



# THE HOUGHTON STAR

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## Mullen, Mahurin Answer Students' Questions about Program, Faculty Cuts

By Katarina Kieffer

Around 60 students gathered in the Campus Center on Thursday, January 29, to hear President Shirley Mullen and Dean Ron Mahurin answer students' questions about the budget and quell concerns. Questions about the future of the First Year Honors Programs and other off campus programs and inquiries about program and faculty and staff cuts dominated the 90-minute session.

Several direct announcements were made concerning budget cuts. Mahurin confirmed that the Star Lake property will be sold following the final program in the fall of 2009, pending the approval of the board of trustees. Mullen noted that the sale of the property in West Seneca was also being "seriously considered."

"The college has been wrestling for 40 years to figure out how to work with the West Seneca campus," Mullen said. "It's not revenue neutral; we'll have to invest a significant amount of revenue to repair the buildings," so the administration is in the process of "weighing the benefits of keeping them versus the cost of [renovation]."

In terms of departmental cuts and changes, the English department

will not replace two positions that will be vacant by the end of the year. Daryl Stevenson, professor of Psychology, will become the Director of Institutional Research, and his position will not be replaced in the Psychology Department. The Foreign Language department will have significant faculty reductions, and there has been one position cut in the Music department.

The college will be looking to hire for four positions in the Science department; Mullen identified the Sciences as one of the areas that has not been "nourished" at Houghton for the past few decades. Several other positions are also open in the Art, Communication, and Education departments.

Asked if it seemed wiser to issue a statement about faculty and department cuts, as "to be unaware and unsure of changes taking place at Houghton seems to promote disunity and rumor-telling," Mullen responded, "We've tried to work with departments; we will be quite ready to talk about departments, as in where there will be cuts and rearrangements."

It is in the realm of faculty cuts that both Mahurin and Mullen called for caution and delicacy. "It really isn't appropriate for us to sit up here and name individuals,"



President Mullen and Dean Mahurin answer student questions regarding budget.

Mahurin said. "I would just ask for a real grace and understanding that each person has to come to their own place about how they want that information to be told...I think we need to respect that."

Starting with a straightforward query about the future of the First

Year Honors Programs and whether or not those changes would affect faculty cuts, Mullen emphasized that Honors would continue to be a part of academics at Houghton, but noted that "as a part of off-campus programs...we've been looking

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## ROTC Forum Addresses Practical Implications of Just War Theory

By Jordan Donald Zaner

Last Thursday, a small group of Houghton College students assembled for a forum on Just War Theory. The speakers for the forum were Houghton College professor of International Relations B. David Benedict and Daniel Minchen, professor of Communications and Business. They sought to explain to the student audience the doctrine of just war. How can the act of killing, even in war, be reconciled with the Christian dictum to "love you neighbor"?

This question is admittedly a difficult one, and one which Christian theologians have grappled with throughout the ages. As Benedict noted at the forum, Just War doctrine has a long-standing history in the Christian tradition, dating at least as far back as the

teachings of St. Augustine in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century. Drawing on his experience as a former Foreign Service Officer in the U.S. Department of State, Benedict outlined some of the elements that must be present for a conflict to be deemed a "just war", according to the teachings of church leaders through the ages (and now largely enshrined in international law).

First, wars must always be fought for the cause of protection, and the intention of those fighting the war must be in line with this cause and not merely a pretext for self-aggrandizement. Next, those authorizing the use of force must have legitimate authority to do so, and must exercise force toward ends that are in just proportion with the wrongs they are seeking to rectify. Finally, they must always use the option of war as a last resort, with

reasonable hope of accomplishing their stated objectives, and with the ultimate goal of a stable, peaceful solution to the conflict.

Furthermore, a war must not be just only in its causes and goals, but also in its means; that is, force must not be used in excess of what is needed to accomplish the aims of the war. Wanton and unnecessary destruction, torture, and the harming of innocent non-combatants are considered unjust—and are classified under international law as war crimes. These, Benedict explained, are some of the basic tenets of just war theory.

A portion of the forum time was spent addressing criticism of Just War Theory. Minchen, a former member of the U.S. military, sought to answer the question of how a Christian can justify the act of killing by addressing the problem

on a personal level. A Christian as a lone individual could be expected, in extreme circumstances, to give up their life rather than kill in order to allow their attacker to survive—and have the opportunity to repent and seek God's mercy. However, Minchen pointed out, a Christian has other moral duties that may not allow them to passively throw their life away. Not only do Christians have a duty generally to protect the weak and the oppressed, but a Christian who has assumed certain responsibilities—such as marriage or parenthood—must, in order to fulfill these responsibilities, protect their children, or spouse, or others for whom they may be responsible. Fulfilling one's Christian duties may require defending others, which in turn can require the use of harmful—even lethal—force.

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## WO out there

By Monica Sandreczki

### Recanting Holocaust Denial

In continuation of last week's news brief concerning Pope Benedict XVI's removal of the excommunication of four bishops, one of whom is a Holocaust denier, the pope has demanded that Bishop Richard Williamson recant his statement declaring that the Holocaust did not take place before he is readmitted into the Catholic Church. Pope Benedict says that he had no knowledge of the bishop's disregard of the Holocaust when he decided to readmit the four bishops into the Roman Catholic Church. Bishop Williamson has said that the evidence is against the killing of 6 million Jews during WWII, stating that only 200,000-300,000 Jews died in WWII, none of whom were killed by the gas chambers. The Vatican does not agree with the bishop's opinions, but many Jewish groups, such as the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors, appreciated the pope's statement.

