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EQUESTRIAN SHOW!

SADIE NAKAMURA ('26)

Houghton University's Equestrian Program is hosting a riding competition this Saturday at the school's Equestrian Center to showcase their riders' skills and horses' athleticism.

While the Equestrian Center hosts a variety of shows, the Horse Trial, Combined Test and Dressage Schooling Show is unique because it caters to riders of many disciplines. Contestants can display their abilities in dressage, show jumping and cross country. Dressage riders perform tests evaluating the obedience, flexibility and athletic ability of the horse. Show jumping competitors lead their mount in jumping fences, pushing the boundaries of speed and height. Cross country riders take jumping to another level by tackling a variety of obstacles in different terrains.

Houghton graduate Hannah Williamson ('19), the



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Equestrian Hunter Jumper Show

equestrian events coordinator and director of the show, explained that each rider will perform different tests depending on their riding level. Riders can decide to specialize in dressage only, or perform dressage and jumping together. Another option is to choose the horse trial, which starts with a dressage test, followed by a stadium jump

course, and finishes with a cross country course.

Some of Houghton's own students are planning on riding in each of the three events.

"You do all three phases in one day and go from one to the next," said Lianna Elliot ('26), a junior riding in the beginner novice division with a horse named Everett. "I am excited about

the horse show because it will be the end of our evening class and we will get to show our progress."

Another eventing student, Greta Hewson ('26), is riding three horses: two lesson horses named Digger and Willon, as well as her personal horse, Gunner.

"I am hoping to show off the hard work I've been putting in the past couple

of weeks," Hewson said. "My eventing class started two weeks before all other classes started, so we've been working on this stuff for a while and I'm looking forward to seeing everything come together."

Not all the Houghton competitions are riding for class requirements. Danielle Skinner ('27), discussed her excitement to ride with her young personal horse, Jersey. The dressage portion of the competition can provide experience for horses who are newer to the showing world.

"It's going to be [Jersey's] first dressage show, so we entered her to get more experience before the November dressage show. I'm hoping to get a good first experience for Jersey, as well as some good comments from the judge," she said.

The Horse Trial, Combined Test and Dressage Schooling Show is starting

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An Evening of Opera and Shakespeare

ABIGAIL BATES ('26)

Houghton University's Lyric Theatre will perform "An Evening of Opera and Shakespeare" in the CFA Recital Hall both this Friday and Saturday.

Beginning at 7:30 p.m., the show will include excerpts from plays, operas and even a few musicals. Emily Quick ('25) explained that although Prof. Amanda Cox is Lyric Theatre's director, several scenes have been led by guest directors. Quick has collaborated on



Lyric Theater

COURTESY OF KAITLYN AVERY

scenes with Rachael McVeigh (Class of '23), and professors Dr. Kimberly Prins Moeller (Associate Professor of Voice) and Prof. Luke Odgen (Graduate Music Coordinator and Part-time Music Faculty).

Quick explained that while people tend to equate Shakespeare and opera to the words "boring" and "dull," the direc-

tors and cast members have tried to make the performance fun for all audience members.

"In reimagining some of the iconic scenes in this show, we've incorporated our own twists; in addition to the expected drama," she said, "we have fun science experiments, bubbles, and no shortage of comedic moments."

Warren Torraca ('26) explained that cast members have multiple roles. He will be playing scenes as Lysander from "A Midsummer Night's Dream", Beadle Bamford from "Sweeney Todd", Benedict from "Much Ado About Nothing" and Malvolio from "Twelfth Night". Despite how fast they had to prepare for a show in the first month of the se-

mester, Torraca is excited to be able to act in a variety of different roles.

"Each scene," he said, "is a new moment in a story; Professor Cox also allowed us to not be bound by the classical interpretation of each scene."

Melanie Grace, a senior graduating in '27, said her favorite roles—out of many she's performing—are Beatrice from "Much Ado About Nothing", Hansel in "Hansel and Gretel", the third witch in "Macbeth" and what she considers "the silliest role I've ever had the pleasure of doing": the "little boy old man fairy spirit" from "The Magic Flute".

"For me, fleshing out every character was probably the most difficult but always some of the most fun," she said.

