



SHEN OLYMPICS | CULTURE, P. 4

# the houghton STAR

Houghton College's Student Newspaper Since 1909

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

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| OPINIONS, P. 7

WHAT HOUGHTON STUDENTS KNOW  
ABOUT POLITICS | NEWS, P. 2

ARTIST OF THE WEEK:

LINDSAY BURGHER | FEATURES, P. 8

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## SOPA and PIPA Bills Go to Washington, Public Protests

by ANDRE NELSON

On October 26, 2011, Texas's 21st congressional district representative Lamar Smith, along with a bipartisan group of 12 initial co-sponsors, introduced the House Bill 3261, called the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), referred to in the Senate as the Protect Internet Property Act (PIPA). Soon after its introduction, the bill caused many unexpected ripples, with a phenomenal reaction from the public.

January 18 marked the climax of the opposition to this bill. Wikipedia, among other websites, disconnected its site altogether, leaving a dark page with the words "Imagine a World Without Free Knowledge." Though many did not take such a drastic measure as Wikipedia, 75,000 websites participated in the protest in one way or another, according to CBS. A black censor bar was put over the usual "Google doodle" on the main search page with a plea to contact local representatives. Google reported to the Los Angeles Times to have collected over 4.5 million signatures against SOPA, while nearly 350,000 e-mails were sent to representatives through websites such as SopaStrike.com and AmericaCensorship.org. Twitter, one of the fastest growing social networks with over 250 million tweets daily, reported 2.4 million SOPA-related tweets between 12 a.m. and 4 p.m. EST January 18.

The drastic uproar halted the bill's progress and caused its authors to seriously reconsider it. But why the uproar? What triggered responses and opposition from mega Internet players such as Facebook, Google,



The proposed SOPA and PIPA bills caused a phenomenal reaction from the public. Most were concerned over the future of free Internet.

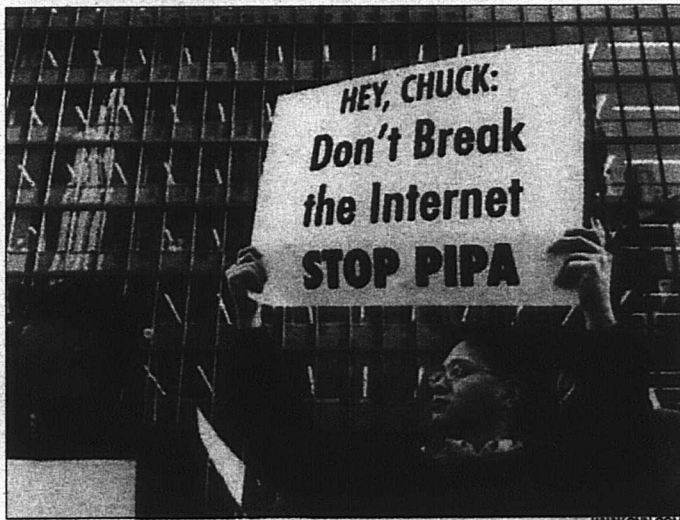
Twitter, and many others if the intent of the bill is, as described in its title, "to promote prosperity, creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation by combating the theft of U.S. property, and for other purposes?"

Stripped to its essentials the bill's purpose is to protect copyrighted material in order to promote legal and fair trade. It aimed to accomplish its goal by expanding the ability of U.S. law enforcement to fight online trafficking in copyrighted intellectual property, through cracking down on Internet pirates, censoring "rogue" websites and blocking illegal activities online. The general public became concerned by what defined "rogue" websites and illegal activities.

SEC. 102. states, "action by attorney general to protect U.S. customers and prevent U.S. support of foreign infringing sites, For purposes

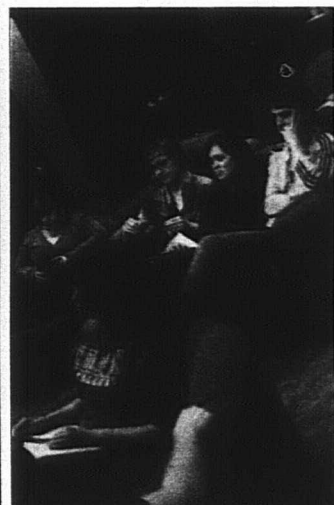
of this section, a foreign Internet site or portion thereof is a 'foreign infringing site' if-- (1) the Internet site or portion thereof is a U.S.-directed site and is used by users in the United States; (2) the owner or operator of such Internet site is committing or facilitating the commission of criminal violations punishable under section 2318." What this means is that the website in question does not have to commit any violation of copyright laws for the government to have the right to censor it; it merely has to facilitate the commission of criminal violations. This means, any site with a comment box or picture upload form is potentially infringing. If the website is found to be in violation, a court order will follow, ordering the site to be blocked by the Internet service provider, search engines will be forced to remove all reference to the offending sites, ad providers will no longer be allowed to service the site and payment providers, e.g. Paypal, will be required to end its service to the site. This allows the Attorney General the right to fully block any website outside of the government's jurisdiction.

