie Sparkes as Peter approached them to say congratulations. He told them what an accomplishment it was to have graduated from Middlebury. Peter was wearing his checked pants, a spiffy yellow blazer and his Middlebury baseball hat, feather included. His disposable camera documented the brief encounter, and then it was over. Only later that day did Lindsay realize that she had no idea how Peter had gotten there, if he'd been driven by a coach or just

wandered down. But either way, he was there, cheering them on from the sidelines like he always did. And reminding them how fortunate they were to be part of the Middlebury community. So in that same vein, let's be so instinctive on the field that no one can figure out how we got there or where we came from. Let's do everything we can do for our team, even if it only lasts for a moment and let's count on each other the way we always could on Pete. Let's remember how incredible it is to be a member of this Middlebury team.

Middlebury v. Union

April 13, 2010

Last summer in Vail there was a thunderstorm in the middle of one of Team Wild's games. As badly as some of the team wanted to forfeit, no one could think of a reasonable explanation to tell Peter that they wanted to quit. How could they explain to Peter that they wanted to give up an opportunity to play lacrosse with best friends? To Peter that was the best possible thing to do. Even in bad weather. So instead, Team Wild finished the game and won. So on this gorgeous day let's do what Peter would want to do – go play lacrosse with our friends and take advantage of the beautiful Vermont weather.

Middlebury v. Amherst

April 15, 2010

During Dave Campbell's first coaching experience with the men's Vail team, the guys were a goal or two down in the third quarter and had lost the ball. From the sideline came a voice shouting "time out!" – not from the coach, Dave Campbell, but from Peter. As the team ran to the edge of the field Dave told Peter that it was his timeout, he called it, now he gets to talk to the team. Peter gave a rousing speech about playing with heart, giving it your all, and loving the game. Inspired by Peter's enthusiasm, the team went back out and won the game handily. So if we get in a rut today, just imagine Peter's inspirational speech at a timeout and give it your all, play with heart, and love playing lacrosse.

Middlebury v. Trinity

April 17, 2010

Several years ago at a practice in weather almost as nice as yesterday's (cold, constant rain), Peter was behind goal, as usual, chasing balls. He was dressed in his same old, thin clothing that can hardly be counted as defense against weather. He must have been frozen. Rachel tried over and over again to give him an extra set of rain gear. But Peter couldn't stand to take them on the premise that he would be taking them from someone else. She finally convinced him that they were, indeed, extra; he accepted only the jacket. Peter was absolutely selfless, even in the most uncomfortable circumstances. So in this less than ideal weather, let's play in Pete's spirit of selflessness. Let our intuition lead us to seem like we've played together for years. Don't always wait for your perfect chance, take the perfect try instead, and make your teammates look good. But please, if it starts hailing, accept the jacket your teammates offer you.

Middlebury v. Tufts

April 24, 2010

While Missy will always say that the Middlebury Men's Lacrosse team was at Peter's heart of hearts, Jim Grube will say that the Middlebury Women's Lacrosse team was just as important to Peter in a subtler way. Peter's relationship with the women's team transcended any relationship he had with the men's team in the sense that the women always treated him with an endearing and affectionate quality that was unlike anyone else. In a way, his relationship with Missy's team took the place of the long, monogamous companion that Peter never really had. Instead, Peter was blessed with Missy and her team and they were always wonderfully kind to Peter. With each of Missy's teams, there was always one player that anybody could name who was especially close to Peter and Missy could probably identify each one of them. One of these players with a real connection to Peter was Char Glessner '03(.5?). I received an email from her in time for this weekend, our Alumni Weekend. It is a wonderful portrait of Peter from the standpoint of someone whom he loved dearly: "To know Peter was to know Middlebury Lacrosse. Peter made us all so proud to be a panther. I think about Missy saying things at practice like 'no one else is running hills like we are' and 'no one else is doing sprints in

the dark' (to inspire us) but also true was that... no one else had Pete Kohn. We were truly lucky and blessed to have Pete. Peter was selfless, committed, dedicated, loving, and always an inspiration. He would walk from his house in Midd to the field in pouring rain to collect balls and line up water bottles. Sometimes I would see him walking on my way to practice and of course I'd pick him up and it is these moments with Pete that I cherish. He would tell me how lucky he was to be with such nice people and I would say the same about him. And then he would usually end the ride with a typical Pete hug, where he would squish his face into your shoulder. His speeches were always eloquent, fair, and right from the heart. He never insulted the other team; he respected everyone."

