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THE DOOR OF PARADISE

DANIELLE SKINNER ('27)

Tonight at 6:30 p.m. Houghton University's (HU) Chamber Choir will be performing in the Center for the Arts (CFA) Atrium. The performance is titled The Door of Paradise.

The Chamber Choir is the most elite of HU's choirs and requires a year-long commitment. Only sixteen spots are available that students must audition for.

The choir is directed by Dr. Kevin Dibble, the Associate Director of the Greatbatch School of Music, Associate Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music.

Junior Susannah Denham '26, a choir member since the spring of 2024, explained that the Chamber Choir is unique compared to other campus choirs.

"We don't usually perform music for large choirs and we do mostly a



Chamber Choir Rehearsal

COURTESY OF KAITLYN AVERY

cappella pieces," Denham not-ed. "Since we only rehearse twice a week, less than any other choir on campus, everyone is a strong musician and confident in sight reading."

Denham commented on the importance of the "performer-audience relationship." The ensemble needs the audience,

and she said the choir wants to share their hard work and "this beautiful combination of pieces" with listeners.

"Personally I'm excited to perform these pieces for family and friends," Denham said, and added that "Dr. Dibble has arranged a beautiful collection of compositions, each with a story

and depth behind them."

In addition to traditional and modern pieces, the choir will also perform pieces composed by HU students and faculty.

"Each piece is truly incredible," she said.

Denham stated that out of their music selection, she particularly enjoys "Song for Athene," "Entreat Me Not to Leave

You" and "Heart Fire." "Song for Athene" is a musical composed by John Tavener with lyrics by Mother Thekla, an Orthodox nun. It was written after Tavener's family friend, Athene Hariades, was killed in a cycling accident. "Entreat Me Not to Leave You" is one of Dan Forrest's best-known a cappella pieces based on Ruth's plea in the Bible. "Heart Fire" is composed by Carrie Magin who explained it "expresses a raw abandon that comes from the beauty of experience and from the natural world around us."

Denham advised attendees to "pay attention to the texts and how the music supports them and creates a specific atmosphere."

Faculty and students alike are encouraged to attend the performance. ★

Life Together Groups

SADIE NAKAMURA ('26)

Houghton University (HU) offers a variety of weekly small groups around campus called Life Together Groups. These gatherings are open to all students and designed to foster a sense of community and encourage meaningful spiritual connection.

Interim Dean of Spiritual Life J.L. Miller explained that Life Together Groups were created to help students share their spiritual experiences and grow together in faith. Each group features a unique focus, providing opportunities for students and faculty to engage in deeper spiritual connection.

"I chose the name Life Together Groups from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's semi-



Bible with plants

COURTESY OF KAITLYN AVERY

nal work called Life Together," Miller said. "The book explore[s] what it look[s] like living together. I think it's such a gift to be at an undergraduate institution like Houghton where you are surrounded by peers, faculty, and staff all interested in being at a Christian University,

growing in their faith, and studying together."

Miller emphasized the importance of creating intentional spaces for Bible study, prayer and spiritual discussion.

"I think one aspect of doing Life Together as Christians is creating [these spaces]," he said. "I wanted to be sure the Spiritual Life office was doing something to en-

hance the offerings across campus."

Miller's overall vision is to ensure that a variety of small groups and Bible studies are consistently available for students because he believes "it is important for students during their college years to be connected with peers and classmates on a spiritual level."

Although student-run small groups already existed on campus, Miller sought to provide additional support to help students easily find groups that fit their interests and schedules. One aspect Miller appreciates is the flexibility and creativity of these gatherings. "I love the variety of styles in the different groups," he noted.

One such group is Daily Prayer. Lee James '26, a double major in bible & theology and history, is one of the students who helps lead the Daily Prayer Life Together Group. The group meets every weekday at 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Spiritual Life Office, located on the lower level of the Campus Center.

"Daily Prayer is open to everyone," James said. "It's a great way to take a breather in the middle of a chaotic week."

See **LIFE TOGETHER** page #2

DANCE CLUB

AIVERY SCHUCK ('26)

Houghton University's (HU) Dance Club is a new affiliated campus club that meets in Presser Hall, located in the basement of the Chapel. Their weekly Saturday meetings, from 6-7 p.m., provide an opportunity for dancers and non-dancers of any skill level to learn some new moves and have fun with friends and peers.

Dancing has been a part of HU's history in various forms.