SEC. 103. states "market-based system to protect U.S. customers and prevent U.S. funding of sites dedicated to theft of U.S. property." It is followed by a description of what this section implies that being, "An Internet site is dedicated to theft of U.S. property' if [a portion of the site is U.S.-directed] and is used by users within the United States and is primarily designed or operated for the purpose of offering services in a manner that enables or facilitates [copyright violation or circumvention



New Yorkers protest the SOPA and PIPA bills.

## RUNNYMEDE SOCIETY HOSTS EVENT FOR THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS



Students listen closely to President Obama's national address.

by SARAH HUTCHINSON

On Tuesday, Houghton students had the opportunity to watch the broadcast of the President's annual State of the Union address delivered from Capitol Hill during an event sponsored by the Runnymede Pre-Law Society.

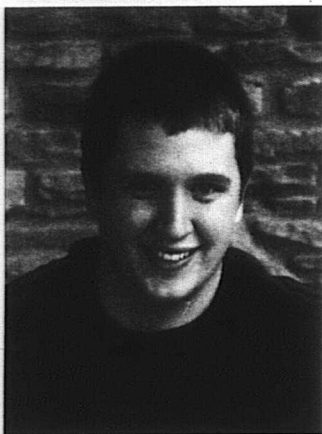
Prior to the speech, the "most emotional moment of the evening," as dubbed by a CNN commentator, was Gabrielle Giffords's entrance into the House chamber, where she was greeted with a standing ovation from her fellow congress members. Last year Giffords was shot in the head at a congressional meet-and-greet in her home state of Arizona. Giffords announced earlier in the week that she will be retiring from office to focus on her physical and mental recovery.

After giving Giffords a quick hug, President Obama addressed the nation, touching on issues such as jobs, public and higher education, energy, and international affairs. He also focused a significant segment of his speech on closing the gap between the wealthy and the middle class, mentioning tax strategies and ways in which the wealthy could help lift the burden of the middle class. Some students watching the speech disagreed with what he had to say on this matter. Sophomore Benjamin Hardy said, "He seems to think that there is a disconnect between jobs and those who create

See SOPA & PIPA page 3

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## SGA / Three Things That Deserve Your Attention



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by GARRETT FITZSIMMONS

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## MAN ON THE STREET

WHAT HOUGHTON STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT POLITICS

INTERVIEWS BY COLLEEN JENNINGS  
PHOTOS BY ANDREA PACHECO



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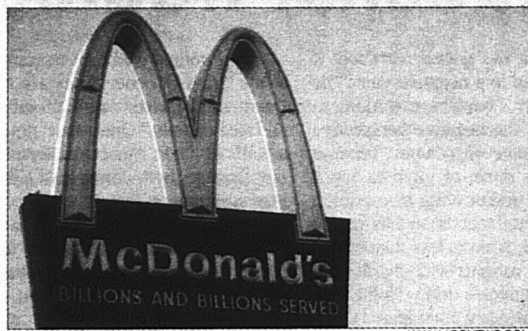


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**SOPA & PIPA** from page 1

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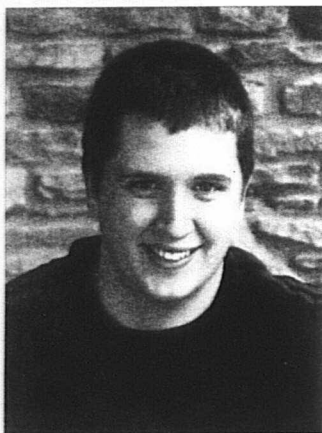
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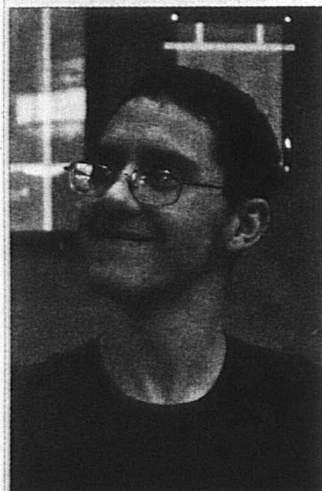
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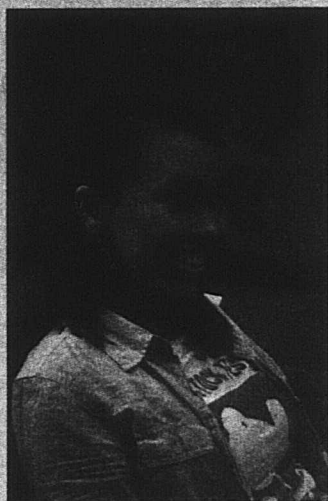
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# Shen Olympics: A Shen-sational Tradition

by DAN SENDKER

A heads up: those who want to enjoy a nice, quiet, relaxing dinner in the dining hall tonight had better eat before 5:30 p.m. -- tonight is the Shen Olympics.

The Shen Olympics is a tradition that goes back at least 14 years. It begins with a dorm-wide dinner before residents return to Shenawana Hall for a night of nonstop sports and games that lasts until 1 a.m. Over 100 residents will compete both as individuals as well as with their floors in a wide range of events, some physically demanding, some fun and silly.

