



LUKE LAUER
CAFFEINATED CREATIVE |
FEATURES, P. 5

the houghton STAR

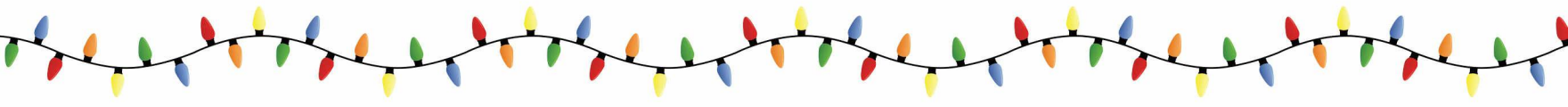
Houghton College's Student Newspaper Since 1909

FTD ED: DEATH, JOY, AND
CHRISTMASTIME | OPINIONS, P. 6

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FIVE IRON FRENZY | FEATURES, P. 5

ARTIST OF THE WEEK:
JANE STAIRS | FEATURES, P. 8

December 13 2013 Vol. 110, No. 12



College Receives NetVUE Grant

LEAH WILLIAMS

Houghton recently received a \$50,000 grant for networking for vocation in undergraduate education. This grant was given to Houghton by the Council of Independent Colleges, a group of which Houghton has been a part for many years. This grant is intended to help colleges who wish to expand on their vocational programs and services. "The overall goal of this grant is to help transform our authentic but often informal mentoring for vocation," said associate dean for academic affairs Mark Hijleh.

Along with Mark Hijleh, the grant team which will be providing leadership to this initiative includes Robert Pool, vice president for student life; Professor Rich Eckley; Dan Noyes, executive director of alumni relations; Brian Reitnour, career services coordinator; Michael Jordan, dean of the chapel; and Mark Hunter, CASA director.

See NETVUE page 3

Congratulations, December Graduates!



KATHRYN-ROSE MELLO

Men's Basketball to Play Against Division I



Current roster for the men's basketball team

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GRETCHEN REEVES

This winter break the men's varsity basketball team will be up against a competitive rival, Radford University, in their upcoming game on Monday, December 30th. Radford, a Division I school, will be the first Division I school the team has played since their game against SUNY Buffalo in 2010. Although Houghton is currently a Division III school, athletics faculty are quick to point out that this is not necessarily a discouraging fact. "The perception that Division III is not serious is an incorrect perception," said Skip Lord, executive director of athletics, stating that the top 15-20 schools in Division III are competitive against bottom-tier schools in Division I. "Of course, they want to bring in someone where there's a higher probability to win," he added, but maintained that this is still an opportunity for the

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See BASKETBALL page 3

Houghton and Indiana Wesleyan Pursue Partnership

STEPHANIE FORD

Houghton College signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU), beginning dialogue about their future partnership. Through this partnership, Houghton hopes to develop online and adult education and see Houghton thrive in this 21st century's changing world.

IWU president David Wright and President Mullen signed the MOU on November 18, 2013. The MOU simply indicates that Houghton and IWU will be discussing this partnership. Specific proposals will be presented December 20th.

"There's a really strong sense right now," said President Mullen, "that we both have something to contribute to one another." IWU has strong, established online and adult education programs, and it hopes to develop in global education and service, areas considered to be some of Houghton's strengths.

President Mullen envisions peo-

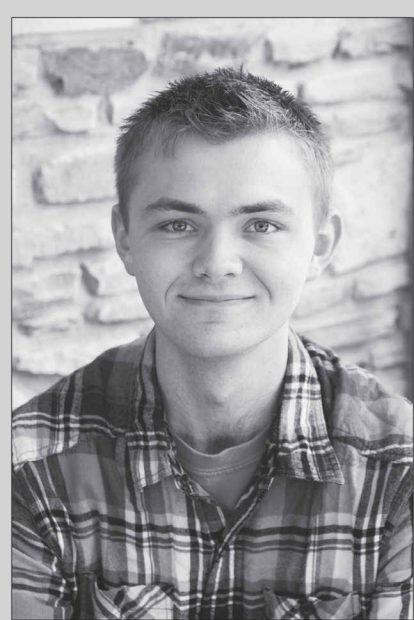
ple in parallel roles at the institutions potentially visiting the other campus, leading workshops in their expertise, and dialoguing with each other. She said, "The goal is for them to help us move faster and with greater magnitude than we could on our own." IWU could assist Houghton with online and adult education coursework, templates, and curriculum.

This partnership will not, however, involve a merger between Houghton and IWU. President Mullen said, "This will not affect the governance of our institution, it will not affect our affiliation, and it's not going to affect our athletics." The partnership would merely be drawing on the two institutions' collective resources.

Houghton College's original mission when it began in the 1880s was to make high quality, Christian education affordable and accessible to students. President Mullen said, "The mission is the same, but the mediation of that mission cannot stay the same because the world is changing."

See PARTNERSHIP page 3

WORLD // World Leaders Pay Respects at Mandela's Funeral



LUKE LAUER

CALEB JOHNSON

December 8 at the age of 95 after a persistent lung infection.

According to the Washington Post, huge crowds of mourners filled a soccer stadium in Soweto, South Africa where together they sang and clapped, memorializing Mandela as a racial healer, a figure so humble and transcendent that he felt comfortable with rich and poor, young and old, black and white. The service lasted for four hours with many emotional tributes and joyous song about a great leader lost. This all happened during an intense rainstorm which, according to tradition, symbolizes the passing of a great leader into the afterlife.

