

Putting a Face to LGBTQ: Equality Ride 2010 Visits Houghton College

by Monica Sandreczki

A group of 18-29 year olds visited Houghton College as their second stop on a 16 school tour with the Soulforce Q Equality Ride, in order "to end the religious and political oppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) people," according to the Soulforce mission statement.

On the morning of Tuesday, March 9, the Soulforce Q Equality Riders came onto campus and met with the Houghton representatives and members of the Houghton planning group for the Soulforce visit. Sharra Hynes, Vice President of Student Life and chair of the planning group, opened the time with a welcome message and emphasized the school's respect for Soulforce and the ability of all to respectfully "agree to disagree." She told the Riders to

expect a range of views on the issue of homosexuality and hoped that civility and respect were "hallmarks" of the day.

SGA President Zachary Adams then said a word about how he has "developed a sensitivity to the ever-changing aspects of the student body." Adams said that he hoped that the day would be "indicative of conversations already going on and of diverse views" among students. Dean John Brittain then gave a brief devotion from Ephesians and said that we must ask ourselves how we are growing in our faith and mentioned that we can all be victims of pride and we need to pursue Christ as our only answer. After that, the Riders and hosts gave brief introductions—name, city, and preferred gender pronouns, whether feminine, masculine, or gender neutral.

Following the introductions, the

hosts and Riders were divided into three different groups in order to take a campus tour to the Chamberlain Center, Steven's Art Studio, the Nielsen P.E. Center, and the library, but were not admitted into residence halls. The Equality Riders then had a closed discussion with College administration.

In the hours surrounding the closed lunch in the South End of the dining hall, there were two opportunities for Equality Riders provide literature, visit classrooms by invitation, and to have discussions with campus and community members in the Dieter Board Room in the Center for the Arts. During these discussions, the Riders and community members broke into smaller groups, where many people had conversations about faith backgrounds, the meaning of Houghton's Community Covenant, and what can be done today, and in

the long term, to make Houghton a more welcoming environment to LGBTQ people.

"I thought the Q & A sessions were wonderful. I walked from table to table, hearing everything from calm disagreement and challenges to eager questions about lives and journeys," said Sally Murphy, a junior Houghton host.

According to Mia Tu Mutch, the first female transgender Equality Rider, the most valuable part of the day was when she got to talk in the discussion groups with students about issues that are important to the LGBTQ community such as race issues and poverty.

"I interacted with people open to engaging with dialogue and I was so pleased and energized by students being willing to commit themselves as

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Soulforce Forum Emphasizes Grace, Understanding

by Kristen Palmer

"Grace" seemed to be the reoccurring theme in Tuesday's events when members of Soulforce paid a visit to Houghton as part of Equality Ride 2010. This was especially evident to those who ate lunch with the members of Soulforce and who attended the forum held later in the afternoon.

Houghton hosts, along with other Houghton representatives of the students, faculty, and staff, were invited to eat lunch with the Equality Riders at the South end of the cafeteria immediately following the first open discussion of the day. The lunch, approximately an hour and 15 minutes long, served as an extension of the first discussion and was an opportunity for Houghton students and other representatives to mingle with and ask questions of the Equality Riders. Heather Shuttleworth, member of Soulforce, saw this as particularly beneficial, because she views eating together as an intimate way to bond with others.

"Sharing a meal is a great way to



The forum was the first public community event of the Equality Ride 2010 visit on Tuesday, March 9.

connect as human beings," she said. "It is a way to converse and form relationships, which are both things that can continue beyond this hour."

Scott MacBeth, Houghton student and host, agreed and felt as though by sharing a meal together, questions were able to be asked free of shame or fear.

"Being able to put a face to the topic of homosexuality, which has been so thoroughly discussed here in the past few months, personally proved to change the nature of the matter entirely," he said. "Hearing their [Equality Riders'] stories and listening to personal accounts during this time created a desire in my heart

to personally become more aware and more sensitive to those on campus struggling with these issues."

Shuttleworth and the rest of Soulforce hoped for this atmosphere of grace to be carried over into the events following the lunch, specifically the forum.

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THE WORLD IS THERE

by Derek Schwabe

Situation in Haiti Remains 'Dire'

Nearly two months after the series of disastrous earthquake strikes in Port-au-Prince, Haitian president Rene Prevel met with president Barack Obama in the White House this week to discuss relief and restoration progress. Mr. Obama described the Haitian condition as still 'dire' and pledged continued economic and humanitarian aid to the devastated nation, stating that "America's commitment to Haiti's recovery and reconstruction must endure and will endure." Although president Prevel expressed deep gratitude to the US and the world for their massive and generous support, he noted that the effort could have been more effectively managed. Both officials agreed on the need to make future natural disaster relief more efficient and called for the creation of a United Nations rapid response team to provide humanitarian help when natural disasters struck.

World Scientists to Review UN Climate Panel

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced this week a request of top world scientists to examine and evaluate the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Inter-Academy council, a respected global network of Science Academies, has been selected as the coordinating organization. The call for review came in response to

recent wide international criticism of the IPCC's annual climate report known as AR4, released in 2007. Although Ki-moon made it clear that the UN has seen no credible evidence to challenge the main conclusions of the report, he asserted the absolute need "to ensure full transparency, accuracy and objectivity." The IPCC hopes to receive an evaluative report from the Inter-Academy council by August, in time to discuss and adopt proposed changes at their October meeting.