According to Shen's president, sophomore Nathaniel Efthimiou, the purpose behind the Olympics is "to help build a stronger camaraderie within the hall." Vice president, sophomore Taylor Wilding, pointed to the competitive nature of the event and said, "The areas of strength, will, endurance, and the gift to keep food down are all being tested." Junior Scott Martens, RA, sees the Olympics as an encapsulation of the dorm's three core values: strength, brotherhood, and honor.

"By competing, we are showing the men in Shen what some of our strengths are; it builds brotherhood by allowing us to compete as brothers in a respectful and godly manner, and finally winning honor for your floor by competing and winning events," he said.

The specific elements of the Olympics have always been a closely-guarded secret. According to RA Christian O'Lone, sophomore, "It's kind of like rites of passage -- not sacred, but secretive in a good way." While the mystery surrounding the Olympics can and does boost solidarity within the dorm, it can be a source of confusion and frustration for the rest of the campus, as they simply may not understand what goes on during the festivities.

"I think most people don't know much about it or what happens," said Steve Mattiace, Resident Director. "There are probably a lot of misconceptions, some possibly founded in false rumors, while others might be from things that have happened in the past." Martens seemed to agree, but was quick to point out how things are changing. "I think in previous years the

information that has gotten out about it has painted Shen in a negative view," he said. "Personally, I have been working to try and change the negative perspective the Olympics have on campus, because honestly, it is a dorm of guys having a blast for a night and creating memories."

It is no secret that Shen has sometimes struggled with a less-than-stellar reputation. In a campus-wide inside joke comparing Houghton's dorms to the four Hogwarts houses, Shen is compared to the infamous Slytherin. There are any number of stereotypes that poke fun at the dorm's old age, physical distance from the rest of the campus, rowdiness, and distinct fragrance, but its devoted residents are not fazed at all.

"I have always felt like we have been the old smelly dorm on the hill, but I am proud to call Shen my home," said Martens. His sentiments are echoed by the hundreds of Shen Men who have lived in the dorm over the decades. And in recent years, Shen has done much to clean up its image, especially in its relations with Roth.

"The comparison conversation is silly to me," said O'Lone. "They are very different atmospheres and both with strong and weak points." One almost never hears a Roth vs. Shen wisecrack anymore, and last semester both dorms held a joint Advent communion service.

Shen's LC, RD, and RAs have been hard at work in preparing for tonight's event, tweaking and retooling as needed.

"We've worked really hard to keep the time events moving and eliminate dead space where nothing was happening during the night," said Mattiace. "Also, we've worked to ensure that the events add value to the night, rather than just being there for the sake of having events. Finally, we consistently changed the event line up based on previous success, removing things that didn't function well the year before, and trying new things every once in a while." With the dorm's strong leadership and faithful residents, it looks as though tonight's Shen Olympics will be a night to remember, as it has been in years past and will be in years to come. ★

# Brown House Hosts Culture Night

by BEKAH HALL

With a fairly constant stream of guests coming through the doors and just enough room for people to squeeze into the living room, the Brown House Culture Night last Friday demonstrated this year's Brown House residents' desire to provide an open, welcoming place on campus. The House's first official activity this semester, the night was complete with dishes from over five countries, as well as a showing of the movie "Life in a Day." While senior Sarah Wangai, resident of the Brown House, said they hoped the night would serve as "mostly a hang-out time," the event also reflected the House's theme: "Unity in Diversity."

Junior Esther Lee, who is Korean but grew up in the Philippines, said this year's residents hope to provide an "open place of new experiences and cultures." Each year, groups of students applying to live in the Brown House submit a potential theme that will guide the residents and the activities they host for the campus. This year's seven residents utilized their multicultural experiences and backgrounds to formulate their theme. They all come from a variety of backgrounds and the combined list of countries they have lived in includes Kenya, China, Korea, the Philippines, Honduras, Japan and the United States. Among the diversity, however, the residents assert they want to create a place where similarities and connections can be made. Their vision for the Brown House is a place where people can meet and connect, where students can find those similarities among all the differences. As junior Liesl McCloskey explained, they envision the Brown House as a "connection for different groups."

The relaxed atmosphere of Friday's Culture Night reflected this desire to provide a place for people to meet and connect. While the majority of the attendees appeared to be international students and those who have traveled for semester abroad programs, the event did draw a large crowd. Wangai said it was "encouraging that this many people came." After allowing time for people to sample and enjoy *hodduk* (Korean pancakes), dumplings, *mandazi* (a Kenyan pastry), and the other international foods, Lee introduced

and started the film "Life in a Day."

"Life in a Day" was created from over 4500 hours of film footage taken July 24, 2010, and submitted to YouTube. Director Kevin Macdonald edited the footage to create the hour-and-a-half film to showcase intimate moments of life, whether routine or devastating, terrifying or triumphant. The man confessing his fear of the "disease" homosexuality, the girl climbing a human tower, montages of people going to the bathroom and waking up --

all provide a glimpse of what life looks like for people around the world. There is not much that ties the clips together other than the fact they were filmed on the same day and that some clips answer similar questions like "What's in your pocket?" and "What do you fear?" The film provides a remarkable glimpse into the variety of ways people go about their day, and, though YouTube is not always known for superb film quality, most of the footage is quite impressive.

