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Amidst Faculty Differences, Presidential Task Force Seeks to Reform Beverage Alcohol Policy

By Rebekah Miller

With the difficult issue of dancing resolved, the Presidential Task Force is taking on another hot topic in the Community Statement of Responsibilities: beverage alcohol. The Task Force has created three subcommittees designed to solicit input from faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured. Dr. Mike Walters, member of the Task Force and chair of one of the faculty subcommittees, remarked, "I was very happy to see the forthrightness and transparency of people willing to discuss this." Senior Amy Labzentis, member of the President's Task Force and participant in faculty subcommittee meetings, commented on the wide range of faculty responses: from absolute prohibition to the removal of faculty restrictions.

For most participants in this discussion on beverage alcohol there are two questions to be answered. First, should the Statement of Community Responsibilities continue to ban beverage alcohol in homes of faculty and community members? Secondly, and closely related, what is the exact relationship between

community members and the Statement of Community Responsibilities?

As it stands now, wording in the statement is vague and unclear, confusing both students and faculty on what Houghton's stance on drinking is. While it is understood that this is a non-issue for persons under the age of 21 because of New York State law, students and faculty over the age of 21 are left to interpret this statement that requires "community members of all ages [to] agree to forego the use of beverage alcohol" because "we recognize the Scriptural warnings against exercising Christian freedom in a way that causes others to stumble" and because "we recognize the physical and psychological dangers of beverage alcohol and its counterproductive nature to the essential spiritual and intellectual pursuits of Houghton College."

Dave Huth, a professor who lives off campus but within the Houghton community, sees two problems with the statement. Huth views the statement as a double standard: "Faculty are agreeing to a different set

of behavior standards than students are agreeing to when they sign up. Students are permitted in their own homes to be governed by the law of their home... faculty are required by employment here to make the culture of their home one in which there is no beverage alcohol."

Huth also disagrees with the wording of the statement he signed, prior to its current temporary changes. That version of the document listed alcohol among blatantly morally degrading activities like pornography, acts of violence, and use of illegal drugs. For Huth, this placement was "a moral judgment against people who use alcohol." He considers the statement as it was written to be "an absurdity and fairly offensive."

The document has recently been revised to not include alcohol in the same category as pornography, violence, and drug abuse. The revised version states, "We consider these rules to be prudent expectations, not Christian absolutes or measure of spiritual commitment." In response to this change, however, Huth re-

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The Tradition Continues: Purple & Gold Week

By Jill Stewart

For the last three years, the campus has been celebrating the Houghton College spirit with Purple and Gold Week. The week is packed with activities for all students, including a variety of competitions. This year's festivities were kicked off on Tuesday as members of CAB gave away t-shirts designed by Jesse Stoddard to each student. Each student was assigned a team and the competition to determine the superior color began. The campus wide game, Catch Me if You Can also began on Tuesday, and yet, in the present, a winner has not been determined. Making an appearance at the Women's and Men's basketball games, was the excitement of the CAB couch and halftime games, with prizes including gift certificates to various restaurants, Houghton apparel, and dinner dates to the Alleghany Grill.

The week gained momentum with Houghton's very first dance-a-thon on Wednesday night. Offering dance instruction by Adam Slocum earlier in the afternoon, the dance-a-thon commenced at 8 p.m. in the retro-decorated campus center. Josh Wallace, a sophomore and Shenawana RA who attended the dance-a-thon, said that winners were chosen based on the combination of costume, dance, and overall participation. He also boldly declared that "the limbo tournament was mad awesome!"

Sophomore Alex Glover said that he had doubts about the success of the dance-a-thon, but ended up going and looks back favorably on the experience. He said that the popularity of it would probably grow, like the dodgeball tournament, which has earned a following and gained participants with each subsequent year.

Thursday was a day of more exciting and some not-so-exciting prizes during Houghton's game show, Let's Make a Deal, hosted by Peter Carpenter. The game included some small prizes, such as dollar-off coupons for Java, \$10 iTunes cards, and a \$30 gift certificate to the Olive Garden. The stakes were raised with free Houghton College

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Lecture Series: The Life and Works of Meštrović

By Ryan Ledebur

Last Thursday evening, February 5, the latest installment of the Houghton College Lecture Series was delivered by guest lecturer Danica Plazibat. Plazibat hails from the city of Split in the Balkan country of Croatia. She is senior curator of the Meštrović Ateljer in Zagreb, the current capital city of Croatia.

As curator of this permanent exhibit of the work of Ivan Meštrović, she has led many students in Houghton's East Meets West (EMW) Honors Program on tours during their Mayterm visits to the Balkan region.

Approximately 70 students, faculty, and community members gathered in Schaller Hall to hear a lecture by Plazibat on the life and work of Meštrović, a sculptor active in the Balkan region Vienna throughout the early 20th century.

Meštrović was born in 1883

in rural Slavonia, a subsection of Croatia, where he spent his early years herding sheep. His father was a stonemason and Meštrović would subsequently be apprenticed to a stonemason where he honed his skills. Although he was accepted at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, he was initially unable to receive a degree due to his illiteracy in the required German.

He eventually received the degree and lived in Vienna for several years surrounded by the Vienna Secession, a group of artists staunchly opposed to historicism and the traditionalist ways of other artists.

Meštrović was considered the best sculptor of the Secession due to his persistence and prolific work ethic. His work was often highly religious in nature and during this period of his life he created his "Head of Christ" (1913) and "Pieta" (1914).

Later in life Meštrović spent

time following in Rome where he was introduced to Michelangelo's work. Throughout this period, his works included many iconic figures and heroes.