In 2011, Jive 101 (along with Pointe to Christ) was a student-run swing club. Then, in the fall of 2016, alumna Kaitlyn Nirkirk '18 founded the ballroom team, which attended ballroom Dancesport competitions. The Ballroom & Swing Dance won ribbons at the Cornell Dancesport Classic (Cornell University) in fall 2016 and other competitions near Albany and at

Princeton in spring and fall 2017. In 2017, they traveled to Columbus, Ohio to compete in the club's largest event, the Ohio Star Ball. After 2022, the club vanished.

Chiara Lantorno '28, one of the club's founders, stated that Dance Club was inspired by the lack of an outlet on campus for HU students to dance together in recent years.

"The club was created after how much I missed taking dance classes with my friends," Lantorno explained, "and I figured other students who used to take dance classes would feel the same."

A typical meeting begins with warm-up, stretching, across the floor exercises and ends with a brief dance combination. They focus on a different dance style each month. January was focused on Hip Hop and February will be centered on Modern dance style.

Bailey Lewis '28 noted, "You don't have to be a

dancer to join a dance club! It is easy to catch on to what is happening. The club is judgement-free and wants to welcome anyone who wants to come and have fun."

It is a great opportunity to express yourself through dance, as well as try something new!

Nadia Gordon '28, another founder, added, "Moving our bodies is one of the best ways to refresh from a hard week of school work ... Dance club is a safe space that cultivates fun and community."

Overall, Dance Club is a space where students can step out of their comfort zone and try something new, or gain the opportunity to continue to dance in college. ★

LIFE TOGETHER from page #1

James emphasized the positive impact of leading a small group, sharing that daily prayer provides a safe opportunity to connect with others, adding, "It would be really cool to see more people get involved!"

Another popular group is Board Games and Big Questions led by Julia Collins '26, a history major. The group combines fun with meaningful conversations, inviting participants to engage with both games and thought-provoking questions.

"I think it can be really encouraging for people to come together in a small group setting," Collins shared.

"Everyone has burdens and it is so beautiful to help each other carry these burdens."

Collins believes the Life Together Groups provide opportunities to form friendships with "people that you might not otherwise meet!" She added that some "of my best friends are the ones that I've met in life together groups."

Through Life Together Groups, HU continues to cultivate a spiritual community where students can build meaningful relationships and deepen their faith. ★

Puzzles

All sudokus provided by sudokuoftheday.com.

Last Week's Answers

Beginner

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

Medium

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

Difficulty: Fiendish

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

Difficulty: Easy

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

Question of the Week

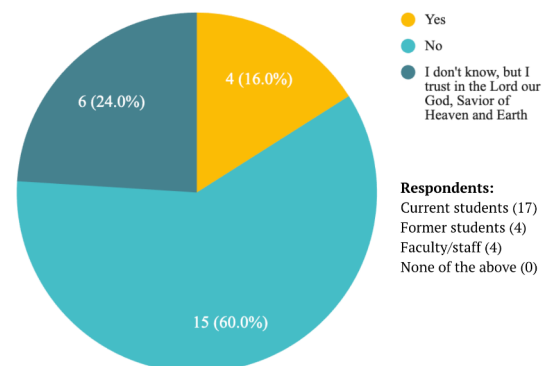
Submitted Question: **Do you think it's possible that out of 8 billion people in the world, someone has some kind of superpower?**



Also on the STAR website & HUB

Weekly questions open to anyone affiliated with Houghton University.

Do you think you could survive a zombie apocalypse?



Anxiety



RHYAN LORENC ('26)

Sometimes I love harassing myself over things I've done in the past. This obsession I've had with my previous and minor mistakes has cost me so much, even someone I cherished more than anything on this planet. Having anxiety is one of the worst things a human could have. People with anxiety are constantly worried and continuously going over the many variables and different outcomes a certain situation could have, and like many others, this mental disorder has done so many things to hold me back. It's taken me 20 years to finally face reality, I am finally seeing a therapist, I'm finally taking

medicine to counteract these thoughts that I have on a regular basis. Do I look back and regret a lot of the things that happen? Yes, I do. Do I wish I could change the things that happened?? In a way, but I wouldn't have gotten the help I required if I didn't get the wake-up call I needed. I didn't see that then, but I do see it now.

Anxiety, a disorder of the mind that sees a person have a constant feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. It's something that plagues the world and many may not notice it, may not recognize it, but is truly a part of their lives.

"Don't be afraid. Don't be scared to be yourself, to go seek help."

(19.1%) have an anxiety disorder. Meanwhile, approximately 7% of children aged 3-17 experience issues with anxiety each year. Most people develop symptoms before age 21." To me anxiety is like that magical stuffed animal that you don't remember getting that just shows up in your room one day. Or

into reality, more into your peripheral vision.

