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Administration Addresses Outlook

In recent weeks the "Save the Beach" campaign has left an air of astounding student activism and the powerful mark that a proactive community possesses. Amidst the hype surrounding our single minded rally to see Dr. Brad Beach back in the classroom next fall, a collection of other position eliminations and professors who have decided not to return have gone unnoticed.

A whirlwind of change has swept over our campus and the majority of the student community may be unaware of such happenings. Our attention has been fixed mainly upon Dr. Beach and JV athletics but we have come to see that these merely scratch the surface. In an e-mail, Dr. Chamberlain informed the faculty and staff of the positions which were being eliminated and the staff members who will not be returning, whether as a result of the aforementioned or on their own accord effective at the end of this academic year.

Some may feel that these decisions were made hastily and careful consideration would prove them imprudent. Dr. Chamberlain reassured, "Please know these were very difficult decisions made after careful reflection and extensive input from the entire Administrative Committee. In every case where a position was

eliminated, the college has met or exceeded our current notice and benefits policies."

Administrators have initiated the long-term goals of increasing enrollment and strengthening academic programs with staff adjustments. Aside from Brad Beach, Richard Gould, Associate professor of Classics and Rich Perkins, Professor of Sociology have reached mutual agreement with the college to not return next August. Both of these full-time positions will be eliminated while Professors Kingdon and Rosendale have reached similar retirement agreements.

Shirley Jacobson, part-time Administrative Systems Support Analyst has ended her service to the college. Also, Doug Roorbach has stepped down as Director of Public Relations and has assumed the position of Web Manager and Editor of the Milieu. Similarly, these Administrative position holders have decided on their own accord not to return and these positions too will no longer exist.

An extensive list of firings has been released in order to reallocate money to numerous other existing programs. Bruce Campbell, Special Assistant for External Relations and Valerie Smith, Assistant Director of Public Relations will both be leaving at the conclusion of this

year and their positions absorbed. Laura Dibble, Administrative Assistant in the Church Relations Office is in much the same situation. The titles of Dean Liddick, part-time Major Gifts Officer and Annie Valkema, Major Gifts Officer will be discarded and not replaced next year as well.

The exhaustive debate over JV athletics has a filtered effect for those coaches, not just players. Dr. Chamberlain stated, "Current coaches for these programs will be reassigned or released, depending on the needs of the department and their specific skill set." The decision to eradicate these programs has been followed by an effort by the college to accommodate both participating Houghton athletes and their coaches.

Dr. Chamberlain expressed his optimism about the time these staff members spent with Houghton College. He artfully declared, "I deeply appreciate the many years of faithful service these individuals have given to Houghton College." Administrators stressed that no fault was involved in the actions taken stating, "In the instances where positions were eliminated, the decision was in no way a reflection on the performance of the incumbent."

-Lindsay Yandon
Staff Writer

The Illumination of Dark Matter

For all of recorded history, humankind has marveled at the number of the stars. This motif has been replayed many times, from God's covenant with Abraham to contemporary literature. Yet, perhaps most astonishing of all is the fact that for all the uncountable infinity of stars, some 90% of the mass of our galaxy remains completely unaccounted for. In fact, current research indicates that only 4% of the mass and energy of the universe is in visible, "normal" matter.

On Friday May 31st, a lecture was delivered by Dr. Rebecca Koopmann. Her talk was entitled "The Dark Side of the Universe: The Quest to Find Unseen Matter and Energy". Dr Koopmann is a former Fulbright Scholar, and a researcher in Physics and Astronomy at Union College.

She spoke about the things in the galaxy we can't see or detect directly at all. Dark Matter is the invisible stuff that physicists believe make up 90% of the mass of the universe. She then posed the obvious question: since we can't see or interact with Dark Matter immediately, why should we think it exists?

The answer revolves around gravity. Kepler's Law states that objects in an orbit move faster the closer they are to the center of their orbit. We see this in the planets of the Solar System. Mercury has the fastest orbit and the orbital velocity of the other planets drop off in proportion to their distance from the Sun. However, when we look at other objects in the galaxy, they are moving much faster than we would predict given the visible mass of the galaxy. The best way to explain this discrepancy is to postulate that the galaxy actually has much more mass than is visible.

While this idea may seem rather ad hoc, Koopmann explained that there are some important verifications of the existence of Dark Matter, including the idea of "gravity lensing". The theory of relativity states that large amounts of matter can bend light that passes nearby (this is why no light can escape the tremendous mass of a black hole). When we observe very distant galaxies, we see a distortion of their images that fits with the presence of massive quantities of Dark Matter.