In 1919, at the end of the First World War, he returned to Croatia. (The country itself had changed from being part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes.) Due to his international recognition, he was welcomed into the cultural world of Zagreb, including the new generation of artists. During the interwar period, Meštrović exhibited his works all over Europe and even paid some visits to the United States.

With the coming of the Second World War, Meštrović's native government signed a pact with the Nazis, proclaiming a fascist regime. Due to some of his political beliefs, Meštrović was briefly imprisoned

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W/O out there

By Monica Sandreczki

Questioning of President of Peanut Corporation of America

On Wednesday, a subcommittee of the House of Representatives held a hearing for the president of the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA), Stewart Parnell. The subcommittee asked him if he or any officials of PCA knowingly sent products contaminated with salmonella out of state. Parnell declined to answer the subcommittee's questions, standing on the Fifth Amendment. Parnell also declined to answer when the chairman of the subcommittee asked him if food poisoning was just the price of doing business. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) discovered twelve cases in which products that knowingly initially tested positive for salmonella were shipped. This recent salmonella outbreak is linked to nine deaths and is responsible for more than 600 cases of illnesses.

Taliban Attacks

Three connected Taliban attacks took place in Kabul Wednesday morning, in response to the torturing of Taliban prisoners in Afghan penitentiaries. Zabiullah Mujaheed, a Taliban spokesperson, said that they had told the Afghan government to stop mistreating the prisoners. In one of the attacks, five Taliban gunmen, wearing explosive belts, attacked the Justice Ministry and held it for a couple of hours before Afghan security took control. In another attack, two men, also wearing suicide vests blew themselves up at the Justice Ministry's correction department. In the final attack, a man in a suicide vest, tried to shoot his way into the Education Ministry. However, all eight of the attackers were killed, making the death toll 28 and 57 people wounded.

Zimbabwe Unity Government

President Robert Mugabe swore in Morgan Tsvangirai, a former opposition leader, as prime minister forming a unity government. Tsvangirai has promised to end political violence and to stabilize Zimbabwe's devastated economy.

Currently, Zimbabwe is fighting a cholera outbreak, exponentially increasing inflation, and a 90% unemployment rate. Mugabe has agreed to work in cooperation with the new prime minister, though many people are fairly skeptical.

Stimulus Plan Settled

The House and the Senate have settled on a \$789 billion stimulus package. The votes for the final bill are to take place next Tuesday. Harry Reid, Senate majority leader, said that the bill should create almost 3.5 million jobs and provide tax cuts and incentives for the middle class. This bill is a compromise between the bill that passed through the House with \$820 billion and the bill from the Senate at \$838 billion. This bill includes aid to states that have faced cuts in their public spending. It also will help people who were hard hit by the recession through such things as unemployment benefits and health coverage. Republicans preferred a smaller package comprised mostly of tax cuts, but Democrats favored a package that would help with infrastructure.

China's Human Rights Record

For the first time, China has submitted a human rights review to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations (UN). It is to be reviewed by a panel that will make suggestions by Wednesday. The document includes the improvements in the country from their economic development. Li Baodong, ambassador to the UN, said, "China is the world's largest developing country. We are fully aware of our difficulties and challenges in the field of human rights." He also noted that health care and social security are not up to standards, and that there are still many people surviving on low incomes. However, Martin Uhomoibhi, current president of the Human Rights Council, said that he is "impressed by the efforts [China] has made to take this country out of slums and poverty." He added that China has even asked UN officials to come into the state to conduct their own assessment. China's record of human rights has been criticized for many years.

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marked, "I consider that ridiculous; all of those statements, even when said by people who are high up in the administration. I believe they believe these things, but that's not actually what's happening in the world around this statement. In the world around this statement it's almost universally accepted that this statement condemns universally ... beverage alcohol."

Part of the problem with this issue of beverage alcohol is confusion over what the Statement of Community Responsibilities itself is supposed to be. Labzantis asserted that "it is a document that is intended to set the tone and the foundation for what we want the community to be and working up from there." This should be "completely separate from [the question of] who should we be or how should we live as Christians." Walters agreed with Labzantis saying,

"Let's stop trying to say this is what Christianity is. This is how we best think we can accomplish what we want to accomplish as a Christian academic community."

One faculty member, wishing to remain anonymous, acknowledged the rights and responsibilities of Houghton College saying, "Houghton College has every right to maintain an alcohol-free campus and to require abstinence from its employees within the scope of their professional activities." At the same time, this faculty member asserted that, "apart from that professional sphere, however, it seems to me that individuals should have to live up only to the commitments they have made to their churches—some of which may be teetotal, some of which may not be." Walters recognizes this difference of opinion and the difficulties this brings to the issue of alcohol in particular. Alcohol "has been a big issue in the Wesleyan church over the past 25 years" he said, "my personal opinion is that I think the gospel is big enough to handle this."

Huth takes this discussion to a deeper level when he says that not only is the document not reflective of his beliefs, but it goes so far as to "usurp the proper moral instructive place that scripture has in [his] life. Scripture tells me I have liberty in this area. The document is telling me that I don't. Therefore I think that's an illegitimate expansion of this institution's purview into my own personal, ethical, and spiritual life."

There has also been discussion by the committee about who is under the jurisdiction of the Community Statement of Responsibilities. Mike Danylak, SGA president and new member of the Task Force, feels that an individual over the age of 21

"should have a right to buy a beer if they want... as a Houghton student, I feel that coming in we all agreed to be part of this community....so if I agree to be a Houghton student and I sign that document and I turn it in, then I know full well what's expected of me and I'm willing to follow it."