While none of the Brown House residents had seen the movie prior to the Culture Night, Wangai thought the film showed how "we're all similar in some ways and different in some ways," and fit well into their vision for the night and the Brown House in general.

The Brown House residents are planning more events for this semester, including another possible Culture Night. Future activities will be announced by campus-wide e-mail. ★



^ The Field of Dreams is a fun place to be, even in winter. While usually only frequented by dog-walkers and joggers, it provides a close and convenient place to observe God's creation for all of Houghton's students.

Peter Stark '12

**PICTURE  
of the WEEK**

Enter our biweekly photo contest by submitting to [HoughtonStar@gmail.com!](mailto:HoughtonStar@gmail.com) Please include photo credit and a brief description.

# Theater Continues to Grow

by HANNAH CARTER

At the end of last semester, Professor Douglas Gaerte, chair of the communication department, announced that official college plays would be suspended, spawning a debate among theatrically-minded students as to the necessity of such plays in the context of the other theater opportunities at Houghton. Several students requested the decision be revoked and the college plays restored, while others felt they should not occur without proper academic support from an actual theater program. In last week's Senate meeting, Gaerte explained the reasons for the suspension decision, giving a brief history of Houghton's theater life, before answering students' questions about possible implications in this decision.

As Gaerte explained, former professor Bruce Brenneman, theater, led Houghton's official theater endeavors during his years as a faculty member. He taught courses to aid students' acting abilities and produced 102 dramatic productions, and when he retired in May 2008, the College had no one to replace him in this area. At that time, it was possible for a student to pursue a communication minor with a theater concentration. Since Brenneman's retirement, Gaerte has occasionally offered a class in reader's theater, but he feels as though it is not enough to academically support a theater concentration within the communication minor. In order to keep theater from dying out, however, the communication department decided to fund college plays themselves. Nicolas Gunning, circulation supervisor in the library, agreed to direct the plays.

The end to the academic theater program had an unexpected result, however, in the formation of successful student-led theater groups. There are currently two active student-led groups: Encore and the Houghton Musical Theater Players (HMTP). With their success, Gaerte argued it is no longer advisory to continue the official college

plays without proper academic support.

"I think better attention could be spent on all the plays and theater opportunities that are coming up this spring -- the school of music production and all the student productions that are on the schedule," said Gaerte.

Those worried about a dearth of professional theater need not fear, however. A new class has been created by the Houghton Movement and Arts Center (HMAC), taught by Gunning. According to Sarah Badger, director of the HMAC, the class is "geared toward helping actors of all experience levels grow individually as artists, performers, and people. Students will expand their knowledge of various acting techniques and approaches but also gain confidence that will benefit them on and off stage." Not intended to replace or provide a

substitute for the college plays, Badger said the class has "been in the works" long before the decision was made to suspend college plays and is open to anyone aged 12 and up -- not just college students.

While college plays may be at an end until the College can support an academically adequate theater program, there remain a plethora of theater options for those interested in performing and/or viewing: HMAC's acting class and previously existing theater dance class, the productions of the music department, the various student-led theater groups, and the Valley Theater.

"The more interesting story [than that of the standing of college plays] is student energy and creativity in putting together a lot of drama on campus on their own initiative," said Gaerte. ★

## SENIORS SPEND SEMESTER IN NASHVILLE FOR MUSIC INTERNSHIPS

by BEN MURPHY

Last fall, two Houghton students earned the opportunity to spend the semester studying at the Contemporary Music Center (CMC) in Nashville, Tennessee. Meant to prepare students for potential careers in the music industry, this program trains students in one of three tracks of study: Artist, Business, or Technician. Seniors Jonny Geeze and Bethany Fonda completed the internship as artists.

The artist division was evaluated through courses covering Faith, Music and Culture, Inside the Music Industry, Studio Recording, and Essentials of Song Writing. In addition to this closely-mentored training, each artist was also paired with a business student who acted as a manager in organizing weekly performances. These Thursday night shows were an opportunity for the students to learn from experience and professional feedback and, best of all, the concerts culminated in a week-long tour of seven universities.

This program's specific and high quality instruction on everything from recording to writing and producing was perfectly catered to Geeze and Fonda, both of whom hail from musical families and admit to singing before they could walk. However, despite everything they learned about the music industry, it is clear that both of them remember the semester primarily for the community they became a part of.

"In the field of music and recording, I learned way too many things to list. But overall, the main thing I learned from this program was that 30 students

from different colleges around the world could learn to live together, make music together, and become best friends in only three months," said Geeze. Similarly, Fonda said, "I learned the most through the close relationships I made, whether we were jamming in a practice room late at night, cooking meals together, talking about life over coffee, going to Sonic after a show, or on stage performing with each other. It was in the everyday moments where I was able to see God work the most. It was the relationships I made that had the most impact on me."

