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Trio of Honors Weekends Ends Successfully

EMMA CARPENTER

This spring, Houghton hosted three honors weekends, inviting academically-gifted prospective students to interview for the college's honors programs, while also giving those students and their families the opportunity to experience life at Houghton first-hand. Each weekend ran from Friday morning through early Saturday afternoon, with a rigorous schedule of interviews, discussions, panels, and information sessions.

"The overall goal of our honors interview weekends is to help prospective students discern if Houghton is the right school for them, as well as to help Houghton decide who should be admitted to our Honors tracks," said Betsy Rutledge, assistant director of admissions events and office operations.

Rutledge and others in Houghton's visit office are responsible for organizing the logistics of the weekends and



PHOTO COURTESY OF PROFESSOR JAMIE POTTER

Prospective Science Honors students test remote controlled submarines as part of the interview process last weekend.

making sure that everything runs smoothly. This extends beyond just lining up classrooms for discussions and scheduling interviews. "We want students to get the whole picture of a

Houghton education," said Rutledge. "So we try to emphasize and help them experience not just academics, but also Houghton's spiritual climate and student community."

Houghton has three honors programs for incoming first year students: Science Honors, East Meets West, and London

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HELP Day Phased Out by Surveys

MICAH CRONIN

Houghton College Evaluation and Life Planning (HELP) Day will not take place this semester. In lieu of classes, HELP Day provided extra space and time for students to fill out surveys evaluating Houghton College and meet with their advisors prior to course selection week. According to Vocational Opportunities and Career Advising (VOCA) Director Kim Pool, Houghton has decided to forego HELP Day this year, as the recent conversion to more convenient electronic surveys has made the loss of a full day of classes unnecessary. "VOCA continues to provide life planning services," Pool stated,

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Intramural Sports Increase in Numbers

CARINA MARTIN

Winter may have brought bitter winds and piled the hiking trails with snow, but Houghton students are finding other ways to stay active during the colder months. Some of the most popular on-campus options are intramural sports leagues, most of which are currently underway for the spring season.

Houghton students can choose from a wide variety of intramural sports and activities, both indoors and outdoors. The fall semester typically offers men's and women's indoor soccer and volleyball, flag football, and co-ed kickball. During the spring, students can participate in a different slate of activities: volleyball, slow pitch softball, and inner tube water polo (all co-ed) as well as men's and women's basketball and outdoor soccer.

Intramural sports are a long-standing Houghton tradi-

tion which, according to men's head soccer coach Matthew Webb, is only growing stronger. Volleyball is usually the most popular intramural, though newer offerings like kickball and water polo have also drawn a large number of participants. On the whole, involvement in intramural sports has seen a steady increase over the past few years, with the number of students involved growing from 824 in 2011 to 1,105 last year.

A variety of other activities, such as skiing, rock climbing, and Zumba, while not officially considered intramural sports, are still available to students through the year. Other non-league intramural events have proven popular through the years, from the 3v3 basketball tournament and whiffle ball tournaments to castleball and the ever-popular Soup Run.

Many of these events help to bring Houghton students together with other members of the

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Reaching Refugees in Buffalo: JET

SOPHIA ROSS

Several Saturday mornings a month students head out to Buffalo, where in groups of two to four, they will tutor refugee families in the English language. The circle of students can be found praying next to the campus center stairs.

These students are working through Journey's End, a Christian refugee service. Journey's End Tutoring, or "JET," has been a part of Houghton life since 2004, when a class of linguistics students tutored refugees in Buffalo as part of their coursework. The next semester they requested to continue the program on their own initiative. "It started out and grew quickly," said intercultural studies professor Marcus Dean. "It's been fairly consistent since then."

JET has remained student-led, with leadership teams ar-



COURTESY OF ALANA PARIS

Journey's End Tutoring (JET) has been a part of Houghton since 2004, and gives students the opportunity to travel to Buffalo and tutor refugee families in the English language.

ranging the numerous details necessary for Saturday morning trips to Buffalo. The current president Melanie Eldred '17, who, now participating in her fifth semester of JET, was drawn to the program before she began attending Houghton. "I've always been interested in different cultures and teach-

ing," she said, remembering her discovery of JET while visiting Houghton. "It's part of the reason I decided to come here." Also on the leadership board are Alanna Paris '18, Kylie Gibbs '18, and Melissa

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Intergalactic // Gravitational Waves Detected



ANTHONY BURDO

THOMAS ECKERT

On Thursday, February 11, scientists from the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) announced they had made the first measurements of fluctuations in spacetime caused by gravitational waves – a monumental leap forward in modern physics. This discovery lends significant experimental evidence to Albert Einstein’s

theory of general relativity and opens up doors to new techniques of listening to massive gravitational events in deep space. Einstein proposed gravitational waves as part of his theory of general relativity in 1915. They were such an exotic part of nature that even he was unsure they could exist. There are many unsolved mysteries in our current theory of gravity and general relativity was an attempt to explain why gravity exists and what causes it. We exist in the four-dimensions of spacetime. Travel through the three-dimensions of space affects the speed with which we travel through time. To picture Einstein’s theory of general relativity, imagine those four dimensions as compressed into a tightly-stretched sheet of elastic. Any mass bends the spacetime around it. Place a bowling ball on the sheet and it stretches, sagging as it conforms to the weight. Roll a baseball in a straight line near the bowling ball on the elastic and it will begin to roll down towards the bowling ball, orbiting the more massive object. Although this metaphor is

