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# SPOT RETURNS!

JOEY SCHUNEMANN ('23)

In the Fall of 2021, SPOT was teetering on the edge. On a post-COVID campus that had grown weary of the campus wide spectacle even before the bi-annual variety show went remote, the chance of SPOT's permanent cancellation was high. During the host auditions, AC Taylor told stories of previous acts gone awry and hosts who butted heads with the Campus Activities Board (CAB) at every turn. The list of auditionees to host a significant opportunity was low; one duo and one individual. The duo came in with a constrictive theme and a loose set of goals. The individual was Steve Harper.

Harper, recent graduate with the Class of '22 had a vision of a renewed SPOT where the host was not awkward glue between the main event, but an act in and of itself with mono-

logues, songs and games all driven by the charisma of a natural performer. In retrospect, Harper said that when he is an audience member, he wants to laugh more than once, like the host and feel that "when the show is over... to be surprised that two hours just passed." Harper also said that hosting was not without its challenges, and that if he could have found a partner that would have fit his high expectations he would have rather not work alone.

Harper said that he "had big plans that didn't happen and [he] had to be OK with that because [he] was a solo host."

This was not the experience of this year's SPOT 2024 hosts, Levi Webb ('24) and Sam Carpenter ('25).

Harper's extremely high standards of excellence set the standard for spots to come, and the immediately following duo had big

shoes to fill and an idea to make it happen. "Blockbuster movies, like the rental store not the concept" was what Luc Pereira ('23) and Ansley Green ('22) pitched to the same CAB staff as before, but with a new idea of what to be looking for.

Pereira and Green brought the chemistry of a pre-existing friendship, not only key for stage dynamics but also the natural expectation for an event where hours of work are needed in preparation. Pereira and Green were on top of logistics and advertising in a way that showed the failings of a single host. While Harper poured all his effort into excellent skits and shaping the evening in a way that ensured highs and lows that would keep people on the edge of their seats, Pereira and Green could split up their manpower enough to

See **SPOT** page #2



SPOT Poster

COURTESY OF CAB

## Feature: Jesse Sharpe

Anna Catherman ('24)

Dr. Jesse Sharpe has had a fruitful year of teaching, researching and speaking. Over the past few months, he spoke at conferences in Philadelphia and Baton Rouge, La.

"It's been a particularly busy scholarly semester," Sharpe noted.

In early February, Sharpe had the opportunity to attend the John Donne Society convention. He spent a weekend with friends from across the world. The agenda included both lectures and ample time to catch up.

"Nobody sleeps for three days," Sharpe claimed.

This year's trip was especially eventful as it overlapped with the Super Bowl and Mardi Gras. They

held an impromptu party for the big game. Then the Louisiana State University campus lost power for five hours on Mardi Gras. While the lights were out, they all gathered in a hotel suite and talked until the issue was resolved.

The society recently finished a variorum of Donne's work, a collection of every manuscript of every poem. It was a massive undertaking; there are more copies of Donne's work than any other in the time period.

Back in January, Sharpe presented on Donne's Devotions at the Modern Language Association national convention in Philadelphia. And at the end of February, he spent his Spring Break in England conducting research.

In the classroom, Sharpe has been teaching two classes, Critical Evaluations

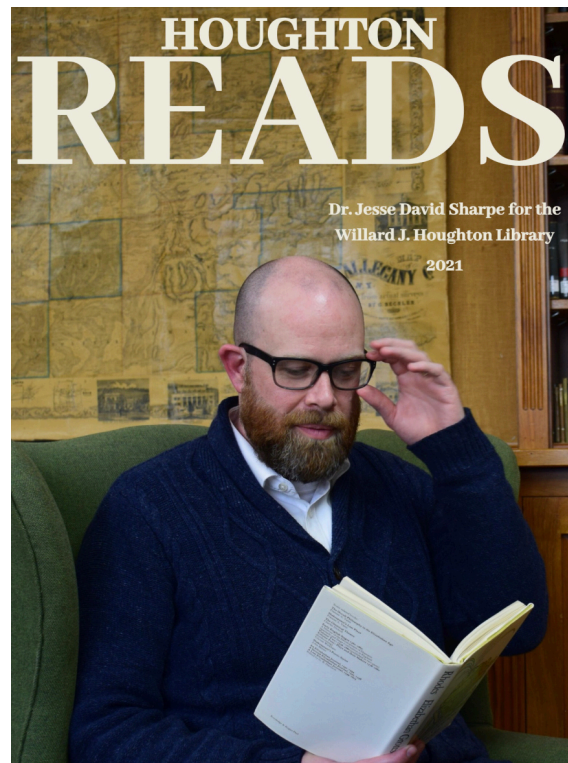
of Literature and Contemporary World Literature, that he hasn't taught since 2020. He also has two sections of Humanities 201.