### Children's Health Insurance Plan

Congress passed a bill and President Obama signed it into law, Wednesday, to give health insurance to 4 million uninsured children. The bill passed 290-135, mostly from Democrats, but did include 40 Republicans' approval. Some Republicans harbor ill feelings toward the bill due to it being a "government-run health care agenda," according to Texas representative, Peter Sessions. According to Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, however, "for every 1 percent increase in unemployment, it is estimated as many as 1.5 million Americans will lose their health care coverage." Currently, 7 million children are part of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, created in 1997, but federal money for this is to expire on March 31. During Obama's presidency, 13 million children could be covered under the plan.

### Hamas Takes UN Aid

According to a United Nations (UN) spokesperson, Hamas policemen have invaded a UN warehouse taking blankets and food designated for people in the Gaza Strip, making it the first time that Hamas has stolen anything. Hamas has denied that its policemen have taken anything. According to Ahmed al-Kurd, The Hamas Social Affairs Ministry in Gaza has been at a clash with the UN on how the relief aid should be divided. The UN does not communicate with Hamas, which is in control of the

Gaza Strip. The UN now distributes enough aid to allow for 900,000 of the 1.5 million people in the Gaza Strip. Half of the people of the Gaza Strip are dependent upon the food aid the UN supplies.

### Missile Tests in North Korea

It is suspected that North Korea is preparing to test a long-range missile that is able to reach all the way to the United States, according to a South Korean official. There have not, however, been any confirming reports from any governments. Spy images have shown a train with cylindrical items heading in the direction of a launch site located near the North Korea-China border. There was also rumor of a long-range missile test, with a range of 3,500 mile, back in July 2006. Tensions between North and South Korea have risen within the past year with the instatement of President Lee Myung-bak in South Korea, who has said that he will not allow free flow aid to North Korea unless they agree to get rid of their nuclear weapons program. President Obama has told the South Korean leader that Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, will be visiting the nation in the middle of this month.

### On-the-Run Nazi Died in 1992

Documents have recently surfaced indicating that one of the most sought after Nazis of WWII, Aribert Heim, died in Cairo, Egypt in 1992. Heim had been living under an assumed name and had converted to Islam since his evasion from arrest by German authorities in 1962. The documents discovered, including medical papers, personal letters, and a passport, were found in a briefcase in the hotel room where he had been residing in Cairo. The son of Heim's dentist, who only knew Heim under his assumed name, was able to confirm that he died in 1992, although he was not aware that Heim had been a doctor or a Nazi war criminal. The man only knew Heim as a German who had converted to Islam who was "fleeing from the Jews." However, there has been no discovery of Heim's body, grave, or DNA. According to the ZDF German television station, Heim was buried in a poor man's cemetery in which the graves are reused every few years, making the likelihood of finding his remains very unlikely. Heim worked at a concentration camp performing experiments on the prisoners trying to find a solution that would kill them the fastest.

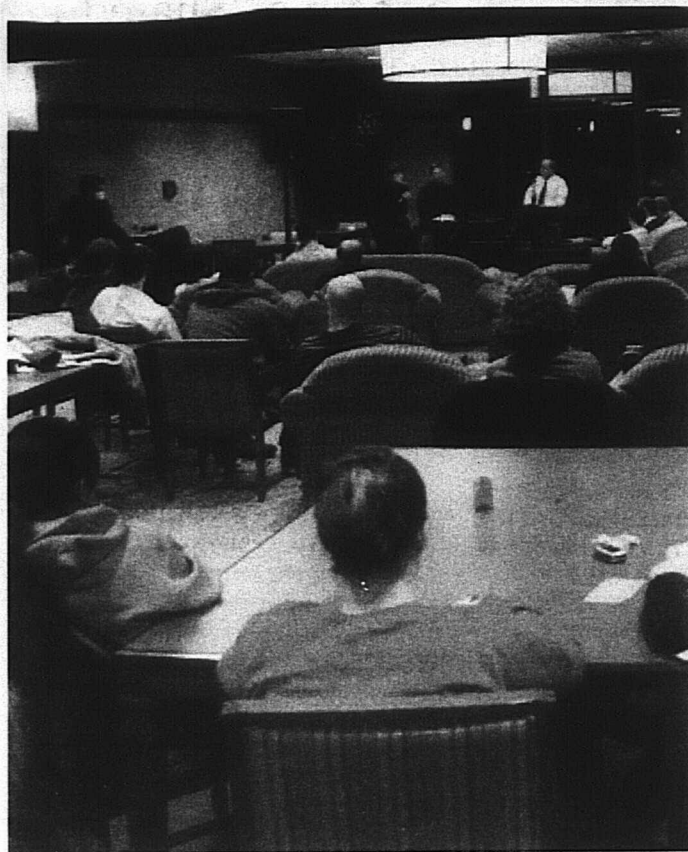


Photo by Tim Chen

Student response to the forum with Pres. Mullen and Dean Mahurin was mixed.

### • Mullen continued from page 1

at the program," specifically arrangements in the London program, "to find some savings." The goal is to find a way to save money without "affecting faculty positions."

When a student later pressed the issue by asking whether there were considerations about "restructuring London to be more like East meets West," on the grounds that the latter model seemed to be more effective, Mullen quickly responded "I don't know enough about what's being asked," and said that the question would be better answered by those involved with the programs.