Gary Stith, chair of the Task Force member, asserted in a Senate meeting discussion about this policy that this document does not require a signature; students and faculty agree to it by remaining at Houghton. For Stith, "there are a lot of things in life we don't sign." In the same way one follows the rules of this country without signed papers, so to should faculty and students follow the Community Statement of Responsibilities.

Huth is especially discouraged when the conversation about the alcohol policy reverts back to the

argument that he made his choice to follow the document when he agreed to be an employee of the school. "I hate that kind of talk... that's not the way that Christians, who are trying to engage and dialogue in good faith with one another, are supposed to be talking

to each other. Yes, I signed a document, is there anything else we can possibly say about this issue?"

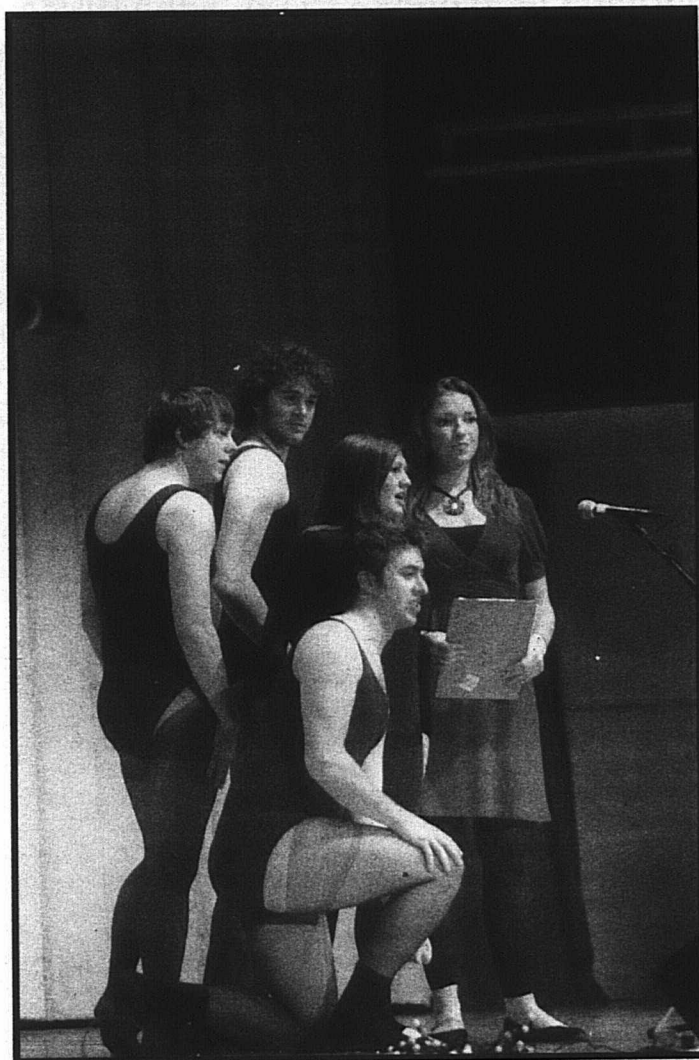
Huth is not alone in his frustration with the policy. While some faculty are less verbal about this issue Huth claimed that after expressing his opinion in the faculty forums, he did not feel he held a position that was "freakish and bizarre." In fact, "there are a significant number of faculty who violate the statement and drink alcohol in their homes." Walters affirms that faculty drink, but does not know how the revised document will address this reality and will take into consideration that some community members do not follow the document in the first place. "It's complicated," said Walters.

According to task force members, there is no doubt Houghton will remain a dry campus in support of its intellectual and academic pursuits. The issue remains, then, to whom the restrictions will apply. In reference to potential changes in the policy, Walters stated, "I don't sense that the mood on campus and the mood in our sponsoring church is...that of great change." He hopes instead for clarification on the issue of alcohol and on the community members' relationship to the covenant.

After some student input from Senate, and considering the faculty input from the three forums, a revised alcohol policy will be sent from the Task Force to be considered by the faculty as a whole.

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Hosts entertain the SPOT audience with SNL skit.

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apparel, a pancake extravaganza basket, and Snuggles®. The final prizes were the most exciting and included a couch, \$100 off books from the campus store, a GPS navigation system, and a Nintendo Wii.

Some unfortunate contestants, however, received "zonks," or prizes that were intentionally undesirable. These prizes included college IDs of former students, a bag of hair clippings from Personal Effects, a giant Nemo fish, and pink women's underwear. Devon Martin, a first-year student, stated that "the game show would have been better if there was more participation and excitement." Alex Glover pointed out that the game show could have had more participation from students if there was more promotion for the event. Regardless, many students came away from the show with a plethora of great prizes.


Friday helped bring the week to a close with the campus store fashion show, and one of the most popular events, the Dodgeball Tournament. Houghton students dressed up and walked down the runway, showing off new Houghton apparel.

Saturday ended Purple and Gold week with the most well-attended event: SPOT. Hosted by Andy Keller and Nate Austin (or Andy Austin and Nate Keller as the advertisements read),

SPOT included a variety of acts that displayed talent and hilarity. Among the highlights was the reinstatement of a house band to play between acts, which seemed to be a big hit among students.

Alex Glover said, "the band helped move things along...I can't think of anyone that didn't enjoy that." Acts at SPOT included double-dutch jump roping, a Thriller-themed dance (an audience favorite), Gameboy music composing, and skits that caused bursts of laughter throughout the crowd.

