

# Praxis: “A Week of Listening”



Staphan Hestick ‘19, Khadeeja Smith ‘18, Joe Miner ‘18, and Travis Trotman 17 (pictured left to right) were student panelists who spoke on their personal backgrounds and time at Houghton College.

HOPE MCKEEVER

With the commencement of a new semester came a new theme for chapel. This

semester’s theme of reconciliation prefaced the focus of the spring 2016 Praxis week, which was dubbed by Dean Jordan as “a week of listening.”

Throughout the week, chapel speakers and panel discussion leaders from diverse African-American and black backgrounds facilitated this listening. Jordan

shared how the influence of the black church in his personal spiritual development contributed to his decision about the focus of Praxis week. Joe Miner ‘18 a panelist from last Tuesday’s discussion, shared, “It was encouraging for me to hear other black speakers come to Houghton to hear about their experience as well as hear the concerns of my white friends.”

Meredith Griffin, pastor at Harvest Christian Fellowship, stated on Friday that an attitude of listening in transition periods is crucial for understanding how to serve one another when it is least comfortable. Travis Trotman ‘17, a panelist last Tuesday, reiterated the importance of “multicultural sensitivity.” He identified this idea as central to listening and speaking with care. Miner added, “We should be looking for ways to grow and love each other.”

On Monday, Tali Hairston, director of the Perkins

See **PRAXIS** page 3

# Solar Panels Prove Profitable

RACHEL ZIMMERMAN

Last spring, the new array of solar panels on Houghton’s field of dreams promised a viable option for energy.

It was the result of the initiative that began three and a half years ago when Houghton was first contacted by Smart Energy with the idea for solar panel partnership. “Houghton was not in a financial position to pay for anything like that,” said sustainability coordinator Brian Webb. Through the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), Houghton was able to begin installing the solar panels in September of 2014. The financial arrange-

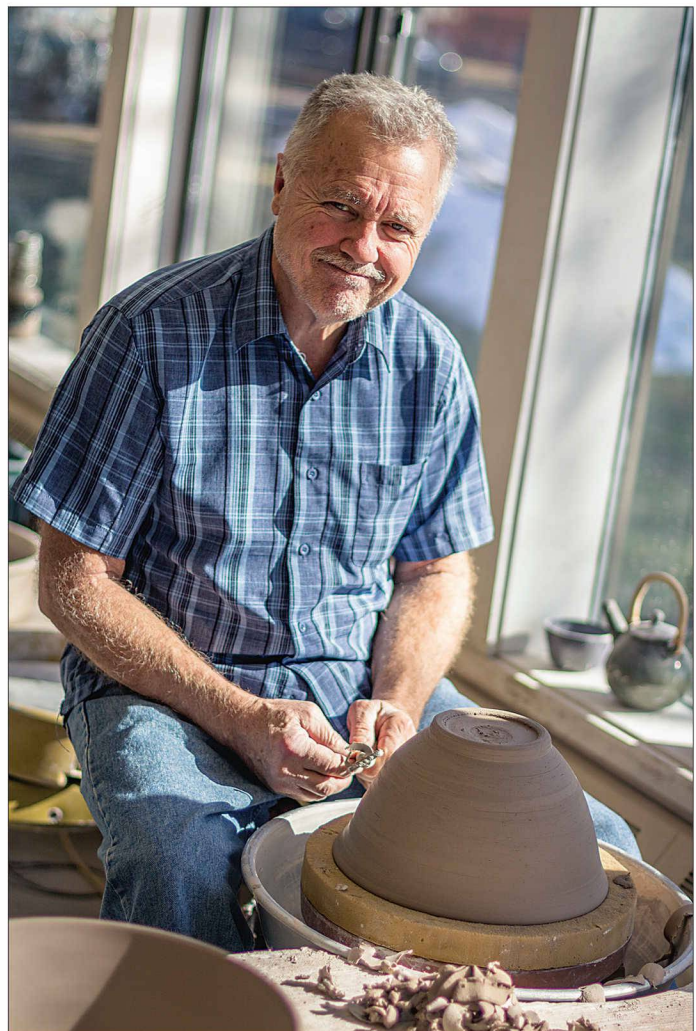
See **SOLAR** page 3

# Film and Panel Debate to Educate on Income Inequality

MICAH CRONIN

Under the coordination of psychology professor Richard Stegen, Houghton Student Enterprises (HSE), and Psi-Chi (the National Honor Society in Psychology), the film *Inequality for All* will make its debut at Houghton College on February 11 at 7 p.m. in the Center for the Arts Recital Hall. Following the film, there will be a panel discussion among four members of the Houghton community.

The trailer of the award-winning documentary states, “Of all developed nations,



Longtime art professor, Gary Baxter, will begin to lessen his course load over the next two years in preparation of his retirement.

See **PANEL** page 2

# Professor Initiates Retirement With College’s New Plan

KASEY CANNISTER

Longtime professor, Gary Baxter, will be retiring from his position as professor of art as he decreases his teaching load over the next two years.

This decision is part of the new Retirement Incentive Plan now offered by the college. “The plan was offered to tenured teaching faculty meeting a minimum age requirement,” said Dale Wright, Executive Director of Human Resources.

According to Wright, participation in the program is voluntary and candidates have two options. The first option is to retire at the end of this current academic year; while the second is to phase into retirement with reduced teaching loads over

the next two years.