Mahurin said that the administration is currently in the process of evaluating Off-Campus programs in general for effectiveness. There is a feasibility study underway for the program in Australia, which is currently in suspension because of changes in affiliation with the Australian location. The Houghton in London program is undergoing a similar review. According to Mahurin, there are no other plans to eliminate programs at this moment, but that the college wants to be sure that these programs are "deserving of the Houghton college stamp."

"We're trying to address opportunities to strengthen the

institution," Mahurin said, echoing Mullen's comment that "in a number of areas you'll hear the theme that this is not just retrenchment" but a reevaluation and strengthening process.

"It may feel like there are 'things being lost,' but really what we are doing is preparing to strengthen the institution," Mahurin said in response to a student question about the loss of opportunities due to cuts.

Student response to the well-attended event was mixed.

Some seemed to walk away reassured. Senior Jordan Zaner said that, while he had come to the session with doubt, he was encouraged by the "openness" Mullen and Mahurin

displayed. "Personally, it made me feel a lot more confident about the future of this school," Zaner said. "I appreciated the fact that there does seem to be some sort of plan behind all of this."

Others expressed reservations. Timothy Chen, another senior student, said, "I have no doubt that President Mullen and Dean Mahurin were trying to address the questions posed to the best of their ability, but it was still somewhat disappointing to see the reservation in their answers that students have almost come to expect when looking for information from administrators."

**"It may feel like there are 'things being lost,' but what we are doing is preparing to strengthen the institution."**





## Plan for Lambein's "Shared Lounge" Space Delayed Indefinitely

By Ryan Ledebur

After considering the possibility of reorganizing Lambein Hall into a "common lounge" dorm occupied by both male and female students, the administration has decided not to pursue this option at the present.

The decision not to move forward with the project was influenced by several factors: student feedback and budget concerns. It is not, however, clear which factor played the biggest role in the process.

Last semester, on December 11, a forum was held by Dennis Stack, Director of Housing and Interim Director of Residence Life and Sharra Hynes, VP for Student Life. Current Lambein residents were invited to attend.

Kim Petrick, Lambein resident and student member of the Student Life Council commented that while there was a good turnout for the Lambein forum, in the end she "felt like the decision to not pursue the change was based more on financial reasons [since the decision] is still being discussed for the future."

Additionally, the ongoing budget cuts made across the board have had an effect on the reality of the Lambein project. The college acknowledged from the beginning of this discussion that budget and funding issues would factor significantly into whether or not changes

to Lambein would occur in the near future. When these ideas were originally discussed, one idea was to make Lambein more handicap accessible at this time, rather than make more sweeping changes that would add cost.

In a letter to current Lambein residents, Stack wrote, "one of the comments voiced at the forum was the concern that many buildings on campus are still rather inaccessible to a handicap person." He added that taking that into consideration,

"the decision by the President's Staff is that the resources that would have gone to making Lambein accessible will instead be put toward the goal of making other areas of campus more accessible for our handicap students."

Stack additionally stated that he does not "think it

**"The college tries to make it easier for students with disabilities to attend here and be successful."**

is a matter of being unable to afford the Lambein Project – it is more about saying what order is the best to tackle the projects." Additionally, Stack noted that the college "tries to upgrade some part of [the] campus to make it easier for students with disabilities to attend here and to be successful."

Joshua Nolen, student member of the Student Life Council, remarked that based on the information he received, "the issue [of creating a shared lounge dorm] is still something that the college is interested in exploring in the future, but



right now the college can't afford it." Additionally, Nolen believed that the decision not to proceed with renovations to Lambein was "simply a budgetary matter."

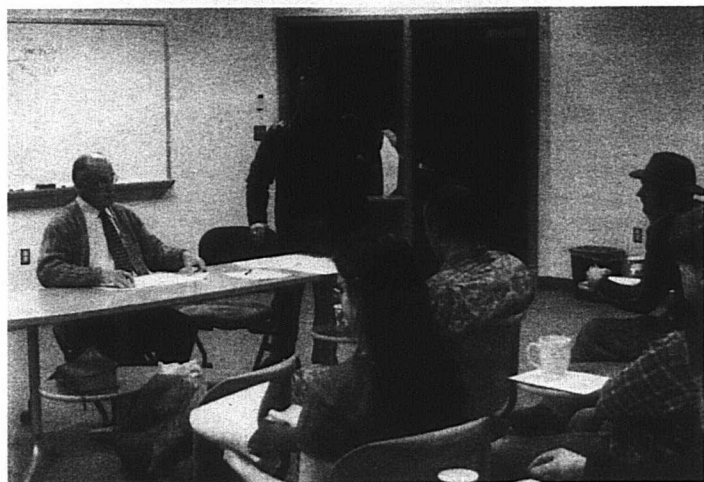
Although the decision appears to be largely budget-based, concerns heard at the December forum were weighed as the President's Staff determined that some of the things suggested by Lambein residents were worth further consideration before moving forward with the entire project. Stack remarked, "Delaying the overall project also gives us more time to study the issues that come along with changing the culture of the hall. We don't approach these matters lightly."

In place of making the changes to Lambein, other campus buildings will be fitted with equipment to make them more accessible to persons with handicaps. Many similar projects have already been completed: the side entrance to

the chapel, the main entrance to Shenawana Hall, and the campus center elevator are all projects to try and make the campus more handicap accessible.

Therefore, buildings like the campus center, the Chamberlain Center, and Lambein are being considered for less drastic renovations to make them more accessible. Stack explained that "upgrading the whole campus will eventually take millions [of dollars], and so we are doing it a bit at a time, within the overall budget of the college."