Bill Gates Surpassed in 'World's Richest Man' Classification

Forbes Magazine issued their annual billionaire's list this week, which reported the displacement of American Microsoft founder, Bill Gates as the wealthiest man on Earth. The estimated value of Mexican Telecom giant, Carlos Slim's fortune surpassed that of Gates by a slim margin of about \$.5 billion, totaling approximately \$53.5 billion. This marks the first time since 1994 that an American has not topped the respected Forbes list. Researchers reported that Slim's investments gained \$18.5 billion this year, pushing him ahead of the pack. In 2009 the list shed 332 names in response to the worldwide recession. Economic Analysts were encouraged with this year's release, as the total number of billionaires reportedly rose from 793 to 1,011. 55 nations were represented in all, with first timers including Pakistan and Finland.

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allies and working to make Houghton a safe place for all students," said Heather Shuttleworth, Equality Rider and straight ally.

"I thought the student response was overwhelmingly positive and when students had varying views and opinions, they expressed them in a sincere and loving way," said Mutch.

After the time designated for community dialogue, there was a closed discussion between the Riders and the Student Government Association in the Dieter Board Room.

"I appreciated that the focus of the conversation was asking

Soulforce about ways that Houghton can treat homosexual students on and off campus. We talked about language that is offensive as well as misconceptions many people have about the GLTB community. The Equality Riders and Senators entered into the conversation with an understanding that we were not trying to convince each other of anything, just to understand each other a little better," said Caitlin Cleland, senator.

Following the SGA discussion, there was an open forum in Wesley Chapel. There were three panelists at the forum—Dr. Richard Eckley, Kathy Elliot of Agape Counseling Associates, and Emily Zahn, Equality Rider—and was facilitated by Mike

Lastoria, who gave an introduction, then presented the panelists with prepared questions during the first half of the forum. In the second half, students wrote down questions and were able to submit them to be answered by the panelists.

"I think the panel discussion was the best thing for the campus because [we] got to hear from three different people about the same issue and it was a great discussion where they weren't debating but talking to us," said Andrew Slocum, senior.

"The forum was very good. Houghton finally had their views challenged but presented it in a non-argumentative way. The forum guest choices were excellent and even-handed. I felt that even if someone didn't agree with all that was said they could still respect it," said Murphy.

After the forum, the Riders had a time of debrief in a closed dinner in the Dieter Board Room, before they were scheduled to leave campus at 7:00pm.

"Overall, I think the day went well," Mutch said, but added that the Riders were immediately "segregated" from the campus and into "a room no one knew existed. We would love to just sit on a park bench and hang out with a student, but we had to be escorted."

Shuttleworth said, "I was very happy we were welcomed onto campus" and could talk to different students, but the conditions were "not ideal because it was very controlled. I understand why it was controlled, but I feel it would have been more effective if it weren't."

"The visit by Soulforce to Houghton College presented a unique opportunity for the entire campus - how would we as a community respond? I was extremely impressed with everyone involved in the day - especially our students. They set a wonderful example for the entire Christian community through their intellectual maturity and commitment to faith. There was an exceptional amount of dialogue that took place throughout the day, and it is my hope that the Riders experienced the love of Christ in our community. While Houghton remains committed to our Biblical perspective, we can and will show dignity and respect to others," said Sharon Myers, Director of Public Relations.

"I think it was a great experience to have Soulforce here and I have had some great conversations with them and I have also created some great friendships," said Slocum.

According to Shuttleworth, the administration of the first school the Riders visited, Valley Forge Christian College (VFCC), did not let the Equality Riders on campus and the Equality Riders learned from an e-mail that the administration would expel the students if they left campus to talk with the Riders.

Mutch said that Repent America, an active conservative evangelical

organization, was at VFCC before the Riders got there and members of the organizations were holding signs and "yelling offensive things" with megaphones. Mutch said that she and another Rider tried to extend their hands to members of Repent America, but they would not shake the hands of the Equality Riders. Shuttleworth and Mutch both said that a member of the organization said that they would not shake hands because they "didn't know where [our] hands had been."

Repent America asked to come to Houghton, but were asked by Houghton administration not to come.

According to Myers, Houghton was also closed to the outside media. One news source, the Olean Times Herald, came to Houghton, but was escorted off campus because the school was closed to media "in the spirit of dialogue."

To encourage students to bring about change at Houghton, Mutch said that it is important "to educate yourself on the lives of LGBT people and have students work to have a safe place for all these different groups to express their needs," and suggested addressing LGBT issues during such programs as FYI.

"I feel the biggest thing a student can put into practice is first language and then love. Phrases such as 'lifestyle choice' are extremely harmful," said Murphy. "I was very proud of the way Houghton reacted in a broad sense. When the forum ended and there was an uproar of applause, I saw our visitors smiling and laughing and few with a tear in his or her eye. We actually listened, which is more than most schools do, but we cannot stop there. We don't necessarily need to change policy; we don't even all need to agree. But we need to find understanding, love, and compassion. We need to be a place where people can feel safe and free to work through any issues they may be dealing with or discovering."

"In the long run, we hope that students can create a safe place on campus for LGBT identified students, but we realize that can't happen overnight. Our goal for the day was to have an honest conversation and get students to think critically and get students to take it upon themselves to be active about this issue and to bring a message of love and affirmation to students who may be closeted," said Shuttleworth. "At the end of the day, that's who this trip is about." ★