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The Least of These

When you walk through the door, under the big black and white sign that says 'Neema Crafts', you are greeted by Rosalie's generous smile. But it's really only a half-smile because she is stringing beads using her one good arm and her teeth. She also runs the register and works as the receptionist for visitors.

A few years ago there were dozens of severely handicapped people begging for handouts on the streets of Iringa, Tanzania. And who could blame them? In a city plagued by 50-percent unemployment, the chances of a deaf woman with only one good arm finding a job were slight.

Today, many of these former dependents are working steadily at producing one-of-a-kind and limited-production handmade crafts. In fact, their income is now greater than that of many of the people they were asking for help. The name of the company they work for is Neema (Swahili for grace) Crafts.

Until recently, Neema's crafts have been sold only at the retail store connected to the workshop, and at a crafts festival in the capital city of Dar Es Salaam. Now there is a store featuring Neema Crafts in England, and the Campus Store here at Houghton has recently

started to carry a limited line of Neema products which they hope to expand soon.

One of the people responsible for this reversal in the spiritual, economic and social status of this small group of Tanzanians is a British artist by the name of Susan Hart. She and her husband Andy (a veterinarian working with Tanzanian farmers) are sponsored by the Anglican Diocese of Ruaha.

The first time I met Susan she was coaching Annie (one of two interns at Neema who were recent art graduates from England) who was sprawled on the floor coaching Maria who was sprawled on the floor because her legs were paralyzed, on how to operate a loom. They were trying to figure out a way to make a loom designed for two hands and two feet operable with only two hands. On the far side of the workshop Tony, who was too deaf to notice the annoying sound, was using an industrial blender to turn elephant dung into pulp for making paper. The paper would eventually be used for making greeting cards and photo album covers.

Susan has taken an idea that has proven itself many times over in other parts of the world, and given it a try in Iringa. The idea was to teach skills to those willing to work, to make crafts that have an appeal to relatively wealthy expatriates. It is a variation on that old idea of taking money from the rich and giving it to the

poor, except that in this case everyone seems to benefit. Tourists and expatriates living in Tanzania get well-made craft objects at bargain prices, and the Tanzanian artisans earn a living wage (about \$400 USD per year) doing work they enjoy. Imagine, preaching the gospel by meeting physical needs.

Susan started Neema Crafts about six years ago with four disabled Tanzanians. When I met her four years ago, there were a dozen people working at Neema. Today there are 57. A coffee shop and café is going in upstairs, and I think I saw Susan eyeing the building next door the last time I visited.

She is also hoping to add a couple more interns. Susan says she likes recent art graduates because they seem to have a better sense for what kinds of crafts people want to buy. The interns develop new products, teach skills, find and order raw materials and help with the bookkeeping.

So far all of the interns have 'gone native'. They live with Tanzanian families, eat their food and go to their churches. Most of the interns have stayed between four and twelve months. All of them have become fluent in Swahili. Susan is very interested in having an intern or two from Houghton College. Anyone interested? ♦

-Professor Gary Baxter
Guest Writer

Citgo, Hugo Chavez, The US And Houghton Citgo

Part 2: continued from previous issue

The Positives and Negatives: Hugo Chavez and the Venezuelan Revolution

Taking the US' record (both positive and negative) in Latin America as a given, we then turn to the problem of Hugo Chavez. Is Chavez the savior of Venezuela and Latin America or is he the evil emperor, the nemesis of North America?

On the positive side, Hugo Chavez is a major agent of change in both Venezuela and Latin America. He has won election through the ballot box. He has brought all sorts of improved social programs to his country and is trying to do so for every country in the region. He has worked closely with the socialist-populist opposition party in Bolivia to bring them into power. Why, if he is doing so much good is he a possible danger, not only to his own country, but also to the whole region and to the United States, the region's hegemon?

On the negative side, Chavez is a stated revolutionary, committed to radical change in both Venezuela and all of Latin America. Coming to power by the ballot box has never stopped ideologues like him from abrogating all democratic functions after achieving power. The proof of his democratic bonafides will come when he willingly gives up power after a

subsequent and inevitable election loss. (In the last election, Chavez was reelected to a great extent because the opposition parties could not work together and, because of restrictions placed on candidates, many boycotted the election.)

His only other alternative would be to suspend the democratic process and declare himself dictator for life. (Others that have followed this path have included Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolph Hitler. They were all elected or duly appointed, then chose to make themselves dictators and emperors for their very short lives.)