It remains clear that while major renovations to make Lambein a shared lounge residence for both sexes are being put on hold, other, smaller steps towards accessibility are being implemented in alternate parts of the campus. All of these changes and renovations, both current and future, are being made in an effort to make all members of the community feel welcome.



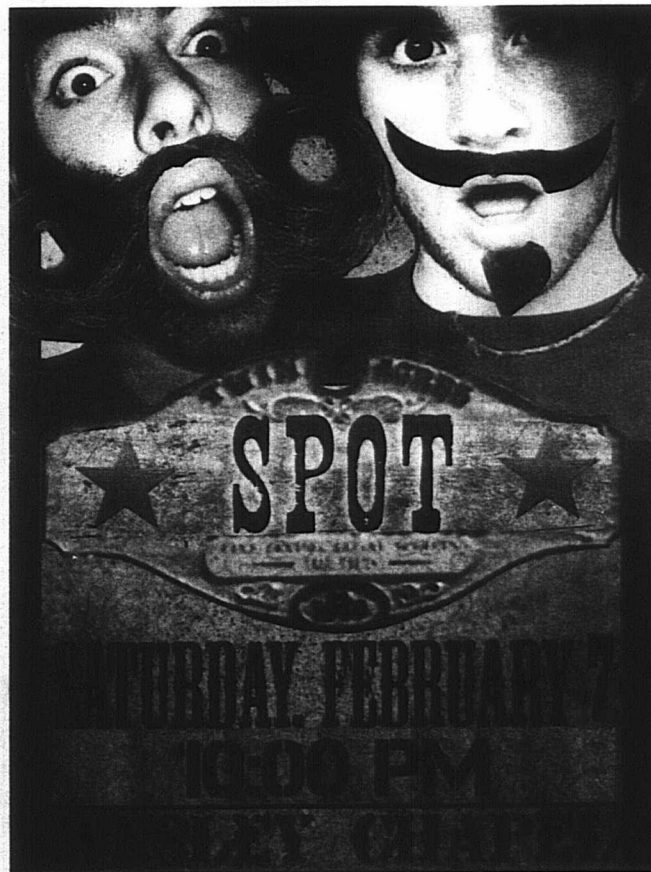
Professors Benedict and Minchen address Just War Theory.

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Another criticism of the notion is the fact that the attempt to actually conduct a just war never lives up to the ideals set forth at the outset, something which Minchen and Benedict both admitted. However, they both argued that, for all its ugliness and brutality, an attempt at waging a just war, however imperfect, is sometimes better than the alternative of leaving

wrongdoings unchallenged.

After the presentation, the forum speakers took time to answer questions from the supportive but rather small audience. Benedict expressed disappointment at the low student turnout, observing that in 2003 (the first year of the Iraq war) they held a similar forum that had much higher student participation and sparked a lively debate across the campus.







## Symphonic Winds Ensemble to Perform Featured Works Tonight

By Kirstie Chen

Tonight, Feb. 6 at 8:00 p.m., the Houghton College Symphonic Winds will be presenting a concert featuring works by Grainger, Giannini, and Gillingham. Sym Winds, as the ensemble is affectionately referred to, consists of about 60 musicians—approximately 60% music majors, 40% non-music majors, and a few community members.

The group has a varied repertoire, from standard wind ensemble pieces to specially commissioned new works. Professor Gary Stith, director of the Symphonic Winds, brings his knowledge of the literature and love of music to the ensemble and selects music that is suited to the particular strengths of the group.

Most importantly, Stith is ever focused on the group's mission: "to perform quality wind band music literature at a high level of performance, and for the Lord to glorify Himself through our rehearsals and concerts." The group rehearses three times a week, each rehearsal beginning with a student-led devotional and ending with

prayer. Before a concert, the group meets for an extended devotional and prayer time.

Stith is most thankful for "the opportunity to conduct an ensemble comprised of sincere believers who love the Lord, seek to serve Him in all they do, and have a genuine passion for the music," and the ensemble is truly thankful for the excellent direction he gives.

Clayton Hamilton, president of the student leadership council, affirms that "my college career would be pretty dull without [Sym Winds]... Mr. Stith is a great guy to be under, and I couldn't imagine Symphonic Winds without him."

Despite the time commitment and hard work that members of Sym Winds must devote to the ensemble, members find that the musical experience and people make it every bit worth the effort. Bassoonist Hillary Chartrand, a sophomore chemistry and psychology double major, states that Sym Winds rehearsal "is honestly the highlight of my day. It's such a relaxing time for me to be with other Christians who share my deep love for music and can fuse the two seamlessly... Mr. Stith is always encouraging

and really cares about us as people outside of Sym Winds, not just as musicians."

Dr. Bob Danner, a former dean of the college who has played tuba with the group for approximately twenty years, states that the Sym Winds experience "allows me, even in retirement, to still have contact with some of the nation's best college students, and to play under an excellent conductor," and that he aims to "convince the students... that music can provide a lifetime of enjoyment."

This year, the Symphonic Winds ensemble has been selected as the featured college wind ensemble at the 29th annual New York State Band Directors Association (NYSBDA) Symposium in Syracuse. The ensemble's mini-tour to central New York will be March 6-8, culminating in the March 7 evening concert at the NYSBDA convention. They will be performing the pieces heard Friday night as well as a few others for band directors from all over the state.

Regarding tonight's home concert, Stith believes that "this is an especially significant concert

for us as we prepare for what may arguably be the most important upcoming Houghton College Symphonic Winds performance in many years... It will be wonderful to perform these pieces for our Houghton 'family' prior to performing them during our mini-tour!"