The plan was offered with two main goals. The first being to give long-serving faculty members who chose to, an opportunity to retire or to reduce their teaching load earlier than they might have otherwise been able to. The plan also hopes to assist the institution in aligning faculty resources with the current size and distribution across academic programs. Wright confirmed that the plan has been well received by the college and participating faculty.

For Baxter this plan was exactly what he wanted. He said, “The work I’ve been doing for the college and in the ceramics studio is pretty physical, so it would be

See **RETIRE** page 3



# International // Zika Spreads Through the Americas



ANTHONY BURDO

MELISSA MACLEAN

The mosquito-borne Zika virus is projected to infect up to 4 million people across the Americas in the next year. Last May, public health authorities confirmed a re-outbreak of the virus in Northeast Brazil. Since October 2015, the virus has

spread to other surrounding areas, including southern United States, according to Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the virus outbreak as a “public health emergency of international concern.” Margaret Chan, director of WHO forwarded a statement to Al Jazeera on the matter—”Last year, the virus was detected in the Americas, where it is now spreading explosively. As of today, cases have been reported in 23 countries and territories in the region.” Though there are strong suspicions behind the causal relationship between the virus and birth defects, Chan states that the claim cannot be confirmed yet. The first outbreak was detected in Uganda in 1947. Fifteen miles outside the country’s capital Kampala lies the Zika forest where the first case was discovered. However, unlike the cases in the Americas, most of the lo-

cal cases in Africa were mild, only resulting in a “rash, fever, and red eyes” for a few days. Julius Lutwama, top scientist for Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI), believes there is an alteration of the virus from the one he discovered in Uganda to that of South America. “What has happened in South America is that it has changed a little bit... and through these changes it has become more aggressive towards humans,” Lutwama said. “This small change has resulted in it posing deep problems in the human population. Since there is no treatment or vaccine for the virus yet, countries are focusing their efforts on preventative measures first. In the case of El Salvador, Eduardo Espinoza, Vice Minister of Health, released a recommendation to the Salvadorans to “plan their pregnancies and try to avoid getting pregnant this year and the next.” WHO, on the other hand, is planning on taking another

route of preventative medicine by helping women reduce their risk of mosquito bites. They will implement this by providing more accessible mosquito nets and repellent. The debate over whether women should abstain from getting pregnant has also brought up the heated discussion around abortion rights. People in this defense are equating the virus to that of a similar case in the 1960’s with the Rubella disease. Like Zika, Rubella had links to birth defects and abnormalities with pregnancies. However, because this was a decade shy of Roe v. Wade, the public debate did not go on for long. But as a result of the widespread discussion, more Americans “came to empathize with those mothers who has an illicit abortion” says Jasmine Garsd of National Public Broadcasting (NPR). In the case of El Salvador, Espinoza plans to reduce pregnancies through natural

ways, such as abstinence and condoms. But unlike the U.S., El Salvador does not have abortion-rights laws. Salvadoran abortion rights activist, Angela Rivas, see the situation differently. She claims that Zika will lead to “more clandestine abortions and a higher number of women being sent to jail.” An emergency meeting will be held by WHO on Monday to discuss possible ways to battle the Zika virus. Until then, preventative measures have been taken to reduce risk of contracting the virus.★ *Melissa is a junior communication and international development major.*

**PANEL** *from page 1*  
the U.S. has the most unequal distribution of income, and we’re surging toward even greater inequality.” Activist Robert Reich, former United States Secretary of Labor is featured, promoting a left-leaning solution to income inequality in the United States and possible solutions toward greater equity. Representing the right wing of the debate on income inequality will be professor of economics, Robert Black. Representing the left wing

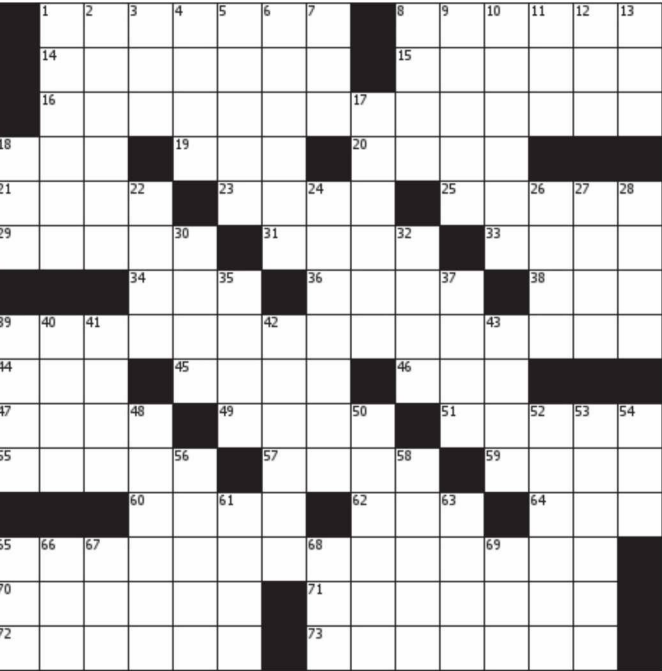
on the panel will be Rodney Glasspoole, an Allegany County probation officer. “Rodney has the most liberal viewpoint on the panel,” Stegen said. “I believe what he has to say will be very provocative.” Representing the moderates are right-leaning Joseph Gilligan ‘17 and left-leaning theology professor Richard Eckley. Stegen stated he is “passionate” about the issue of income inequality, which led him to organize the event. As the moderator of the debate,