Grace has enjoyed acting alongside her fellow cast members in many

See **LYRIC THEATRE** page #2

Feature: After Party Groups

ANNA LLOYD ('26)

This week, sixteen small groups across campus met for the first time, utilizing a six-week curriculum called "The After Party" to help navigate discussions regarding Christian engagement in politics.

These groups are jointly sponsored by the Office of Spiritual Life and the Kingdom Initiative, with the goal of drawing students, faculty, staff and community members into conversation with one another. The groups will wrap up in the first week of November, just in time for the election, and culminate in the Kindschi Symposium on Faith and Justice on the topic of civility. For students, it is also an opportunity to earn Around-the-Table credits toward their fall chapel attendance.

Bethany Tubman ('25), leading one of the small groups, said, "The After Party is a unique opportunity to engage in meaningful and intentional conversation about how Christians should navigate the American political climate. I'm so thankful that Houghton is partnering with the After Party."

Given the topic these groups are centered on, worrying about the content and atmosphere surrounding these conversations is to be expected. However, that fear is partly what these groups are designed to address.

"[Students] need opportunities to reflect on the meaning of Christian

citizenship without getting caught up in the media hype, overhead polemics, and online frenzy," Dr. Meilaender, Dean of Religion, Humanities and Global Studies and the Kingdom Initiative Director, shared. "This fall's After Party groups should provide the chance to do that, getting together with a few brothers and sisters in Christ – faculty, students, and staff – to talk with each other about how we engage in public life, live out the faith, and respect our fellow citizens, even when we disagree sharply."

The curriculum acknowledges the deeply polarizing atmosphere that many people are familiar with when it comes to discussions around politics, and instead seeks to re-orient participants in these conversations toward living out identity in Christ through the way that they engage with others.

"As Christians," Interim Dean of Spiritual Life and Chair of Religion, J.L. Miller said, "we must find ways to subvert the current cultural draw towards polarization...to help one another have caring and charitable conversations with people from all walks of life."

As participants engage in their small groups, they will be asked to consider questions such as "Who has disappeared from your life because of politics?" in order to shift discussions from being primarily about party, policy and ideology, to being centered on relational practices, relationships and spiritual values. The curriculum

stresses that this doesn't suggest that Christians should not take part in political discussions or actions. Rather, "The After Party" takes this approach because, at this time, the political arena is dominated by a way of relating to one another that ultimately attempts to deny the worthiness and value of those whom you may disagree with. The hope is that as individuals refocus on relating to one another in a way that affirms their being created in the image of God. In this way, we will be able to move forward into conversations that do involve party, policy and ideology in ways that are helpful and beneficial.

Miller shared that it is his "sincere hope that our campus' participation in the After Party will help all participants grow in their ability to demonstrate Christ's love during a contentious time in the public sphere."

A group participant, Mary Blake ('26) said of her experience in an After Party group: "I'm excited to have the opportunity to be in an After party group with other people who are looking to honor God and prioritize loving their neighbor in the election season. I hope that these discussions inspire us to be more active in building relationships with people who may see things differently than us and less passive in having difficult conversations." ★

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at 8:30 a.m. and running until 5 p.m. this Saturday at 9823 School Farm Rd. HU's Equestrian Center is going to be a bustle of activity, and riding students are excited to see their friends and family come out to the barn to support their accomplishments. Williamson added that all shows at the Equestrian Center are open to the public.

"I would love to see a good turnout to this show, because it has so many different elements for people to enjoy," said Hewson. "It's our most versatile show of the year and some of the best weather!" ★

LYRIC THEATRE from page #1

long rehearsals, and watching how "everyone tries different things with their characters." She disclosed that they have all been working hard to make their many characters seem like normal people that someone "might talk to today, [with] just a little bit of a different way of speaking."

"Each character has such depth and motivation behind their actions that, in most cases, has been building over the course of the show," Evelyn Simanowski ('25) said that because they are only performing short scenes, "[their] job as performers has been to bring [out] as much of that developed character ...

Bringing the characters out of their original context and still making them real people with believable stories has been a challenge, but one that has only made me grow as an actress."

Simanowski is performing Rosalinde from "Die Fledermaus", Beatrice from "Much Ado About Nothing", and Sibella from "A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder". She is excited to share all the different scenes the cast has been preparing with their audiences.