In Contemporary World Literature, Sharpe tried something new: exclusively reading authors outside North America and Europe. This class's conversations have been exceptional, and he really enjoys them. His favorite part of being a professor is "just being in a classroom and having discussions."

Sharpe's home life has been busy as well. His sons are filling out a flurry of college applications, and he's planning to spend the summer with them before they leave home. And the family cat, Nougat, has been doing her role in keeping life exciting.

Nougat recently got out

See **Sharpe** page #2



Jesse Sharpe's 2021 Houghton Reads Poster

COURTESY OF THE WILLARD J. HOUGHTON LIBRARY

Feature: Elijah Sproull

ANNA CATHERMAN ('24)

Elijah Sproull turned down Division II scholarships in volleyball to come to Houghton - before there even was a volleyball program. Sproull started playing volleyball in middle school. In high school, he traveled the country playing. But he was prepared to give it up at God's leading.

"I felt like, for some reason, God wanted me to come to Houghton," Sproull, a sophomore, said. Instead of playing volleyball, he ran track, and was the freshman class representative on Student Council.

Two months into his first semester, Sproull mentioned in a meeting with Director of Athletics Dr. Matthew Webb that he was interested in playing volleyball as a club sport. In response, Webb said he was considering starting an NCAA team.

"He reached out about a month later and told me that we were going to go ahead with announcing the program," Sproull said.

That program started

with tryouts this fall. Coach Lindsey Seddon said she picked students based more on character and potential than skill. Starting with just three experienced players - Sproull among them - meant the team has had its share of rookie mistakes. According to Seddon, Sproull and the other experienced players have been patient with the newcomers, around six of whom had never played on a volleyball team before. Now, one of the team captains, Sproull lead the team with the most kills in its first-ever win against Maranatha Baptist on Jan. 27

Sproull is involved on campus off the court, continuing his involvement in Student Council serving as Athletics Representative. A double major in business and theology, he plans to run for Spiritual Life Representative this year. Outside the classroom and off the court, Sproull enjoys hunting, fishing, and skiing. He goes to Holiday Valley every Thursday morning. "That's my me time," he said. He slides down the slope and prays.

He returns refreshed and

ready for more practices with Houghton's fledgling volleyball team - which has been steadily improving.

The program's very first game was "a rude awakening."

In that match, Houghton played St. John's Fisher - the seventh best team in the country. Sproull said that many of his teammates were "shell-shocked" by the level of play.

The next day, they played Nazareth, which is ranked 11th.

"Playing two top-15 teams in your two days of playing games...that was definitely a wakeup call to like 'hey, this is the level of play that we gotta play at,'" Sproull said.

Seddon set the expectation early on that they wouldn't be a winning team this year.

But, Sproull admitted, getting a win this early in the season was "really cool." ★

Puzzles

All Sudokus provided by [sudokuoftheday.com](http://sudokuoftheday.com)

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

Difficulty: Tricky

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

Difficulty: Diabolical

Last week's Solution

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

SPOT from page #1

start with the goal of getting people in the door.

"I worked on silly sketches and host dialogue while she took on a lot of the overarching logistical issues," Pereira said.