Journey Osburn, a senior, said, "the SPOT hosts brought a different kind of humor to SPOT than in past years and I really enjoyed it." Becca Stafford, also senior said, "I thought SPOT was one of the better ones that I've seen since I've been here." Devon Martin added "This SPOT was the best one I've ever been to."

The general consensus of the student body was positive toward Purple and Gold week, but as Alex Glover and Chris Green pointed out, "people are more concerned about having fun activities than the actual competition between Purple and Gold." Each event was well received, and some events will perhaps be promoted more in the future to ensure an increase in student participation. 



Peter Carpenter hosts Houghton's first "Let's Make a Deal"



The Macarena: a hit at the Purple and Gold Week Dance-a-Thon.

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by the regime but was eventually released with some help from the Vatican.

While imprisoned Meštrović could not work in visual arts, so he began to write. Some of his works include works of fiction and an imaginary dialogue with Michelangelo.

Upon his release, Meštrović turned down a personal invitation to return to his native land from the Yugoslav leader, Tito, and took up a teaching post at Syracuse University in 1946. While in the United States he gave an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. This was a rare opportunity as the Met had a policy of not granting solo exhibitions to living artists.

Although he was not as artistically successful in America as he had been in Europe, Meštrović continued to work and create prolifically.

Meštrović died on January 1st, 1962 after suffering two strokes in a matter of months. He was buried in his hometown in Croatia. Meštrović will be remembered as one of the world's greatest sculptors for having profoundly affecting the art world.

Plazibat kept the audience's attention throughout her presentation and very few people were aware of how late it was when the lecture ended. Host Professor Peter Meilaender closed the evening by inviting audience members to come forward if they wished to speak with Ms. Plazibat further.

Many of the students gathered for the lecture were past or present participants in the EMW Honors Program. One such attendee was

This lecture "highlights the college's global connections, strengthens a tie to a foreign partner."

Meredith Toombs, a freshmen currently enrolled in the program. "I found the lecture fascinating, even for someone who does not often have the opportunity to explore the world of art. [Plazibat] was so knowledgeable and passionate about the topic and her lecture gave us a great look into the time period that Meštrović worked in," she said.

Meilaender, the organizer of the event, said, "I was pleased with the student response. Bringing [Plazibat] in seemed like a good way to highlight the college's global connections, strengthen a tie to a foreign partner, and give the campus an opportunity to hear a real expert on an important, but for many of us little-known, sculptor."



Purple and Gold Week's Dodgeball Tournament Winners "True Underdogs"

By Joel VanderWeele

Last Friday, February 6, over 150 students gathered to compete for ultimate triumph in CAB's dodgeball tournament. The tournament was organized by Dodgeball Chancellor Andrew Slocum and Purple and Gold Week chairs Sonja Mindrebo and Allison Beck. According to Chancellor Slocum, "The night was a great success... people were having fun, the music was great, and it was just a great night to be out playing dodgeball."

After a long night of competition, 160 spectators remained in the gym to watch Devon Martin from team Caucasian Overload take on

the Boss's Zachary Wise in a head-to-head match-up in the Championship round. Martin emerged from the battle victorious and was lifted on the shoulders of his teammates. Gregory Dabb, also from Team Caucasian Overload, said of the team, "Everyone counted us out, but we proved a lot of people wrong." Martin, who draws inspiration from the tenacious racquetball player Marty "Smokin'" Hogan, echoed Dabb's sentiments, declaring, "We don't lose like them."

The rise of the Caucasian Overload is a true underdog story. According to Dabb, who named the team after a phrase used in the

motion picture Undercover Brother, the team was formed to prove a point to someone who didn't want Dabb on his team. Dabb took this insult and used it as inspiration to drive his newly formed team to victory. The key to the Overload's success was a combination of this "chip on the shoulder" approach, the spirit of Alaina Williams (an important, though inactive, member of the team), and the entire team's love of the popular movie Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story.

Not every team, however, took the tournament quite as seriously as Caucasian Overload. While some teams focused on dodgeball strategy (the famous Five D's of Dodgeball: Dodge, Duck, Dip, Dive, and Dodge), others concentrated on costumes, team cheers, and coordinated dance moves—some of them in slow motion.

Regardless of each individual team's success (or lack thereof), a good time was had by all. Chancellor Slocum highlighted one of the favorite elements of dodgeball, saying, "The highlight of the night for me was watching people get nailed with a dodgeball. I mean, let's face it, there is nothing better than seeing someone get hit with a dodgeball. Granted, they aren't the old playground balls, so it's not as funny, but some people got hit really hard with the ball."

"It was just a great night to be out playing dodgeball."



Photo by Rachel Cross

Team Caucasian Overload came out victorious at the Dodgeball tournament.

How to Survive Valentine's Day: Ideas from STAR Staff

By the Editorial Staff

Tomorrow is Valentine's Day. This holiday provides a perfect excuse to show the people you care about how much they mean to you. Some may complain that Valentine's Day makes people who are not in romantic relationships feel left out, but those people are just not being creative enough. There are countless ways to celebrate Valentine's Day, and many of them don't require the presence of a significant other.

The Editors of the Star would like to offer some suggestions on how to spend your Valentine's Day 2009.



1. Unrequited love is one of the most romantic parts of Valentine's Day. If you're sick of using extremely vague language to express your feelings, hoping that your friend picks up on your hints, why not write a romantic poem to the one you admire? Then, when the opportunity presents itself, drop the poem near them and immediately pick it up, saying, "um, this is totally weird, but someone just dropped this behind you."