When students were asked to choose a favorite piece from the upcoming concert repertoire, all four pieces received votes, and several members of Sym Winds remarked that they "enjoy all of it."

Dan Wartinger, a graduate student who has played with the Sym Winds ensemble for seven years, said that "this is perhaps the most fun I have had with any music we've played in Symphonic Winds."

The two Grainger pieces are delightful and whimsical, the Gillingham With Heart and Voice has beautiful and exhilarating moments as well as deep spiritual meaning, and the Giannini Symphony is fantastically exciting to play and great fun to listen to. From all indications, it is going to be an epic concert.

## Eastern Europe Night a Cultural Experience with Food, Stories

By Laura Jackson

Last Thursday, January 29, students joined several missionaries, a group of Russian women, and host Brian Webb in Java 101 for Eastern Europe Night. Webb welcomed the group by explaining that the casual evening would feature storytelling, free coffee, and traditional food, with a trivia game to follow later. Guests were invited to share stories about travelling, living, and working in parts of Eastern Europe.

Jim Hill, a missionary-in-residence from Slovakia, appropriately began the evening with a tale about coffee. During an early trip to Eastern Europe, Hill accepted the hot drink from his hosts, unaware that the local brewing technique involved leaving the grounds in each individual cup. Hill laughed, "I learned the hard way not to drink Turkish coffee with grounds in the bottom."

Attendees could sample Turkish coffee as they listened to others speak about amusing and meaningful experiences.

Webb told the group about being berated by a Russian babushka for putting his hands in his pockets while in a church. Missionary John Frazer described an entertaining language mishap in Hungary. Stephanie Gallogly, a sophomore who traveled to Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia with Houghton's East Meets West program, spoke about how the trip helped her appreciate the far-reaching effects of the Balkan



Photo by Tim Chen

Attendees enjoyed stories from several individuals and samples of Eastern European food and drink.

Wars. Prior to coming to Houghton, Gallogly had not heard Eastern Europe discussed very often and she values her expanded knowledge of the "intricate histories" of the Croats, Bosnians, and Serbians. Her time abroad gave her a deeper understanding of ethnic dissension, Gallogly said.

A surprising aspect of the evening was the unplanned presence of several Russian women who have been travelling around America in recent weeks. They contributed to the story-telling, describing their experiences both here and at home. One woman, who has taught English in Russia for over two decades, mentioned that their group has been "experiencing shock about everything, everything

at Houghton, including the weather, which is not as cold" as in Russia. Mother and daughter Sasha and Masha explained that the average winter temperature in their city of Perm is 20 below zero Celsius.

After every few stories, Webb passed around a new Eastern European food. The first delicacy to be offered was Slovakian palacinky, a crepe-like dessert stuffed with jam, followed by scrumptious Hungarian cake squares dipped in chocolate and covered in coconut. Czech open-face sandwiches were the next to emerge; these treats were topped with daintily-arranged vegetable and cheese slices. Another sandwich featuring a delectable cheese spread rounded out the food samples, which had been provided

by the Hills of Slovakia and the Frazers of Hungary.

Webb tried to highlight cultures represented at Houghton, where there are a number of community members with Eastern European backgrounds. He wanted to provide an opportunity for people to talk about their shared interests. As someone who has been to Russia five times, Webb emphasized that although Eastern European countries may appear quite Western, living there makes one realize that there is "a good bit of difference" between the two. Hosting events like Eastern Europe night, Webb said, reminds him that "every culture I've experienced has been able to contribute to my life."





## Houghton Women's Basketball Look to End Season Strong

By Nick Fredette

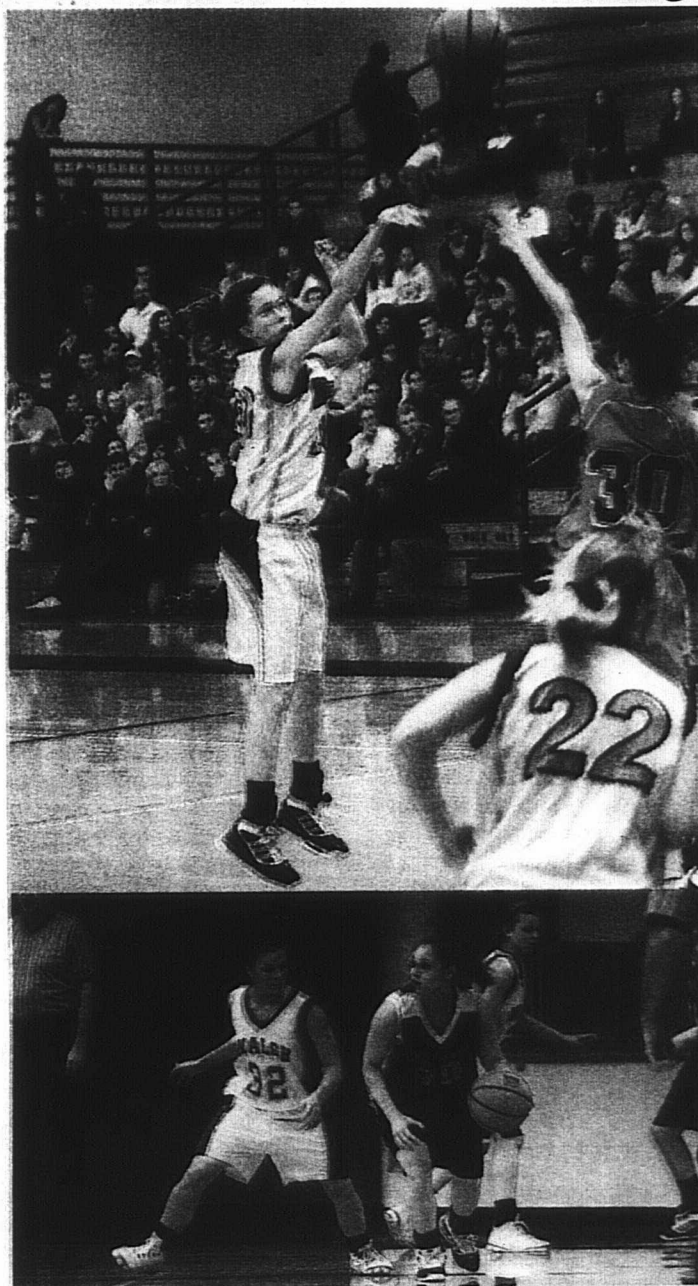
As Purple and Gold Week kicked off at Houghton, the women's basketball team tried to improve upon an 8-10 record against the visiting Daemen College Wildcats, but couldn't finish offensively. The Wildcats achieved a victory over the Highlanders, 77-45. The Highlanders tried to maintain good scoring with performances from freshman Alicia Marhefka and sophomore Ashley Dupler, and on the defensive side of the ball, attempted to stop Sarah Bogardus. Bogardus, a senior forward, averages a stellar 24.6 points per game. Daemen's near 50% shooting was tough to combat.