he will explore each of the candidate’s ideas and proposed solutions to the issue from an economic, political, and Christian perspective. Gilligan, however, stated he believed the film is a “neo-Marx presentation of income inequality” in the United States, an idea which he plans to expound upon, “when the debate happens.” Gilligan also offered his thoughts on how to discuss this polarizing issue well, and stated media, such as student newspapers, are a good outlet for students to encounter various

opinions and viewpoints. He also suggested that everyone, particularly students, stay politically informed by reading a variety of news sources, such as the Washington Post and the New York Times. “Try to read from people who have different viewpoints than you,” he said. As a theologian, Eckley said he frames his thoughts on income inequality around the Bible, which, he said, “supports preferential treatment of the poor.” He continued, “In the Bible, the poor are always given hope. I have

no problem with [economic disparity] until it gets to the point where there is despair and hopelessness-when the rich pull the ladder up with them.” The event, which is expected to last roughly three hours, is expected by the coordinators and panelists to spark lively and, hopefully, constructive discussion about economic justice and income inequality in the United States. The film and debate are free of charge and open to all students, faculty, staff, and community members.★

## Crossword of the Week



**Across**  
1. Fill beyond full  
8. Large grassy plain  
14. Parliamentary procedure

15. Buster or Diane  
16. So said Murphy, Part 1  
18. Goof  
19. Waterproof raincoat  
20. Opposing

21. British nobleman  
23. Caulterize  
25. Leavening agent  
29. Make sense  
31. Plan to attend  
33. Old Testament book  
34. Forest denizen  
36. Hound’s prey  
38. Stalemate  
39. So said Murphy, Part 2  
44. Grazing land for the flock  
45. Word with inch or tape  
46. Name in a Johnny Cash song  
47. Informal message  
49. Like champion race-horses  
51. Some map markings  
55. Expert  
57. Republic of Yemen city  
59. Polynesian dance  
60. Golfer’s selection  
62. “\_\_\_ many cooks ...”  
64. Time-wasting bother  
65. So said Murphy, Part 3

70. Reduced the fare  
71. Agreements  
72. Breaks a certain limit  
73. On that account  
  
**Down**  
1. Gave a turn  
2. Wayne’s butler  
3. Two-year-old  
4. Short news bit  
5. Seemingly radiated qualities  
6. Parcel inquiry  
7. Underwater cave dweller  
8. Largest organ  
9. Short-tempered  
10. More facile  
11. School organization  
12. Taro product  
13. Terminate  
17. Kind of insect stage  
18. Clean air gp.  
22. Regretted  
24. Embarrassed  
26. GM or MG product  
27. Hubbub

28. Biblical pronoun  
30. Farm need  
32. Those in favor  
35. Contrast or volume, on an old TV  
37. Needle case  
39. Mater preceder  
40. Can’t be without  
41. Agatha Christie, e.g.  
42. Wide of the mark  
43. Interlock  
48. Sense-dulling drug  
50. Uncouple  
52. Angola capital  
53. Firstborn  
54. \_\_\_ Paulo, Brazil  
56. Attempted  
58. Present time  
61. 2:1, e.g.  
63. Aroma if pleasant, smell if bad?  
65. Bartender’s requests  
66. Take tea  
67. Answer a raise  
68. Word with box or trick  
69. Hematite, for one



SOLAR from page 1

ment allows Houghton to lease the land for WGL Energy without paying capital, buying the energy it produces at a “predetermined price” for twenty-five years. Webb explained that “because the energy is connected to the grid it, is sold to RGNE,” Houghton’s utility company.

According to Webb, there are two aspects determining the overall success of the endeavor. “It’s automatically successful, environmentally speaking,” he said, since the driving factor was “wanting to install renewable energy and lower the carbon footprint.” The solar panels produce nearly fifty percent of Houghton’s energy. “It’s the equivalent of 300 homes worth,” Lauren Bechtel ‘16 explained, recalling the visual representation of the 300 paper homes on the quad last spring. Bechtel was involved in the installation of the solar array as one of the student representatives, a link “between the student body population and the leaders that made it happen.”

Webb also discussed the “side benefit” of the financial yield. While he admitted that examining savings is “preliminary analysis” due to the

differing billing cycles of the solar and utility companies, it looks promising. “The difference between what we pay and what get paid is really attractive,” he said. Since the solar panels were finished in April, Houghton’s savings have amounted to \$73,000 according to Webb. These savings counter the concerns of some Houghton students regarding the solar panels last spring. “There was a lot of confusion and misunderstanding,” Bechtel explained. She noted that while students worried about the cost of the solar panels, the PPA and likely financial benefits attest that “Houghton wasn’t choosing solar panels over student interests.”

Both Bechtel and Webb are pleased with the success of the solar panels. Bechtel noted that Houghton still has the largest solar array of any New York State campus. “Even if the students don’t see them everyday, they’re still contributing to the sustainability of our college,” she said. “It’s been exciting to see it go up,” Webb said. Having overseen the project through the phases of organizing grants, funding, design, and construction, he expressed “finally getting it installed is a big success.”★



ANTHONY BURDO

According to Brian Webb, sustainability coordinator, Houghton's savings have amounted to \$73,000 since the instillation of the solar panels.