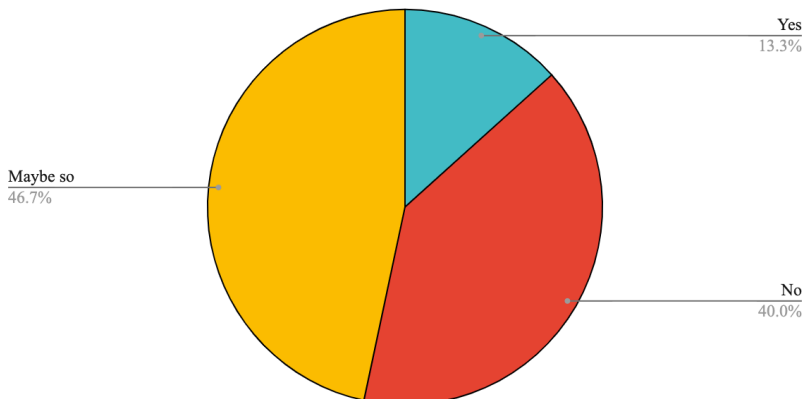
"One of my favorite things about live theatre," Simanowski said, "is that it's a collaborative art form that requires the collaboration of the audience with the performers, not just between performers."

Simanowski added that "the scenes that we're presenting are so deeply human that they really bring the art down to earth and are relatable to everyone. They remind us what it's like to laugh, and cry, and really just feel deeply."

Tickets to the show are \$5, and are available online at "Tickets: An Evening of Opera and Shakespeare" or at the door. An ASL interpretation will be available at the Friday performance. Contact Amanda Cox (amanda.cox@houghton.edu) with any questions. ★

Question: Do you think Aliens exist?

09/20/24



Respondents: Current students (10); Former students (2); Faculty/staff (3)

Question of the Week



SCAN ME

God Calls Us to Testify



DR. NATASHA DAVIS

Testimony. Have you ever heard someone's testimony? Of course, throughout the Bible we read many accounts of people sharing their testimony of how God transformed their lives, but I'm speaking of a testimony by someone you know. Maybe you heard someone's testimony in church or in class, recounting how God has worked and moved in their lives. Or maybe you have shared your own testimony. God reminds us as believers that we are called to testify. 1 Peter 3:15-16 says, "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." So, with that, I am going to share my testimony and I pray that it will bless you in some way.

I'm going to take you back to a time when I was in high school, a senior in fact,

and I was ready for the next chapter of my life...college! During my high school years, like most teenagers at that time, I was an active student, always involved in a variety of things both in and out of school. I was also very involved in my home church serving on the Young Adult Usher board, singing in the Young Adult choir for a short time (where I quickly learned God did not intend for me to be a singer), attended Sunday school and church every Sunday, never missed church revivals or homecomings, and participated in church trips. God was a significant part of my life, and at an early age I gave my life to Christ and was baptized.

So, as an excited and ambitious teenager in my Senior year, I was ready to take on the world and to see where God was going to lead me next. Imagine my surprise when someone I trusted told me one day, "You will never

"Reminder. HIS plans for you, not others; what HE thinks of you, not others."

thinking I've accomplished so much in preparation for college, academically and personally. This person saw how hard I worked, so where did that statement come from? But yet for some reason, when this person looked at me, instead of seeing my God-given potential, they only saw unworthiness. In that moment, time stood still for me as those words sunk right down to my soul, crushing my spirit. Was this person right? Did they see

and broken. In that brief moment in time, I went from a joyous teenager to feeling that I somehow failed God by not being good enough, that someone felt compelled to tell me I would never amount to anything.

So, after walking away, you're probably wondering what I did next after that encounter. I went home and told my momma, that's what! Through tears streaming down my face, I recounted for my mother what this person said to me, and in all her infinite Christian southern momma wisdom, my mother gently replied, "So are you going to believe that one person's opinion about you or what you know to be true of what God says about you? Are you going to let them define your life for you or are you going to define it for yourself according to God's will for your life?" And that was that. The tears dried up, and with a renewed spirit, I understood that I could not and would not let that person make me think less about myself. That not only was I smart enough to attend college, but after earning a bachelor's degree, two terminal degrees and several certificates, I thrived in college!

In all honesty, after telling my mother what happened, I almost halfway expected her to find this person and bless them with a good ol' piece of her mind, but that was not the case. Instead I was taught a very valuable lesson that changed my life: never allow someone's opinion of you to overshadow what God knows and says about you, and that's my testimony.