Recreations of old movie posters with photo-shopped energetic hosts were plastered on walls all across campus. In addition to the advertising, SPOT band candidates were reached out to well in advance, and auditions ran smoothly. When the actual night came, the dual host power showed its merit, and cemented the formula that the last five shows have followed. They did not have to sacrifice quality for logistical mastery, they did not have to sacrifice as many great sketch ideas as Harper did. The night was tight, well planned, and well executed.

This year so far has largely been a mystery. With a slew of duos auditioning with different plans, Webb and Carpen-

ter had a theme that was creative, interesting and put lots of focus on live entertainment. This felt like an exciting change of pace, but was followed by a bit of radio silence.

When auditions came, a kindly smiling Carpenter sat casually on the stage and gave encouragement to the groups there that "we believe that if you want to be in [SPOT], you can be in [SPOT], and we will just talk through what that might look like."

This was an inclusive change from the careful planning of Harper's crafted narrative but one that could certainly yield more positive than negative. Without much more from them in terms of follow-up communications to the CAB team, there has been a sense of mysterious anticipation across campus. Will the show follow strongly in Harper's footsteps of crafted skits with less of an emphasis on Pereira and Green's advertisement skills? Have other

commitments delayed planning for both impacting quality? Or are we on the verge of another revolution in the variety show on the ravines edge? The answer will be on stage Saturday, March 16 at 10 p.m. in the Wesley Chapel. ★

Sharpe from page #1

of quarantine after eating a bat. The New York Department of Health ordered her isolation since her rabies vaccine had just expired. She ate the bat on a Sunday, and on Wednesday her next shot was scheduled.

She emerged from six months in the basement the same cat she was before. And Sharpe took her to get her rabies shot.

"It's nice to know there's not rabies in the house," Sharpe laughed, adding "[n]ow she can eat all the bats she wants." ★



# In Defense of Metz



HANNAH SMITH ('24)

"Metz is terrible."

We have all heard that one before. Metz has no options. Metz is nothing compared to home cooking. Metz is simply inedible. This comes up in conversations early in the morning, sometimes at lunch, and definitely at the dinner table. But I argue that there are more people in favor of Metz than we know. It's too easy to get caught up in the rut of complaining and shortchange a good thing rather than appreciate what is there.

According to a comment from senior Abigail Young, "It's not a restaurant, but it's not bad food." If we really look

at Metz with open eyes, we can see that the options are much more varied than the typical college fare. Bethany Smith from Eastern Nazarene has said that almost every night they have a fried food option: chicken tenders or pizza. There are no self-cook stations or fruit stations. The best that can be done is to go to the store yourself to get some strawberries.

Houghton has cooking stations, a sandwich bar, a fruit bar, a salad bar with dependable vegetables, and a pizza station. Pretty much any option for what you're feeling or can make yourself. True, there's not always

*"Living in a space where the closest restaurant is the local Chinese restaurant and Dunkin Donuts is twenty minutes out is difficult!"*

tude towards Metz is because "I think I get disappointed sometimes because I'm tired. We live in the middle of nowhere and I can't just run out to Wendy's and get my four piece chicken nugget meal." It's hard! Living in a space where the closest restaurant is the

*"True, there's not always a hit at the Main Plate section, and it may not be home cooking, but it's not bad."*

a hit at the Main Plate section, and it may not be home cooking, but as Abigail previously said, it's not bad.

Junior Brynn Dixon says part of her own atti-

local Chinese restaurant and Dunkin Donuts is twenty minutes out is difficult! Especially when most of us come from areas much more urban than Houghton is.

I think wishful feelings about missing home cooking are felt by a large portion of Houghton students. Home is far away, along with the comfort of a homemade meal, and college food can feel subpar compared to it. But we don't hate Metz. They do a fantastic job and we appreciate the effort they put into changing and addressing our needs. But there isn't much they can really do to subdue this feeling of wishing from Houghton students. It is simply the way it is when living in such a rural space. And Three Bums Pizza is not exactly a great option to get away from dining hall food.