The women's basketball team is coached by athletic director Harold "Skip" Lord. Coach Lord said "We graduated three senior starters from last year's team," but he is still "very excited about the progress the team is making." As a fairly young team of 16 players, 14 of which are underclassmen, the Highlanders got off to a pretty rough start. Despite the slow beginning, Houghton will look to finish strong, with continued hard work coupled with a strong inside-outside game. The Highlanders have a strong inside presence from Ashley Dupler, who is averaging 11.4 points per game and is also capable of shooting from behind the arc. The team averages 6.3 three-pointers a game and has three players who have made over 20 three-pointers made so far this season. These three sharpshooters are Kaylyn York, Shannon Daugherty, and leading scorer Leah French. Defensively, Dupler is also a strong presence with a formidable

35 blocks this season and Lisa Skrypnik has also been a defensive factor with 1.6 steals per game.

With only three weeks remaining in the regular season, Houghton will have to pick up the pace a bit if they want to improve upon last year's team. The 2007-08 Highlanders advanced into the first round of the American Midwest Conference (AMC) playoffs, where they fell to rival Roberts Wesleyan College, 72-53. This year's team is currently ranked 12th in the AMC. According to the AMC website, the tournament fields finishers two through five of the North and South divisions, meaning the Highlanders have a few spots to make up. Also, the Highlanders have a tough schedule this season—possibly one of the toughest they've ever played. In the AMC, there are two teams currently ranked in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics top 25: Shawnee State at number two and Cedarville at number 20. Also, there are teams not currently ranked, such as Notre Dame, which has been in and out of the rankings all year. Despite this challenge, Coach Lord is pleased with the team's progress so far. "We are starting to play better in spurts. Our consistency is coming along and we had a big win at Notre Dame College this past weekend," he said. His game plan to wrap up the season: "finish strong."

Houghton's next home game is at 6pm on February 10th. The Highlanders will clash with the Carlow Celtics, who are ranked last in the AMC with zero wins. Come out and support the ladies of the Houghton College women's basketball team!



The Highlander women's next home game is Feb. 10th.

Photos by Mike Wise

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## The Great Divide: Christianity's Unnecessary Dichotomy

Richard Dawkins inspires a new perspective on how our created intellect should interact with an inescapably physical and spiritual world

by Rebekah Miller

Richard Dawkins, author of the recently published book, *The God Delusion*, prides himself on his ability to think critically. His scientific mind can't get enough of itself. He writes, "We are liberated by calculation and reason to visit regions of possibility that had once seemed out of bounds or inhabited by dragons." These dragons are the falsities of religion, the religion that, for Dawkins, leads people down the path of blind loyalty and passionate belief in whatever they choose to believe.

It is because of this blind faith that Dawkins is frustrated with religion. To support this claim, Dawkins draws examples of unreasonable blind faith from those within the non-radical Christian faith. There is much to learn and much to be enlightened about in the world, and religion obstinately blears the distinctions and gives people an excuse to stop thinking.

I want to argue that this is not the case. Religion, what I call the

practice and belief in a fundamental set of doctrines and beliefs, should not be an exclusively blind faith for Christians. As the poster on Professor Benjamin Lipscomb's door reads, "Jesus came to take away your sins, not your mind." But how exactly do reason and religion co-exist when faith in an unseen God is such a crucial aspect?

The question about reason and religious belief has tickled the minds of the theologians, clergy, and laypeople alike. How does one balance a faith in something that is not historical with reason? The life and death

of Jesus are historical, reasonable and relatively provable. His resurrection, however, is completely outside of the range of history by history's own standards. Because it is a supernatural event, something

that defies the pre-established rules of this earth, it cannot lie within the historical scope. Yet it is this resurrection that is the crux of the Christian faith. Again, how does one think about God without eventually reverting to the final conclusion that God is outside of our ability to think about him? As Dawkins point out, there is an impulse in

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Christianity to simply answer every unknown question with "that's the way that God did it" or "God has a plan" and leave it at that.