Now, at the present time, the people of Venezuela may actually support Chavez in theory and in practice. On the other hand, like Cuba, there also may be very little opposition left in a new Venezuela. Chavez provides the people with every good thing, minimally, from cradle to grave. However, one must look below the surface. What is the reason for their support? What is Chavez' motivation for such largesse?

The Dark Side of Hugo Chavez: Godfather, Ward Boss?

Chavez has proven himself to be acting as godfather; yes, like the Godfather of the movie and its many sequels. The pattern is clear: Godfathers, mafia dons, ward healers, ward bosses, whether organized crime or political

machine families, all follow the same script. They follow Jeremy Bentham's philosophy of utilitarianism, his dictum of accomplishing the greatest "good" for the greatest number through the use of the fewest resources. It is very efficient. Moreover, by combining this with using the carrot and the stick, you can get people to do almost anything, be very efficient, and make loads of money.

The pattern is crystal: The godfather or political boss creates a following by bribing (or at least giving people great gifts) to voluntarily vote for him and his cause, on the one hand, and/or subjecting them to protection and confidence schemes to force them into line, on the other.

As an analyst, one must look behind the actions of any political, economic or social leader and examine his or her motives. Why is Chavez doing what he is doing? It could be that he is truly a man of the people and giving them gifts out of the truth of his ideology and the goodness of his heart. However, human beings are usually not that simple and their motives are not that altruistic. It seems to me that Hugo Chavez is giving great gifts to his people to obtain and maintain power for himself and his small elite group. The people will vote for him because he takes care of them, at least minimally, from cradle to grave.

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America and Food: Our Responsibility

Mozzarella sticks and FHM magazine. Nachos and MTV. Chocolate milk and America's Next Top Model. God bless America and the completely contradictory messages we send to our young citizens. On the one hand, we are taught to worship physical appearance, while on the other we are bombarded with messages to indulge in a "little KFC," to "think outside the bun," and live on the "Coke side of life" (I'm thinking Arby's!). What we end up with is the mixed message of setting unreachable goals in terms of body image while at the same time encouraging dreadful, and even deadly eating habits.

All of the "fast foods" listed above can be found, along with pizza, burgers, and fries, in the cafeteria at Wellsville High School. For the past 2 months I have been student teaching at Wellsville and during this time I have been observing the nutritional habits of teenagers. Being a PE teacher has afforded me the unique opportunity to examine today's high school students' physical abilities and general well-being, which has left me feeling like I want to laugh and cry at the same time.

The fact that nearly half of the students are overweight and out of shape is not what shocks me the most. What blows me away is the lack of responsibility shown by the school when those

same students are served unhealthy food for lunch. Mozzarella sticks are served as an entrée, nachos as a full lunch, pizza and French fries as a complete meal. These are nutritional habits that we cannot afford to teach to a media-dominated generation. How will these habits play out after students leave high school? How did you eat as a first year compared to now? First years, how do you eat now?

We live in a culture where at school a 16-year-old girl is taught that it's okay to eat high fat, high carb, fried food while MTV tells her that she needs to weigh 105 lbs and look like Lindsay Lohan. We live in a culture where at school a 17-year-old boy is taught that it's okay to eat hot dogs and curly fries while a commercial for Dentyne Ice tells him that he needs a six-pack (abdominal muscles) to get the girl who looks like Lindsay Lohan. We live in a culture where the girls with high metabolism win, leaving the rest rejected for falling short of a flawless figure. We live in a culture that preaches non-stop advice on how to have the "good life," which is often blatantly contradictory, and comes at the psychological expense of young people everywhere.

I object to the way that American public schools neglect their obligation to teach healthy eating habits and supply nutritional meals;

especially when we live in a culture so intensely dominated by the pressure to look thin. My guess is that our schools are motivated primarily by economics—how else do you explain schools letting Pepsi Co. pay them for using their vending machines? Of course, I am not an expert on this subject and so my questions about this have reduced me to Google-ing for the "No Skinny Child Left Behind Act." So far, nothing.

As an education major and a member of this challenging culture, I am concerned that public schools in America are failing in their duty to provide a healthy environment and teach sensible dietary practices. At the same time, the prevalence of education majors, on this campus and across the country, is encouraging because we as future teachers are learning more about the harmful effects of poor diet habits. I am hopeful that we will all take seriously the dilemma facing kids who are immersed in the conflicting messages sent by the mainstream culture. I am hopeful that we will do what we can to teach children responsible dietary habits, beginning by practicing these healthy habits ourselves. ♦

-Joshua Walters
Guest Editorialist

devotional:

The Dark Night of the Soul

All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him...Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and by the does of the field: Do not arouse or awaken love until it so desires.