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Want to write?  
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PRAXIS from page 1

Center for Reconciliation, Leadership and Community Development at Seattle Pacific University spoke to this. He explained that in order for Christ to live through us, He must live through our ac-

tions. This incarnational attitude points the listening back to Jesus and the humanity that He embodies in order to love us in our humanity. Dean Jordan posed the question, “When we’re done listening and trying to act, what will that look like?” He added, “It’s not just about be-

ing nice.” Miner echoed this statement and stated, “Racism isn’t just a mean word, it’s a mentality and a system. It’s not something that changes overnight.” With this in mind, sensitivity and understanding were common themes from this past week.

How can Houghton con-

tinue this conversation? Trotman suggests that Houghton provide a trained diversity counselor for the Houghton community. He described how this service would give students a safe, comfortable place to continue to ask questions and learn from one another.

Dean Jordan has assured chapel-goers that Praxis week is not the end of the diversity conversation. The first and last chapel speakers of February, Black History Month, will be dedicated to pastors who lead intentionally multicultural congregations.★

RETIRE from page 1

nice to slow down the pace a little bit.” Baxter currently teaches art classes in ceramics, three-dimensional design, and sculpture. Carolin Jackson, a senior art major, described Baxter saying, “He has always found a way to see beauty and merit in near-

ly every one of his students’ endeavors, encouraging and provoking in such a way that always brings their projects and ideas to a great completion than before.” The plan is for Baxter to only teach ceramics for the next two years and for the college to hire a new professor within that period. In the meantime, they may have to hire an adjunct professor to teach Three-Dimensional Design and Sculpture.

The transition of older professors into retirement allows for younger professors to transition into the department. Baxter said, “I think for a lot of students there’s a great deal of appeal to having young faculty members.”Baxter continued,, “I think it’s good to have balance, with some older and some younger faculty. But I think it’s good to have some new blood. With new blood comes new energy for the de-

partment.”

After retiring, Baxter will continue making art. At his home he has a studio with both a wood burning and gas kiln. “I am planning to continue to produce ceramic art and continue working for as long as my health allows me to,” he said. Baxter continued, “I have a pile of books to read that I haven’t been able to get around to, and it’d also be nice to travel.” While he has been on sev-

eral trips to Europe with students, those trips always take place in the summer during high tourist season. Baxter expressed excitement to be able to travel to places like Greece, Turkey, and Japan during the off-season when it is less touristy. She continued, “While his absence will be sorely felt, his impact and influence in his students’ lives will only continue to bloom and resonate for many years to come.”★

Sports: Scores and Highlights

**Men’s Basketball, 1/30/16**  
Houghton v. Hartwick College  
L, 91-85 Houghton Shooting %: 34.9%  
Hartwick Shooting %: 44.4%

**Women’s Basketball, 1/30/16**  
Houghton v. Hartwick College  
L, 55-45 Houghton Shooting %: 42.6%  
Hartwick Shooting %: 32.0%

**Congratulations to Maisie Pipher on scoring her 1,000th point and being named as Empire 8 Woman’s Basketball Player of the Week!**



# Athlete Spotlight: Nikki Garns



Soccer and track athlete Nikki Garns has been breaking school records as of late. She recently she broke the record for the indoor 300 meter event. When she's not practicing or competing at a meet, Garns is busy studying theology and Bible.

ALICIA NEEDHAM

Nikki Garns ‘18, has been breaking school records right and left on the track. Recently, she broke the school record for 300 meters indoors by finishing in 6th place (43.77) and set a facility record (10:02.74) at the Kerr-Pegula Field Complex with her other teammates (Kate Taggart, Rebekah White, and Joanna Friesen) for the 4x800 relay. Additionally, she has qualified for NCCAA Nationals by finishing 3rd in the 800 meters which was a three second indoor personal record. Patrick Hager, head men’s and women’s track and field coach, said, “I know that when Nikki gets the baton she’s going to do everything she can to put them in the best position and I don’t think anybody doubts that when they’re in a relay with Nikki.”

When Garns first settled on coming to Houghton, she had decided to play soccer because the women’s program is very strong and didn’t actually plan on running college track. After being contacted by the head track and field coach at the time, Garns was convinced that she could compete in both sports. Hager knew that Garns would be an “immediate impact type of person” as a

freshman. Last year, she was the 1st Empire 8 individual champion indoor or outdoor, 2nd in the 800 meters, set an outdoor school record by taking 4th in the 4x8, was a member of the 4x200 meters relay team that set a facility record, and was part of the relay team that took 4th last year at NCCAA women’s track national meet.

She has been having quite the success in soccer as well. The women’s soccer teamed ended their 2015 season (16-6-2) champions of the NCCAA women’s soccer national tournament in Florida. “Nikki provides versatility, for the women’s soccer team with her ability to play well at several positions,” said head women’s soccer coach, David Lewis. “She is a team oriented player who I have great respect for.” Nikki has great running ability which has built up her stamina, strength and allows her to play many different positions in soccer successfully. “She is talented and she works hard, but it’s her toughness that sets her apart” said Hager. Garns has a “mental fortitude” that allows her to be tougher than everybody else on the track and on the soccer field. On relay teams she’s usually the anchor because she does not like to lose and is very consistent. “I admire her collected demeanor during practices and before races

and it has been a challenge to me as an athlete to push beyond my limits” said Rebekah White ‘18. “It is a privilege to train and compete with Nikki and I truly believe that it has made me a stronger athlete.”

