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BACK TO SPOT!

MADI FLEURY '28

There's something special about a night when Houghton University (HU) campus crowds together to cheer, laugh and soak up each other's creativity. SPOT is that night, and it's getting ready to take over the semester once more tomorrow, Oct. 3, from 9-11 pm!

SPOT is a Campus Activities Board (CAB) event at HU that brings together students and faculty alike. SPOT occurs every semester to entertain and produce a variety of acts so that there is something for everyone. Chiara Iantorno '28, a music education major involved with the event, emphasized that "You get a flavor of all different parts of campus through the different SPOT aspects. It just makes it a fun time."

This year's SPOT hosts are Carson Schmieg '29, Drew Shaner '29, and Elijah Hungerford '27. The theme



The SPOT hosts posing like the protagonists of *Back to the Future*.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF ANNABELLE ROOT

was presented by Schmieg and Shaner for the "amazing story and plot it could carry!"

As quoted from the 80's film, "Your future is whatever you make it so make it a good one!" With that being said, the theme for this semester's SPOT is "Back to the Future!"

One thing that makes SPOT particularly unique is the live SPOT band, per-

formed by students. The musicians in the band include: Nathan Newcomer '28 and Elijah Hungerford '27 on drums, Job Theobald '28 on keys, Ethan Howell '28 on saxophone, Corban Gibson '29 and Wyatt Christensen '28 on electric guitar, Jackson Collins '28 on bass guitar, Chiara Iantorno '28 on acoustic guitar, and Grace Bailey '28, Cora

Paige '27, and Henry Sardina '28 on vocals. Their music will transport you back to the times of Michael Jackson, Simple Minds and 80s pop culture movies.

Part of SPOT's magic is the way it dissolves the usual boundaries of campus life. One might find themselves smiling ear to ear for a best friend, a resident assistant, a lab partner, or the

professor whose class they barely survived last week. Somewhere between the laughter and the applause, one can start to see the campus differently. Music professor Dr. Kevin Dibble observes "It's very easy for people to see us as faculty and them as students. But we're all humans. We can all have this shared joy."

Our hosts are ecstatic to entertain the student body this Saturday. Hungerford said, "I love entertaining and talking to people. I want the opportunity to just show off what I got and give people a good time." That's truly what SPOT is about and exactly what we want our hosts to be focused on.

The campus dance club is doing a parody of "Dance Moms", surrounded in the drama and chaos that goes down in the hit reality show. Weeks of planning and filming occurred for the short

See **SPOT** page #2

Houghton University to Log Portions of 1,300-Acre Campus

WESLEY ANDERSON '27
ANDREW THOMPSON '27

If you've walked the Houghton University (HU) forest trails recently, you've likely noticed yellow X's and slashes painted across many of the tree trunks that line the paths.

To casual hikers, student runners and disc golfers, the markings appeared suddenly. These markings indicate a major forest management project that will soon bring logging and trail closures to HU's 1,300-acre property.



Marked trees in the woods on campus.

COURTESY OF WES ANDERSON

According to Donald Haingray, the project manager, the upcoming project will focus on harvesting hardwood trees while also addressing trees killed by the invasive emerald ash borer and clear canopy space for younger growth. HU made project decisions based on consultation with a forestry company.

President Wayne D. Lewis Jr. emphasized that discussions about forest health began well before his tenure. "Selling timber can be financially beneficial, but not hugely beneficial. Finances are not a good enough reason to do anything that we believe would be hurtful to the forest."

The project will be di-

vided into multiple sale parcels, and timber companies will bid on these parcels and remove trees over the next two years.

However, for students who utilize the forest for recreational and academic purposes, news of the project has sparked concerns over the ecological stability of the Houghton forest and the state of the forest going forward.

Mae Ennis '27, a senior environmental science major who uses the forest for hiking, cross-country skiing and coursework, was disappointed to first learn about the project during a research class discussion rather than a university announcement.

Ennis said, "honest stewardship and the integrity of how Houghton manages land should be of the utmost concern, and the longevity of the ecosystem should be first and foremost."

Benjamin Haytock '27, another senior environmental science major, said, "selective logging can be a legitimate conservation tool. However, it should be done in a way that is mindful of the ecosystem."

Haytock stated that without clear data or maps from the administration, it is difficult for students to know what to think about the full impact of the harvest.

Several surveyed students indicated they were most disappointed with the loss of forest as it may remove key outdoor recreation spaces. After logging, (depending on the process used) forests can take anywhere from 20 to over 100 years to regenerate.

For those coming across marked trees in the HU woods, this is what they mean:

— Single slash: This in-

See **LOGGING** page #2

Houghton Students Launch DormSweep

JONAS LIKENS '27
ABIGAIL RENAUD '28

What happens to the furniture, textbooks, electronics and other belongings students no longer need when the semester ends? Two Houghton University (HU) students are hoping the answer can be found through a new online marketplace built specifically for college communities.