(Song of Solomon 3.1,5)

Often I am caught up in trying to feel God's presence in worship, or to comprehend his mysterious movements. It is difficult for me to relinquish rational control of my spirituality. When I feel like my usual attempts to reach God are futile, I naturally turn to self-condemnation. Frequently when we sense God's absence, we assume that it is something we have done to create a barrier between us and our Creator.

St. John of the Cross wrote on the dark night of the soul, revealing another possibility. He writes of a darkness, which silences our senses and quells our spiritual appetites. This binds our capacity to think, remember, and even understand; as a result, even our wills are constrained. "And over all this hangs a dense and burdensome cloud

which afflicts the soul and keeps it withdrawn from God."

Why would God subject his children to spiritual depression?

The dark night of the soul is the spiritual equivalent of a purifying incision. It brings our practice of solitude to a more divine plane, allowing closer communion with God. This darkness comes to numb our powers of rational thought so our minds might be transformed; as the darkness passes, we can hope to reason like Christ and share in his peace.

As deep calls out to deep, we are only promised union with God if we are faithful. A night like this is not brought during a time of sin, but as a result of intense spiritual seeking. Song of Solomon 3.1-5 illustrates such a time, through its metaphor writ for our comfort and instruction.

All night long on her bed the Beloved looks for her Love. She attempts to find Him in the reaches of her soul as she lies there. His loss

plagues her so much that nightmares reflect her wanting. The searching here confirms it is not sin which bars her from grasping His presence; instead, she is suffering the confusion which precedes her moment of transformation.

Troubled by her Love's absence, she enters the city to search. All the streets should be familiar to her. Still they remain unlit to her eyes, refusing to lead her toward her Love. As her search begins to consume her, the watchmen of the city find her. In this, we know her Love is aware of her actions. She poses them a question and their silence ends her pursuit. The watchmen symbolize those who wait in the night with their souls hushed. By their witness, we, as she, learn to become still.

After she learns this, her soul has hope. Her Love finds her, moments later. Once she learns to be still, the work of transformation can quickly be done. On His return, she is delighted. The Beloved then implores us not to arouse or awaken love until it so desires. Because of the joy of her transformation and the serenity imparted by Christ which casts out all fear, she calls out to us, telling us to patiently endure the dark night of the soul. ♦

-Victoria Kempton,
devotional piece, Fall 2004.

Featured Artist: *Dan Fessenden*

Mixed media on plexiglass by senior Dan Fessenden. A self-described packrat, Fessenden scavenges materials for his pieces from the kind of things that most people throw away. This piece, called *For the Bridegroom*, contains parts of a circuit board and discarded shard of tile attached to an abandoned sheet of plexiglass. In this way he gives or finds significance in the stuff of everyday. "I love objects," Fessenden says. "I'm interested in the stories they tell by how they've been used—every cup, every jar has scratches on it that tells a kind of history of occurrences and the marks become a symbol of individuality."

Fessenden uses an artistic vocabulary of "found objects" that has risen to prominence in the wake of World War I when the Dadaists expressed their frustration with the pretentiousness of contemporary society by gluing together scraps of paper and exhibiting urinals in world-class museums. Since then "found object" art has been used both to debunk the highbrow tendencies of the modern art world and tentatively seek out some sort of transcendence in things that might otherwise be overlooked. Fessenden connects the "found object" genre to



graffiti art which has recently gained attention in the art world. "When you see a graffiti you almost feel as though you shouldn't be looking at it because the person technically shouldn't have done it. It's a very private thing for each person that views it—it seems a bit like an inside joke," he explains.

There's an element of risk in the way that these pieces are put together, especially one like *For the Bridegroom*, which was designed largely based on intuition. I was very influenced by Scot Bennett's ideas of experimental line," Fessenden says. "You make one mark and then all the other marks are a response to what you already have." He admits that while "sometimes it's eerie how well it works, sometimes it just fails. [The layering technique] is not like a drawing where you can just erase—each mark covers something else."