Garns serves as the team chaplain for the men’s and women’s track team. She organizes team devotionals on Fridays. “Her love for Christ is evident in all her interactions with her teammates and competitors. She is always encouraging and supportive of her teammates, especially on days when our confidence has been shaken” said White. Lewis said, “Nikki embraces life with an infectious enthusiasm. She has strong interpersonal relationship skills and she desires to serve others as an outgrowth of her Christian faith.”

Garns is a theology and Bible major who has a sports ministry concentration and a business administration minor. “I would love to work at a summer camp basically as a director, event coordinator, any leadership type role” said Garns. In summers past she has worked at camps in different roles and she is looking forward to her internship at a camp for this summer since it is more related to what she wants to do after college.★

# The Best Film of 2015 (Is Already On Netflix)

JACKSON WHEELER

All the controversies facing this year’s Oscars, aside, there are, in fact, some excellent and exciting films up for the top prize. Space has never looked better on Matt Damon in *The Martian*, scandal has never been so uncomfortably diabolical as depicted in *Spotlight*, and explosions have never in the history of explosions looked so very, very cool as they are, along with everything else, in *Mad Max: Fury Road*. But I don’t want to talk about these movies.

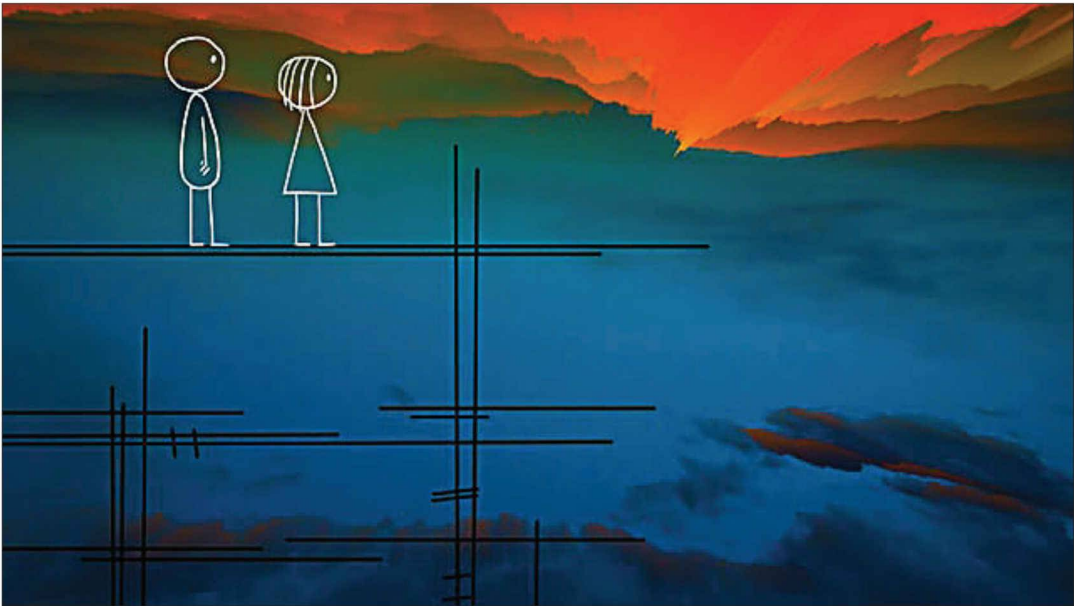
This actually, isn’t a review for any of the films that have been nominated for Best Picture. The films up for the award have already received enough press, enough critical inspection, and more than enough reviews. The nominee that I believe to be deserving of your attention resides among the contenders for Best Animated Short Film. In a category that is so often dominated by Pixar’s charmingly eclectic shorts, there lies *World of Tomorrow*, the quirky, foreboding, hilarious, introspective masterwork from veteran avant-garde animator Don Hertzfeldt, and it’s already on Netflix!

It begins with a young girl skipping into frame to answer

a ringing telephone. Her name is Emily and she can’t be more than three years old. The person on the other end is a grown up woman who claims to be Emily’s clone from over 200 years in the future. From the outset of their conversation it becomes clear that something is amiss with this older, monotone, nearly robotic future Emily, contrasted against her young, innocent counterpart, whom the former calls Emily-Prime.

Clone Emily paints a picture for Emily-Prime of what the future holds and to us, at least, it doesn’t look pretty. Due to the rapid pace of technological innovation, human emotional capacity seems to have moved backwards. The result of this imbalance has created a population of people like Clone Emily, efficient and productive but leaders of cold, mechanical life-styles. She speaks very matter-of-factly about this distant future lacking the self-awareness necessary to realize how destitute the whole thing really sounds.

Of course, little Emily-Prime picks up on none of this. She takes everything in stride, with starry-eyed amazement and charming naiveté, occasionally making little, nonsensical observations, as any young child might be expected to. She’s adorable. She is us, in a way, someone being given the foreboding description of a potentially ruin-



*World of Tomorrow*, one of this year's Oscar nominees for Best Animated Short Film, is now streaming on Netflix

ous future, unable to comprehend its negative implications due to a preoccupation with the intoxicatingly bright lights that obscure them. For Emily-Prime, nothing really sinks in. Subtext is lost on her, and we’re left to wonder if that’s because she’s only a child or because she’s only human.