imperfect, it illustrates the overall idea of general relativity: gravity is caused by the warping of spacetime around mass. If this is the case, we should observe effects of this in the universe. Many of these effects have been measured, such as the ability of gravity to bend light. One of the heretofore unobserved phenomena of general relativity was gravitational waves. If we think back to the elastic metaphor and imagine two massive objects orbiting each other, we would observe ripples in the material emanating from this event at a steadily increasing rate. These are akin to the gravitational waves observed by LIGO. These waves stretch space in one direction and compress space perpendicular to this stretching. If you had incredibly sharp vision and two rulers in an “L” shape, you might think that you could observe one ruler getting longer and the other getting shorter as a gravitational wave passes through the area, but because it is space itself that fluctuates, you couldn’t observe the change using anything that has mass. LIGO works on a similar principle to the hypothetical

ruler experiment. However, instead of measuring distance with mass, light is used as a unit of measurement. An observatory contains two 4 kilometer tunnels kept at vacuum and arranged in the same “L” shape as the rulers. A single laser beam is split at 90 degrees to travel down both tunnels and reflect off a mirror. The wavelengths of the beams are then measured independently. If the length of either tunnel is altered by a distance 1/10000 of the diameter of a proton, the wavelength of the laser beam traveling down that tunnel will be altered enough to detect the change when compared to the beam traveling down the other tunnel. This is a common physics technique called laser interferometry, applied on an exceptionally large scale. There are two such LIGO sites in the United States, one in Louisiana and another in Washington State. You would know you had measured a gravitational wave if one of the tunnels got longer and the other got shorter as a wave passed through the detection system. In September of 2015, both sites received the same signal, a fluctuation in

spacetime equal to 4/1000 of the diameter of a proton. This almost imperceptible change matches to the predicted signal of two black holes orbiting each other faster and faster until they collapsed into a single black hole 65 times the mass of the Sun. This spectacular event in deep space sent out ripples in spacetime that are being observed now, over a billion years after it occurred. This is a monumental step forward in physics. It is incredible evidence for Einstein’s theory of general relativity. It opens up questions about binary black hole systems. How do they occur in the first place? It advances our knowledge about the least understood fundamental force – gravity. On top of this, it is a meaningful achievement that marks what humanity can achieve through cooperation and hard work. This is a milestone in science that will inspire many graduate theses in the decades to come.★ Thomas is a senior majoring in physics with a minor in mathematics.

SGA Update: Seventeenth Executive Council

HOLLY CHAISSON

On Monday February 15 the Student Government Association (SGA) held their seventeenth Executive Council Meeting of the year. As a special order of business, Vocational Opportunity and Career Advis-

ing (VOCA) director Kim Pool and VOCA counselor Andrew Silbert gave a presentation detailing VOCA’s emerging concept called the Focus Program. The program would be oriented to prepare students for life after Houghton, similar to the way the Transitions class prepares incoming students. Details

of the possible program included a pair of classes that would focus on topics such as professional development, preparation for job interviews, and how to articulate to employers the benefits of a liberal arts degree; as well as a possible online platform for students to keep track of academic and extracurricular

activities for resumé building. Also discussed was the possibility of a leadership conference that would take place as a weekend retreat. Additionally, students may not be aware, but the SGA devotes time during each meeting to the open public forum. According to Friesen, “[The forum is] a

time for anyone with a concern or question to have a voice and make SGA aware of their concern. It’s built into our meetings intentionally: SGA is here to serve and represent the student body. I’d like to see the forum be used more often: it makes the meetings dynamic and student-oriented.”★

Baseball and Softball Seasons Begin

ALICIA NEEDHAM

The baseball and softball seasons are in full swing with teams having daily practices to prepare for their first games of the season. Next week, both of the teams will be traveling to Florida where their seasons will officially begin. Baseball captain Michael Knapp ‘15 said, “I am most excited about getting the year started off in Florida against some good competition. We have a lot of potential this year and [it’s] always good seeing how you match up against good teams.” On February 22, the baseball team will play Concordia College (Moorhead) in Winter Haven, Florida and the softball team will play Johnson State College on February 23 in Clermont, Florida. According to head coach of women’s softball, Brianna Allen, softball has an unusually

young team this year. Allen said, “I am really excited about how young our team is, we have six freshmen that will all be instant contributors to the program and great additions to our upperclassmen.” There are only four returning players, two seniors and two juniors. In addition to the change in their roster, the team has a new head coach this season, Allen who was the assistant coach under Nora Duffy last season, has now stepped into the role of head coach. “I have seen a lot of heart and a strong desire to win out of this group,” said Allen. “These girls are really embracing what it means to be a Highlander on and off the field and they are creating a solid team culture that I hope we can strengthen and grow for many seasons to come.” This season, Allen wants her team to develop a high level of mental tenacity so they can hold their heads high in the face of challenges. Captain Jessica Hayner ‘15 added, “Ev-

ery time we come together we want to embody grace, positivity, and courage.” The baseball team is also starting the season with a young team. This season, they have twelve new players comprised of first year and transfer students. “We lost a lot of pitchers last year and some guys who played a big part as leaders on the team,” said Knapp. “It will be a challenge but I think some of the younger guys and a few transfers will step up and fill those roles.” The team has also acquired a new addition to their coaching staff. Chad Muise ‘15, has made the transition from former player to pitching coach. “Looking at the game as a coach compared to a player is a whole different feeling,” said Muise. “I am extremely blessed to be able to get a start to my collegiate coaching career under Coach Reitnour, and watch how every action conducted is so thought-

ful and meticulously planned out.” Concerning their goals for the season, the team wants to be the hardest working in the country, make the National Christian College Association (NCCAA) playoffs, end the year in the top of the Empire 8 conference, and to improve and grow together as a whole.” Both the baseball and softball teams host several clinics in the spring. This past weekend the baseball team hosted two winter clinics, the first of which was focused on providing an opportunity for little league players to learn more advanced techniques, such as hitting and pitching. The second clinic was geared toward more advanced varsity, junior varsity, and modified-level players and covered techniques including hitting, catching, pitching, and fielding. According to Reitnour, the goal of these clinics is to spread the love of this great game by offering high quality instruction