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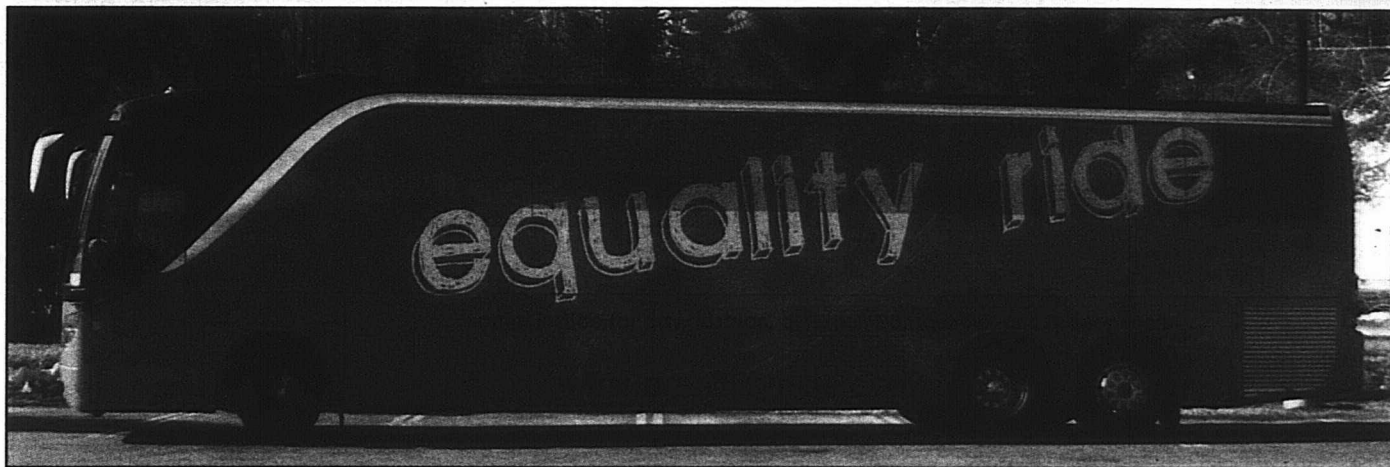


photo by Wesley Dean

Hather Shuttleworth, Equality Rider, said that she thought "we could all agree that a college environment should be a place where you can express yourself and learn from one another." This year, the Riders travel from February 25 until April 29, just over two months.

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"It is harmful to coerce someone into being something that they are not, and I would hope that the forum will expose that idea and open people's minds," said Shuttleworth prior to the forum. "I hope that it will have all of us realize how our actions and words affect others, and in the future, inspire someone to take action."

The forum, which took place at 4 p.m. in the Wesley Chapel, may have fulfilled Shuttleworth's wishes. Facilitated by Dr. Mike Lastoria, Director of Counseling Services, the forum featured a panel made up of Dr. Richard Eckley, Professor of Theology; Kathy Elliot of Agape Counseling Associates; and Emily Zahn, Equality Rider and junior at West Virginia Wesleyan College. Lastoria began the event by stating that the forum would not be a debate. If it was a debate, "would anything be accomplished?" he asked. According to him, wars over issues like these "have done little to show that Christians are known primarily for their love of people."

"Today is for listening," he said.

The 90-minute forum was divided into two parts — the first consisted of three rounds of questions asked by Lastoria and answered by the panelists, and the second included questions asked by audience members directed toward the panelists.

Lastoria began the discussion by stating that many communities "talk past each other" and asked Equality Rider Zahn if she knew of a way to "bridge the gap." Zahn replied by saying that there are many things the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning) and Christian communities agree on, including justice, fairness, and love, among other things.

"We should focus on those things, instead of what we disagree on," she suggested.

Lastoria's next question was directed toward Eckley, as the professor was asked what he thought about the phrase "Love the sinner, hate the sin."

"I am not fond of using that statement," responded Eckley, "but it is a starting place for discussion." Eckley claimed that the identity of a

person is so tied to his behavior that when he hears that phrase, all he hears is "we hate you."

Zahn agreed with Eckley's view and claimed that when told by others, "I love you, but I hate that you are gay," all she hears is "I hate a part of you." She then referenced John 13:34 and Galatians 5:14, passages that command Christians to love one another, and asked the audience to ask themselves: "Am I really loving them like Jesus would?"

The discussion then shifted to a conversation about reparative therapy. Lead by Elliot, she talked about the advantages and disadvantages of this process. She claimed that oftentimes someone, after completing reparative therapy, will start a healing process, will alter his lifestyle, and/or will see a change in sexual arousal and attraction patterns. Elliot, however, also recognized the possibilities of damage, especially if one is coerced into it or is given false promises for change. These issues could cause internal crisis within the person.

Lastoria stated that Soulfence has spoken out against reparative therapy, so when asked her take on the issue, Zahn focused on the negative aspects. However, Lastoria asked her if she would support a member of Soulfence if he wanted to change, and she said she would first ask him "why?" and attempt to determine if he was pressured. Ultimately, though, Zahn believes in the empowerment of others, and if he really wanted to take part in reparative therapy, she would support him.

The discussion touched on other topics, such as accepting the homosexuality of people but asking them to refrain from acting on it. The forum concluded with Zahn's opinion on how the Equality Ride visit went.

"This was our first welcoming stop," she said to the audience. "So thank you for being awesome."

She said that Soulfence's goal is to form relationships and to open up dialogue and also to "create a space for students to come out without being criticized." When asked by Lastoria if she thought the visit was successful, she answered that she is not sure at this point, and it may be clearer in five years.

"I don't know if our [Houghton's] policies will change that much," Eckley responded. "But I hope that dignity and respect might be nurtured better by visits like these."

Elliot added that she would hope grace is a result of this visit.

"We need to stop seeing it as a fight against each other," said Zahn, when asked where to go from here. "It is a fight against discrimination and injustice that we can come together to dismantle."

The audience took a three-minute break, which segued into the second part of the forum. Questions concerning Eckley's stance on homosexual relations on campus, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of gay Christians, and transgender issues were asked and thoughtfully answered by all three panelists.

Zahn, early in the forum, claimed that being a lesbian is a part of her identity. "How do you know your sexual orientation is yourself and not an inclination?" an audience member asked.

"I believe my sexuality is a gift from God," she answered. "So it is more than an inclination, because it is part of who God made me to be."

Zahn was also asked how the homosexual community might respond to the notion that personal history, instead of biology, forms homosexuality.