And apart from being technically, spiritually, and communally sound (pun intended) the CMC was also an encouraging boost to both Geeze and Fonda as they prepare to leave Houghton in May. Geeze said, "People always tell me, 'Oh you'll find something to do after you graduate.' But I don't want just 'something to do' after I graduate. I want to do something I really enjoy doing, and this program showed me what that is." Fonda -- an ICE major -- believes the CMC strengthened her love for music as well as education and has motivated her to move back to the Nashville area after school.

When asked to describe a typical day in the program, Fonda said, "Imagine doing what you love to do more than anything 24/seven with 30 other people who share the same passion. We ate, slept, and breathed music and loved every minute of it."

For those who are interested in hearing some of the music they wrote and recorded during the program, both Geeze and Fonda have music pages that can be found on Facebook. ★

## TRACK AND FIELD

by NICK FREDETTE

Winter sports at Houghton are well under way. The track and field team has begun its indoor season, travelling to R.I.T. in Rochester and Geneva College in Ohio for its first two meets. The Highlanders performed well in both meets, and two athletes in particular really excelled in these early-season contests.

Senior Danielle Brenon from Binghamton, New York, improved on an already illustrious running career in her time at Houghton. In the first meet of the season, the Rochester Invitational, Brenon took first place in both the mile and the 3000-meter run, qualifying her for the NAIA National meet in both events. In the second meet at Geneva College, Brenon won the 5k race with a time of 17:34, breaking a school record, which she previously held, by 20 seconds. Sophomore Alyssa Figueroa also performed exceedingly well in the early-season meets. In her debut at R.I.T., Figueroa won the triple jump, missing the school record by only an inch, and took fourth place in the 60-meter dash, breaking a Houghton College record with a time of 8.23 seconds. Just one week later, Figueroa was successful again at Geneva College, where she improved upon that school record with a 60-meter dash time of 8.18 seconds.

As the team looks toward the rest of the indoor season and the outdoor season as well, training is a top priority. The athletes have a tough practice and lifting regimen, and they hope it will pay off in the rest of their meets this season. Distance runners, sprinters, jumpers, and throwers all train daily, improving their stamina and speed. They also lift regularly to build the strength needed to compete in these competitive collegiate track and field events.

"[Coach Dougherty's] training is very intense. People may think it's crazy that on a distance day someone could be running up to 18 miles, but he has a plan for every runner," said Leah Williams, sophomore. "He knows what's in his athletes' best interests and pushes everyone as far as their potential. If you let him, he will make you into a great athlete, and even with these tough practices, the team dynamic makes them fun as well."

Even through this tough schedule of training, the athletes on the team share a positive outlook for the rest of the indoor and outdoor season. Sophomore thrower Luke Ogden said, "We have a lot of new faces on the track team, and everyone brings a different element. It is exciting to see how much potential we have and what great things lie ahead of us in the upcoming season."

This personifies the general positive outlook instilled by coaches Matt Dougherty, Bob Smalley, and their assistant coaches. The stress preparation but understanding of good preparation leads to a positive outlook. This positive attitude and strong work ethic has led the Highlanders to success in the past, and the team looks to continue this success through the end of indoor season and the upcoming outdoor season.

### SPORTS RECAP

#### MEN'S BASKETBALL:

**SAT 1/21**  
at Wilberforce Univ. - L 51-66  
**TUE 1/24**  
vs Daemen College - L 59-75  
**Season Record (as of 1/25):**  
7-11

#### UPCOMING GAMES:

**SAT 1/28**  
at Walsh Univ. @ 4PM  
**TUE 1/24**  
at Alfred Univ. @ 7PM

#### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:

**SAT 1/21**  
at Wilberforce Univ. - W 83-80  
**TUE 1/24**  
vs Daemen College - L 61-70  
**Season Record (as of 1/25):**  
11-7

#### UPCOMING GAMES:

**SAT 1/28**  
at Walsh Univ. @ 2PM

All information from  
<http://athletics.houghton.edu/>

## Were You Aware?

by RENEE ROBERTS

In the spring of 1975, Carolyn Paine Miller, daughter of Dr. Paine -- Houghton's second president -- and Miller's husband John, and their daughter Luanne, were captured by Communist forces in North Vietnam. Miller and her husband had been working as Wycliffe Bible translators and

were translating the New Testament from English to Bru when attacked. After eight months, the three were released and returned to Houghton in November. As they entered town, they were greeted by townspeople singing hymns and holding torches along the side of the road. Luanne Miller is now known as Luanne Brubaker, Dr. David Brubaker's wife.

## The Abiding Value of Student-Led Theater at Houghton



by AMBER PAYNE

*This commentary is written in response to the following articles published in the December 2 issue: "Houghton Cuts College-Sponsored Plays" and "Cutting Theater: The Elimination of a College Asset."*

Like Miss Trask, who authored the commentary "Cutting Theater: The Elimination of a College Asset," I too have enjoyed a lifetime of theatre. Anyone who has ever met me knows this. All of my fellow senior ICE majors have endured countless rants in classes over the years about theatre and the Arts' importance in education. My professors recognize me as the "drama" girl, as I not-so-subtly weave storytelling and theatre-arts into my papers whenever possible. I live and breathe theatre. When I'm not in a show, I go through withdrawals. Since my first play in the second grade, I have spent 20 years of my life dedicated to this Art-form. I simply cannot get enough of it. When I move somewhere that doesn't have theatrical opportunities, I help to create them. Here, it has been

the Houghton Musical Theatre Players, a student group dedicated to the performance of musical theatre for both music and non-music majors alike.