in some of the best facilities in the northeast at an affordable price.” Next month on March 12 the softball team will host a clinic featuring Jennie Finch, an Olympic softball gold medalist pitcher. The clinic will be aimed toward girls ages 8-18 and will be offered at the Kerr-Pegula Field House. Finch, along with Houghton coaches, will run drills that focus on pitching, hitting, and defensive skills in addition to instruction on strength and conditioning training. Finch no longer plays professionally, but is an avid member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) Softball and is very involved in the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team. “Being able to attract guests of Jennie’s caliber will be huge for Houghton softball and athletics, giving us a great opportunity to show off our own coaches, athletes and facilities,” Allen said.★

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which include assistance with major selection along with job and internship searching. Several well-attended workshops from last year’s HELP Day will be available this semester, including a networking and LinkedIn workshop on March 3, an etiquette luncheon on April 6, and “Budgeting 101” on April 12.

There have been mixed reactions on campus since

HELP Day was cancelled. Krista Maroni, Resident Director of Lambien Hall, as well as the leader of the upcoming budgeting workshop, stated, “I liked the idea of HELP day because so many students tell me they wish Houghton taught practical information.” However, Maroni noted a disconnect between the voices calling for more practical education and attendance at daylong workshop events like HELP Day. “It seems wise to incorporate more opportunities for life-after-college education

throughout the year without a day off as students sort of check out when they don’t have normal classes,” she said.

Lauren Bechtel ‘15 disagreed. “I think VOCA will be overwhelmed [by graduating seniors] by the end of the semester,” she said, citing HELP Day’s tertiary function of setting aside a specific day for seniors to finalize graduation day details. “I think students are very interested in [financial and life] planning, and now we will have to find time out of our own

schedules to access those resources. As a very busy senior, having HELP Day to focus on these important issues would have been very helpful.”

Despite Bechtel’s insistence on HELP Day’s relevance, such does not seem to be the case for all students. “Obviously I love a day off,” said Jiwan Dhaliwal ’17, “but I never went to any of the HELP Day sessions anyway, so I guess all I’m losing is a day of sleep. I would ask VOCA to bring it back for a spontaneous holiday,

but that’s probably the reason it got cancelled.”

For Pool, the absence of HELP Day is no excuse for students to slack off on increasing their employment potential. The VOCA Director continuously advises students to continue to be mindful about after college and summer planning. “Students are strongly encouraged to make an appointment with a VOCA counselor,” she stated, whose services are available to students through the academic year.★

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Schaefer ‘18. Responsibilities are shared evenly among the leaders, with Dean acting as the new advisor.

As the advisor, Dean noted, “The pretty important dynamic of student interest and involvement.” The student leaders expressed a passion for what they do, and each semester has shown a significant number of student volunteers. Dean contrasted the involve-

ment of Houghton students with Journey’s End’s attempt to engage students in Buffalo. “They can’t get them to get up and go on Saturday mornings,” he said. JET students nonetheless expressed their willingness to get up on a Saturday morning, “Helping refugees learn English and learn about American culture, and through our actions showing our light for Christ,” Eldred said. Although Journey’s End tutors cannot directly speak about Christianity unless asked, Dean noted the importance of JET as a Christian service. He said, “In today’s climate, with the negative attitudes toward

immigrants and refugees, it’s a statement that our Christian love reaches out to people to serve them.”

A typical JET day can have any number of complications that come with working with refugees. Eldred noted that, at times, “the language barrier is a struggle,” and it can be difficult to keep up with families who move or whose phone lines are disconnected. Yet she said, “Through all of those things, it’s nice that God still works through JET.” Eldred noted several moments and experiences that leave a lasting impression, from the first time “when a kid

understands something,” to the relationships that come from meeting with a family consistently.

Paris also described impactful experiences, and noted her involvement with a family from the Congo. “One kid, Joseph, was real nervous,” she remembered. “But one day he came and sat on my lap and started coloring with me.” With that, everyone became comfortable, “because if Joseph was comfortable, everyone got comfortable.”

Although teaching English to refugees is an experience that naturally lends itself to intercultural,

education, and TESOL students, Dean and the JET leaders urge students of all majors to participate. It is a significant opportunity for Christian service. “This is your backyard, Western New York Buffalo,” Paris said. “If you feel stuck in America, you can do something incredible just on West Side.” As Dean noted, it develops important skills for anyone, “It’s a good opportunity to begin to think, how can I reach out to people who are different than me?” Students can learn “to see people from other cultures as people, not as people from other cultures.”★

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Houghton community. It can sometimes be difficult to make meaningful connections outside the college, and students shared that intramural events have provided a fun way for them to cultivate friendships with community members. It’s also a great way to build camaraderie with other Houghton students. “Interacting with members of different teams is another aspect of participating

in intramural that is also quite fun,” said Aichia Kuwong ‘16, who has participated in intramural soccer, basketball, and kickball.

With students’ busy schedules intramural sports can sometimes seem like a hefty time commitment, especially those that meet late on weekday evenings. Students shared that it can be difficult to make time for more demanding intramurals, especially when also juggling other commitments like evening classes, extracurricular events, and homework.

According to the National

Intramural Sports Association, intramural sports provide an effective way for students to cultivate healthy exercise habits along with lifetime leadership skills such as “the ability to think strategically and a penchant to act collaboratively.” Webb agreed, pointing out that “staying active allows for better overalls health,” while being part of a team “allows for a competitive environment and shared experiences amongst friends.”