Metz has done a lot to accommodate students in terms of changes to meals and food options. In past years we had limited access to fruit, but they heard our desire for fruit, and this year we have a fruit bar. There were a lot of complaints about Poblanos being all day-every day, and this year we have a weekly rotation on that station. They hired a professional

dessert chef. There's even an 'Ask Us' board up next to the coffee station. They make sure to respond promptly to comments students post and do the best they can to make the changes asked for. That's a 10/10 in my book.

Metz will never be home cooking. It will never cater to our taste buds specifically. But they do their best with cooking for the university body. I think it's important to remember to be grateful for the blessing of the people who work to make our lives easier. Metz is fun to complain about, but we should be careful not to convince ourselves that it really is terrible, because convincing ourselves that something is terrible is surprisingly easy. ★

*Hannah Smith is a Bachelor of Fine Art student, with a minor in Art Business. She is a graduating senior this year. Her favorite color is green, and if she could live life wearing only red converse sneakers, she would. She's on the Houghton Women's soccer team, and loves to hang out at the rock wall in Nielsen.*

Have an opinion  
you want to share?

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## SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor  
should be less than 600 words

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The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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STAR

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## Columns

## When you worry — Look to the birds

Karl Schmidt

Luke 12:22-25 says, “Then Jesus said to his disciples; ‘therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the Ravens: they do not sow or reap, they have no storerooms or barns, yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?’”

We have many occasions in life to worry. What career path to take, who to be friends with, who to date, who to marry, etc., the list is never ending. Years ago, I had finished my bachelor’s degree and student teaching and was looking for a job. After a whole summer of interviews, I went back home to my parents’ house, with no job and a wife and baby. I had a great opportunity to worry. A month into the school year I was called for an interview, as a long-term sub, and finally got a job teaching history at Rushford Central School (Cuba-Rushford Central School) where I stayed for 30 years. I think all of us can look back at our lives and see how God sustained us and by doing so taught us not to worry.

Besides my love for teaching, I’ve always had a love for birdwatching. I’ve been fascinated about the variety of ways birds find things to eat and what they eat: from a Belted Kingfisher or an Osprey diving from a great height into the lake to catch a fish, to Ruby Throated Hummingbirds drinking nectar from my bee balm flowers (they also eat a lot of spiders), or to Vultures that eat dead animals (they have special enzymes in their gut that can break down the most disgusting rotted meat that would probably kill us). Last summer I watched a little American Redstart, a bird in the Warbler family, like a miniature fighter pilot chase a moth, finally grabbing it with its beak and after struggling with it a little bit, swallowing it down. Once while out

for a walk, I watched an enterprising Gray Catbird in front of a beehive picking off bees as they flew out. For those of you who visit Florida, you might know of the Anhinga, a bird that chases fish underwater and spears them with its beak; or the various species of herons that wait patiently to grab a fish in the shallows. Closer to home, while canoeing by a rocky island in the Adirondacks (Canada Island, Lake Lila), I watched a baby Spotted Sandpiper struggling with a dragonfly it had caught by the tail — perhaps the first meal of its life.

Winter can be a particularly hard time for birds to find food. But again, God cares for His creation. Cedar Waxwings, Robins, Chickadees, and Bluebirds are sustained throughout the cold winter by eating berries left over from the Fall and the tops of Sumacs. We’ve all seen woodpeckers at suet feeders, but many times in the wild I have seen Downy Woodpeckers and Chickadees picking at the fat of a dead deer carcass.

For one month in May thousands of songbirds flying north from Central America get to the shores of Lake Erie in Ohio and stop exhausted and hungry. But at that very time in early May, hundreds of thousands of Caddisflies hatch and provide the needed food for the birds to make it across the lake. The same scenario I’ve seen in birds that make it across Lake Erie at Point Pelee, a park in Ontario with a peninsula that stretches out into the lake, one of the first spots birds stop to find more to eat to replenish their supplies.

Many of you may have witnessed God supplying birds with food in some way or another. The Creator of the universe has provided for His birds, sometimes specifically by how they were created, and sometimes by the impact of other parts of His creation like the Caddisfly hatch.

God loves us so much, how much more will He provide for us. ★