I am in love with all kinds of theatre, from Shakespeare to Kander and Ebb to Tennessee Williams. On campus, I have participated in shows with student-led HMTP, Shakespeare Players (now Encore), and the Willard Avenue Irregulars as well as "official" productions through Houghton College-Sponsored Plays and Greatbatch School of Music. I have been asked by several professors to perform dramatic interpretations and reader's theatre for their presentations or social groups, and have taken every single performance-related class offered during my time here. I enjoy the company of Carly and the people she quoted in her commentary. I do not doubt their love for theatre. I do not doubt that they gained confidence through their participation in theatre (one of the many benefits of the Arts in which I have bored my ICE major friends with).

I decided to audition for "The Glass Menagerie" last semester and was honored to play the fantastic part of Laura. I wanted the experience of working in an official show with Mr. Gunning, as well as the chance to perform a Williams masterpiece. Throughout the course of the show, one thing became very clear to me: Gunning's veteran actors had an unquestioning dedication to him. Sweet? Yes. However, it leaves me to ponder of Miss Trask and colleagues: Are you defending the integrity of the Art or a friend?

Now, I am sure that Dr. Gaerte regards Mr. Gunning as his friend, or at the very least a friendly colleague. I am sure that

this resolution was a difficult one. I am also very sure that he would NEVER make an "impulsive" decision. I'm willing to bet that Gaerte has been observing the "official" productions for years, as well as noting the trends of FANTASTIC student-led productions on campus. Which allows me to address the following: I am saddened by the disillusion of some of the members of the theatrical community at Houghton who don't acknowledge the AMAZING student-led productions that have occurred here within the past few years.

The student productions here have been incredibly "professional." Sure, every once and a while you'll do one and think "what have I gotten myself into," but that goes without saying. I've been a part of ACTUAL professional productions, paying gigs in established theaters, and have thought that very thing. The fact that these fantastic student shows are being put on with little to no funding, have to scrounge and fight for performance space at a college that does not have a truly suitable venue for theatrical productions, and STILL manage to put on great shows speaks to their impressive competence. Another comment on their level of professionalism: they all work with each other. Last year this campus saw an astonishing number of student theatrical productions. Not one of them stepped on each other's toes. Casts were encouraged to participate in other productions. Directors worked with other directors to create rehearsal schedules to share space as well as performers. Rehearsals were cancelled so that actors in one show could go and display their support for the other show. Talk about professionalism! The comment

on how cast members in official college shows "work harder" was also particularly biting and completely ludicrous. The fact that student shows are belittled as merely a "supplement" is downright insulting. As someone who has participated in a wide variety of theatre here on campus including official college productions, I can tell you these assumptions made about student-led theatre groups are incorrect.

Truth be told, I, a card-carrying, nobody's-more-nuts-for-theatre-than-me nerd, applaud Dr. Gaerte for his decision. The Glass Menagerie performed four shows. Our maximum audience, which included about 60 people (in an auditorium that seats five times as many), happened on opening night. Each night after that looked emptier than the last. From what I have heard, this was a part of a trend. There is nothing worse or more disappointing than performing to an empty audience. When people aren't coming to the "The Glass Menagerie," a theatre classic, something needs to change. To Miss Trask and any student or faculty who supports her views, I am truly sorry you are hurting over this temporary (not indefinite as the article so clearly misstated) loss of college-sponsored plays and I resonate with your concerns, but until a program with solid credentials is established, maybe it is for the best. Trust me when I say Dr. Gaerte has too much respect for theatre to let it die in Houghton. Perhaps that is part of the reason why he made this decision after all.

Amber is a senior ICE major

## The Penultimate Word / The Perils of Negative Political Strategy



by ELISA SHEARER

ABC news recently aired an interview with Newt Gingrich's second wife: she reported that he asked her (with whom he cheated on his first wife while she had cancer) to agree to an open marriage with him so he could continue a relationship with his mistress (now third wife).

When asked to comment in the recent presidential debate, Gingrich replied with a scathing critique of the moderator and of media in general, which was greeted with multiple standing ovations from the South Carolina audience (Republicans often criticize the media and it is a popular talking point throughout the party), 65% of which was Evangelical Christian. In the South Carolina primary two days later, Gingrich beat Mitt Romney by an impressive 12% (even more astonishing considering he was trailing Romney in the polls by 10%). 46% of self-reported Evangelical Christians voted for Gingrich in the South Carolina primary.

Why would a crowd, composed mainly of evangelicals, value their love of spite for the media over an extraordinary account of personal infidelity?