2. If you happen to be dating someone this month, but don't want to make a large financial commitment, create love coupons for your significant other. Things like, "Good for one free back massage" or "Redeemable for one unembarrassed kiss in the Campus Center" or "Return this coupon for one night of watching your favorite television shows" are sure to woo your loved one. Unless you predict a long-term commitment, be sure to put an expiration date on the coupons.

3. If you have been in a

relationship for a while and are not opposed to spending a little cash, remember that flowers, movies, and romantic dinners are great ways of avoiding the fact that you no longer have anything interesting to say to one another.

4. Another financially significant way of celebrating Valentine's Day is to buy a piece of jewelry for your significant other. Then, after giving them the gift, take it back and throw

it into the woods. After all, love is more important than gifts.

5. Take your significant other back to the place where your relationship first became official. We recommend doing this at an odd time, otherwise the quad will be crowded.

6. Facebook has added another element to Valentine's Day, so why not take this opportunity to officially change your facebook relationship status? Nothing says, "I'm not ashamed of our relationship" like an electronic announcement.

7. Alternatively, if you are not in a relationship, go ahead and Facebook-stalk the person whom you are interested in like you usually do, but this time imagine that they are doing the same to you.

8. Take advantage of the hard work of the wonderful ladies of Gillette Hall Leadership Council and write a message on the pre-made note card with candy Necco hearts attached. Bland Hallmark greetings cards are not special, so be sure to pick a pre-made note that fits your situation. If you don't have anyone in particular to write to, just write a nice note to yourself from "anonymous." Not only will you make your other single friends jealous, you will have a box of candy hearts to enjoy.

9. Hire a music major and an English Lit major to collaborate on a song for the one you love. Depending on your own level of talent, you may also want to hire an additional music major to perform this song for the apple of your eye.

10. Buy a single ticket to My Bloody Valentine in 3-D and observe how awful most Valentine's Day dates actually are.



Surprised by Hope: Review of N.T. Wright's Newest Book

By Shane Marcus

Nicholas Thomas (NT) Wright is the Bishop of Durham in the Church of England, and one of the world's leading New Testament scholars. He is a prolific writer whose books, articles, and sermons are constantly being published. He is one of many leading the charge to revitalize the Christian faith for a new age and a new time. He has written books such as *Paul: Fresh Perspective*, *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship*, and *Evil and the Justice of God*.

His most recent book is *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*. It is his attempt to highlight one of the most central features of the Biblical story for the Christian life: the resurrection. Wright's case is that the church through the ages has misunderstood the resurrection, and not given it nearly enough place in the Christian life.

He breaks the book up into three sections. The first is called "Setting the Scene." He lays out what he sees as the popular conceptions of life after death: belief that the spirits of the dead are still with the living and watching them, or that they are simply in a better place. Most believers can't do much better, simply believing that after death they will end up playing harps and sitting on clouds in a cartoonish sort of way.

Wright finds this idea to be unutterably boring, and not in line at all with traditional Christian beliefs. He points out that "there is very little in the Bible about going to heaven when you die." He prefers talk first of all about the Kingdom of Heaven coming here on earth, which began with Jesus ministry.

He points out that "The kingdom is meant to be a picture of present reality, the heavenly dimension of our present life."

The resurrection, Wright argues, was never meant to mean simply a life of the soul in some heavenly realm. It was to be a new kind of bodily life after whatever 'life after death' might occur. Resurrection referred not to the period of time immediately following death, but a completely new kind of existence after that.

The next section of the book is called "God's Future Plan." It begins with an extended look at the Easter narrative itself, and the appearances of the risen Jesus. Wright's discussion of this point constantly keeps in mind Paul's words that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead. Jesus is leading all humanity into this new kind of life, this heavenly life, and Christians are to understand heavenly life and the kingdom of God as this new resurrection life. The resurrection is the initiation of the new creation, and Jesus is the first fruits of that creation.

Wright says that too often Christians take the hope of the resurrection and individualize it, and do not get a big enough picture of the resurrection. If the resurrection is the beginning of the new creation, we need to hope for not only the resurrection of the body, but the ushering in of the kingdom of heaven into all creation.

This leads into the final section of the book: "Hope in Practice: Resurrection and the Mission of the Church." Here Wright talks about salvation not as the soul being saved from damnation; but as the whole person, soul and body, being saved to participate in God's new creative




SURPRISED BY HOPE

Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection,
and the Mission of the Church

N. T. WRIGHT

work in the Kingdom of Heaven. He says that Christians need to rethink justice, beauty, and evangelism in light of this idea of salvation, and see all the work that the Church can do now as preparing the world for God's new creation, and bearing the fruit of the resurrection life.

Wright's argument ultimately is that the resurrection is the central theme to Scriptures. The

Biblical narrative shows a picture of humanity broken, struggling, and ultimately coming to fruition in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The mission of the church, then, is to work in and for that heavenly life that Jesus exemplified at the resurrection, and to see all its work as participating in the work of God's new creation, that God will one day bring to fulfillment. 

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Foolish Abandon: Leaving Our Fear to Live Out of Love

Praxis week centered around showing love to others - but do we really have the willingness and capacity to love fully and selflessly?

by Luke Hands

"To fear love is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead." - Bertrand Russell

We are a generation largely characterized by fear and anxiety. The wonderful possibilities afforded by living in the 21st century have cast us into a world of great doubt and fill us with anxious uncertainty. We are schooled to reach so far into ourselves and our individual experience of life that we truly cannot extend ourselves to others beyond ourselves; we cannot truly live or love. Praxis week made me wonder how many of us truly consider ourselves to be Kafka's mute Gregor or Camus' Stranger, or even Shelley's modern Prometheus; called to this life without consultation or consent. We have become so truly Romantic in our ideals and view of the world that we cannot move beyond ourselves to love fully or truly. The landscape of our interior life and our concerns seems to obscure everything and everyone around us.