The venue of the memorial service, Soweto, is symbolic for many South Africans. The Washington Post writes that Soweto was the site of the 2010 World Cup tournament and the last time Mandela was seen in public. Moreover, Soweto was a formerly segregated township that was at the center of anti-apartheid protests in the 1970s and 1980s, a fitting place for South Africans of all backgrounds and color to unite to mourn a leader who fought against this segregation.

Among the mourners were over ninety presidents and prime minis-

ters from around the world, including U.S. President Barack Obama, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and British Prime Minister David Cameron. According to the BBC, Obama, who was cheered as he took the podium to offer a eulogy to Mandela, remarked that "we will never see the likes of Nelson Mandela again. While I will always fall short of Madiba [Mr. Mandela's clan name], he makes me want to be a better man." Cuban President Raul Castro, whose brother Fidel showed much support for Mandela's anti-apartheid cause, also stated during his eulogy address that Mandela was the "ultimate symbol of dignity and the revolutionary struggle." Other mourners included many celebrities, such as Charlize Theron, who was born in South Africa, along with Bono, Oprah Winfrey, Peter Gabriel, and Sir Richard Branson.

While President Obama may have been cheered, the warm welcome was not spread to current South African President Jacob Zuma, who was booed and jeered as he prepared to give his closing address. According to Reuters, Zuma's government is currently in the midst of numer-

ous corruption scandals, upsetting many South Africans who view him as a fraction of the man that Mandela was. Undeterred by the booing, the BBC reports that Zuma stated that Mandela was "one of a kind...a fearless freedom fighter who refused to allow the brutality of the apartheid state to stand in way of the struggle for the liberation of his people." Additionally, Zuma announced the renaming of a number of public buildings. This includes the Union Buildings in the capital Pretoria, where Mandela will lie in state until December 13, which will soon be known as the Mandela Amphitheatre.

The ceremony concluded with a speech by South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who asked the crowd to rise to their feet for a final tribute. On December 15, a state funeral for Nelson Mandela will be held before his body is interred in a family burial plot. ★

Caleb is a senior international relations and history double major.

WORD ON THE STREET



LUKE LAUER

"I think more activities planned on the weekend would be a good idea because it seems like a lot of on-campus events occur on Fridays and tend to overlap, but then when it comes to Saturdays and Sundays, people often go off campus because there's not much to do."

--Lindsey Hawkins, junior

"I would love to see the old milkshakes come back to Big Al's because the new ones are a hollow shell of their former selves. And I would love that Mr. Professor Lipscomb's chapel blog be revived in some way."

--Luke Rosamilia, sophomore



LUKE LAUER

What changes would you like to see on campus next semester?

"Students should be allowed to park at the bank for ten minutes to use the bank without getting a ticket. It's absurd."

--Billy Marshall, senior

"I would like to see more art history classes like the history of graphic design and the history of interior design. Stuff like that."

--Hayley Day, junior



LUKE LAUER

"Trays in the cafeteria."

--Caleb Johnson, senior

"I guess if there's one change I'd wanna see on campus... I think Houghton needs a really big spiritual revival to get itself back with God."

--Ian Patrick, freshman



LUKE LAUER



LUKE LAUER

BASKETBALL *from page 1*

men's team.

The chance to play against a Division I school is considered a beneficial and constructive one. "There are a lot of reasons to go into it," said Drew Hannan, head coach of the men's basketball team. "Generally speaking, the reason for us to go is the opportunity to play against that level of competition. ...[I]t's an opportunity to really test yourself against a very good team, a very good program...." Lord described it as a "unique opportunity ... to play a game that you probably wouldn't get to play otherwise." Chris Enlow, junior and a member of the team, sees the game as an opportunity to show a moral victory to any spectators. "If we come away from it together and just stick together through it, we can sort of make a statement to the Empire 8 that 'Hey, we can actually play basketball; don't just look down on us,'" he said.

In addition to providing a substantial challenge to players, the college also benefits from financial compensation from competitors. The practice of scheduling "guarantee games" between a higher-ranked school and a lower-ranked one is not uncommon amongst institutions of higher education. Each game a pair of schools plays is contracted for a certain time and place and financial consideration is often included in such contracts. Talks for such a game between Radford and Houghton began last April even though the men's team had already filled its schedule at that point. The decision to play against Radford was made in June after a space opened

up.

In Houghton's case, a "modest sum," as Lord described, was provided to the college by Radford to cover travel and lodging expenses. As the team boasts 20 members, this allows them to travel with a bigger roster. "We're not able to get any frills or extra stuff with it, but we are able to then travel with a bigger squad than we'd normally be able to carry," said Hannan. In previous years, extraneous funds have been used for other team expenses. "Even if there is money left in the budget, it goes right back in the institutional kitty," explained Lord. Added Hannan, "I know one year we were able to use the money to buy uniforms, at least partially. It's not a huge amount that doubles our budget or anything, but it's enough to help some."

Occasionally upsets do happen; Houghton has won guarantee games against colleges in higher divisions before. The chance of winning is still present. Overall, players remain optimistic, albeit anxious. "[O]ur guys are excited about it," said Hannan. "There are some nerves coming in terms of playing a team that you know is going to be extremely talented. ...[G]enerally the first few minutes are very difficult in that game; then you just adjust to that style, that level of play." "Anything can happen," said Enlow. "Like they say in football, 'Any given Sunday.' Really, if we go down there and play our top game... who knows?" When asked about the possibility of an upset, he laughed. "If we end up winning, we better get a freakin' parade when we get back here." ★



Brennen Campbell plays defense

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PARTNERSHIP *from page 1*

That is what this moment is about at Houghton."