"Being abused does not cause sexual orientation," she said. "We should focus on the real issue, and that is that abuse is not okay, and it is going on."

Elliot responded with an argument about the difference between sexual orientation and sexual attraction, and that abuse oftentimes does affect sexual attraction.

"Abuse can cause distortions," she said.

Concerning the importance of both the LGBTQ and Christian communities working together, Eckley and Zahn agreed. Eckley recognized that the entire Christian community will probably never come to agreement about how homosexuality should be handled, but that nonetheless, Christians should work together.

"While limits to discussion were reached at certain points because of varying beliefs, God's love and grace provided an atmosphere of peace," said MacBeth of the forum. "While I still don't agree with their [Equality Riders'] views on homosexuality, I believe the event was very beneficial to our campus."

Despite the fact that consensus was not reached between the two groups, agreement about the concept of grace allowed both to share views openly. ★

The Results Are In! 2010 SGA Elections

With congratulations to all who participated, the Houghton Star is pleased to announce the members of the 2010-2011 SGA Cabinet. Although the race was close, **Zachary Adams** carried the day with 53% of the vote, and will serve a second term as President. **Joshua Mertzluft**, running unopposed, but almost unanimously supported, will be serving as Vice President. **Katie Schutte** and **Jaime Donnan** will each be serving as Commissioner of Finance for a semester, having won by a very narrow margin. **Anna**

Austin will be taking on the role of Commissioner of Communication. **Bethany Josephs** will be serving as chaplain. And finally, the race for Senator was intense, but out of the 11 students who ran, **Elizabeth Bailey**, **Austin Rudd**, **Hannah Vardy**, **Brian Lustig**, **Darius Crawford**, and **Alice Browning** will be serving full terms, and **Dodie Cook**, **Mitch Galusha**, **Sarah Wangai**, and **Derek Schwabe** will be serving semester-long terms. For more detailed returns, visit www.houghtonstar.com.

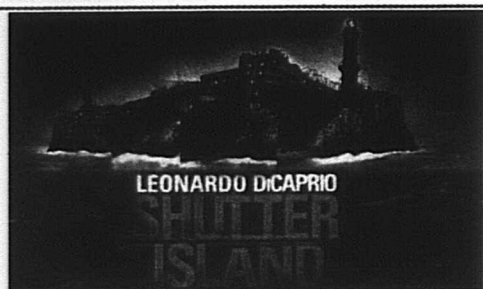


photo courtesy of thecutkid.com

Film Review: Shutter Island

by Ryan Clark

I'll never forget the first time I saw one of Martin Scorsese's films. It was my Senior year of High School. I was alone in the basement of my home watching "Taxi Driver" while my parents slept. It was an unforgettable experience from an unforgettable filmmaker: the palpable tension and sense of environment, the outstanding performances, the directorial command, the undeniable humanity of the characters despite their despicable and pathetic nature.

And now I'll never forget the first time I saw a Martin Scorsese film in theaters. Scorsese is who Roger Ebert calls "the greatest living filmmaker". Few directors, American or otherwise, have such a presence, such a command of style. "Shutter Island" is no exception. From the opening scene (underpinned by the indomitable music of Penderecki's Third Symphony) we feel as if we're stuck in a Limbo of sorts: the gloom of the locale (an offshore Atlantic Island) is tangible, and we are thrust headlong into the troubled psyche of the characters.

The plot revolves around former World War II veteran-turned-U.S. Marshall Teddy Daniels (the wonderfully talented Leonardo DiCaprio), who arrives with his partner (Mark Ruffalo) to Shutter Island, a mental institute for the criminally insane, investigating the "disappearance" of a patient, one Rachel Solando. Teddy is recently widowed (his wife was victim of arson), and his troubled psychology and past are literally flashed across the screen in certain scenes. One of the most memorable of these flashbacks is his arrival as a soldier to the death camp at Dachau. This horrifying scene is magnificently executed but completely silent except for the soundtrack featuring a Piano Quintet by Gustav Mahler. There are many scenes of such harsh contrast.

As the film develops, it becomes less about the missing patient and more about medical ethics in general and the violent nature in all humans. In one of the many scenes between Teddy and Dr. Cawley (played by the brilliant Ben Kingsley), they discuss two different schools of psychiatry: surgical and pharmaceutical. Because of the circumstances of his wife's murder, Teddy at first is skeptical of any sort of therapy for the deranged ("f**k their sense of calm") but the more he stays on the island, the more he feels like a patient, isolated to and fueled by his own memories and nightmares.

Teddy realizes that, to borrow a quote from "Deadwood", "we all have bloody thoughts".

The film at first seems to be about Teddy unraveling a government conspiracy. It seems that he was meant to come to Shutter Island so he could become part of some surgical testing facility, taking place in the lighthouse on the shore of the island. This, coupled by the growing potency of Teddy's nightmares, causes a great sense of vertigo (in fact, it somewhat resembles the Hitchcock film of the same name), and Teddy's growing fear is not of falling from the cliff of his insanity, but of throwing himself off of it; of drowning himself totally in the nightmares of his past. This is a classic theme of Scorsese's: that of guilt. For Travis Bickle in "Taxi Driver", it was the guilt of not acting against the imperfections of his surroundings. But Teddy Daniels possesses something Travis does not, the ability to recognize the imperfections of his surroundings within himself. Teddy knows what humanity is capable of, thanks to the Holocaust and thanks to his wife's murderer. Teddy's guilt is that he cannot understand why.