The repercussions of manufactured immortality, the increasing numbness we experience in the way that we deal with death, and the importance of retaining our innocence in a world that seeks to corrupt it, are only a few of the ideas that *World of Tomorrow* explores. When it comes to presenting its themes

in a highly thought-provoking manner, the short manages more in its 15-minute runtime than most modern blockbusters do in excess of two hours. Hertzfeldt’s minimal but surreal visuals are complemented by the film’s simple but deceptively complex narrative. Each of Clone Emily’s memories, stories, and revelations told and shown to the Emily-Prime are so intensely personal that her impersonal method of delivery only highlights their significance.

As stone-faced and robotic as Clone Emily may be, she does retain just enough of her humanity to impart a few choice words

of wisdom to her young, past self. “This is your future, Emily-Prime,” she says, “It is sometimes a sad life and it is a long life. You will feel a deep longing for something you cannot quite remember. It will be a beautiful visit.”

Whether or not Emily-Prime actually understands the significance of everything she’s been shown is up for debate but really, it’s not about her. It’s about us. It’s about what we’re able to take away from Clone Emily’s advice that is so important. “What a happy day it is.” she sings upon returning home. You can sing along if you want to.★



# Annual Faculty Art Exhibition to Feature Four Professors

RACHEL WRIGHT

This year’s faculty art exhibition features work from professors Gary Baxter, David Huth, Ted Murphy, and John Rhett. The collection is open from January 25 to February 29, and the gallery opening is this Friday, February 5.

This year, Baxter’s contributions include a selection of slab-made bowls and a tower-like installation of mugs. He has continued his explorations of texture with the variety of materials he used to make impressions in the surfaces of the vessels, draping the slabs over different forms to shape them. His work is largely inspired by fish and underwater life, as his series of bowls showed in last year’s faculty show demonstrated. His ziggurat of mugs explores the “idea of structure where the primary bonding force is gravity”.

Huth’s work brings focus to the fragile details of creatures often considered repulsive. He writes in his artist statement, “As I visually study more and more details of the living flesh of amphibians, insects, and other small animals, I feel more and more continuity between the story of my body and the stories of their bodies. This continuity very obviously connects all living organisms, a condition that takes my breath away to understand my place in it.”

His photographs feature careful studies of each organism, whether that be a salamander, frog, or dragonfly. He has several compositions made up of multiple photos of only a single feature of these amphibians, such as their eyes and limbs.

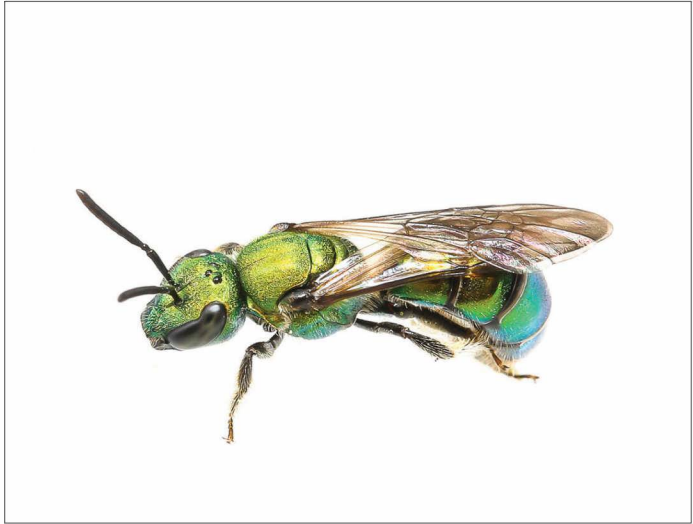
Murphy’s additions to this year’s show are a continuation of his work from his sabbatical year. He continues his exploration of detailed spaces and surreal objects. His drawings are bright with color, yet maintain a quiet meditation which echoes his creative process. He has been drawing to pay attention ever since he was very young, and these works are an echo back to his earlier years as well as a reflection in his participation in the present. He writes in his artist statement, “In my own mind they merge into one continuous oceanic experience.”

This year, Rhett is showing a series of watercolors and oil paintings. His watercolors were created over a series of bike rides around the Houghton area. Though he explores the form of the road over the landscape, the paintings are free of people or vehicles, creating a quiet moment in time. His brush strokes hold a lot of motion though the subjects are still. Through these careful studies made while in transit, he shows the beauty and intrigue that can be found along a journey, rather than in the destination.