Developing Houghton's online and adult education programs could facilitate residential students taking more summer classes and graduating early, high school students having dual enrollment with Houghton, and non-traditional students enrolling more easily.

"If you look at where the growing populations are," said President Mullen, "They're in the cities, among the international students, among

part-time students, and among adult learners. I see online and adult education opening more access points to Houghton students."

President Mullen believes Houghton needs to face the realities of this 21st century time. She said, "If we do not find creative ways to enter these partnerships now, then we're not going to be drawing the benefit that will strengthen the institution for greater prosperity in the future.... My confidence is in the mission of Houghton and in God's faithfulness to call us and make us adequate for that mission.... This is something to celebrate." ★



Mullen and Wright sign a memorandum

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NETVUE *from page 1*

"Consistency" was one of Robert Pool's choice words when describing the hopes he had for the vocational program. "I hope there is more consistency in the questions professors ask students as well as the answers they give them." Pool hopes that when students meet with their advisors, discussions will be more along the lines of what the student's strengths and weaknesses are as well as what they plan to do in the future. Through that the professor could connect them with alumni, as well as set up interviews and internships for that student. "We already have these things available to the students but we hope to make it more intentional."

Currently, Houghton's vocational programs include Transitions, sophomore retreat, HELP Day, guest executive dinners, Imitators of Christ, academic capstone projects, and alumni connections. "Houghton has supported students in vocational aspiration all along, but this project will help us bring together many elements of this exploration into a more coherent and effective whole," said Hijleh.

"What we want students to be able to ask themselves is, 'Who am I?', 'Who am I in Christ?', 'What's my purpose?' and 'How can I use my

services?' We are trying to prepare students for lives of significance," said Pool.

Current students as well as future students will benefit from this program. "We will be able to communicate the program's coherence and benefits to prospective students and their families, which we believe will make the value of a Houghton education much clearer," said Hijleh. Hannah Zgrablich, junior, said, "I'm interested to see how this program will develop. It would be extremely useful to focus more on our future careers while we're in school so as not to be in complete shock when it's time to face the real world."

Hijleh, along with the rest of the grant team have high hopes for this program. "All of this will come together over the next two years in the form of 'VOCA' a new center for exploration of vocation. Students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members will have access to and be encouraged to make use of materials and programs that assist them with making connections between spiritual formation, Christian calling, academic advising, coursework and co-curricular activities, career development and professional networking in the context of Houghton's mission to 'to lead and labor as scholar-servants in a changing world.'" ★



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email us at:
editor@houghtonstar.com

Houghton's Best Kept Secret: Reference Librarians



Library reference desk.

LUKE LAUER

DAVID SMITH

Although the Willard J. Houghton Library may be a familiar place for most students, often the reference desk goes unnoticed even though it is adjacent to the computers by the entrance.

While the reference desk is barren, this absence of clutter is in direct contrast to the immense knowledge which each librarian can access. In addition to being reference librarians, David Stevick oversees the

library, Glen Avery works with Houghton's instructional technology such as Moodle, Brad Wilber heads up reference as a whole, and Betty Bunt specializes in cataloguing. Yes, they are quite busy, but each puts student needs first when at the reference desk.

When you attempt to do research on the Internet, "the whole realm of knowledge may confront you," Stevick said. Therefore, it is necessary to "separate the chaff" of information, finding the best resources one can. Avery said when he is searching for information a student needs, "I become Sherlock Holmes and

try to find resources the student can use for that paper." Indeed, Wilber said one quality he would like to instill in students is persistence in finding resources. "Seek quality," Avery said, "no matter what you do and in the resources you seek. Never give that up. Never say, 'This is good enough.'"

In order to aid students in finding materials, Wilber said reference librarians accept requests in person, by email, and even by text message. "If there are new ways of reference," Wilber said, the library "jumps on board." He also mentioned that librarians will follow up by email with students who initially come into the library for help, establishing a relationship where Wilber said "we get to see the same student through the process" to see how he or she is doing with the project or paper. In addition to searching for information, the reference librarians provide students with skills such as narrowing the focus of one's paper. Avery said he helps his clients hone in on their topic. Whereas one might say one would like to work on the topic of war, Avery said his job is "to find materials a student is passionate about," bringing the topic down to a more manageable one on the Japanese internment during World War II, to name one possibility.

In selecting an area to study, Avery said one might find a "void, what's not been written"; while one may need to modify one's topic, Avery said he hopes to encourage students to fill that void. However, not all voids can be filled. Wilber

mentioned that, at a previous reference position, he received several requests he couldn't fulfill, much to the disappointment of someone looking for a photograph of Julius Caesar and another trying to locate a sound-recording of dinosaurs.

As part of being a reference librarian, Stevick said one must have an M.A. in Library Science. In his own case, Stevick noted that he was a Humanities major when he attended Houghton in the late '80s and early '90s. This has especially prepared him for his work since he received a broad introduction into many subjects; therefore, "things ring a bell quickly," he said, allowing him to direct students to appropriate topics and databases. Gesturing to a number of photos taken around the world including Machu Picchu and notable European landmarks, Avery said "travelling extensively and experiencing life in its various aspects" has made him a better librarian.