I will not give away any details about the end of the film. I feel that would ruin the dramatic and emotional impact. I will say that it fits the bill as far as Scorsese films are concerned. Many critics have panned it for not being of conventional Scorsese fare. Some think he simply dabbles in B-movie territory. Maybe he does. But the good news is.... it works. The film looks, sounds and feels wonderful and well-commanded by director, writer and actors (Leo better be up for an Oscar next year, and Ben Kingsley should make more films with Scorsese). The film is beautifully lensed by cinematographer Robert Richardson, and Marty's wonderful partner in the editing room, Thelma Schoonmaker, leaves an unmistakable mark. The soundtrack is also one of the best I've heard; consisting of mostly classical pieces from the likes of Krzysztof Penderecki, John Cage and Morton Feldman.

Shutter Island is an interesting study of madness, of monstrosity. From Teddy's perspective we see many horrifying crimes of humanity, and like Teddy, we cannot understand them. What do we as humans do? Do we look the other way? Or do we confront those images of monstrosity within ourselves? By the end of the film, the answer is not obvious for Teddy or for the viewer. ★

How well do you think Houghton is handling the Equality Ride?

Well 👍👍👍👍👍👍 49%

Neutral 👍👍👍👍 27%

Poorly 👍👍👍👍 24%

Results from 55 votes



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Intramural Wrap-Up

by Colleen Jennings

Complete with intense competition, great times with friends, and lots of laughs, the winter intramural season, which includes men and women's basketball, coed handball, and coed water polo, was a success on multiple levels. Although everyone may have different reasons for playing, all participants would agree that intramurals are a great way to spend time here at Houghton.

The handball championship game was Monday March 8 between Justin Farnsworth's Team Secret and Dan Tomlinson's Hand 1. The competitive matchup drew quite a large crowd and was close the whole way through. According to Team Secret player Danielle Turner the game went "goal for goal," but in the end it was Hand 1 that came away with the victory. It was a dramatic end to an intense season that Turner said she liked because it was "really great competition but also a lot of fun."

The men's basketball championships were won by Aaron Martin's Team Fartins in the A-league and Jeremiah Schmutz's Pioneer Food Services in the B-league.

Perhaps not quite as aggressive as handball, the basketball season still had its fair share of competition. However, for freshman transfer Ed Linnecke, the intramural season was more than just playing basketball. "It was really my first experience of Houghton, so I got to know a lot of people through it," noted Linnecke, "it helped me adjust to my new environment tremendously."

Although women's basketball had a lot of strong teams, it was not characterized by its intensity. It was instead known for the Field Hockey team's inventive plays and complete lack of understanding of the rules of the game, or for team Crossblade's Lady Gaga night and other crazy outfits. As seniors Emily VanEenwyk and Carrisa Lang showed at SPOT, their plays were unique and entertaining to watch. For example, Lang would dribble the ball up the court and suddenly shout, "fire!" Immediately the other girls on the team would stop, drop, and roll, acting as both distraction and blockade as Lang attempted to score.

Leah Scott and the volleyball

Intramurals cont'd on page 5

Concert Review: Relevant Worship

by Adam Rinehart

Friday night, March 5, Relevant Worship entered our community and led a pleasant worship experience. Houghton's very own Dreaming Outloud got the night started right, opening the show with their smooth and melodic sounds, catchy beats, and pleasant vocals. Alternating between popular worship songs and some of their own original compositions, the band created a soothing but groovy atmosphere.

The band members had great onstage chemistry and audience interaction, complete with beautifully harmonized vocals during the popular worship song "Here I am to Worship" and a cute synchronized jump. The band stepped outside of the box a bit when vocalist/bassist Steven Jay Woods whipped out an uncommon instrument: the mandolin. Overall, Dreaming Outloud definitely proved to be both entertaining and meaningful. They closed their set with a cover of the soulful song "Washed by the Water" by popular band NeedToBreathe, ending it with an a cappella chorus that had the whole audience on their feet clapping and singing along.

Patmos Vision took the stage after Dreaming Outloud and rocked out with their fabulously coordinated wardrobe. The seven-piece band displayed all-star talent on every instrument. Despite many obstacles, including lead singer Hannah Prentice getting sick before the show, as well as numerous technological difficulties during the show, the band still delivered a stellar performance. They played a variety of covers of popular rock songs by both distinctly Christian and secular bands, which included Kutless, Evanescence, and The Fray. The most impressive part of their performance came when guitarist/vocalist Jedidiah Boswell passionately sang the Foo Fighter's song "Home." He began accompanied only by Greg Mather on piano and Emily Dunn on violin before the rest of the band gradually

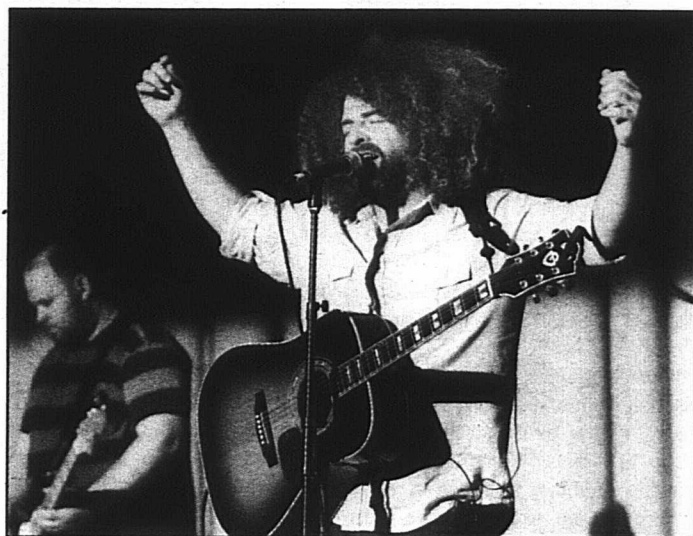


photo by Heather Hahn

Relevant Worship performed at Houghton on March 5, led by Hoisington

came into the song as its intensity increased, carving out a beautiful, holy space for all in the chapel. The song flowed seamlessly into "Never Alone" by Barlow Girl during which Hannah's intense vocal talent burst forth. The song started gently and built in intensity until it climaxed with an epic drum solo by Dan Larson. When asked what he thought the band would do next, bassist Ryan Blum stated the band's intent to "learn some new material," and that they hope to play at Houghtonpalooza. A fun fact about the band: rhythm guitarist Graeme Little is 6'5".