Intramural sports provide an accessible way to enjoy physical activity without the pressure

of competition. Kuwong was quick to praise the program’s unique atmosphere, “It is always fun getting the chance to play sports that I like in a less competitive setting.”

Many athletes appreciate the welcome contrast that intramurals provide to the more competitive environment of intercollegiate sports. “Our varsity sports teams expect us to train consistently in the off-season for the sake of ourselves and the team. Intramurals are for literally anybody to take a swing at and be active a couple nights a week,” shared Justine Phillips

‘18, a member of the Houghton softball team who has also participated in intramural soccer. “The two experiences are 110% different.”

Based on the current success of intramurals at Houghton, the Athletics Department looks forward to growing the program in the future. Webb believes that intramural sports will continue to thrive in years to come. “There is a lot of history and tradition in intramurals,” he said. “It is a great way to get connected, stay connected, and maintain relationships. And it provides for a great study break.”★

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Honors. “Students are divided among those interviewing for Science Honors and those interviewing for the two humanities programs (East Meets West and London Honors),” said Professor Peter Meilaender, interim director of honors. Science students and liberal arts students have separate schedules for Friday, both of which include interviews and interactive experiences designed to give students a taste of what the programs will be like.

“Science students have

departmental information sessions; humanities students attend an East Meets West class,” said Meilaender. “Science students do a problem-solving team exercise; humanities students participate in a simulated class discussion on an assigned reading.”

Ryan Spear, Director of Admissions, said the honors weekends help the college make decisions on scholarships and admission to the honors programs, but also provide the opportunity for students to get to know Houghton and to interact with other prospective honors students.

Rutledge agreed, describing

prospective students’ exposure to Houghton as a critical part of the honors weekends. She said, “We want students to be able to envision themselves as Houghton students and ask themselves, ‘Can I see myself spending the next four years here?’”

Spear said the intensive nature of the honors weekends is intended to communicate to students that Houghton’s honors programs are more than just “a collection of a few ‘harder’ classes dubbed ‘honors.’” According to Spear, many students who interview for Houghton’s honors programs excelled in high school and are used to performing well academically. He

said, “Our goal is help these students see that Honors at Houghton isn’t simply about slapping a ‘feel-good’ label on their existing accomplishments in order to entice them to enroll,” but is instead “a rigorous experience that is intended to further develop their God-given potential.”

According to Rutledge, the most recent honors weekend (which ran February 12 and 13) had 64 students, the most of any interview weekend to date. Spear estimated a total of about 120 students for the three weekends combined, which he said is on par with previous years.

Both Rutledge and Spear emphasized the preparation

for the honors weekends as a personalized process designed to connect with students on an individual level, and not just as throngs of intelligent young minds.

“We work really hard to make the Honors weekend a personal experience,” said Rutledge. “Because we strongly believe that the Houghton experience is a personal one.” She added, “We want to welcome as many of these students into our Christian academic community as possible, and we want students and families to come away from the weekend feeling that we got to know them as individuals.”★

Sports: Scores and Standings

Men’s Basketball, 2/13/16
Houghton v. St. John Fisher College L, 89-95
Houghton College Shooting %: 49.3
St. John Fisher College Shooting %: 54.4
Men’s Basketball is currently 7th in the Empire 8 conference

Women’s Basketball, 2/13/16
Houghton v. St John Fisher College L, 44-77
Houghton College Shooting %: 21.7
St. John Fisher College Shooting %: 43.8
Women’s Basketball is currently 8th in the Empire 8 conference

Touchdown For Data Science Students

TESS TAGGART

During Super Bowl 50, several Houghton College students had a very unique view. In fact, we were told we could go anywhere we wanted with just a flash of our credentials. During Super Bowl 50, we were at Levi's Stadium.

Last October, we were selected to intern and collect data for economic impact research for Golfweek Amateur Tour. This was because of a connection with Houghton College alumnus Dexter Davis. Davis is a Professor of Sport Management at the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM). Houghton reached out to him because of a local newspaper article about all of his exciting sports management endeavors. For instance, he has been to 11 Super Bowls. During Golfweek, Dr. Davis got to know us and after connected with us again to present the opportunity to go to the Super Bowl. It was a long process of getting credentials and approval to work for NFL On Location, but he had been through it many times and was a great help.

Overall, our group of students wanted to find new ways to approach sports business and analytics by gaining insight on how this particular sport-



COURTESY OF TESS TAGGART

The view of the Super Bowl 50 from the sidelines, a view that Houghton data science students had the opportunity to enjoy.

ing event was run. Our day in the stadium was not focused on actual analytics, rather the problems we could solve through use of data science.

Isaac Hess '16 commented on the opportunity, "Words cannot describe how valuable this experience was to me in addition to combining two huge passions of mine, sports and business." Houghton and UTM students were personal assistants to Hall of Fame players, including Rod Woodson, Dermontti Dawson,

Warren Moon, and Shannon Sharpe to name just a few.

During the time we were not assisting our players, we got to see hands-on what it takes to run the largest sporting event in America. Every detail was thought out, and every problem was solved along the way with the help of a great network of managers and volunteers. If you were a fan, you wouldn't sense even a hiccup in organization. Everything was seemingly effortless and extremely exciting.

After the dream of game day ended, we were able to begin asking questions. What types of issues at the Super Bowl or other sporting events could we help to solve through use of data science and sports management?

Hopefully through this experience, we will be able to form data based, quantifiable questions in the future to supplement the sports industry. With our connections to Golfweek Amateur Tour and future connections being made with more

local sports organizations, we can find a place to apply these ideas.