There are so many "subjects, questions and people to meet," Wilber said, talking about how he enjoys being "exposed to all of the disciplines the college is teaching." And yet, the reference librarians love working with students just as much: Avery said that "when a student comes a sits down beside me, that makes my day." Students do not recognize "how eager we are to be of service," Wilber said. Many times students will wander over to the desk and say "I'm sorry to bother you," Wilber said. "No! That's what we want to do and like to do." ★

DAILY CALENDAR

13 / FRIDAY

Athletics

6 PM | WBB vs. SUNY Canton

CAB Midnight Breakfast

10 PM | Dining Hall

16 / MONDAY

Final Exams

Cash for Books

1 - 3 PM | Campus Store

17 / TUESDAY

Final Exams

Cash for Books

9 AM - 3 PM | Campus Store

18 / WEDNESDAY

Final Exams

Cash for Books

9 AM - 3 PM | Campus Store

19 / THURSDAY

Final Exams

Cash for Books

9 AM - 3 PM | Campus Store

Movie Review: "Thor: The Dark World"

GLENN HAMPSON

Before diving into the actual film itself, can we just take a moment to admire the genius that is behind the Marvel franchise? This brand is a money-making juggernaut, and its momentum is now unstoppable. To introduce each superhero in their own separate movie before combining them all into the behemoth that was the first Avengers film was completely unprecedented and truly brilliant.

With that being said, I felt as though Thor 2: The Dark World is the 5-minute breather that Marvel had to take before cranking out A+ superhero movies again. The movie exceeds expectations as far as special effects and fight scenes are concerned, and Chris Hemsworth (Thor) and Tom Hiddleston (Loki) put on great performances. However, the writers who created the storyline seemed confused as to what movie they were writing. Allow me to explain.

The plot begins thousands of years ago, when Thor's grandfather led the forces of Asgard in a war against the Dark Elves. Their leader, Malekith, had created a super weapon—otherworldly floating goo called "the Aether" that turns everything into darkness—but he was defeated before he could deploy it. The Asgardians, unable to destroy the Aether, decided instead to "bury it deep where no one can find it." Surely, this problem will never surface again thousands of years later.

Fast forward to the present; Thor has returned to Asgard, leaving his love-interest, astrophysicist Jane Foster (played by Natalie Portman), behind on Earth. While searching for a way to contact Thor, Jane stumbles into an alternate dimension, where she comes into contact with—whoops, it wasn't deep enough—the Aether. This alien fluid enters her



Thor: The Dark World movie poster.

IMDB.COM

body and refuses to leave. Malekith and his army, who have been in suspended animation and conveniently forgotten on their starship all this time, are awakened by Jane's meddling and come looking for the Aether.

So now Frodo, Sam, and their friends must try to destroy both the Ring and Sauron before they usher Middle Earth into a new age of darkness.

Oops, I mean:

So now Thor, Jane, and their friends must try to destroy both the Aether and Malekith before the latter usher the universe into a new age of darkness.

It seems as though director Alan Taylor just copy-and-pasted some of Tolkien's ideas, which takes away from some of the originality that defined the first Thor. However, with that said, I'd still recommend seeing this film in theaters. The battle scenes are breathtaking, and with the storyline of The Dark World taking place all over the universe, it's really a

sight to behold on the big screen.

Perhaps the biggest draw would be to see the character development that occurs in Loki and Thor. The uninspiring script is transcended by the now revealed backstory of these two characters and their relationship between each other. During the course of the film, we learn that Loki may not be the all-around villain that he was portrayed to be in the recent Avengers movie, while Thor makes some self-realizations of his own. Watching these two interact is as satisfying as watching the action sequences.

In conclusion, I enjoyed this film enough to say that it is worth the price of admission. Thanks to the success of the Avengers, every Marvel film from here on out is a must-see anyway. It does not matter if Chris Hemsworth was replaced by a trained monkey at this point. As long as there is a 3-minute clip after the credits roll of a sneak preview of Avengers 2, that movie ticket is money well spent. ★

Caffeinated Creative Studios: For Your Design Fix

STEPHANIE FORD

The half coffee cup of the “Caffeinated Creative Studios” (CCS) logo has popped up on most of the campus’s bulletin boards and cafeteria table inserts this semester.

The six students who form the CCS team have designed posters, logos, e-mail ads, and banners. They’re regularly asked, “Do you get paid for this?” *Nope.* “Do you receive course credit?” *We may in the future, but not this semester.* “So you’re just super nice?”

They really are nice, but that’s not their sole motivation for working on designs and ads.

Yinka Araromi and Josh Duttweiler, members of the CCS team, lounged on the grey couches in the Chamberlain Center Atrium. They’d both come from working in the Mac lab.

Duttweiler shared, “We started Caffeinated because we wanted to get some real world experience with design. We knew that clubs and organizations on campus were looking for advertisements, and we knew we wanted to get involved.”

The CCS team consists of Yinka Araromi, Josh Duttweiler, Nicole Mason, Amy Coon, Alex Hood, and Morgan Loghry. They are each communication and art majors who are interested in graphic design and hope to potentially work in professional design in the future.

Araromi said, “I hope this is kind of good practice for me to understand how this kind of business works.” He looked at Duttweiler, laughed, and said, “I pretty much talk about it every day. I don’t know about Josh, but I talk about it every day. It seems to come up at least once a day.”

Duttweiler said this service is available to Houghton College student organizations, academic departments, and residence life staff. People can find them on Facebook and start their design



Joshua Duttweiler '15, Amy Coon '14, and Yinka Araromi '14 of Caffeinated Creative Studios.