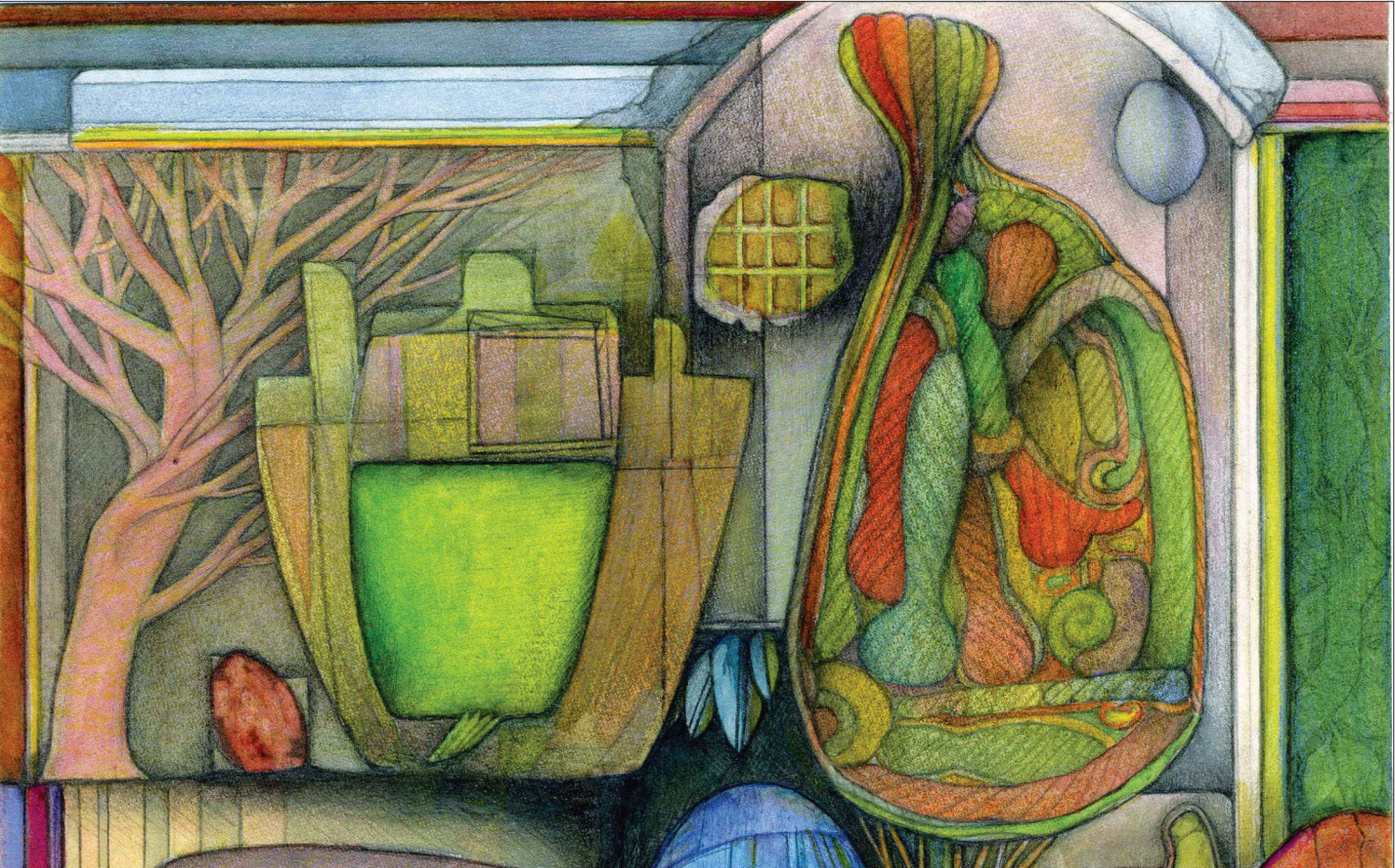
The show as a whole speaks to the life and experience of the artists around and in Houghton. The endless possible tessellation of mug ziggurat speaks to Murphy’s continuous drawings, Rhett’s attention to the ordinary to Huth’s detailed observations. Murphy writes, “People would

not believe how seldom we interact throughout the year in what we are making. But come “showtime” we are linked in ways I find compelling and even a bit mystical - like the notion of “w resonance” we just seem to pick up each other’s sensibility and work with it. Our students of course do this. They follow each other’s

lead and integrate into their work pieces of each other’s thinking. It stands to reason that even though we are not sharing a studio space like our students we do something of the same.”★



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MASON WILKES



Works from professors (left to right descending) Dave Huth, John Rhett, Gary Baxter and Ted Murphy will be featured at the Faculty Art Exhibition. The reception is this Friday at 6pm at the Ortlip Gallery.



# The Dark Side of Humor



ANTHONY BURDO

CARINA MARTIN

I heard a joke about drone strikes yesterday, and it got me thinking about our fascination with provocative comedy. Normally, I'd be the last to undersell humor's value: it can be a powerful comfort in times of trouble, a way to build solidarity with others who are suffering. Yet I can't help but wonder at what point this incessant impulse to push the boundaries of comedy begins to destroy rather than console.

Traditionally, satirical humor is meant to antagonize

those who are comfortable in their positions of authority, to tear away the carefully maintained veil of convention that lets powerful people get away with oppression and maltreatment. But when we tell jokes about impoverished immigrants or people on welfare, who's actually laughing? Are we calling attention to inequalities and corruption, or kicking those who are already on the bottom?

Now may be a good time to remember these words of Jonathan Swift, perhaps the greatest humorist of them all: "Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own." Humor that touches on delicate subjects should always be informed by an awareness of our own failings, lest it risk clueless insensitivity. Take aim at yourself first.

Of course, it's easy to dismiss objections to "edgy" humor as needlessly politically

**"But when we tell jokes about impoverished immigrants or people on welfare, who's actually laughing?"**

**"When I go to the Bible and read how the prophets spoke out about injustice and tragedy, I don't see a lot of one-liners or sarcastic quips."**

correct. A Washington Post article a few years ago about the pop culture fondness for poking fun at North Korea missed the point in a truly spectacular fashion: "We should probably feel guilty for all the lightheartedness, but schoolmarm-ing ourselves doesn't tend to feed hungry mouths or aid defections." Well, yes—policing our language does distract us from feeding the hungry. But so does laughing at them.

