

ANDOVER ON DISPLAY

Phillips Academy is a prototypical blue-blood New England prep school, located in Andover, Massachusetts (it likes to call itself “Andover”). That means that there is a better than average chance that most of the students were reared in homes that are just as fashionably “progressive” as the school itself. Enter Austin P. Van, a 17-year-old who is no doubt Ivy-bound.

Mr. Van has on display at the school’s art exhibit a large oil painting that shows Jesus “locked in a passionate kill with another man.” We wrote to Barbara Landis Chase, Head of the School (she obviously prefers this neutered title to the allegedly sexist “Headmaster” or the sexually salacious “Headmistress” designation), clearly stating that the student had a legal right to insult Christians. But what we wanted to know was “whether you believed he had a moral right to do so?” Surely someone as urbane as Ms. Chase would know the proper etiquette. While waiting for her response, we tapped into the school’s website. What we found was gold.

Andover is a 500 acre campus with more than 160 buildings, including a very needed bird sanctuary that occupies 125 acres. There is a huge library, two museums, an astronomical observatory, a licensed FM radio station, ten extensive science labs, twenty art and music studios, a state of the art theater (which they spell “theatre”) complex, three gyms, two pools, eighteen playing fields, twenty-five tennis courts, two dance studios, an all-weather track and a covered hockey rink. Why they don’t have a Disney theme park is unknown. But not having a rainforest strikes us as just downright inexcusable.

Most high school kids are known as freshman, sophomores, juniors or seniors. Not at Andover—that would be too common for these gentrified egalitarians. They have juniors, lower middlers, upper middlers and seniors. How quaint. We like this

stratification system because it is endearingly aristocratic: it provides a good example to the 30 percent of the student body who are “men and women of color” that being a upper middler is an important rite of passage; the 70 percent who are non-colored people assumedly also get some benefit from this elitist quirk.

Andover, which preaches the wonders of multiculturalism, doesn't mind bilking parents \$18,200 a year, or \$23,650 for resident students (30 percent of all students come from foreign countries). Never mind that the average cost of a private college education is \$14,500, it is not only just that Andover costs more: where else can a young person, with or without color, experience such splendor while networking his way to Harvard? By the way, we have just learned that another tuition hike is expected this January, which is only fitting given the cost of maintaining that indispensable bird sanctuary (want to bet that being pro-life is seen as being pro-Nazi?).

Andover advertises that “Faculty members are students' house counselors, coaches and advisors, which is why teaching at Andover occurs 24 hours a day.” Given this intimate environment, birds and all, maybe some egg-head can get to these lower middleers before they go any further and teach them a thing or two about bigotry disguised as art. The enlightened student might then ask the Head of School why she tolerates anti-Christian bigotry on her palatial estate.