Before any of the bands took the stage, I sat down for a chat with Relevant Worship. When asked what prompted the kind of music Relevant Worship makes, vocalist Christopher Hoisington simply said "everything." He went on to say "My prayer to God has been that He would allow me to see him in everything, even in the things that are not Christian" and that in doing so he would be able to "take phrases and ways to say things that aren't so Christianese that you've hear a hundred times before." I suppose that is what makes this band "relevant." He expressed his desire for the band to be part of the "new worship leaders that go out of the

new and different sound.

Despite all this, Relevant Worship showed me nothing that caused them to stand out from any other standard worship band I have listened to. Musically they were proficient but not astounding, and lyrically they sang generic, theologically thin praise choruses. An exception to this was found in the song "Yahweh" and in their closing song, which were both robustly theological. Another nice gem in the performance was the particularly nice renditions of the old hymns "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" and "There is Power in the Blood."

One thing I cannot be critical of, however, is their authenticity. Hoisington said during the interview that people aren't looking for people to respect artistically anymore; they are looking for people they can believe in, and it was very clear that these guys were just that. And because of their hearts of authenticity, they were able to create for everyone a special and holy time of beautiful worship. This, according to Hoisington, is the definition of worship. "Worship is getting everybody in one accord and singing the song." Certainly, this is exactly what happened last Friday night; genuine worship happened. ★

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Intramurals cont'd from page 4

girls, known as team Fancy Nancies, faced the soccer girls in the championship game for the third year in a row. The soccer girls won the first year but the Fancy Nancies took back the title last season. It was a close game but the Fancy Nancies defended their title and came away with the win.

Scott echoed the feelings of most intramural participants when she said she played "to spend time with her friends and to play another sport that I love." Players were not the only ones who enjoyed the intramural

season, the supervisors and referees also had a great time participating. Carolyn Adams, who worked as one of the three supervisors over this intramural season, said that she liked "watching the teams interact and seeing the different dynamics involved." Varsity basketball player Ashley Dupler said it was "fun to ref" the girls' basketball games, "especially the field hockey girls."

The water polo season is still in full swing and the championship game is scheduled for March 18, 2010. ★

Intention vs. Perception: What you say is only as effective as how you say it

by Bryan Overland

Over the past few weeks there has been a student movement on campus involving white t-shirts with the words "I Have Died And My New Identity Is In Christ" written on them. This was intended as a "proactive response" to the Soulforce visit. Last week I wrote a commentary piece against this movement. I did not go about writing that article in the best way possible, and as a result, people's perceptions of my words did not match my intentions.

First of all, my fixation on the point of division and offense may have actually created more division and offense while failing to remedy the more important worries I had. These worries may have been obscured by many of my own words. Christianity is a religion full of division and offense. Christians are called to be in the world but not a part of it. The church is separate from the rest of the world. We are different. Being a part of one of the many Protestant denominations, I can attest to divisions within the church. As for offense, Christianity is an offensive religion. It reveals the sin that we live with. It is offensive to be told that you are wrong, that you need to do away with sin in your life. Therefore, just because something is offensive or divisive does not automatically make something wrong. You must seek to understand what the offense or division stems from. All unnecessary offense and division must be avoided, but a Christian should not be afraid when Christ's Gospel offends or divides us from the rest of the world.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In response to the From the Editor's Desk article by Monica Sandreczki run in the last issue of the Star, first I would like to say that I agree with her, to a point. I believe that Christians ought to be cautious in assigning significance to current events as things which fulfill "prophecy." (A discussion of the numerous grammatical errors in last week's Star is for another letter.) However, I disagree with her about the reasons.

I appreciate Monica's comment that

Another mistake I made was not to talk with those behind the t-shirt idea to clear up my own misconceptions about their project. In publishing my article I was representing their intentions based upon my own perceptions. Since then I have met with Martin Hegeman and discussed how the messages we intend are often not what people receive. At the end of this article is Mr. Hegeman's explanation of what the goal of the t-shirts was.

My previous article was an attempt to question the usefulness and validity of using t-shirts to communicate a message like this. T-shirts give a person the opportunity to see what you are wearing, make a judgment, and move on based upon that fact alone. They have the danger of cheapening the words on them into clichés. If we are known only by the t-shirts we wear, and not by our stories or actions, then we have failed. I assume that many on the Soulforce bus would find the message of the shirts applicable to their own lives. This further illustrates the potential confusion caused by the shirts. Surely the purpose of the shirts was not to affirm homosexuality.

As I wrote in my previous article, the message on the t-shirts is a message that should apply to the life of every Christian. That this message is being displayed on t-shirts reduces the power of these words to that of a mere bumper sticker. I do not want the enormity of these words reduced to a clichéd theology which is associated with a strong anti-homosexual standpoint. That is not what they mean.

we are at all times closer to Christ's coming than we were, but I don't think we are wrong to expect him. After all, believers in the early church expected Christ's return during their lifetime. Since he has already delayed almost 2,000 years, it makes sense for us to expect him all the more now.

Monica contradicts herself. She claims that we should live each day as if the end of the world is near, but that our beliefs about it should have no sway over our actions. The return of Christ is one of the few things worth hoping for, and it should be that hope that motivates us. How much of the Bible would Monica suggest we ignore in this matter?