Middlebury v. Skidmore

April 28, 2010

The notion of the Keeper of the Kohn began during the 1991 lacrosse season on the trip in London, England. While the players were always kind to Peter, he was frequently left without a companion after practices and on van rides. In an effort to have Peter taken care of as well as to let Jim Grube and Erin Quinn have some space to plan, Jim decided to have a rookie ask Pete at the end of every practice to sit with him on the bus. The idea was for Peter to be constantly engaged and surrounded by people who wanted to have fun with him because when he was alone, he met face-to-face with his handicap. And that was lonely for Peter. At the same time, Jim and Erin didn't feel that it was necessary for Peter to know that it was a set plan. While this was the start of a Keeper, Erin Quinn established the custom for the men's team and it became a hallowed tradition. Being the Keeper of the Kohn was an honor, just as it was an honor for all who knew Peter Kohn.

Middlebury v. Williams

April 30, 2010

As especially the seniors know, Peter would take the senior class out every season to a dinner of their choice. While this may be a bittersweet thing to talk about, it nonetheless embodies Peter's sincere generosity. Money was of no issue on this senior dinner night. He was emphatic in telling them to order whatever they wanted regardless of price. Peter would periodically tap (or break) a glass to get the seniors' (or the restaurant's) attention so he could make toasts. He would toast every senior individually. So this being the senior's last home game, let's imagine what Peter would say. He might talk about Lindsey's quiet intensity, Kasey's genuine sense of humor, or Gotwald's uplifting presence. He might refer to the fact that Dana is always smiling, face guarding included, or Carrie's steady heart and soul in everything she does. But above all, I'm sure he'd acknowledge how great our seniors are, how hard they work, how genuinely beautiful their hearts are, and how much of their hearts they give. Let's win this one for the seniors and for Peter.

Middlebury v. Colby (NESCAC's)

May 2, 2010

Last year on the day before the team left for Colby to play them in NCAA's, Peter gave an epic pump up speech. He encouraged our team to play like lions, tigers, bears, cougars, leopards, and, with some prompting, panthers. Peter began to "grrrr" and kept grrring. Apologizing for going with the men and not the women, he left the team ready for Colby. The next day, however, the bus drove through town and as it began to turn onto Rt. 7 Peter appeared in the middle of the green enthusiastically flagging it down. Peter climbed onto the bus (stopped in the middle of the road) to wish them luck. The team requested another "grrrr" but Peter responded, "what? A prayer?" Following a little "God and Jesus" the team urged "no Peter! Grrrr!" He grinned, pumped his fists, and said with heart and soul, "GO HARD!" With that, he hopped off the bus and left the Middlebury Women's Lacrosse team to their task. So let's go hard with heart and soul, a genuine enthusiasm for the game, a little "grrrr," and embarrass the mules on their home turf. Let's win another for the seniors and for Peter.

End of Season Banquet

May 8, 2010

As a final story for this season, I have a short but fundamental one. When Jim Grube went to visit Peter in the hospital last summer, Peter had a championship ring on his finger, given to him by the Middlebury Women's

Lacrosse team years ago. He wore it always. It was a part of him just the way that our team is an integral part of who Peter was. So as our seniors leave Middlebury, they aren't really leaving us. Because when Peter was buried with that ring on, we became two entities forever tied together. And in that way, our seniors will forever be a part of the Middlebury Lacrosse tradition that is carried on by those who follow.