There is, however, an alternative to choosing reason or religion exclusively: choosing both. The two are not mutually exclusive. God

may be outside of our reasoning capabilities, but the way in which we live our lives, the way we think and the things world we think about are all within our power to grasp, manipulate and expand. The

Great Enlightenment and the Age of Reason were not flukes in the development of humankind. We do have the power to think and reason. Religious traditions like the Seventh Day Adventist or Church of Latter Day Saints traditions who place their entire emphasis on life after death miss out on the important thing we have now: life here on Earth. What comes after death is, quite noticeably, left almost entirely up to our imagination and faith. As science and reason have pointed out to us time and again, however, life on Earth is just asking to be discovered, explored, questioned and investigated.

That's not to say that questions concerning things for which we do not have an answer, such as the nature of God or the problem of evil, should lie dormant on our mind's doorstep waiting for God's omniscient footprint. At the risk of sounding defeatist, we must acknowledge that those answers will not come readily, absolutely, or even at all. Yet, the pursuit of those

*Divide continued on page 7*

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Just confused?**

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The editorial staff re-  
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reasons of length or  
decorum.**

## Houghton's Got Talent: A Very Impressive Act

A contestant from last week's talent show talks about censorship and it's place on a Christian Campus

by Joel VanderWeele

In the last week I have been asked a number of times why I pulled myself out of Houghton's Got Talent. The reason I withdrew from the competition has to do with censorship and the lack of transparency in the Office of Student Programs (OSP).

After performing the song "Kiss" by Prince for my audition, I was told by the students charged with organizing the event that I could perform it for Houghton's Got Talent. A few days later, however, I was informed that OSP did not want me to perform that particular song, so I changed my selection.

For the second round, I again asked OSP if I could perform the song that I had originally prepared. I changed the lyrics to make the song more agreeable, but was eventually told that I was not to perform that song, original or edited.

Besides the obvious disappointment of being told that I could not perform that song, there were a number of reasons why this situation bothered me.

Houghton does a decent job of allowing students to organize their own events, but if they are put in charge of events and then told that they do not actually have the power to make final decisions, we are merely giving them the illusion of authority. If students are put in charge, I believe they should be entrusted with the power to make the decisions they see fit. If, however, the college does not wish

to trust students with these types of decisions, we should not pretend to put them in charge and then overturn their judgment.

Another example of this type of distrust was even more evident in last semester's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary "then and now" SPOT. As Commentary Editor Micah Warf wrote about the event, "By taking the wheel, the administration is, in essence, expressing a distrust of their students that is unprecedented and uncomfortable."

My other complaints are more specific. When a representative of OSP was explaining why the song, which is not explicit but does have some implied sexual language, was forbidden, they first mentioned that it was not the type of thing the Houghton community would want to endorse. I agree, but do not think that is reason enough to forbid the performance. After all, does Houghton, as an institution, want to endorse juggling swords, secretive romantic affairs without parental consent (Taylor Swift's "Love Song"), and referring to women as "sweetness" (Jonny Geeze's first song)? I would like to think that students are generally receptive enough to realize that a song is not the equivalent of a new line in the Community Covenant.

This type of inconsistency is not altogether uncommon. For this week's Purple and Gold Dance-a-thon, KC & the Sunshine Band's "That's the Way I Like It," an oldies classic, was deemed too inappropriate to dance to while

Beyonce's "Single Ladies (Put a Ring On It)" passed the test.

The rep also noted that because we have a high percentage of females on campus, we ought to be especially careful about offending that part of the population. Again, I agree that we should be careful about offending women, but it is not because there are a large number of them on campus. Our sensitivity towards certain groups should not be based on whether or not they represent a majority of the population.

These previous complaints are real, but I can at least understand where the impulse to police comes from. What I don't understand is this final point.

When I asked if I could rewrite the lyrics to make them more appropriate, the reply was that they would prefer a performance of the original song to a re-written version. The reasoning for this was that edited lyrics bring attention to the fact that the performer had been censored. I find it surprising that the Office of Student Programs was more concerned about the appearance of censorship than the censorship itself.

If we are not ashamed of our policies, we should not hide them. If, on the other hand, there are policies that we want to remain hidden, we shouldn't have them in the first place.

*Joel VanderWeele is a junior Math and Philosophy major.*





• *Divide continued from page 6*

answers is not meaningless. For example, I know I will never get an "A" in a Meilaender class, but there is something to be gained in the trying, something which could not be gained any other way.

The Christian thinker has free reign to explore the world, to consider its beauty and its complexities and to continue to ask questions, probing the earth for more answers to scientific riddles. God's purpose for the world and God's plan for the world are not different from the design of the world. The rules of the world, such as gravity, do not fall out of importance because there is a being over them. Perhaps, as with the resurrection, God does work outside of scientific laws in certain instances. Perhaps his intervention in the world today causes scientific flaws in our understanding of the world, but it is hard to believe that we should not or cannot rely on one of our most fundamental and important characteristics as human beings, the ability to reason, in order to live life more fully and understand it with the greatest clarity we can achieve.

Does this line of thought cause God to fall into the background? Does the inevitable outcome of this line of thinking lead to the clockmaker God of the Deists? No. Our life is not black and white. The things we cannot know either because of a lack of scientific development (how light can have both particle-like qualities and wave-like qualities at the same time) or the things we cannot know because they are simply unknowable (what will happen to us in the afterlife) are filed away to either be figured out later, or believed in now. The failure of the Enlightenment was its inability to encapsulate the entire human person. Humans are more than reason. But humans must also be more than faith.

*Rebekah is a junior Humanities major.*

From the Editors' Desk...