This piece was recently selected for the Annual Student Juried show and can be seen displayed in the Ortlip gallery. ♦

-Kelsey Harro
Managing Editor



A Moveable Feast *The Captivating Student Exhibit in the Ortlip*

I seldom find reason to be proud of my contemporaries and peers. We participate in trite anti-smoking ads, are responsible for the musical genocide that is emo, and generally mope about feeling Garden-State-ingly sorry for ourselves. But once in a while we shine bright. And it's moments like these that make me swell with pride at the thought that I am rubbing shoulders with the future every day.

I had one of these moments today as I strolled into the Ortlip gallery to check out the Student Exhibit. Having missed the opening night, the works were all new to me as I adjusted the lights and gaped around the open gallery (I rather prefer it this way; I usually end up talking more than looking on opening nights). And I was glad for every second today. What I experienced took my breath away.

The greatness of this exhibit speaks of the richness of the student body that produced it, because it lies not only in the individual works but in the contrast of the show as a whole. Each great piece varies greatly in style and mood. There are the serene, graceful photographs of Mary Gibson (*Beauty of Form, Beauty of Form & Line*) that make such a lyrical use of the body that you forget that the human body is what you are looking at. These are placed right next to Dan Fessenden's *Landscape with Produce Band*, an abstract piece that painfully asserts itself into your vision. It's a compelling

piece that is hard to turn away from. Also, it is a compelling juxtaposition that really lets you see the excellence of both pieces.

My favorite piece in the gallery is Hi Uan Kang's mixed media installation, *Leaves*. It was Frank Stella that said "the aim of art is to create space," and that is what Kang's piece does. You are immediately drawn to it because of its impressive size, but not in a heavy sense. The play between the negative space and the vertical lines of the piece is a sort of dance that takes place in your mind as you circle it to take it all in.

The portraits have their high and low points. Among the best are Kelsey Harro's *La Suora* with its bold, confident strokes and Julia Waltz's *Joey*, which is able to transcend the idea of the model with its unique approach. Stefan Zoller's abstract paintings are compelling not only in size but in tone. Paul Christensen's ceramic jars are both illustrative and disarming. There are also some newcomers, Ashley Hackett and Elizabeth Jancewicz, whose pieces particularly impressed me.

Be sure to take this opportunity to witness of the great work that your peers here at Houghton College are accomplishing. And be sure to remember these names. They will soon be recognized by the world for the artists that they are becoming. ♦

-Stephen Sorensen
Guest Writer

Houghton Abroad

Houghton in Morocco



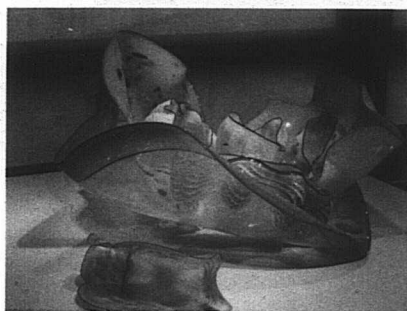
Photograph by Kristen Lamos
taken when she studied abroad
in Morocco.

This shot is of a Sahara
Camelline in the late afternoon.

Corning Museum of Glass

I walked down the grey clean corridors opening thick, heavy, transparent doors that lead into galleries. I followed the path in the carpet looking at glass behind glass. Sculptures, ancient vases, beautiful mosaics, wonderfully rich colors that told the history of glassmaking through the ages. From the intricate detailing of miniature aquatic life, to the grandeur of chandeliers and stained glass windows, you can find glass works from all over the world here at the Corning Museum of Glass.

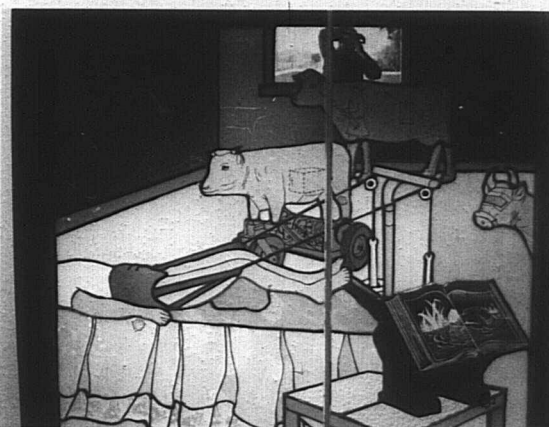
There is something about glass that is inherently beautiful and watching the glass blowing show, feeling the heat from the kiln, I saw how much craft and skill goes into working with the material.