LUKE LAUER

requests.

Araromi said, “I usually check when the jobs come in every day. I see who of us is maybe the least busy and then I ask them first. Then if they can’t do it, I’ll send it to the next person. We then send the designs to each other to kind of like critique. We don’t send anything out until most of us are okay with it.”

Duttweiler described this collaborative process, saying, “The clients have something they envision. And then it’s what they envision and what you envision and the design, and what’s the best way to communicate. So there’s a lot of back and forth, making sure everyone is happy.”

Once a month the CCS team meets to

plan and dream. Duttweiler grinned and said, “There’s coffee!” “Josh brings the Keurig,” said Araromi, “I bring the snacks. Always chips and dip and chocolate.” “We sit around in the presentation room close to the computers,” said Duttweiler. “And I feel like half of it is kind of socializing, and half it is kind of business,” said Araromi.

Duttweiler also shared the story of CCS’s name. He said, “We spent months putting together lists of names. Kind of like the idea of caffeine, you know energy and excitement, and it’s kind of a cool thing, coffee, especially at college. And then creative studios – it all fit.” Araromi added, “‘Caffeinated’ just felt appropriate for students.” He grinned.

“We do consume a lot of caffeinated beverages.”

This semester, CCS has been overwhelmed by the positive response they’ve received. Duttweiler said, “We got a lot more interest than we expected originally. We’re glad that people can trust us and want us.” Araromi and Duttweiler shared that this support gives them confidence that CCS can continue into the future. Araromi said, “It’s meeting a kind of need at the college.”

“Caffeinated was created to inspire, train, inform and empower students,” said Araromi. “It’s exciting.” ★

Album Review: Five Iron Frenzy, “Engine of a Million Plots”

ABBY ERLANSON

Five Iron Frenzy. The band’s name honors a golf club swinging paranoiac. Its albums have names like *All the Hype That Money Can Buy*, *It’s Funny but Not Very Creative*, and *Our Newest Album Ever!* (exclamation point not mine). A few of its songs quote literary figures like Edgar Allan Poe and Shakespeare, while others feature imaginary scenarios with dancing glittery unicorns or hungry wizards.

And it’s a Christian band. Earnestly, realistically Christian.

If this description intrigues you, stop reading and go listen to Five Iron Frenzy’s new album, *Engine of a Million Plots*. If the description has confused, alarmed, or disgusted you, then please keep reading.

Five Iron Frenzy is a ska-core band, meaning they combine the reggae-like rhythms and prominent horn sections of ska with the fast, intense, and sometimes abrasive sounds of hardcore punk rock. The band formed in 1995, released nine albums between then and 2004, and after a nine year gap released a tenth album in November of this year. The latest album, *Engine of a Million Plots*, features twelve of the band’s characteristically weird, spirited, and astute reflections on life. The music—with its strong beat, catchy melodies, exuberant horn playing, and hint of melancholy—is fantastic. However, the album’s greatest strength is in the lyrics to its songs.

That is, once they make sense. Listening casually, I found the meaning of these songs difficult to grasp. This is partly because the words can blend into the music and partly because the words often seem

nonsensical. The snippets “we are professors at robot spy college,” or “I fight tsunamis with an umbrella” for example, don’t convey much. However, reading the full lyrics revealed commentary on despair, arrogance, lost faith, and tightly held hope. The album presents a complex picture of Christianity—alternately joking bitterly about its failures, regretting times when it is lost, and triumphing in the confidence it offers.

The song “Zen and the Art of Xenophobia,” for example, mocks the hypocrisy and disdain of so-called Christians. With biting sarcasm, the lyrics say to “cling to your god and guns,” and to “lock and load—just like Jesus did.” The line “give me liberty...or something” highlights the loss of ideals, while the suggestion to “turn your wine back into water” evokes the self-righteous Pharisees’ rejection of Jesus’s miracles. The final words, “and Jesus was American,” are a sharp rebuke for a false sense of superiority.

With an entirely different tone, the song “Blizzards and Bygones” reflects on the loss of a once vibrant faith. The song is resigned in attitude, with lyrics like “you look around but find yourself all alone, and you hunker down, but the cold’s already in your bones.” However, the portrayal of faith is beautiful and loving. The song contrasts the time “back when the angels of heaven would sing” with a time of “frost and no thaw,” and describes “a flicker of desire...a faintly glowing fire for some truth” that remains even when faith is gone.

Of all the songs on the album, “I’ve Seen the Sun” caught me most unaware

with the power of its lyrics. The details are vivid and chaotic—“I’m facing down death like a fly on the windshield. You bring the Warheads, I’m bringing ice cream” or “I’m screaming down into the black abyss...bells are ringing.” But they bring to life the central lines, “I’ve seen the sun come down...And in the dark of night I hold to its return.” This radical hope appears again in the words “tell me that I’m doomed and I’ll keep singing. The fight won’t end with me.” Then, in the last line, the song boldly celebrates the source of

such hope: “Savior says...everything’s gonna be alright.”

Five Iron Frenzy’s new album is simultaneously profound and playful, depressed and confident, accusing and joyful. A brief description should have made obvious that the band doesn’t take itself too seriously. Arguably because of this, *Engine of a Million Plots* offers a thought-provoking look at the real brokenness surrounding Christianity and the real salvation we find in Christ. ★



Engine of a Million Plots album cover.