DormSweep, created by HU senior Jonas Likens and co-founded with sophomore Efrain Arellano-Onate, officially launched on Sept. 21, 2026. The platform is designed to give college students a secure way to buy and sell used goods within their own university community.

Likens is a senior at HU studying business-marketing, with minors in communication and accounting. Arellano-Onate is a sophomore majoring in accounting who also brings experience in web design, application development and coding. The founders hope their different areas of expertise will allow DormSweep to combine business strategy, communication and technology into a marketplace designed around the specific needs of college students.

The aim of this platform is to solve a problem that students face ev-

ery year. "A lot of students would throw away good products and furniture, especially living in the townhouses. We wanted to create a website to post items that [people] know would sell," said Likens.

The idea also addresses a sustainability concern on college campuses. Students frequently leave behind usable belongings when they move out, particularly at the end of the academic year. As long as items are circulated and recycled through DormSweep, landfills are less affected by the waste generated by college campuses. Less trash piles mean an uncluttered campus and cleaner Earth.

Unlike other online marketplaces, such as Facebook Marketplace, DormSweep is organized around individual colleges. Students must have a current school email address from a participating institution to access that school's marketplace. HU students, for example, will be able to buy and sell with other members of the HU community but will not automatically have access to another university's marketplace.

The platform will allow students to list and purchase items such as textbooks, electronics, dorm-room necessities, furniture, clothing and

other used goods that still have value.

The founders say the goal is not simply to create another online marketplace, but to encourage students to reuse items while providing opportunities to save and earn money.

Safety and accountability are also central to DormSweep's approach. The company monitors listings to help ensure that sellers accurately represent an item's condition through descriptions and photographs. DormSweep also promotes clear and respectful communication between buyers and sellers, completed payments and safe exchanges of physical items. Not only is the goal to keep usable goods from being thrown away, but also for students to be able to connect with other students in a way that is "safe, secure, and private," according to Likens.

DormSweep is currently licensed to operate in Michigan and New York.

The founders see HU as the beginning of a larger vision: creating college-specific marketplaces where students can thrift online, earn money from items they no longer need and find affordable goods from members of their own campus community.★

SPOT from page #1

film to come into place. Members of the dance club will play various roles of characters for the film, from dancers to moms to Abby Lee Miller. The SPOT act also includes a professor as a special guest with a comedic role.

As a student, college and its workload can be intense. But, SPOT is not an event to miss and will not be a waste of a Saturday evening. As Iantorno puts it, "Let yourself have a fun time. Some people get kind of critical of SPOT sometimes, but that's really lame. Just come to

have a good time and don't take yourself too seriously." SPOT is an event for everyone of all majors, personalities and interests. There is something for everyone to enjoy.

Following the event, head over to the Highlander Shop to receive an extra 25% off all clearance items as well as additional "get ready for winter sales." On top of that, if you come dressed in your finest 80s attire, you can receive an extra discount!

Rumor has it: there is a special appearance at the end of SPOT as well. Great Scott! ★

LOGGING from page #1

indicates a tree designated for cutting.

— Double slash: This marks an internal harvest boundary.

— Triple slash: This designates property lines.

— An X: This identifies a dead tree, which loggers may remove for safety but is not necessarily part of the commercial timber sale.

The administration has not conducted a specific process to gather input from students or faculty. "People have given feedback, but more through personal conversations" Lewis said.

The Houghton Forest Management Project web-

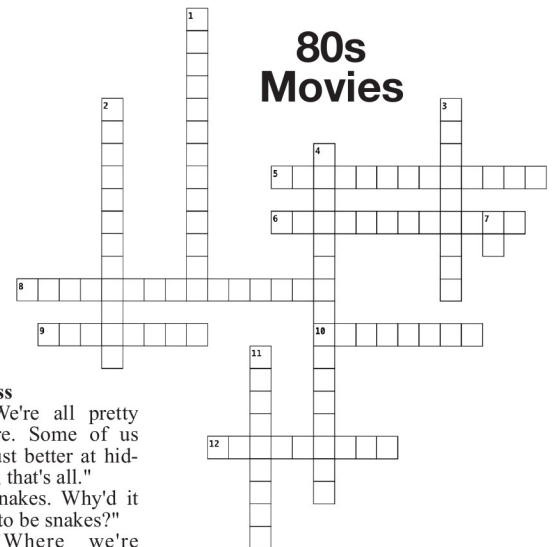
page indicates that updates will be posted when more details are set in stone. Lewis said he would be open to a community forum to discuss the logging plan.

As HU prepares to open its first section of timber to commercial bids this fall, students remain watchful, hoping that the university's commitment to Christian stewardship remains prominent, and good forestry practice remains a primary concern.