I was spurred to think more deeply about the correlation between fear and love by Machiavelli's, The Prince. Now Machiavelli is surely not discussing love in the context I am, but he unfolds for us a telling social commentary. He tells us

that it is much safer to be feared, because "A wise prince should establish himself on that which is in his own control and not in that of others..." How many of us, if we are honest with ourselves, feel that this is deeply true? We cannot let go of the control, or truthfully the illusion of the control, of our lives even to experience the most dynamic of relationships. I submit that we cannot fully live without love; nor can we fully love without embracing the life more abundant. This intrinsically contains several elements. We must be willing to relinquish the illusion of control in our lives. We must will ourselves to submit to the love of those who give it. We must capture and suck the marrow from life abundant. I say this so that our love does not become possession, so that our love does not become jealousy, confusion, or insanity.

When we turn inward instead of abandoning ourselves, our love becomes just another tool in the attempt to control our lives. Our love becomes unrecognizable, even to us, and instead of life it becomes death. When love has become

merely a servant of my arrogance, my anxiety, my foolishness, it is a wellspring of fear and anger. When we label a poison - love, there is only one outcome; that of death. All of our true and deep relationships, including that with God, are work. However let us try as we might to labor for love instead of blindly for our own egos, our own insecurities. When love becomes only the projection of our own insecurities we are paralyzed to truly give, and completely unable to receive or see with any clarity. Surely in this we must rely on the love of others for us to help us see

when the way is dark.

The art of loving well must be an act of humility, we must be ready to accept as well as give while we learn to let go. How many of us remain slaves to our routines, our empty rituals, and at times even our empty relationships, including that with God, in our attempt to remain "safe?" To remain complex and unknown. We cannot let ourselves be truly seen because we are afraid that we cannot be truly loved. Pain, doubt, and fear have obscured our abilities to give or receive love. We need to open our

eyes to the beauty and light of life, yes, even in these last dreary days of winter. This is far from a call to live as the quintessential optimist, though if you see life in that way I applaud you. No, this I think is instead a call to live as a fool, because undoubtedly it is foolish to extend oneself in love, or to even extend oneself to receive love. It is foolish to relinquish a part of your life to a force that you cannot control. But isn't this the radical call of the gospel? The radical call of life?

Fear and love seem inextricably tangled to me more than not. However, I am constantly reminded of the love that casts out all fear; that is, indeed, a stranger to fear. Love has left me breathless, but in this curious condition I know I am truly alive. Are the empty motions killing you? Is the routine putting you to death? Don't be content to let life happen to you. We are in such a dynamic place at an equally dynamic time of our lives. This cannot be a time of death, and we must reject the heart that is merely content to beat. An orientation toward the life lived more abundantly, necessarily directs itself through love.

Luke is a junior Secondary Education and History major.

I submit that we cannot fully live without love, nor can we fully love without embracing the life more abundant.

**Disgusted?
Delighted?
Just confused?**

We want you to be part of the conversation.

Letters to the editor (signed) should be 350 words or fewer and be submitted by Tuesday at 7 p.m. to star@houghton.edu.

The HOUGHTON STAR is dedicated to the free exchange of ideas, and encourages community members to participate in the discussion. Ideas expressed in these pages reflect solely the opinion of the writer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit any contributions for reasons of length or decorum.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editors,

Oh I'm sorry, I thought this was a college and not an episode of Freaks and Geeks. I thought the horrors of popularity strife were a thing of the past here in our supposedly Christ-centered community, but apparently my pair of rose-colored glasses needs to be stowed away. I'm of course referring to the "Joe Awesome" video shown at SPOT this past Saturday. For those who are unaware or those who were completely lost while watching it, the video very obviously mocks Joe "Cool" Freeman, a consistent contributor of videos to SPOT over the past few years. In my opinion, we went too far for the sake of humor.

Don't get me wrong, I think overall SPOT was hilarious and one of the better ones in recent memory. However, I found the "Joe Awesome" video distasteful at best and an embarrassment to Houghton. Poking fun at an idea, philosophy, tradition, or "type" of person is one thing, but to so blatantly deride a single person for his attempts at getting a laugh is vile. And to top it all off, Joe has graduated and consequently was

not in attendance to defend himself. What an ignoble lack of courage on the creators' part.

Sure, Joe Cool's videos may have been low budget, a bit campy and at times hard to follow, but he meant well. He certainly never stooped to this level for a laugh. No one deserves that type of harassment, especially not Joe. He is one of the most genuine and caring people I had the pleasure of sharing my college experience with while I was a student.

On Saturday evening we witnessed, if only for a few minutes, one of the worst ways a Christian community can operate; attacking one of its own. If this type of mockery becomes commonplace, it can be poisonous to any community. One might say that I am grossly overreacting, but this type of personal ridicule is a tragedy and has no place here. Shame on us all for laughing at such malevolent behavior and for encouraging this type of cowardice.

-Justin Hackett, class of 2008

Dear Editors,

I feel that Houghton College honors too many sacred cows, so I appreciate—with measure—the deconstructionist spirit that seemed to pervade this year's SPOT. One act, though, should never have been

part of the show: The Game Boy act.