There is certainly more scriptural support for the coming of Christ being preceded by disaster than his teaching

by Martin Hegeman

There is no doubt that some have taken away the wrong perception of our T-shirts. First, we do well to remember that even Jesus Christ invariably caused divisions and offended many, choosing to speak very boldly and strongly at times. We are called to be "citizens of heaven"; to "be in this world but not of this world." Jesus Christ calls us as well to action, not to passivity. My question is this: How has the Holy Spirit empowered you into action that sets you radically apart from this world?

For some of us that means wearing a T-shirt that proclaims that our lives have been radically transformed by the Holy Spirit. This action should not be read as a protest, or that we who wear it are "better" than those who don't agree, or again, those who agree but don't wear a shirt. Philippians 3:12-14 says: "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting

what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Throughout the planning of our response, there have been some misconceptions that in hind-sight we may have been able to avoid; there may have been words that offended. Suzy Derksen, with whom I have had the privilege of working, writes: "In a self-seeking and individualistic world, it is not a comfortable thing to put on a T-shirt that proclaims submission to the Word of God. It is a grave misconception that wearing a T-shirt with this message somehow divides the 'sinner' and the 'saved.' It is our brokenness that unifies us. I believe in the power of testimony. Those who wear this T-shirt must be prepared to give an account of what Christ is doing in their life. While some may see these T-shirts as a tacky campaign or demonstration, the power of this statement must be accompanied by a response to the question 'why are you wearing this T-shirt?' I am inspired by those in our community who have had the courage to publicly share their story. Sin loses its power over us with public confession."

The Gettysburg Address was 272 words...

The Houghton Star is dedicated to the free exchange of ideas and encourages community members to participate in the discussion. Ideas expressed in these pages reflect solely the opinion of the writer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit any contributions for reasons of length or decorum.

We want our readers to be an integral part of the conversation.

...We're giving you 350

Letters to the editor (signed) should be 350 words or fewer and be submitted to STAR@houghton.edu. If letters to the editor don't appeal to you, register at www.houghtonstar.com and comment on our articles online.

Letter cont'd on pg 7

From the Editor's Desk...

How the Religious Right Has Failed Itself

by Joel Vanderweele

This week's Equality Ride visit went amazingly well. The months of planning, panels, and (let's be honest) panic are over, and now we can all breathe a collective sigh of relief. This is not to say that the conversation that the Equality Ride sparked should end; far from it.

I think everyone involved with the visit is glad that nothing terribly objectionable happened, and that neither the Equality Riders nor the representatives of Houghton College did anything that they will come to regret. The main complaint I have heard is that the day was too restricted.

To my mind, the Equality Ride visit proved that politically conservative Christians have the ability to handle disagreements, even deeply-rooted and hotly debated ones, with grace, love, and humility. This is no small thing.

Despite all of this, however, I still can't seem to shake my fear of the so-called "religious right." Part of my fear is rooted in a general suspicion of people who make a habit of mixing power and piety, especially in politics. But it goes beyond that.

When I think of the "religious right," I don't think of events such as this week's Equality Ride, where large groups of politically conservative Christians extend a gracious hand to people they disagree with and engage

in thoughtful dialogue.

Instead, I think about the gun-sight manufacturer Trijicon, which covertly inscribed "2COR4:6" on the scopes it was selling to the U.S. Military.

Or I think of Todd Akin, GOP Congressman from Missouri, who recently said on the floor of the House of Representatives, "I believe as we stand on the abyss tonight, for those Americans who are wont to turn to God for answers, that this is a time to be doing that, to ask for his help, supernaturally, so that we don't make this fatal step, pushing our nation into socialized medicine."

Or I think of the Christian Science Monitor article in November, which reported that a group of politically conservative Christians started distributing bumper stickers which read:

"A Prayer for Obama, Psalm 109:8." The verse reads, "Let his days be few; and let another take his office" and is immediately followed by "let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow."

Most of all, I think about the shrill and heavy-handed "dialogue" that dominates the Fox News Network. More than their liberal counterparts, many pundits on Fox make a habit of poisoning the well by applying

overblown religious language to issues which are never addressed in the Bible, to the point where believing that some social services should be funded by taxpayer dollars becomes a case of "religious" heresy.

I am not ignorant of the fact that my fear of the "religious right" is colored by politically-motivated media sources that seek to exploit every example of ignorance they find, and I don't want to ignore the same type of shrill and heavy-handed dialogue that occurs on CNN and MSNBC. It also may be important to note that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) defended the Psalm 109:8 bumper stickers as a legal form of free speech.

But this is not enough. Just because the means by which the self-appointed spokespeople of the "religious right" communicate their beliefs is technically legal, does not mean we are succeeding. Similarly, the fact that the secular/liberal (often read "Godless") media often falls prey to the same shrillness that politically conservative Christians do, does not mean politically conservative Christians ought to be pleased with themselves. Whatever their political convictions, Christians are called to be salt and light to the world. In that way, the religious right has seriously failed itself.

More specifically, the spokespeople of the "religious right," official and unofficial, have failed to represent their constituency to the detriment of the entire group. If a large group of young and energetic conservative Christians can handle something like the Equality Ride as well as Houghton students did, why can't the spokespeople who are supposed to represent this demographic learn from them? Why can't the public face of the religious right exhibit the same grace, love, and humility shown on campus this week?

I have a feeling that many Christian conservatives want to prove that they will not be swayed by wishy-washy liberalism, and so they "call it like it is" and call those who disagree with them overly-sensitive, saying things like "If you think this is scandalous, read the Bible." But it is not appropriate to respond to your critics by giving every political issue near-salvific importance, so that everything they say is not only wrong, but a sign of the Devil's work in their life.

How do you make your so-called representatives reform without simply shouting louder than them? It's a difficult question. But it must start with open ears, open minds, and, most of all grace.