"A thing is good when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

- Aldo Leopold ★

80s Movies



Across

5. "We're all pretty bizarre. Some of us are just better at hiding it, that's all."

6. "Snakes. Why'd it have to be snakes?"

8. "Where we're going, we don't need roads."

9. "Say hello to my little friend!"

10. "I am your father."

12. "Man who catch fly with chopstick, accomplish anything."

Down

1. "As you wish!"

2. "He slimed me."

3. "From the oldest of times, people danced for a number of reasons."

4. "No matter what anybody tells you, words and ideas can change the world."

7. "Phone home"

11. "I move the stars for no one."

HOMEcoming EVENT CALENDAR

FRIDAY

Homecoming Collage Concert — 7:30 pm — Wesley Chapel
Purple & Gold Homecoming Dance — 9:00 pm — Van Dyk Lounge

SATURDAY

Breakfast and Q&A with President Lewis — 8:00 am — Dining Hall
Equestrian Center Open House — 9:00 am — Equestrian Center
Homecoming Disc Golf Tournament — 9:30 am — Field of Dreams
Dr. Ben King Portrait Unveiling — 11:00 am — CFA Recital Hall
Homecoming Harvestifal — 11:00 am — Quad (Rain: Van Dyk Lounge)
CAB SPOT: Back to SPOT — 9:00 pm — Wesley Chapel

check CampusGroups for additional information

Why We Should Be Able to Drink at Houghton



MADI FLEURY '28

The water quality on campus is overflowing with problems. To be honest, it's giving last spring's flood a run for its money in the "most chaotic campus liquid" category. This is my second year on campus and second year of living in Gillette (now East) hall. The water quality issues I have experienced have been brutal to my health. I suffer from a chronic illness which affects a lot of my life choices and what goes into my body.

To those who are going to make comments of "Just get a Brita filter" or "Everyone gets sick in college", you'd be better off skipping this article. Truth be told, I have tried a Brita filter. I still use one to this

day. I never drink unfiltered water because I know the health risks one can experience from unfiltered tap water.

When I moved onto campus last year, August 2025, I came equipped with more electrolyte packets and supplements than a human could need. I also brought a brand-new, still in the box Brita pitcher. I used my Brita filter religiously, filling up my teal water bottle multiple times a day. If I wasn't in my dormitory, I would fill it up using the water station in the

my levels were becoming off again. However, my nutritional intake hadn't differed.

Eventually, we began getting emails from Bill Burrichter, the Vice President for Student Life. Each email began with the statement that our water in East hall would be down for a period of time while they worked on the plumbing. After they turned it back on, the taste and clarity of the water was unreliable. Allow me to paint a picture: if you were to fill up a clear glass, you would see

To be honest, it's giving last spring's flood a run for its money in the "most chaotic campus liquid" category.

Greatbatch atrium.

I realize that every first-year student goes through an adjustment, and hormonal changes as they adapt to a new environment. Still, the symptoms that I started to experience at around the second week of Sept. became similar to those I had experienced the past Spring. I could tell that

a very cloudy liquid. It often would take about 45 seconds for the water to become transparent enough to see through.

Following the visual red flags, I became physically alarmed by an increase of health issues. I began to experience more frequent headaches, weakness that quite literally kept me in

Albeit, this is the health of your students we are talking about.

bed at times, and nausea that not even Zofran - a common over-the-counter nausea medication - could not ease. I was also going through Brita filters at least once a month. According to the official Brita website, the replacement should be around 2 to 6 months. However, one phrase caught my attention: "If you have hard water, you may need to change filters more often."

This statement led me to informally research symptoms of drinking hard water, which led me to suspect that this was a problem at Houghton University (HU).

Two of the main components of hard water are the calcium and magnesium levels. Calcium is a major aggressor for migraine attacks, making it easier for my body to fall into flare-ups. Usually I would drink more water as staying hydrated would help me, but the levels made that impossible.

Many of us dealing with chronic migraines are prescribed magnesium oxide supplements as a preventative. Similar to a block tower, too much magnesium can ruin the entire point of the supplement. A solid tower starts nice and steady, but as you put more weight, height and blocks onto the tower, it begins to stumble. By the time it gets to its limit, it doesn't be-

come much of a help than it does a risk. Eventually it falls apart and goes to waste.

The magnesium and calcium in my body were attacking each other at this point. Despite the war I felt going on in my body, I was still expected to work and perform as a college student. This was among the hardest parts of all. I had experienced chronic illness struggles tied to my education previously. Unlike then, however, I wasn't 15 minutes away from my healthcare facility. I was six hours away from the place I called home and the place where I could find comfort in knowing I would be able to find answers to my problems.