On top of this, our group all made connections with UTM students and faculty. Bjorn Webb '18 reflected, "The relationships that I developed while staying and working with students from UTM will be relationships I am able to take with me into the workforce." This was an extremely valuable experience for both schools.

During the rest of the week in San Francisco, we had the opportunity to visit Tableau, a software development and data visualization company, and Cisco, a Silicon Valley technology company. We were able to discuss the analytics of college football data during our time trying out Vizable, a new app developed by Tableau to make data visualization simpler for the general public. Ashley Schenk '16 noted, "It was an incredible glimpse into such an exciting and innovative company."

Over all, the week felt like a dream for the students that traveled to California. Thanks to the work of Garfield Fisher and his wife Carmen McKell, the founders of Houghton Center for Data Science Analytics (CDSA), we had an incredible trip. The connections the students made and the friendships that were built were priceless. ★

Film Review: *The Revenant*

AVA BERGEN

"As long as you can grab a breath, you fight." These opening words whispered by an unkempt Leonardo DiCaprio set the tone for *The Revenant*, a visually assaulting cinematic masterpiece that explores the sheer brutality of the human condition.

Directed by acclaimed filmmaker Alejandro González

Iñárritu (*Birdman*, *Amores Perros*, *Babel*), *The Revenant* follows the grueling story of Hugh Glass (DiCaprio), a fur-trapper in the untamed 19th century American Midwest. Early into the film Glass gets mauled by a bear in what might be the most viscerally affecting scene of the entire movie (this is saying a lot, as we also witness DiCaprio devour raw bison liver, crawl inside of a horse carcass for warmth, and descend down an icy waterfall). His throat and back are violently

ripped open by bear claws, and we hear DiCaprio's expertly agonized cries, the sound of bones crunching. Glass somehow manages to kill the bear, but his half-Pawnee son Hawk (Forrest Goodluck) and companions find him in grim condition. There's nothing like seeing someone's throat get ripped out to remind you that your own day isn't going so badly.

It's no accident that despite the violence that saturates the film, the setting and cinema-

tography are devastatingly gorgeous. Shot entirely with natural light, the beautiful scenes of nature form an interesting contrast to Glass's suffering, perhaps as a testament of nature's callous unconcern.

After the attack, Glass's companions and son valiantly attempt to carry him back on a makeshift stretcher, but the journey is too far and the weather becomes dangerously cold. Companions John Fitzgerald (Tom Hardy) and Jim Bridger (Will Poulter) are nominated to stay behind with Glass, if only to give him a proper Christian burial. It's the decent thing to do.

Glass is in terrible shape, but it's clear he's still fiercely fighting for his life. Unfortunately Fitzgerald doesn't seem to care about this. When he sees Glass's wounds he dismisses him as "already dead" and believes waiting behind is a dangerous waste of time. After all, his fur-trapping companions are getting further and further away while he is stranded in the wilderness. This is not to defend Fitzgerald; his motivations are mercenary and he remains the scummiest of scumbags. Fitzgerald dupes Bridger into leaving the still-breathing Glass behind, but not before throwing him into a fresh-

ly dug grave. What makes this scene so frustratingly poignant is Glass's utter helplessness when confronted with betrayal. He cannot speak or move, only stare in rage at his betrayer. The range of emotion DiCaprio is able to convey with grunts is astonishing; if this performance doesn't finally win him an Oscar, I'll eat raw bison liver.

The Revenant is a story of raw endurance. Driven forward by a thirst to revenge himself against Fitzgerald, Glass crawls up from the grave and begins his long journey of both survival and vengeance. We see the desperate lengths he goes to survive, and we are disgusted and impressed. The movie serves as a reminder of our own mortality: as we watch Glass gut a dead horse in order to crawl inside its warm body we may shudder, but we also understand.

When Glass finally succeeds in revenging himself on Fitzgerald, it feels perfectly unsatisfying. Glass's sole motivation for survival is over; Fitzgerald's death fades and falls in line with the rest of the carnage in this film. If Glass's success feels anticlimactic, perhaps that is the point. ★



COURTESY OF FOXMOVIES.COM

DiCaprio has been nominated for an Oscar for his performance in *The Revenant*.

Agape: Awakening Sacrificial Love in the Everyday

KRISTIN MCKANE

This past weekend, a group of Houghton students joined ten other universities at the annual Calvin College Faith and International Development conference. Agape, a word of Greek origin and the focus of the conference, signifies the highest form of love. Simply defined, agape describes the love of God and from God, whose nature is love itself (1 John 4:8).

Faustine Wabwire of Bread for the World, one of the first plenary speakers, challenged attendees: “The world is wounded, and so many of God’s children are hurting in profound ways. They experience fear and hunger as they attempt to swim across the cold ocean waters to escape conflict in Syria. Something is wrong. Have we moved away from agape? Is there room for it in our lives today?”

In supplement, Peter Greer, President and CEO of Hope International, shared that agape is not part of human nature, as sacrificially loving people is inherently dangerous.. However, both Scripture and Jesus’ life challenge Christians to follow their Savior in fearless agape: a dangerous, costly, selfless love. Greer, with transparency, acknowledged the human inner conflict, “agape is how I want to live, if even though sometimes all I want to do is run away with

a gallon of mint chocolate chip ice cream and a Netflix subscription.”

Sara Steffenhagen ‘16 further explained that weaving agape strengthens the sometimes tattered fabric of development work, “selflessness is necessary, because development is about long-term relationships and the understanding that you may never see any of your hard work, or deep love, come to fruition.”