PATHEOS.COM

TWO VIEWS

Is free-market capitalism good and just?



JOSEPH GILLIGAN

FACEBOOK

Each day we participate in the most just and free market system in the world. The iPhone we bought to talk to friends, the Pepsi we drank to keep us awake to study, the paycheck from work, are an integrative part of the free market. Dinesh D'Souza, former President of The King's College noted free market "capitalism satisfied the Christian demand for an institution that channels selfish human desire toward the betterment of society."

Author Michael Novak documents the origin of free enterprise to the Catholic's creation of Canon Law, which led to a common market and law system by establishing "jurisdictions of empire, nation, chartered city, guild [for] merchants, and entrepreneurs. It also provided local and regional arbitrators, jurists, negotiators, and judges. Now gears for windmills, harnesses for beasts of burden, ocean-going ship rudders, eyeglasses, and ironwork" were invented with the free flow of trade and ideas. Later the "Protestant Work Ethic" would bring ferocity for free markets documented in Max Weber's 1905 book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Book critic Tom Butler-Bowdon states Weber makes a compelling argument that Protestants made free markets worthy and morally just because "of the spirit of progress; the love of hard work for its own sake; the orderliness, punctuality and honesty; and the belief in a higher calling."

As history tells us, the free enterprise system has been the catalyst for the greatest strides in innovation, social mobility, and the standard of living. In a free enterprise system, allocation of goods through trade is not an exploitation of buyers by sellers, rather a mutual agreement of value between two consenting parties. However, many of today's liberal-progressives argue free enterprise is unethical resulting in a mal-distribution of wealth. They claim markets cause the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer. However, history has shown societies prospered from free market expansion which created a better standard of living for all income classes. When President Kennedy cut taxes for the upper class the economy blossomed. Kennedy remarked, "A ris-

ing tide lifts all boats." According to economist Arthur Laffer, the US's "purchasing power of the median income family rose to \$54,061 in 2004, an \$8,228 real increase since 1980. The middle class is not disappearing... it is getting richer." The poor have also benefited from these booms. A Treasury study on income mobility in the US from 1996 to 2004 found the bottom 20% of wage earners experienced a 109% (inflation adjusted) increase in income.

Critics of free enterprise often cite Sweden as a model of how socialism can work. Having a mother from Sweden and having visited many times, I know Sweden is a lovely country, but if Sweden is socialism's best argument, then the cases against socialism are many. It is true Sweden has relatively no poverty. On the other hand, economist Milton Friedman noted, "That is interesting because in America, among Scandinavians, we have no poverty either." Likewise less than 7% of Swedes and Swedish Americans live in poverty. However, the similarities end there considering how wealthy American Swedes are compared to their Swedish counterparts. A Swede's average income per year is \$36,600 while an American Swede's average income per year is \$56,900 according to author Kevin Williamson. A typical Swedish family would live in an 800 square foot apartment and own one car, while a typical Swedish-American family would own a 3000 square foot home and own two cars.

In addition, according to *Socialism* by Williamson, Sweden's GDP per capita was 20% higher than that of the US in 1980, but in 2001 not only was the US's GDP per capita higher, it was higher by an overwhelming 56%. Sweden also has more social rigidity than the US. Ironically, America is more egalitarian than Sweden. While income may be more equally distributed in Sweden, the US has distributed wealth more equally. Income and wealth are correlated in the US by high paying careers or entrepreneurship. In Sweden you are more likely wealthy because you inherited it.

The free enterprise system has benefited all economic classes and mankind's leap in innovation, social mobility, and our standard of living.

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On the other hand, collectivist societies have stifled innovation, while creating a rigid social mobility, driving down a lower standard of living. President Ronald Reagan once said, "Socialists ignore the side of man that is the spirit. They can provide you shelter, fill your belly with bacon and beans, treat you when you're ill, all the things guaranteed to a prisoner or a slave. They don't understand that we also dream." Similarly, Timothy 1:7 states, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The choice is clear. We must continue to dream. ★

Joe is a first year business and accounting major.



SHARON BRAUTIGAM

LUKE LAUER

While I agree with Joe Gilligan's point that free market capitalism has benefitted society through encouraging innovation and thereby increasing the wealth and living standards for societies as a whole, it is not immediately apparent whether these accomplishments classify capitalism as good and just. The statistic that Americans have a higher median income and standard of living than Swedes merely demonstrates that free market capitalism, as compared to socialism, may be a more effective route to materialist ends. In order

to take the next step and assert that capitalism is then good, one would need to assume that maximal wealth is the good to be pursued by an economic system. However, this would be to assume what capitalism already asserts: that the ultimate goal is maximization of profit. In order to avoid circular reasoning, the goodness of capitalism cannot be analyzed on the basis of resulting wealth. Fulfillment of materialist objectives, such as the effective production of goods and the increase of societal wealth, is a significant merit for an economic system, but does not provide adequate basis for qualifying capitalism as good and just. The standards of what is good and just for an economic system should be defined in ethical rather than purely economic terms.

The traditional ethical defense of capitalism is on the basis of freedom. According to Amartya Sen in *Development as Freedom*, while efficiency and the ability to improve living standards are important reasons to maintain free markets, "the more immediate case for the freedom of market transaction lies in the basic importance of that freedom itself." Though we might dispute how freedom should be defined or realized, most of us probably agree that freedom is intrinsically valuable, and the promotion of freedom is an acceptable basis for asserting that free market capitalism is "good."