From the Pyrex casserole dish tower to fiber optic demonstrations, the glass museum sets out to make people understand just how important glass really is. With an interactive gallery in the museum, you can learn about the history of bottle making machines, discover first hand the many properties of glass, and take a quiz about the chemical compositions that alter its makeup. Sitting on one end of a large twenty foot glass structure shaped like an egg, I experienced the effects glass can have on acoustics listening clearly to a whisper at the other end.

With a large shop, a little café and grill, a couple of films, and the live show, I spent about three hours exploring what the museum had to offer. At this time of year it was not very busy and I enjoyed everything at my own pace. They offer a student discount which makes the ticket prices \$11.25. A price that I thought was worth paying.

Located just about an hour and twenty minutes down route eighty six, Corning is



a delightful little city that houses the glass museum, West End gallery, a small art gallery, as well as the Rockwell Western Museum and a number of little shops and restaurants. If you have never visited, I would suggest making the drive before your Houghton college career is up. Glass is everywhere, in our televisions, mirrors, windows, cars and dishes and has contributed to everything from light to the internet. Maybe its time to give back a little and enjoy exploring the wonderful world of glass. ♦

-Adam Sukhia
Columnist



Faculty Book Review: *The Memoirs of Hadrian*

"Just when the god's had ceased to be, and the Christ had not yet come, there was a unique moment in history, between Cicero and Marcus Aurelius, when man stood alone." -From a letter by Flaubert

In 1927 Marguerite Yourcenar encountered this entry by Flaubert. It stirred in her a desire to return to her abandoned project to write a novel about the second century Emperor Hadrian (117-138 C.E.). Over the next 25 years she wrote and re-wrote her masterpiece *The Memoirs of Hadrian*. Its publication in French at mid century made her universally admired. (So admired that she relocated to the then remote Mount Desert Island in Maine where she lived the rest of her life in something akin to a Sheppard's cottage, eventually people would even seek her out there until her death in 1987).

One does not need to be a fan of ancient history to appreciate this novel. For it is first a work of fiction (although it is accurate in every way and draws upon hundreds of historical documents). I read fiction and non-fiction alike and for identical reasons. I read for the beauty of language and the compelling aesthetic impact of ideas. My reading is like my thinking process, associative and capacious. Yourcenar was one of France's greatest writers and complex scholars. She is one of those rare scholar/artists who is admired with equal measure by the world of academe and the world of artist. I have read most of her work. *The Memoirs of Hadrian* remains one of my favorite works of literature.

The novel begins as a letter to Hadrian's successor Marcus Aurelius. The epistolary novel allows Yourcenar to freely move in and out of the story in a first person voice. It is the combination of the narrative of Hadrian's life, with all its adventure and drama, and his meditations on his experience that I find so enriching and beautiful. The accounts of the wars with the Dacians are harrowing. His grief over the death of Antinous is deeply moving. Hadrian's grief prompted him to have erected through out the Roman world temples to Antinous. Antinous' beautiful face was then codified as an ideal form. (It would later become a source of inspiration in the development of Leonardo's sensibility and consequently the High Renaissance style).

The first 25 pages of the memoirs are among the most eloquent I have ever read. Yourcenar's meditation on mortality is filled with wisdom. One sentence near the end of the chapter "Animula Vagula Blandula" reads: *"A part of every life, even a life meriting very little regard, is spent in searching out the reasons for its existence, its starting point and its source."*

This sentence has a resonance with a similar entry by Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations* Book II entry 4: *"Remember how long you have delayed, how often the god's have appointed the day of your redemption and you have let it pass. Now,*

if ever, you must realize of what kind of ordered universe you are a part, of what kind of governor of that universe you are an emanation, that a limit has now been set for you and that if you do not use it to come into the light, it will be lost, and you will be lost and there will be no further opportunity." (Translated G.M.A. Grube)

"No further opportunity"... George Long translated this differently..." if then you do not use (this time) for clearing away the clouds from thy mind, it will go and thou wilt go, and it will never return"

It being our chance at life to make a difference. Some would say this is the essence of the Stoic philosophy. Yourcenar's novel is a grand vision of one complex influential life. Hadrian is one of a sequence of great Emperors. Gibbon describes them as the most significant in the period Rome's greatest era. From Trajan to Marcus Aurelius Rome experienced a period of magnificent rule. After Marcus Aurelius the Empire begins its famous decline.