Students discussed how to integrate agape love into attitudes toward mass incarceration, immigration, hunger and malnutrition, restorative justice, and agricultural practices with a diverse set of organizations. Additionally, students viewed Reparando, which documents Tita Evertsz and Erwin “Shorty” Luna’s efforts to restore and revitalize the Guatemalan city of La Limonada, and a performance of Seven, a documentary play based on the lives of women’s rights activists spread across the globe.

“Seven was powerful because it modified a depressing posture of, ‘this is how women are treated, let’s go do something about it’ to, ‘this is how women are treated and this is what they are doing about it,’ which was sobering,” said Bethany Rudolph ‘17.

Nearly every Houghton attendee participated in an exercise with a Bread for the World staff member who affirmed students’ roles in representative democracy by presenting a script for calling respective state senators and urging a “yes” vote on the Global Food Security Act.

Senator and representative offices track calls received in



COURTESY OF CHANDLER JONES

Houghton Students attended the Calvin College Faith and International Development conference this past weekend. Agape, signifying the highest form of love, was this year’s focus.

support of particular legislation. Senators will likely side with constituents if ambivalent towards a decision.

“Calling my senators was much easier than I expected and also super impactful for taking just under one minute. I’m definitely going to do it again,” said Sarah McCloy ‘16.

Jason Fileta, Director of Micah Challenge, explained a similar experience during his lecture at the Faith and Justice Symposium last fall. While a student at Calvin College, Fileta became exhausted with inaction despite continuous learning about injustice.

A frustrated Fileta and a handful of Calvin students contacted senate and representative offices weekly. Per-

sistency proved successful; by the end of the semester, the congressman requested to meet with students for further discussion regarding the issue advocated for.

Houghton’s Sustainability Coordinator, Brian Webb, bridged both Fileta’s and Bread for the World’s templates for advocacy by proposing implementation of the ‘Do Something Table’ at Houghton. The table would allow students to write letters to or call senators regarding social justice issues. Webb asserts, “it’s just a practical way students can live out faith that can influence the country in bigger ways than they can imagine.” During conference debriefs, students showed enthusiasm for and supported

Webb’s proposal.

The conference, its speakers, and activities, reminded students that whether domestically or abroad, Christ followers are called to relentless advocacy, pursuit of justice, and agape love as modeled by Jesus. Its challenges hold weight, for if advocacy and justice pursuits lacks agape, the Christian story may be seen as inauthentic, and a form of politically expedient, engineered propaganda.★



Photo
of the
Week

LANDON
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Don't Judge a Politician by Da Cover



ANTHONY BURDO

JACKSON WHEELER

We are often reminded that inequality persists in today's society, yet, it's humbling to stop for a moment and notice just how far we've come. Just look at the bipartisan contenders for the 2016 election. At one point, the candidates included one black man, two women, two men of Latin American descent, a Jew, and, of course, an orange monster masquerading as a billionaire. In a race that is typically composed exclusively of white men, the diversity of this year's candidates is refreshing and exciting, whether or not you agree with the minutiae of their politics.

However, the ambition

of the various Presidential hopefuls aside, there is an ominous revelation lurking beneath the surface of today's American politics, a bias that lies not with the candidates, but with the electorate- the voters.

A recent Gallup poll asked a number of Republicans and Democrats how tolerant they would be of a presidential candidate occupying a certain gender, race, sexuality, religion, or ideology. Responses ranged from the relatively unsurprising to the particularly disconcerting.

For candidates who are Catholic, female, black, Hispanic, or Jewish, over 90% of participants said they would not have a problem voting for them. Mormons and homosexual candidates polled lower with 81% and 74% levels of tolerance. Evangelical Christians, perhaps surprisingly, ranked even lower: only 73% favorably with 25% of voters saying they would not elect someone of that background. The candidates with the lowest degree of tolerance among voters were Muslims, atheists, and, unfortunately for Sanders fans, socialists; the latter being favorable to only 47%.

“Politicians ought to be judged by two things: their ideas and their policies.”

Now a socialist is certainly unique among the other listed characteristics, a lone wolf in the sense that some may have justifiable qualms about the political and economic implications of such a candidate's beliefs. There's nothing wrong with disagreement, provided, of course, that one's opposition to such a candidate depends on the knowledge of what a socialist affiliation actually entails. For instance, nearly every other Western European nation has a pronounced Socialist Party and has for decades. And here, even in anti-Communist America, we currently enjoy the benefit of several programs that are socialist in nature. Social Security and Medicare are two of such services, fueled by the taxes of wage-earners, which in-turn support elderly pensioners. It's not right or wrong as an ideology. It's simply less scary in the presence of sufficient context.

Moreover, a disagreement with socialism can be justified on matter of principle but that still leaves the question of why many voters are hesitant to elect Muslims or atheists, or even evangelical Christians and Mormons, for that matter. Thomas Jefferson coined a phrase during the writing of the U.S. Constitution which appeared later in Supreme Court decisions: it said that there should be a “Separation of church and state”, ensuring that Congress would “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,”. The core idea is that because we live in a multicultural nation, it is unjust for a politician of any religious background to impose their values on a national community that does not universally accept or agree with them.

As a result, Christian politicians should not be able to enact legislation that

explicitly favors Christians or forces non-Christians to adhere to their beliefs in the same way that a Muslim politician would be prohibited from doing the same thing. Likewise, an embittered atheist would be unable to enact legislation prohibiting the exercise of religion. No Muslim President would be able to pull a fast one and impose Sharia law, just as no Mormon would be able to legalize polygamy (not that it would be a legitimate concern) as doing so would violate the separation between church and state, not to mention that either law would be shot down by Congress immediately.