No, I mean the hosts' "Joe Really Awesome" video, an acidic riff on the "Ask Joe Cool" videos by Joseph Freeman, Class of '08. Although Joe is my friend and was my cartooning colleague, I will admit that there were parody elements in this video that were dead on. From the video's format to Mr. Austin's eerily accurate mannerisms and vocals, the video looked commendably like the ones it was lampooning.

Although satires are more suited for things in the public eye that could stand to be/should be taken down several pegs, the video devolved from a general parody of Joe's video style and persona into a harsh mockery of Joe himself. Messrs. Austin and Keller were very kind and supportive of me as we worked to develop my own act, so I can't understand the video lynching they gave to Joe, who was bashfully surprised to be knighted "Sir Cool" by President Mullen herself at the 2008 Senior SPOT, and whose persona in the end was only half-removed from the one he good-naturedly affected in his videos.

The most inappropriate aspect of this video: Mr. Freeman graduated Houghton last year and is no longer attached to the campus.

Letters continued on page 7



Letters continued from page 6

This displays an incredible inability to develop a snappy comeback on time, in addition to an inability to proportionately respond to personal rivals or enemies.

There are better ways of dealing with those people. You can tell them what you think to their face, or punch that face and start a fistfight. I'm being fairly serious: at least these methods directly and honestly provoke some sort of resolution. If you can't bring yourself to that, another mature solution is to just keep the hostile feelings inside. This was about as mature as painting "Suzie smells like farts" on the front of the elementary school.

-Andrew Davis, class of 2009

Dear Editors,

For many of the students at Houghton, SPOT is the highlight of the year. It is the one event that captures everyone's attention and is even more popular than going to see Dr. Britain dress up in his buzz light-year costume, although that is a tossup for some. The SPOT of spring 2009 was no different than any other and we went with high expectations. And for the most part, it did not disappoint our desires to laugh and enjoy ourselves.

But there was one act that stopped my excitement and made me feel not only uncomfortable but somewhat irritated at what they had done. The act I am talking about is the video of Mr. Awesome. In the film different people asked him questions on how to be cool, and he responded with silly answers and ridiculous hand motions that made him look quite foolish. All this absurdity is really a feeble attempt to mock Joe Cool who is really Joe Freeman.

Joe graduated in the spring of 2008 and I got to see his final Joe Cool video at Senior SPOT before I entered Houghton as a freshman this year. He created several videos starring Joe Cool, a character who believes he is the coolest kid on campus. In each one, he sports shades and a baseball cap and proves his coolness by interacting with fellow students. Even though I did not know him personally I know a few people who did and I got the impression that he was socially awkward, but really sweet and actually believed his videos were really cool. To commemorate his coolness President Mullen gave an award to him before he graduated which he thought was very special.

I can only imagine what Joe would think if he saw that video and knew that we all laughed at it. Making fun of people in the first place can be spiteful, but when it is done to someone like Joe, that is downright inappropriate.

-Naomi Warf, class of 2012

From the Editors' Desk...

A Realistic Approach to Diversity at Houghton

The Editor questions whether cultural diversity in its richest sense can find a place at Houghton College.

by Katarina Kieffer

Diversity has been a catch-word on campus lately, from the contested bid to bring Nicole C. Mullen to campus, to President Mullen's address on the importance of diversity in the Houghton community, to the recent displays and events put on to celebrate Black History Month.

From what I understand, the recent emphasis has largely been a result of a request by the board to look into bringing more "diversity" to the Houghton campus. I'm a bit unsure what is meant by "diversity" in this context; in any context, it's a tricky subject to nail down. I assume - and hope - that it's something more than merely filling a quota of students from varied ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. Cultural Quota systems do a disservice to both the individual and the culture by buying into harmful stereotypes. I hope instead that diversity in this context is referring to cultivating a culture of diversity in which substantial differences (of many natures, not just race and ethnicity) are embraced - if not always agreed with - respected, and valued.

While unfortunate, location and cost certainly play a large role in Houghton's perceived lack of diversity; but there is a more subtle contributor to the problem. As a self-proclaimed Christian campus, Houghton has in many ways already set a limit on cultural diversity; as a college that follows the Wesleyan denomination, that limit is restricted even further. Alongside the recent emphasis on diversity, in fact, there's been a lot of talk about Houghton's history as a specifically Wesleyan campus and the importance of strengthening those historical denominational ties.

The application process, for example, requires prospective students to write an essay about their "personal relationship with Jesus Christ" and any recent spiritual growth they've experienced. A Christian Character recommendation is also required. Presumably, the College retains the right to judge

whether or not to admit a student based on religious affiliation, or lack thereof. Another issue which has received considerable attention, including in past decades in the Star, is whether or not Houghton will accept students whose sexual orientation is not condoned by the church at large, and the Wesleyan denomination in particular. While it would be hard to place sexual orientation and religion in the same category, there is a similar tension.

Would an Atheist, a Muslim, or a Hindu be welcome to attend Houghton? Technically, I suppose so. Perhaps one would respond by asking, why would they want to? Houghton is an officially Christian school after all, and there are a lot of other options out there, with atmospheres that would better suit people of different faiths.

This is where it gets tricky; Houghton is, first and foremost, an institution of higher education. Because we are not a church, evangelism and outreach are not our primary goals. Yet we have labeled ourselves as a specifically Christian institution, and as such, the idea of bringing others to the faith is inherently part of the identity of the College.