## The Thorns of Rose Garden Theology

How can we encourage an atmosphere of openness when we've been taught to hide our flaws?

by Margaret Boecker

Last week in chapel, we heard Reverend George Grace of First Bible Baptist Church in Rochester bring authentic health-and-wealth gospel theology to our campus. "Because I'm a believer," Rev. Grace claimed, "I have a great future." This approach reflects an outdated, ineffective theology which, to me, resonates not only as false, but as utterly destructive to the way we live within a community.

My idea of belief looks a bit different than that of Rev. Grace's. Contrastingly, because I'm a believer, I sometimes become disillusioned when life is unbearable and God feels nonexistent. Because I'm a believer, I pray, pray, and pray some more, but sometimes never get an answer to the hurt and suffering I endure. Because I'm a believer, God's inactivity in certain circumstances makes me angry. All because I am a believer.

Rev. Grace went on to tell us that we should become the "quintessential ultimate optimists" if we believe. This motivational, cut-and-dried message gives an absolutely false idea of what Christianity really is. It gives no hint that Christianity is a life of struggles, extreme ups and downs, and daily battles against a world that threatens to undo us. I don't know a single Christian who is truly the ultimate optimist; I only know people who cling to a message of hope (not optimism) found in Scripture and who are forced to ask God's mercy to find strength in a broken world.

Rev. Grace's rose garden ideology brings massive complications to the arena of faith. Are we to give the impression that becoming a follower of Christ transforms life into failsafe happiness? What, then, are we to say to a brother or sister who is mentally incapable

of being optimistic? If we were to encounter an individual with clinical depression, for instance, would we tell them that they just need to be more positive? It would be impossible to give that person the kind of understanding and support they need.

If every believer should be the ultimate optimist, then we would have to assume that person simply isn't praying enough or seeking out ministry opportunities; perhaps their faith is just too small. Essentially, we would have to question their spiritual state. If optimism is the result of belief, then depression (a chemical imbalance) is the result of life mismanagement or failure to live inside God's will, which causes "everything to work together for good for those who love Him."

Very quickly this threatens to dissolve into a legalistic issue. Many Christians have an enormous amount of guilt resulting from any level of mental or psychological suffering. If we indeed live out this theology, there are bound to be devastating effects on our community. We would end up hiding our struggles, hiding our shame, pretending our sin doesn't exist and trying to fool each other into thinking we "have it all together." This behavior, practiced over a substantial period of time, is certain to result in isolation.

I'm looking for a community of people who are willing to share with each other. I want to be surrounded by people who are willing to reveal the darkness we all hide, people who are vulnerable enough to offer mutual accountability in areas we are all equally broken. I don't want to be part of a community that is afraid to admit we lie, cheat, foster addictions to sex and substances, break rules, and let people down. In doing this, we shortchange each other out of God's gift of relationship. Confession in relationship, and

the freedom that comes when we are willing to bare our mistakes, is an aspect of community we are desperately lacking.

Rev. Grace also quoted Matthew 6:33 as his life verse, being "inscribed on the pulpit" of the church he pastors. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you." Now, he never specified what these "things" actually were, but relative to his speech and the tonal emphasis he placed on the word "things," he certainly seemed to refer to things of the world. He gave up his Corvette convertible and a great career to go into the ministry, knowing he had a "great future" ahead of him. Interestingly enough, the last verse in Matthew 6 does not make mention of an existing easy road in Christianity, but rather, it soberly advises us not to worry about any day but today, since today's troubles are enough to bear on their own.

Today's troubles, I'm afraid, are all too often swept under the carpet among Christians. We are afraid to show ourselves as flawed, weak, or unsuccessful, and we are consumed with putting on a façade. We've become masters of the delicate art of masking struggles, failures, and shortcomings. We want to give the image that we "have it all together," when truthfully, none of us do.

How can we be an honest, loving, supportive community when we are being encouraged to hide our struggles? When we are prodded to become the "ultimate optimists," I suspect there will come a great deal of hiding what's really going on. A community of optimists might just turn out to be a community of fakers.

*Margaret is a senior Art major and serves as Sports and Culture Editor.*

# SPOT.



**February 7.  
10:00 PM  
Wesley Chapel**

## 2008-2009 STAR Staff

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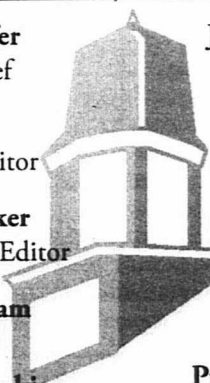
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Advisor





artist: **SHERI**  
OF THE WEEK: **TABER**

**Notes from the artist:**

I like painting landscapes full of bright colors--colors that you wouldn't think are in everyday places, and faces with priceless expressions that you tend to miss. Most of my paintings recently have been inspired by my trip last spring to Tanzania where I saw breathtaking landscapes and beautiful people. Most of my paintings are based off of photos taken mostly by Josh Turner when we were in Tanzania. In all honesty, I don't really contemplate for hours what to paint; I paint what I admire and find beautiful in the hope that someone else will enjoy it, too. By painting these pictures I am sharing with you part of my experiences, the people I grew to love and part of who I am. Also, by painting interculturally, I figure I am using both of my majors!

*Sheri is a senior Intercultural Studies and Art double major with a concentration in Watercolor.*



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

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

E-mail nominations to  
STAR@houghton.edu

Congratulations to last week's winner, **Tim Chen!**

SUDOKU answers	9	1	3	2	4	6	5	7	8
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**Submit your  
completed  
puzzles at the  
Star office for the  
chance to win a  
Sudoku book!**

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