In conclusion, a Presidential candidate's superficial differences should not be enough to dissuade a voter from supporting them. It shouldn't matter what a person's ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious faith is. Politicians ought to be judged by two things: their ideas and their policies- not by where they are on a Sunday morning or by what they have between their legs.

★

“It is unjust for a politician of any religious background to impose their values on a national community that does not universally accept or agree with them.”

Jackson is a junior political science major with minors in Spanish and business administration.

The Church and ‘The Good Testimony’



ANTHONY BURDO

ALANNA PARIS

When I was 18 I got baptized. It was the right thing to do after growing up in a Christian household and going to church my entire life. I was the first one to be baptized in the group that had made the decision with me. Uniquely, I was the only member of the group who was born into a Christian household and therefore the only one to become a

Christian as a child. I didn't have a flashy story or years of sin and turmoil to mull over, my story was short and to the point. Now, you are probably wondering why I am telling you this; what does this have to do with anything?

The problem with my baptism is that it was handled insincerely. Instead of a way to profess my faith publicly and to outwardly declare myself a child a God, it became a warm-up for something better. There were about five baptized that day, and each salvation story was more intense. The finale involved a couple on the brink of divorce who testified that after they found our church, God wiped all their problems away. This testimony is not a way to show people Christ's love or of His faithfulness to those still struggling or still hurting. Instead, it was a way to sell a brand and to reel people in. That's a problem.

“Lead them to Christ without indoctrinating them into their particular brand of Christianity or ministry needs.”

Many churches make this mistake. A big event such as a baptism or a special holiday service brings visitors. Therefore, the church displays testimonies that say ‘look at not only what God did for me, but also make sure you see how good this church is and they can fix all of your problems too.’ This atmosphere creates an awful situation where people's real struggles, heartache, and lowest moments are used as selling points to get numbers in a church.

In contrast with this insincerity, why not show a consistent Christian whose

life is a testament to years of following God and His mercies? Or better yet, why not humanize the Christians who seem to have it together by showing their vulnerabilities? Why is it always the ones the world would deem ‘messed up’? Until you give yourself to Christ, you're ‘messed up’ too. Why is it we dwell on someone's past when God has made them a new creation?

We remember Abraham and Paul for their Christian acts more than their past lives. I do not mind if someone, in an act of humbleness, wants to share their story because they want others to know of Christ; this is something Paul did often.

I encourage people to stop exploiting past sin as ways to get numbers. I encourage the Church to invest in everyone; both the drug addict that doesn't know Christ and the

clean-cut community leader that doesn't know Christ. I discourage the Church from using human struggles and common societal ills being ‘cured’ as attendance boosters and encourage them instead try showing God's love and mercy by interacting with those struggling outside of the safety of church walls. Invite those struggling to church, but do not give up if they never come. Lead them to Christ without indoctrinating them into their particular brand of Christianity or ministry needs.

Teach people to be disciples of Christ, whether they think like you or not; to really care about the problems in the world, that is what Christ calls us to do. Let's stop making Christianity a show and start making it lifestyle.★

Alanna is a sophomore Spanish and intercultural studies major with a minor in linguistics.

“Why not humanize the Christians who seem to have it together by showing their vulnerabilities?”

Syrians Are Not the Only Refugees



ANTHONY BURDO

RAISA DIBBLE

While I stand in a circle with other students at Dean Jordan’s daily communion, we launch into the portion that is titled, Prayers for Others. During this time, anyone can say a name or a situation that is on their heart, so that the whole group may offer a prayer with them. As we start off, the prayers are individually specific – “for David, for Lindsey, for my parents, etc.,” but soon the person next to me pipes up, “for the Syrian refugees.” No one looks up in confusion: we have all heard much about the plight of these refugees over the past few months, and we respond emphatically in unison, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

The UNHCR (The United Nations Refugee Agency, originally “office of UN High Commissioner for Refugees”) estimates that 1 out of every 4 refugees worldwide is Syrian, the largest source of refugees in 2014; previously it had been

Afghanistan. While it is certainly fortunate that many prayers and resources have been directed to this country’s peoples, I wonder about the other 3 out of every 4 refugees that aren’t Syrian.

Why have the Syrian refugees received explosive media attention in the last year, but many other nationalities are left lagging behind? It troubles me that at Houghton, a place that is internationally-minded, I have never during communion nor morning prayer heard a prayer offered up for these other refugees. I have not heard a chapel prayer that included another specific minority. In the last year, there has been a GCF session to educate us about Syrian refugees, but not about the Rohingya, the Tatars, or the Baloch.

Columbia has over 6 million registered IDPs (Internationally Displaced Persons) in their country, but I don’t know anything about their struggles. Do you remember when South Sudan became a country in 2011? Or when conflict started heating up there again in December of 2013, creating 1.5 million internationally displaced persons that have yet to return home? When did we stop praying collectively for the Sudanese? Or think further back, to the Tibetan protests and subsequent Chinese human rights violations in 2008-2009. Tibet is still a source of refugees, many who go to Nepal

“The Houghton community and general Christian population tends to rely on trending media issues as focal points for sympathy and prayer.”

and India in search of religious and political freedom. There was a time when I often heard prayers for them, but that time has passed, though the people group still faces persecution.

Have you heard of the Rohingya? They were the subject of some news articles last year, one which states, “According to the UN, they are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world.” The Rohingya are a minority from Myanmar/Burma, who are considered “stateless.” Though they live in Myanmar, they are denied citizenship and so have no identification with which to apply for asylum. Due to hostile welcomes from the governments of neighboring countries, last year in May, there were an estimated 8,000 Rohingya stranded at sea (BBC news). Yet, there haven’t been any pancake dinners at Houghton to raise money for relief efforts to the Rohingya, only for the refugees from Syria.