Attempting to reconcile the Christian aspects of the school with the institutional elements is a difficult task; the balance between diversity and exclusivity is likewise a challenge. The wider church has been struggling to come to terms with the cultural "diversity" of the postmodern West, in which the choice and amalgamation of culture is analogous with trying something a little "different." In an effort to keep up with culture, many churches and Christian institutions have simply bought into the idea that there ought to be a Christian alternative for any given cultural phenomena. In this way, Christianity seems to say: "Look! We're just like everyone else; we have our own subculture."

I might be wrong, but I'm pretty sure that's exactly what Christians aren't supposed to be. The church, ought not to presume that it will be,

or ought to be, reducible enough to be automatically understandable to every human being, regardless of cultural background. The goal shouldn't be to merely create a Christian-culture enclave, but to live in the culture at large as Christians.

When it comes to diversity at Houghton, this is one of my primary concerns: that there must be an acknowledgement that, when we are talking about welcoming "diversity", we are often talking about a very specific type of diversity - that which exists within the body of Christ. While there is certainly a place for a Christian institution like Houghton, there must be an acknowledgement that it will not be a microcosm of society at large; the language of diversity that is being used may help us to avoid that often uncomfortable acknowledgement.

Why is it so uncomfortable? Because it's exclusive, and we have grown to fear that word. As an educational institution, it seems that Houghton ought to be seeking the most responsible and academically bright students; as a consciously Christian institution, there are other factors that will be considered, and will likely modify the academic considerations. I do not want to disparage our embrace of diversity, but I would like us to acknowledge that it does not, and cannot, reach nearly as far as we might like to think. If Houghton is serious about retaining an actual connection with a Christian denomination, rather than becoming a school that is merely nominally affiliated with the church, this is imperative. The challenge, then, is either to expand our values to include many practices and values that we do not currently condone, or to recognize that for Houghton to reassert its identity as a Wesleyan school it will have to embrace exclusivity. Inevitably, we will choose the later, and in doing so will be creating an environment inhospitable to the spectrum of cultural diversity.

Kat is a senior Political Science major, and serves as Editor-in-Chief

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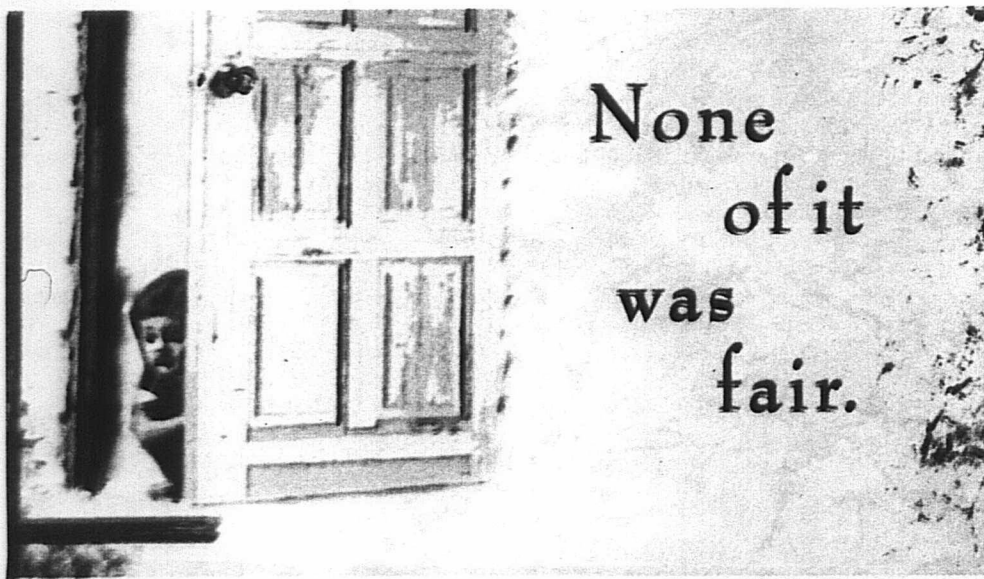
artist: MADISON OF THE WEEK: MURPHY

Notes from the artist:

"Artist" seems like such a strange title – I kind of feel like it should be reserved for the more established workers of paper, paint and clay who have mastered the medium through which they communicate. I've played with digital media for while though it's only been recently that I've begun to learn what possibilities and challenges exist there. I feel like the kid standing at the line between the shallow and deep end of the pool; there's a whole lot deeper to go. I've come to understand my "art" as a form of communication: a chance to convey emotions, sensations, words, mental images or thoughts that I couldn't express in normal conversation. I love creating something so I can share it with other people. It's a great experience.

"Autumn Breeze" was a project I created in Photoshop. It was inspired by the feeling and sound as the wind blew through the trees on campus last fall. The girl in the picture is immersed in the feeling of the wind, as I was. "Blind Justice" was a project I created using both Photoshop and After Effects, inspired by some of the themes in my own life. It was more of a challenge to complete, requiring not only visual elements, but also corresponding sound, movement, and narrative—but the result was rewarding, since the meaning was much clearer when the media worked together as a whole.

Madison is a sophomore Communication major with a minor in Writing.



Blind Justice, After Effects project

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND WHO MAKES OUTSTANDING ARTWORK? Do you think they should be featured in an issue of the STAR?

Nominate artists you know for the Houghton STAR Artist of the Week!

E-mail nominations to
STAR@houghton.edu

Congratulations to last week's winner, Seth Zielinski!

SUDOKU answers

9	1	3	2	4	6	5	7	8
6	5	2	7	3	8	9	1	4
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5	8	9	2	6	7	1	4	3
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Autumn Breeze, digital image

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SUDOKU

Submit your completed puzzles at the Star office for the chance to win a Sudoku book!

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