Joel is a senior Mathematics and Philosophy major and is the Editor-in-Chief

Letter Cont'd from pg 6

in Mark. For example, there's the book of Revelation, which clearly states that the purpose of foreseen tragedy is to call people to repentance.

There is no way around it - Christ's return is and will be preceded by disaster. The simple truth that can be gained from those passages which some conveniently avoid is that God is not only a God of love and grace (though he is those things, which may account for the delay in his coming) but also a God of justice and wrath. This means that we don't have easy answers about suffering. However, our hope is also in this: for the salvation of many, God required at least one man, and consequently those close to him, to suffer and to die.

-Tierzah Faulkner, Class of 2011

Dear Editor,

I feel it necessary to respond to "What Would Jesus Wear..." Mr. Overland states that Jesus interacted with the "unclean" people of his time by talking and eating with them. He then mistakenly extends this policy to

Houghton's response to Soulforce.

Soulforce is not the equivalent of the prostitutes and tax collectors of New Testament times. The Samaritan woman did not claim to be Jewish or godly. Neither did Zacchaeus. They were outside the means of salvation of that time and perhaps for this reason Christ dealt gently with them.

Many Soulforce members, however, claim to be simultaneously Christian and homosexual, something traditional Christian morality declares impossible. Christ did respond to believers who were in clear violation of the revealed scripture but these were the Herodians, who adopted Greek culture at the expense of their Jewish faith. And Christ was not as inviting to these believers.

What then is a Christian response to Soulforce and to homosexuality? I am not completely sure myself. I think there are two great errors Christian fall into on every issue. The first is self-righteous condemnation of any deviation from one's particular interpretation of Scripture. This, surely, is not in the spirit of Christ's kingdom! The second, however, is to accommodate Scripture to the prevailing whims of the culture. However, the truly controversial message of Jesus is that the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom separate

and different from all the kingdoms of this world, is at hand.

Thus, to return to the T-shirts, I have no problem with someone declaring that their identity is in Christ, even if this condemns homosexuality. It is

not a self-righteous condemnation but an affirmation of traditional Christian morality. It is an invitation to discussion, something Christ would have approved.

-Theodore Janney, Class of 2013

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Self Portrait in Blue, Oil, Spring 2010

JOYCE TAYLOR

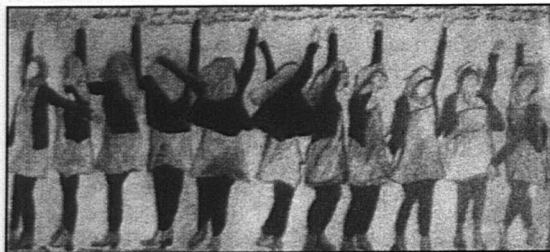
Note from the artist:

"I've got two big hands and a heart pumping blood" as The Mountain Goats would say and a strong desire to create art. I am in the process of figuring out which media works best for my purpose, my current interests include the relationship between photo images and transferring those into artistic creations. I work in a variety of media depending on the time of day or mood. I enjoy painting in oils but do use acrylics occasionally. My sister is one of my muses for creating and I love to capture her beauty in paintings, her name is Georgia and she is the purple painting. People interest me as subject matter and cropping their bodies in and out of the picture plane. I love art. I want to create daily. I'm not sure where it will take me, but it's my heart's

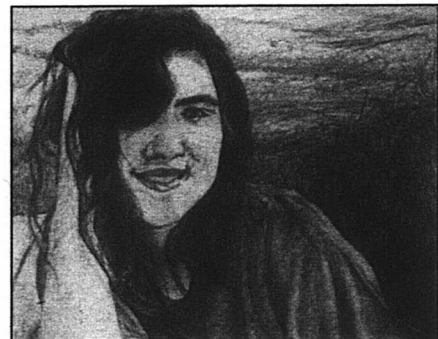
desire to design and experience the world through creating. Also, I am in a pottery class and I have to say, it is one of the most spiritual things I have ever experienced. Really I just want to make art that people can enjoy. I have a personality that one could describe as quirky or silly and I want my art to reflect this exciting nature and make people smile. I want to depict enjoyable images for others. I've only begun this process. I believe there is so much I want and need to learn and I'm excited I have the chance to spend the next few years of my life dedicated to this...



Sheila, Acrylic, Spring 2008



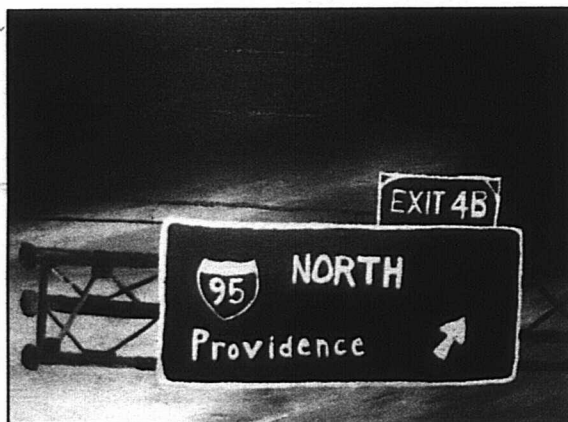
Sketch of a Spin, Graphite, Fall 2009



Self Portrait in the Park, Graphite, Fall 2009



Georgia in the Dressing Room, Acrylic, Summer 2009



Almost Home, Acrylic, Summer 2008

OF THE artist WEEK

THIS SUDOKU IS
EASY

Prize: Leroy Townes and
the Lone Stars' album!

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

Congratulations,
Bradley Mey-
ers, winner of
TWO
BUFFALO
SABRES
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THIS SUDOKU IS
**KIND OF
HARD**

Bring your finished
sudoku puzzles
to the STAR office
clearly marked
with FULL NAME.

The Star will only
accept one puzzle
per student per
semester.

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sudoku CHALLENGE