Marguerite Yourcenar commented that throughout her life she received many letters from people saying that *The Memoirs of Hadrian* helped them live their lives better. I echo this sentiment. I can think of no greater compliment to an artist. ♦

-Ted Murphy
Professor of Art

Student Project Fund Petition to Give \$25,000 to the College

In the front page article recently published by the Star, Hilary Young discussed the issue concerning the Student Project Fund and the possibility of the students giving \$25,000 to the college from the Fund. In said article, I was quoted several times with regard to the issue. Though one might gather that I am in support of such a petition from the article, in the interest of objectivity, I did not offer my opinion on the matter when I was interviewed by Hilary. As such, my opinion was not stated in the article, and properly so. As a response to this article, however, I would to give my opinion in the matter as a student and previous current holder of the SGA Commissioner of Finance (CoF) position.

As the CoF my position entitles me to be a member of the Financial Affairs Council (FAC) as well as the Finance, Facilities, and Audit Subcommittee of the Board of Trustees. After two full years on these committees and interacting with the former CFO of the College (Jeff Spear) and the current Acting CFO (Dale Wright), I feel that I have a very intimate knowledge of the finances of the college. As such, I can confidently say that no student currently enrolled at Houghton knows as much about the finances of the college than I do. It is from this position of knowledge and expertise that I write this response.

I believe that the petition being circulated to give \$25,000 to the College for this year's operating budget should not be endorsed by the student body. As stated in the Statement

of Intention of the Student Project Fund, the fund "shall be used for substantial, on-campus projects as desired by the student body." This petition clearly does not satisfy the intent of the fund.

Secondly, the initial situation concerning the project fund was caused by a budget deficit in the current year of about \$350,000. As of the February Board of Trustees meeting, this deficit had effectively been reduced to about \$135,000. This is not to say that the deficit could not rise again, but a number of factors could also lower the deficit further. Also at this meeting, the Board of Trustees passed a motion allowing for the transfer of up to \$200,000 from the college's Segregated Annuity Fund. In brief, an annuity fund is established when an annuitant (usually retired) donates a sum of money to the college and thus receives a fixed rate of return on that money until they are deceased. At that point the money is given to the college. This money is segregated, by state law, from the other funds of the college. After many years, the Segregated Annuity Fund has accumulated a large surplus, such that there is an excess of \$400,000 in the fund above state requirements. In the words of President Chamberlain (paraphrase), it is about time that we took money from the fund. Its purpose is to benefit the college, and it is not benefiting the college sitting in a segregated fund.

Thus, any budget deficit existing at the end of the fiscal year that is below \$200,000 can be covered by a transfer from the annuity fund.

This effectively eliminates a budget deficit which would render the transfer of money from the SPF superfluous. Some in the SGA argue that the money should still be donated as a gesture of good-will to the college. My response to that is simple. The students, and more importantly the SGA, have a fiduciary responsibility to use the funds in the best possible manner. In other words, we are stewards of the funds we have been entrusted. To use these funds in a manner not originally intended, would be a breach of fiduciary responsibility (stewardship). As leaders of the student body, the SGA should not so arbitrarily forsake fiduciary responsibility for such an abstract purpose as good-will.

Thus, I feel that the petition that is being circulated concerning the SPF and the college's operating expenses should be rejected. As stewards of the small amount of funds we are entrusted with, we should be pursuing capital projects and large campaigns rather than paying to run the lights in the campus center. I would further endorse some of the other projects that are currently on the SPF docket, including the petition to redo the Chamberlain Center atrium (courtesy of Inti Martinez) and the pavilion project by the flats and townhouses (currently awaiting SPF Committee's final decision). Let us use our money for the good of our Alma Mater. ♦

-Kyle Nagy
Guest Writer

Letter To The Star

Last Thursday, I attended the forum, 'Naked v. Nude: What's the Difference? A Discussion of Nudity and Art in the Christian Community'. I was happy to see the recital hall full of students and professors interested in listening to the panelists respond to the community's questions and concerns. One thing struck me, however, as I looked around the auditorium. No administrators were present. Even the Dean of Students, who suggested the forum in the first place, was not in attendance. I was gravely disappointed to see that the same people who administer guidelines for student life seemed to have little regard for the opinions and views held by the students.

After the recent upheaval of our campus regarding Dr Beach's dismissal and The Student Projects Fund, I have repeatedly heard from students, faculty members, and administrators that, "We are a community. If an issue arises, we need to open up dialogue between administrators, faculty, and students in order to work things out." I too believe this to be the best solution. But it seems that every attempt to resolve an issue is marred by a lack of total cooperation. All parties involved need to be working together, listening, and attending events in order to fully understand and respond appropriately to the issues that have taken center stage at our college.