Of course, considering personal character in a political candidate is not necessarily the way to choose the most effective

and productive political leaders. John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton both had less-than-stellar relationships in their closets, but both remain very popular presidents. But Gingrich's actions (and the pattern of activity in the Republican primary) are not just about the issue of a candidate's personal life; the fact that his negative and argumentative rhetoric does not offer positive facts about his credentials but only attacks anyone who attacks him. This, I think, is a key factor in the increasingly lamented depravity of the advancing election process.

At a speech in Florida on Tuesday, Mitt Romney stood beneath a giant banner that said, in caps, "Obama isn't Working." The philosophy of this strategy is immensely troubling: with it, Romney is defining himself and his political values negatively (the other guy stinks!) instead of positively (I am qualified!). The poster does, at least subconsciously, lessen my conception of the current administration, but it does nothing for my confidence in Mitt Romney as a leader; it submits lazy criticism without offering any sort of constructive statements. Most public political arguments today are the philosophical equivalent of a temper tantrum.

Negative campaigns are lazy and immoral and (consequently) destructive. But the reality of the elective process is that negative campaigns work; and people choose candidates based on the public assessment of their overall charisma as much as (probably more than) their political credentials. A Princeton study gave subjects second-long glimpses at black-and-white photos of politicians running for office; the results of the elections indicated that those subjective first assessments were right 70% of the time. Our subconscious is affecting our decisions, especially in politics, more than we'd probably like to admit. Emotional and familial ties to various political parties and opinions run deeper into our

motivations than any objective decision we think we've made.

This is not necessarily a bad thing; if we tried to operate on a solely unemotional basis we'd be paralyzed in most common social situations. People do not act wholly rationally, and that's okay; it's an important aspect of society and humanity. But being emotionally invested in our opinions causes us to identify ourselves via those opinions and others who hold them; it also causes us to violently defend ourselves. This in turn, sadly and ironically, causes us to lose a part of our humanity.

Affectations of certainty are the core of the degradation of the current political culture, I think, and Christians and college students seem to be just as guilty as the average American (of either party) of assisting that degradation.

Sadly, it seems that political activity today can be defined as scoffing at anyone from the opposite party without being aware of their actual views. Political loyalty requires the refusal to admit that policy change affecting a population of 300 million could require nuance, and that there may yes indeed be quite a few exceptions-to-rules. Political argument involves asserting that one's own personal political philosophy is all-encompassing of every problem faced by governance ever. Political maturity is proven by shouting responses to politicians on the television.

People calling themselves the followers of Christ should not support negative philosophies based on clichés and anti-

values. People calling themselves lovers of truth should not snidely dismiss the suggestion that society's most complex problems require more nuanced policy change than their own bull-headed solutions.

Any person who considers him- or herself a Christian, a student, or a member of society should not adopt this self-satisfied and contemptuous attitude.

Any person who considers him- or herself a Christian, a student, or a decent member of society should not adopt the self-satisfied and contemptuous attitude that coats so much of current political discourse. The trend of demeaning opponents with substance-less rhetoric is most painfully obvious in individual politicians, but reflects a sneering, childish tone that has descended upon two-party extremist politics in general.

While we cannot fix the idiosyncrasies of human behavior, we do have, if we intend to be members of society, a responsibility to remain aware of them and their effects on our actions and the actions of those around us. A small conscious awareness of the fallibility of a campaign based only on negative arguments will do a mountain of good compared to the comfort-seeking, obstinate attitude that is our alternative. I know that it seems like it'd be much nicer to not pay attention at all, but as long as we pay taxes and use highways, we inescapably are involved: a vigilance against lazy and anti-human political culture is a necessity for anyone preparing to become independent and employed.

Elisa is a senior English and psychology major

# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK / War and the American Ideal



by CHRIS HARTLINE

A few weeks ago, a video surfaced with four American soldiers urinating on the bodies of two Taliban soldiers in Afghanistan. One of the soldiers joked, "Golden, like a shower" and another looked down at the bodies and wished them a "good day." All of this was captured on video and, as with almost everything captured on video these days, uploaded to YouTube.

The response from the powers that be was swift and damning. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta called the act deplorable -- the White House agreed -- and Arizona Senator John McCain, a former POW in Vietnam, said it tarnished the image and reputation of the Marine Corps.

Nancy Sherman, a professor of Philosophy at Georgetown University and the first distinguished chair in ethics at the U.S. Naval Academy, said, "the act is a violation of professional military conduct and the fundamental moral requirement in war of showing dignity and

respect to the dead." Furthermore, the act of urinating on a corpse is not sadistic or driven by anger -- feelings that would be understandable, though acting on them still unacceptable -- it is an act of degradation and shame. Particularly in an environment of religious tension between the Middle East and the West, an act such as this is pure stupidity and has both strategic and philosophical implications.

Earlier this week, a member of the Afghan National Army (our allies) killed four French soldiers. The soldier said he did it because of the video of the American soldiers degrading the body of his countryman. Reports have also surfaced that the Taliban and Al Qaeda have begun using this video as a recruitment tool. These are the real implications of the stupidity shown in the video. Lives have been lost, will continue to be lost, and the enemy will become stronger because of it.