The issue to be explored, then, is to what extent the theoretical good of free market capitalism—freedom—is actually realized in capitalist societies. In this context, the attainment of individual freedom will also be my criteria for measuring whether the system is just.

Perhaps the issue of greatest concern for individual freedom in capitalist societies is immense (and growing) wealth

and income disparity. The Gini coefficient, which measures the income inequality within a particular group, has risen enormously within countries with capitalist systems over the past quarter-century. Since China began capitalist market reforms in 1979, its baseline standard of living has increased considerably, but its Gini coefficient has increased from about 28 points (marking relatively equal economic distribution) in 1991 to over 47 points (marking gross inequality) in 2012.

While economic inequality is not necessarily inherently unjust, it may still pose a significant barrier to individual freedom, thereby perpetuating injustice. Individuals with less money have less freedom to act in various areas of life, for instance to access education or healthcare. Individuals with less money also have less power to influence what happens in society. This is particularly true in circumstances where wealth may literally buy political influence, a common occurrence in countries such as China. To the extent that the gross economic inequality associated with capitalism limits freedom, it is unjust.

Defenders of capitalism might respond by suggesting that the underlying structure of capitalism is just, however,

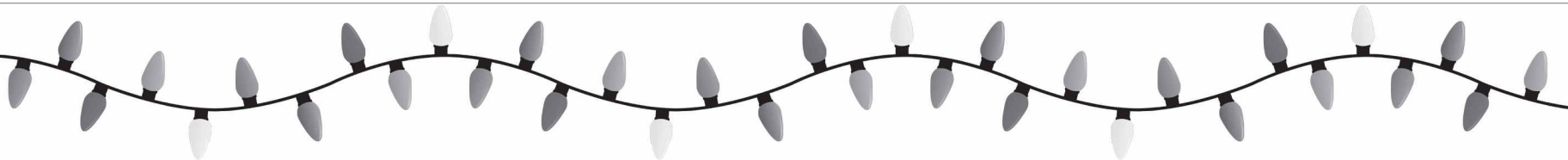
While economic inequality is not necessarily inherently unjust, it may still pose a significant barrier to individual freedom, thereby perpetuating injustice.

because it rewards individual effort and achievement with economic success. But basing economic justice solely on individual effort mistakenly assumes that individuals begin on level playing fields

with equal capabilities to succeed. A recent World Bank study showed that 80% of variability in a person's income is accounted for by country of birth and parental income level. The remaining 20% is primarily affected by sex, race, and other variables over which persons have no control; individual effort has a very small impact on economic success. Even in capitalist societies where there might be a stronger relationship between effort and success than exists globally, there is no question that factors over which an individual has no control significantly influence his or her life success or lack thereof, economic and otherwise. Although capitalism is structured individualistically, in reality, the "individuals" who take part in capitalism are shaped by communities.

So am I suggesting that free market capitalism is not good and just? Perhaps this is not the most relevant question. When evaluating capitalism, we must consider it in relation to alternate economic systems. Other systems might come closer to the ideal of the good and the just in some regards, but there are always tradeoffs. While free market capitalism cannot be unqualifiedly characterized as good and just, it may still be the best alternative. However, we must be careful to recognize the limitations of capitalism so that we can be open to pursuit of the good and just through whatever measures may be most effective rather than limiting ourselves to a single framework. ★

Sharon is a senior business major.



Disce aut Discede / Death, Joy, and Christmastime



LUKE LAUER

LYDIA WILSON

Christmas (or Hanukkah or Kwanzaa etc., but for my purposes Christmas), is fast approaching. School has a tendency to push the holiday to the background, but very soon we will be suddenly remembering that we must buy gifts for parents and siblings and best friends before slogging home through December slush. And when we arrive, we will be faced with the reality of how we feel about this particular holiday.

Christmas is associated with joy and warm fuzzies, and comes with a wildly heightened atmosphere, more so than any other holiday in our society. It's an atmosphere fed by people of many different backgrounds—Christians place exaggerated emphasis on family, love, and giving of oneself, and in general, everyone focuses on parties, food, festive décor, good cheer, and buying presents—of which consumer culture takes eager advantage.

In the movie *Love Actually*, a compilation romantic comedy set on the backdrop of the countdown to Christmas, the characters constantly use Christmas as both a reason and an excuse for their various behaviors. A secretary confesses her love to the Prime Minister, "Because, if you can't

say it at Christmas, when can you?" A groom's best friend confesses his love to the bride, "Just because it's Christmas, and at Christmas you tell the truth." A boss urges his employee to confess her love to her co-worker, because "It's Christmas." Much is expected at Christmas. Much is connoted—people are meant to experience love and people are meant to travel to their childhood homes to gather around warm hearths and exchange heartfelt gifts with loving family members.

It's a difficult time to have bad memories.

The hefty amount of people with disjointed families and/or scarring experiences can easily feel marginalized when the seeming majority is swimming in a dream of sugar plums and packages tied up in string. My parents announced their divorce in the fall of my 7th grade year. Christmas was the last day we were ever together as a family. Fortunately, my experience has not soured my feelings towards the holiday itself as much as it could have, and as much as it certainly has for others with similar or worse experiences.