There is not just one type of anxiety disorder, there are actually many anxiety disorders. Some of these include, but are not limited to; Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Panic Attacks, Separation anxiety disorder, and Substance/medication-induced anxiety disorder. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5-text revision (DSM 5-TR) "Anxiety disorders include disorders that share features of excessive fear and anxiety and related behavioral disturbances. Fear is the emotional response to real or perceived imminent threat, whereas anxiety is anticipation of future threat." (pg.215) Anxiety is the fear of being embarrassed in public. Being away from a safe space that you can go to just to be yourself.

I am here to tell you, be yourself. Be your goofy, silly, crazy, annoying, chatty, emotional self. Don't be afraid. Don't be scared to be yourself, to go seek help. Criticizing yourself every now and then is ok, it helps build strength and pushes you to get better, but berating

yourself constantly is not. Go, seek help, go find someone to talk to and someone who won't judge you. Finding help and talking to someone has been the greatest thing that has ever happened to me, I feel so much better, both mentally and physically. There is a stigma in this world that going to talk to a therapist means you're weak, no, it just means that you care for yourself, you care for your health. Help break the stigma around mental health. It is ok to not be ok. Let that resonate with you as you go about your day to day lives, through all the ups and downs of being a college student. Seek peace within yourself, trust me, and more importantly trust God, it helps more than you could ever imagine. ★

Hello my name is Rhyan Lorenc. I am a junior here at Houghton. I am a pre-music therapy major with an instrumental concentration. Along with being in the Houghton Wind Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, and Houghton Choir, I am also on the Disc Golf team. Music has always been a part of my life since the very beginning, and the love of psychology and interest in mental health came starting freshman year of high school. I've had a lot of friends and family members suffer from mental health disorders and I want to bring to light the issue of people not wanting to seek help out of the fear of being embarrassed and perceived as weak or even disabled.

Have an opinion
you want to share?

CONTACT
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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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The Houghton
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Review

The Wild Robot (2024)

Written By: Caleb Tiedemann ('25)

I'll be honest—I'm not the biggest fan of animated movies. To some, that might be considered heresy of the highest order, but I've watched many disappointments and witnessed plenty of thoroughly underwhelming films. So when I saw trailers and advertisements for *The Wild Robot*, I didn't bother hoping for anything special. Looking back now, the trailers were actually pretty terrible, barely scratching the surface of the movie's deeper themes and meaning.

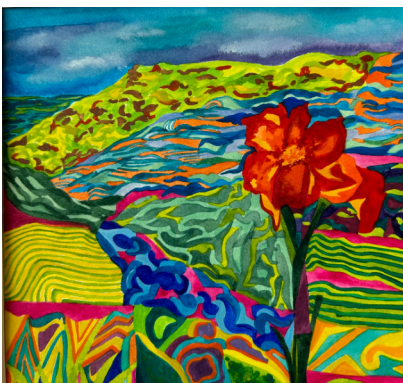
However, I enjoy being pleasantly surprised. So when I finally watched *The Wild Robot*, I was amazed at just how unequivocally wrong I had been! The movie was produced by DreamWorks, and while their films made up a large part of my childhood, my adult life has been far less inclusive of them. Upon watching the film, I was greeted with a stunning animation style—a gorgeous swath of color stretching across the skies and a breathtaking depiction of the seasons in a rugged, weathered landscape. The animation team was un-

doubtedly put to the test, but they truly delivered.

It was refreshing to see a unique and emotionally mature concept brought to the screen. Don't get me wrong—the film is accessible to both children and adults, but I wasn't expecting plot points specifically targeted at an older audience. Many children's movies seem to cater solely to kids, almost as if they forget that adults are the ones watching alongside them.

The movie tells a touching story of motherhood, shifting family dynamics, and friendship. These themes are beautifully conveyed through excellent voice acting that evokes deep emotional responses. I grew to love and connect with the various characters throughout the runtime. Additionally, Kris Bowers' musical composition was the perfect complement, enhancing both the film's most emotional and triumphant moments.

Ultimately, *The Wild Robot* was a fantastic surprise, and I strongly recommend it to anyone who enjoys movies. It has all the essential elements of a truly great film.



Artist of the Week

Elyse Howard ('25)



Hi, my name is Elyse! I am a senior majoring in Studio Art and minoring in Education.

I love to paint using watercolors and oils. I enjoy focusing on the celebration of color and composition within my pieces. I draw my inspiration from nature and the cultures I've lived in. Creating brings me great joy and allows me to feel close to my Creator, experiencing the fullness of His beauty and goodness.