When will we get it right?

Illumination Continued...

What then makes up Dark Matter? The currently favoured theory is that this mass is made up of Weakly Interacting Massive Particles, or WIMPS. These are particles like Neutrinos or gravitons, which are predicted to exist in massive numbers by particle physics. Neutrinos, for example, are extremely light particles emitted in vast numbers during fusion. The chief obstacle remaining to this is that none of these WIMPS save Neutrinos have ever actually been observed, despite years of careful search. Thus, the problem remains an open one.

The lecture was followed by a vigorous question and answer session. ♦

-Will Davis
Guest Writer

Citgo Continued...

In the future, if he somehow fails to deliver, they will turn against him, as the people eventually do against almost all populist leaders. His option will be to use force to coerce compliance through the mechanism of a protection racket. He will say to individuals and groups that they need his protection to live in his society. When they refuse to pay protection money (insurance for this service), he will do as any good godfather or political machine politician -- start destroying property and breaking heads. That always proves to individuals and groups they truly do need his protection -- a need that he has self-manufactured. It is a hallmark of business: Find a need and fill it, or rather, create a need and fill it.

By the way, this is already being used against the opposition in Venezuela. Read the newspaper accounts of homes and businesses being damaged and opposition leaders being arrested, roughed up and incarcerated.

Hugo Chavez' Real Legacy

What has Chavez done? He has given much to the poor and the powerless. He has given them gifts. But who are they from? Are they not the gifts of a "benevolent" dictator to a subject people? With the gifts, is he giving the poor the power? It does not look like it. He is keeping all the power for himself and a small group of men and women who have been very clear that they know what is best for the people and they will give it to them, whether they like it or not.

Of course, in the beginning they like it. Who would not? Everyone appreciates gifts. However, as the revolution matures and the people gain knowledge, they will come to see the wisdom that these gifts have strings attached. They will want their own political and economic power and Chavez and his group are unlikely to give it to them willingly. (In all of Latin American leftist revolutions, only the Sandinistas in Nicaragua ever gave up power voluntarily.)

Although he portrays himself as a populist, I doubt that he is. He strikes me as more in the long line of Latin American pseudo-populists, such as Juan and Eva Peron, who were in it partly for the people, but much more for themselves, their own political and economic power and, of course, their massive egos. "Don't cry for me, Argentina..."

The Bottom Line: Citgo Incorporated and the Houghton Citgo

So, what about Citgo in general and the Houghton Citgo in particular? Should one support a government corporation when one disagrees with the ideology and actions of that

government and its leaders? It is really up to each individual to decide. You have the perfect right to decide either way.

For myself, I think the evidence is clear: Hugo Chavez and the present government of Venezuela, controlled by ideologues with the stated purpose of fomenting revolution (having joined the long term Castro conspiracy) against the governments of Latin America and the United States, have threatened me as a supporter of, and voter for, the government of the United States. They have threatened me on all three levels of their attack: They have attacked my government, my political parties, and my people. I choose to not support their crusade with my money.

As a good capitalist, I can vote with my dollars. I can request that the Willard Houghton Foundation also vote with its choice of franchise: Vote to support freedom of choice rather than socialist dictation. Vote to support real social reform (which is desperately needed in Latin America) rather than the false promises of socialist-communist ideology. Vote to support a Christian approach to solving the problems of Latin America without resorting to the failed atheistic approach of socialism and communism.

Of course, in making such a declaration, we must be about our Father's business, calling on our government to correct the wrongs of the past, begin solving the problems of the present, and prepare for the challenges of the future. As a nation, we need to be investing in Latin American political, economic and social development, sending and receiving groups that will accomplish this job. As individuals, we have to give, send and go to support our brothers and sisters in need so they do not have to resort to such extreme measures, even those of duly electing radical ideologues. Either way, vote with your dollars; vote with your time; vote with your commitment to do the right thing for Venezuela, Latin America, and for us. ♦

By Blaine David Benedict, PhD

Dr. Benedict is Professor of Political Science and International Relations and Director of the Political Science and International Relations Programs at Houghton College.

He also teaches as an adjunct professor of international relations and comparative politics at Alfred University.

THE STAR IS ALWAYS
IN NEED OF WRITERS:
ONE TIME
CONTRIBUTIONS
ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.
PLEASE EMAIL THE
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Correction:

Eric Reinhold also took several of the photographs that were published with the Katrina Relief article in the March 17 edition of the Star.

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