My advice to HU Administration? Please install water softeners on every faucet to better the water quality. I understand that sometimes this is challenging in some geographical areas. Albeit, this is the health of your students we are talking about. That is ultimately more important. ★

Madi Fleury is a junior studying music (general studies) and criminal justice. She is involved in Houghton Choir and Dance Club. She enjoys spending time with her dear friends on campus and collecting stuffed animals along the way.

Have an opinion
you want to share?

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**SPEAK
OUT!**

Letters to the editor
should be less than 600 words

SUBMIT TO
star@houghton.edu



The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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Movie Review

Cars 20th Anniversary Review

NATE NEWCOMER '28

"Speed...I am speed."

If you're the age I am, there's a solid chance these four words strike a deep chord within you. Lightning McQueen's opening speech cements his legacy as one of the greatest characters in animation history and introduces one of the greatest movies of the 21st century. But why is Cars so good? I could answer, "because cars are cool" and call it a day there, but that doesn't make for a compelling review. Rather, Cars stands out for a few reasons: its animation, its characters, its soundtrack and its ending.

First, the animation is spectacular and still holds up twenty years later; the characters are expressive, the texturing is great (you can even see the difference in paint between McQueen and Sally!), and the backdrops are incredible, especially the race stands and the mountains of Radiator Springs. Speaking of which, Radiator Springs has an appealing old-timey look and feel to it, something accentuated even more with its literal glow-up later in the film. The cinematography is also amazing, particularly during the races, but the scene of McQueen catching Doc doing laps for the first time is a standout.

The characters are similarly fantastic. The star of the show, Lightning McQueen, is cool, confident and skilled but arrogant, something the opening scene excellently demonstrates. McQueen begins as a jerk, shown through the way he treats his pit crew and the old cars at Rust-Eze. Twice his own selfishness costs him the Piston Cup; his refusal to make a pit stop causes him to forfeit certain victory, and his refusal to let Mack sleep results in his getting stranded in Radiator Springs—and it is here we meet the ensemble cast that helps him grow as a character.

Each main ensemble member teaches McQueen an important lesson. Through Mater, McQueen learns the value of friendship which helps him overcome his ableism and respect the old rusty cars too (he also drops some great lines—"He did what in his cup?"). Sally helps McQueen appreciate Radiator Springs and all the cars that live in it, and her drive with McQueen and the following flashback to Radiator Spring's glory days are together some of the best scenes in the movie. Finally, Doc Hudson teaches McQueen how to

humble himself and later how to race, two things that pay off extremely well in the finale (he even learns to overcome some selfishness of his own). Each of the characters are well-written, well-performed and play a crucial role in McQueen's journey.

Another huge strength of Cars is its soundtrack. While movies like (it pains me to say it) Guardians of the Galaxy toss songs arbitrarily into different scenes, Cars utilizes its soundtrack much more intentionally; the opening "Real Gone" sets the movie's tone excellently, "Our Town," provides the emotional backdrop to Sally's Radiator Springs flashback and most notably, "Life is a Highway" is the perfect backing track to the gorgeously animated road trip montage. The original score is phenomenal too; personal favorites of mine play during Doc's laps and during the final race. These songs take near-perfect scenes and elevate them even higher.

The final scene and ending of Cars is, in my humble opinion, one of the best to ever grace the silver screen. It is a series of fantastic payoffs; the real pit crew being the friends he made along the way, backwards driving from Mater, Guido's legendary pit stop, Doc's advice of turning left to turn right and most crucially, the payoff to the journey McQueen has been on throughout the entire movie. When "The King" suffers a debilitating crash, McQueen finally realizes that there are things more important than the Piston Cup he has been pursuing up to this point. He sacrifices his rookie victory to help his fellow racer finish his final race, not wanting him to endure what Doc went through decades earlier. Merely a week ago, McQueen wouldn't have been caught dead giving up his rookie season Piston Cup for anyone or anything else. But thanks to everything that the cars at Radiator Springs poured into him, he ultimately realizes that it's "just an empty cup" and that his friends matter more to him than racing.

In conclusion, Cars is an excellent movie because cars are cool. And Lightning McQueen is super cool. But beyond that, Cars uses a combination of great animation, great characters, great music and a perfect ending to give us one of the greatest animated movies of all time.

Kachow! ★

Sudoku

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	6			5			4	
		7						
9								
		4	5					
5	8			6	3			
					8	4	6	
7	3							1
	2				9	8		3

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#168988

Difficulty: moderate

Can't solve it? Check the solution at <https://sudoku.cba.si/>



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT



The STAR is holding a competition to give an opportunity to a new Comics Artist for the semester!

Applicants will send in 2-3 samples of their work. Applications are due by Oct. 11th, and the winner will be announced in the Oct. 16th issue. Afterwards, the winning artist will produce one comic a month for the remainder of the semester.

Scan this QR code to see all the details and apply!