Two years ago in a chapel service before Christmas break, Dr. Bruxvoort Lipscomb read her essay "On Death in December," explaining her associations between death and Christmas. She listed three tragic deaths her life that had each occurred in December, and each involved a mother losing a son. Her essay focused on a painting of Madonna and Child by Bellini in which the Christ-child appears dead, and she pointed out that Christmas is, in reality, the celebration of a baby who was born so that he could eventually die. She concluded with confession that when she thinks of the births of her own children, she thinks also of their inevitable death. In that moment, it seemed to me an unnecessarily morbid distortion of what

should be a joyful holiday.

A few weeks later, my aunt died.

I've since experienced my fair share of grief. My aunt was the second in a series of deaths of four loved ones over the past two years, and marked the first time that I glimpsed, from my stubborn place several rows back at the viewing, a disquietingly real body within a casket. Her death made true for me the words that Bruxvoort Lipscomb had shared: Christmas is indeed a season about "birthing death."

While this truth may not have always been apparent to me throughout my life, I know now that it was the only reality for my mother. At childhood Christmases she

Similar to the inflated perception of what a "Christian family" should look like, the concept of Christmas tradition is also far from what the Christian religion would actually call for.

needs to be sacred. Christmas needs to be changed. Christmas is perfect. Christmas is unimportant.

I don't think Christmas is really either of these things.

Similar to the inflated perception of what a "Christian family" should look like, the concept of Christmas tradition is also far from what

the Christian religion would actually call for. We started out with the basic idea for a celebration of Jesus' birth, and tacked on pagan practices along the way, partly to aid with evangelical efforts, partly just for fun. Like Valentine's Day, the holiday is now so strongly tied to distorted, Hollywood versions of love that do more harm than good. But Valentine's Day is a simple holiday, based primarily on legends and trivial customs. Christmas is not such a throwaway holiday. Christmas has roots that are vitally important to Christian beliefs, and it should not be treated in the same way. Both overly positive and overly negative perspectives on Christmas are too simplified to do it justice.

I have found great hope in the Christmas story of Jesus' birth and promise, but I have also found great hope in Bruxvoort Lipscomb's version of Christmas, one that takes an honest look at the future of the baby Jesus. Taking both viewpoints together can lend to the holiday the depth and dignity that it deserves. Don't cheat yourself this Christmas by focusing on only one aspect of your experience. To be sure, Christmas is a time of deep joy, but it is not a holiday to be taken lightly. ★

Lydia is a senior art and writing major

When we arrive home, we will be faced with the reality of how we feel about this particular holiday.

the connection between my sister and Jesus, until two years ago. But for her, and for Bruxvoort Lipscomb, and for many others like them, Christmas has always meant something a little different.

It's common for people with contrasting experiences to feel animosity towards one another. Those who have had mostly pleasant Christmases throughout their lives, as I have, tend to feel that those who appear more cynical are putting a damper on the Christmas spirit. Those who have not been so fortunate tend to feel isolated and misunderstood. Christmas



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.

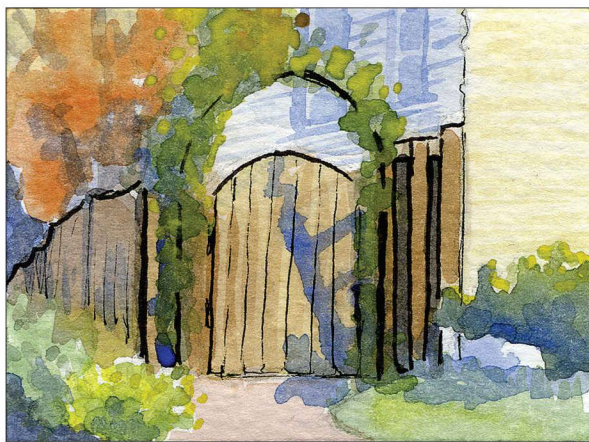
We at the Star would like to express our own grief and deepest sympathies with those mourning the loss of Marina Slavin. In her memory, we would like to encourage her friends, classmates, professors, and those that knew her to submit remembrances and reflections to be published in the January 24, 2014 issue of the Star. Tributes should be up to 400 words long and should be sent in by the first week of classes next semester.



ARTIST OF THE WEEK



LUKE LAUER



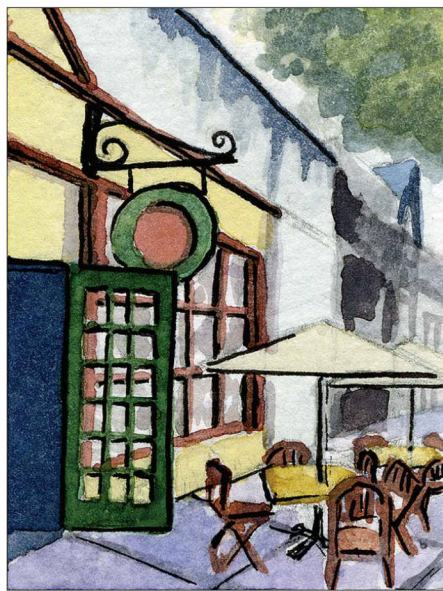
The Garden Gate, watercolor



Dare We to Touch? ceramic



The Water Fountain, watercolor



The Cafe, watercolor



Music Stand, wood

JANE STAIRS

I'm an art education major with no concentration media. It is not the materials that motivate me to make art, but the ideas that I can communicate through them. Someday, I aspire to spark this love of ideas in my students.

Jane is Junior Art Education Major



CHRISTMAS SUDOKU

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Last week's winner was: **TEIRA HAWKINS!**

PHOTO OF THE WEEK: BEST OF THE SEMESTER

Gone, but never forgotten.

RACHEL WOODWORTH