As crushing as it was to hear that statement, it was also my God-given fuel to always lean into one of my favorite Bible verses. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Reminder. HIS plans for you, not others; what HE thinks of you, not others. What is your testimony? Have you shared your testimony with someone who needed to hear it? If not, I encourage you to do so and write them down in a testimony journal. Whenever you can, share His goodness to encourage others that He can do the same for them. That moment in my life strengthened my relationship with God. Now at this time in my life, knowing how far God has brought me spiritually, personally and professionally, is why I always carry an attitude of gratitude for everything HE has done in my life. For the truth is, just because that person thought I would never amount to anything, is the reason God used me to show and prove, that according to His plan, I actually amounted to everything.

May God bless you always and in ALL ways! ★

Dr. Natasha Davis is currently serving as the Special Assistant to the President for Strategic Planning and Compliance/Title IX Coordinator and cheer coach at Houghton University in Houghton, NY. She enjoys reading, arts and crafts, college basketball, NFL Football, and trivia.

"God reminds us as believers that we are called to testify."

amount to anything." Unfortunately, there were more negative words to follow that I won't divulge here, but I'd like for you to let those words sink in for a moment. Say those words out loud and see how it feels. Heavy statement, right? Here I am, a teenager

something in me that God didn't see? Maybe this was God's way of telling me not to pursue college because I was not smart enough or there was something I lacked. So many emotions were felt at that time that I walked away from this person feeling defeated, angry

Have an opinion
you want to share?

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SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor
should be less than 600 words

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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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Satire

Why Women Are Terrifying!

Samuel Cobb ('27)

Look, let's be honest here. Some people are afraid of heights, others of spiders. Then there's me—bravely navigating the treacherous waters of a female-dominated university. Yes, the irrational fear of women, but I'm not talking about the cartoonish run-away to the Arctic type of situation. I'm not afraid they'll hit me with their purses or yell at me for wearing socks with sandals (though it has happened). No, my fear is a bit more subtle, a little more nuanced. The truth is, women make me nervous in the most awkward, bumbling ways.

You see there's something about their mannerism, their mastery of small talk, that leaves my hands clammy and my tongue to swell up in my mouth. Either I end up talking too much or too little. "You like cats? I liked a cat once. He got run over by a car." Wait, there are women at the homecoming dance? I guess I'll hide by the punch table and snack on goldfish and fruit snacks.

It doesn't matter if it's an after-class chat or just a casual encounter in the dining hall. Even if I knew them for my entire college career, the results are still the same. I freeze up like Shen Pond in December. I scramble to find something meaningful to say, something that they will look back on and think "Wow, that guy is cool." Instead, the words that come out are not cool guy words, but "So.., you like...uh, weather? ...

Snow good?"

And don't get me started on group scenarios. It's like standing in front of a firing squad made up completely of charm and intelligence. I laugh nervously at jokes I don't get, make a few comments on the snowfall, and pray they don't ask the dreaded haircut question. The weather app is oftentimes my companion and friend in these situations. Whenever I manage to survive one of these encounters I have to drown my pain in a glass of Upstate New York low-fat Chocolate milk to clear my head (Current count: 85 glasses).

Before you state the most obvious solution—therapy?—I have considered it. But I am sure that it is not that big of a problem per se, and can't people keep their little quirks? Some people are afraid of clowns, which is valid, and I am afraid of the person who can read my very soul. And I already participate in therapy, albeit a little homebrewed version (I have an unopened Lego box in my dorm room).

So while my soul is being read like an intriguing novel by Mary Shelly, I'll do my best to survive the fast-approaching homecoming party. I'll be fine as long as the opposite sex doesn't ask me too many questions, or make eye contact for too long. Because even though women are frightfully scary I might eventually build up the courage to say "hi" before I die. ★



Artist of the Week

Aubrey Armes ('25)



I am a Studio Art major in my senior year here at Houghton. I have experimented in a variety of mediums, including woodworking, oil painting, watercolor, oil pastel, and graphite. Currently I am producing oil and watercolor commissions and looking forward to branching out into an artistic profession! I love what I do, and am so thankful for the people in my life who shape the artist I am becoming. All glory to Him!