Of course, there are many people suffering persecution in the world and it is natural to focus on the Syrians, because they are the nationality with the

most refugees. However, it is not fair to single them out while neglecting the fate of millions of other refugees around the world.

Similarly, I don’t think it’s fair during a PRAXIS that is focused on reconciliation to only have African-American speakers highlighted. Racism and ethnic prejudice happen to millions of people in so many different countries around the world. Sure, one of the speakers had a story about a Korean student they counseled, but why didn’t we hear directly from any Koreans? Why were only African-American speakers brought in?

The Kurds have been persecuted in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran because of their ethnicity and are in desperate need of reconciliation. In Russia, minority groups like the Romani and Tatars are continually marginalized and have been for years. In Ukraine, tensions between Ukrainians and Russians have led to war. Yet, only one race was represented during PRAXIS week, though there are millions, if not billions, of people suffering from ethnic prejudices and tension.

These two instances lead me to wonder if it is really true that the people praying for Syrians care at all about refugees. If they really cared about refugees, they would not only pray for Syrians, but also for the many other refugees around the world. Indeed, if they even cared about the Syrian refugees, they would have started praying for them when the Syrian civil war broke out 5 years ago. If the campus really cared about global ethnic reconciliation, they wouldn’t just be talking about the plight of minorities in the USA, and they wouldn’t just have ethnically black speakers. However, over the past couple of years or months, these are two issues that have taken a front-row seat in the American media and become topics of heated debate. But if we really cared about refugees and ethnic reconciliation, we would be praying for and hearing from the multitude of diverse stories from around the world that are not always at the forefront of the media.

Sadly, I find that the Houghton community and general Christian population tends to rely on trending media issues as focal points for sympathy and prayer, rather than consciously working towards broader social justice movements. Unfortunately, the multitude of prayers for Tibet that I once heard have been reduced to just a few, and sadly, in a couple of years, this will probably happen with the Syrian conflict too.★

“Why have the Syrian refugees received explosive media attention in the last year, but many other nationalities are left lagging behind?”

Raisa is a junior accounting major.



The mission of the Houghton Star is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have characterized Houghton College since its inception. This will be 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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Artist of the Week



Titles & Media

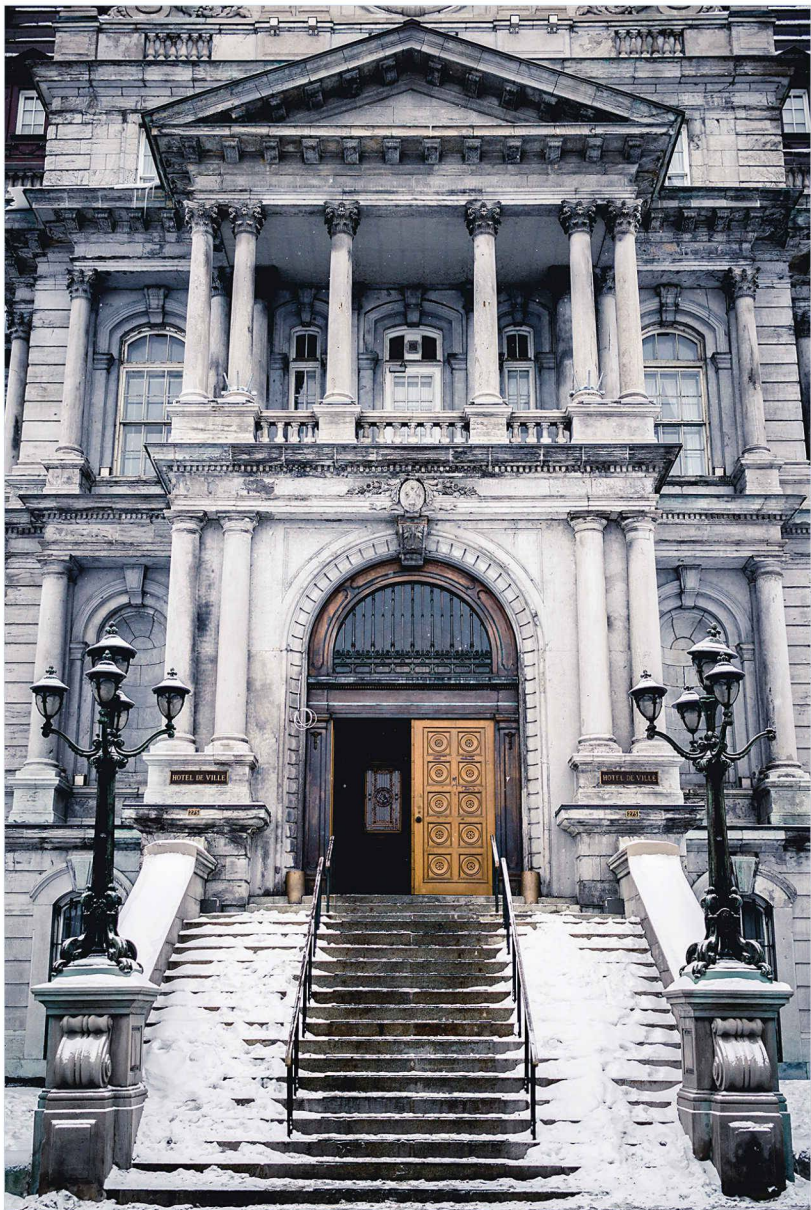
clockwise descending

Self portrait
Hôtel de Ville
Did Not Draw
Day Hikes
Mostar

all works digital photography

Anthony Burdo

// senior biology major with a chemistry minor



“ Photography is not objective, it is deeply subjective...you photograph with all your ideology. ”
-Sebastião Salgado