But there is a greater issue at stake: the moral standing of the American Republic and its example to the world. Some have come out in recent weeks to criticize the Obama Administration's response to the conflict. Florida Congressman Allen West, a former Army Lieutenant Colonel, said "the Marines were wrong... As for everyone else, unless you have been shot at by the Taliban, shut your mouth, war is hell." Texas Governor Rick Perry said the desecration was a "stupid mistake," called the criticism "over the top," and claimed it reflected the Obama Administration's "disdain for the military."

California Congressman Duncan

Hunter also urged that the marines "not be used for the purpose of making a statement to our partners in the region" meaning the soldiers shouldn't be punished harshly simply to mend relationships with Afghan President Hamid Karsai or the Taliban during efforts at peace talks. The most stunning of defenses I've heard came from a woman on talk radio who defended the marines by saying "they're just kids."

This incident is not simply a mistake, a moment of unsound judgment. Marines are some of the most highly trained soldiers in the world, but more importantly all U.S. soldiers understand they are not simply "killing machines" but are rather the most numerous and visible representatives of the ideals of America in the world.

Congressman West is right. War is hell. He went on to compare the incident to the American soldiers dragged through the streets of Mogadishu (made famous by the movie Black Hawk Down), and those tortured, beheaded and hanged in Iraq and Afghanistan. War is hell, but what sets the United States apart is the way it carries itself in the world, represented by the very soldiers who have been trained to kill

-- an interesting paradox. Whether in China, Burma, Syria or Rwanda, the United States has always opposed human rights violations and fought tirelessly -- using diplomatic and military means -- to defeat these abuses. That is what we represent. Those marines were not only degrading the bodies of their enemies: they were degrading the very ideals they are fighting to protect and defend.

Alexis de Tocqueville once said, "Two things in America are astonishing: the changeableness of most human behavior and the strange stability of certain principles. Men are constantly on the move, but the spirit of humanity seems almost unmoved." On that day, the spirit of our humanity was moved, and for that moment we shrank in our stature and example.

Chris is a senior political science and history major

Those marines were not only degrading the bodies of their enemies: they were degrading the very ideals they are fighting to protect and defend.

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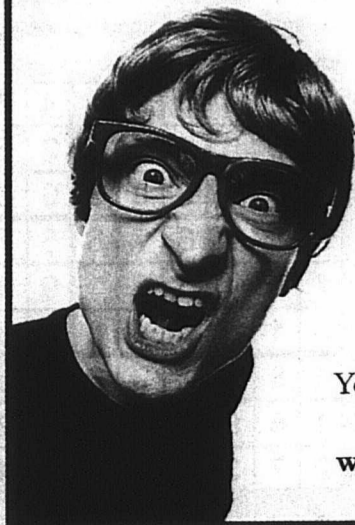
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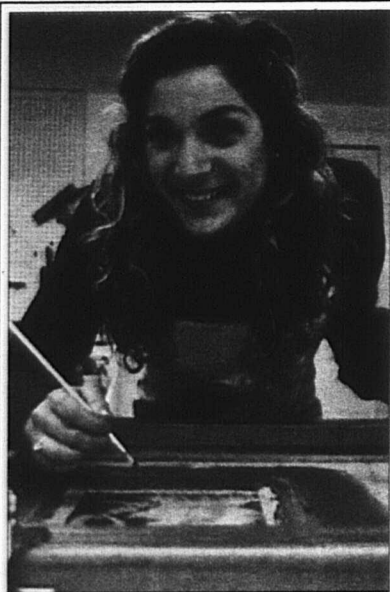
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Lipscomb  
Faculty Adviser

# ARTIST OF THE WEEK



ANDREA PACHECO

## LINDSAY BURGHER

Perhaps I owe my love for art to the very inspiration of the world around me, and to my mom, who shares the same passion and appreciation for art as I do. As an artist, I feel it's my duty to find beauty in everything. The various forms, textures, color, shades and even movements in my everyday life encourage me to convey my thoughts and feelings through a pencil or brush. I thank the Lord for specific people here at Houghton, who are expanding my knowledge in the art realm and giving me the desire to put myself in everything I create.

*Lindsay is a junior art major with a minor in psychology.*

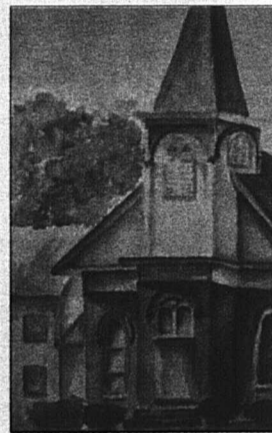
**Top-bottom:**

"Untitled", charcoal unfinished, charcoal

"Erin", graphite

"Angelica Church", watercolor

"Gillette", watercolor



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

# SUDOKU

To win a free Java drink, bring your finished puzzle, clearly marked with your full name and CPO, to the Star office in the basement of the Campus Center (deadline: WED 1/25 by 5PM)

120 Seconds Solution:

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

Just want a puzzle solver?  
 THE PUZZLER  
 Your solution will be sent  
 to you through campus  
 mail.