And maybe we shouldn't let ourselves off the hook. North Korea is, after all, a country where prison guards tie pregnant women to trees, slice the fetuses from their

stomachs, and leave them on the ground to bleed to death. A young woman who escaped from North Korea last year told the U.N. that she "didn't know what freedom was." We have the freedoms she doesn't, and that includes the freedom to joke and to laugh with impunity. But that license exists for a reason, and we need to start thinking more about our responsibilities than our privileges. We need to be careful not to mistake cluelessness for courage. Humor that pokes fun at others' suffering is rarely as brave or subversive as we believe it to be. It's usually just cruel.

When I go to the Bible and read how the prophets spoke out about injustice and tragedy, I don't see a lot of one-liners or sarcastic quips. What I do find is a lot of weeping and advocating and a whole lot of what you might call solidarity. But if

you do find a passage where Jeremiah cracks a joke I'd certainly love to hear it. (I'm skeptical, though—I find it hard to believe Jeremiah even knew what a joke was.)

This is a bitter lesson, and it isn't one that can be learned overnight. It's one that has taken me a long time to accept because I dearly love to laugh and will use nearly any opportunity to make a good joke (or a bad one, to be honest). And because we live in a culture that incessantly screams that we deserve to be entertained, to be amused, to be diverted. We hear this so often that we forget the vast and unspeakable sacredness of suffering. We forget that some ground is still holy. We forget to take off our shoes.

"Blessed are those who weep," Jesus told the disciples, "for you will laugh." In the kingdom of heaven, there is a place—an important place—for laughter. But it must never supplant compassion. ★

*Carina is a sophomore media arts and visual studies communication and writing double major with a minor in art.*

# Me, Marriage, and the Myth of Sexuality



ANTHONY BURDO

MICHAEL CARPENTER

I am what some would call "ex-gay". Let me explain.

Since late middle school, I have almost exclusively been attracted to men, both physically and visually — sometimes emotionally, too. I remember finding girls and women physically attractive for a year or two before this, but seventh grade is about the time I became addicted to pornography, and my view of men and women quickly became distorted. I've lost most battles against the temptation of pornography since. Each time, I fell for the

temptation to sexualize images of men. It has always been tempting to define myself as "gay" or "homosexual", but I never actually have. Inwardly, though, I have questioned my sexuality many times. It is only within the past two years that, with the help of counseling, accountability, support, and Christ's redemptive power, I have begun healing. And as I recover from a porn addiction, my sexuality has been healing, too.

Do understand: my story is mine alone, and cannot be used as an exemplar of "the gay story", if one even exists. Nevertheless, I think my story is an important one, as I can honestly say that I have walked, am walking, and will continue to walk away from any thoughts and behavior that could be categorized as "homosexual". Also, I believe a lot of the things that I have learned along the way are worth sharing.

I have always believed that homosexual behavior — in this case defined as sexual acts between two people of the same sex, and any physical

**"Do understand: my story is mine alone, and cannot be used as an exemplar of 'the gay story', if one even exists."**

**"While homosexuality was never a conscious choice I made, I was not born into it, either."**

or emotional intimacy that accompanies it — is defined by Scripture as sinful. However, for many years, this left me in a somewhat hopeless state. I did not remember ever choosing homosexuality, so I did not see how I could ever choose to give it up. And I never found myself lusting after women, like the guys around me did, so how could I even begin a serious relationship with a woman? I was surprised to find that the Bible's most applicable response to this question is found in Paul's exhortation in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 2: "... because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband." Scripture's advice to me became clear: If I find myself tempted to be overtly sexual in any way, I ought to take seriously the recommendation to marry a

woman.

At face value, this seems ridiculous. If that's what you're thinking, I'm not surprised. Our culture propagates the idea that we are born into one unchangeable sexuality, and most of us in the Church have fallen for it. I am living proof, though, that this is untrue. While homosexuality was never a conscious choice I made, I was not born into it, either. From the beginning, my story shows that sexuality is determined by sexual behavior (physical and mental), not the other way around. I know that most of my natural desire, the things I think will make me happy, are actually unhealthy. When I study lists of sins in the Bible, I find that this is the point of all God's commands: He knows what is good for us and what isn't; we think we know, but are usually wrong.

Over time, God has helped me to appreciate Biblical marriage as the important and graceful gift it is. The New Testament makes it clear that the reason God gave us marriage in the first place is so that it could model the Gospel. Husbands have the opportunity to live out

a beautiful picture of Christ as they die to themselves and take responsibility for leading their wives and families. Wives can live out a wonderful picture of the Church by showing love and respect to their husbands. This relationship can model this aspect of the Gospel like no other human relationship can. Of course, this is one of many mysteries of our faith that I am just beginning to learn.

Many will tell you that attractions are nigh-impossible to change. Addictions, too. I would say the same. But I know that with God, all things are possible. For this reason I hold to Romans 12:1-2. "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." In the face of a porn addiction and difficult-to-change attractions, this is my hope. If you find yourself in a similar place, may this be your hope, too. ★

*Michael is a junior applied design and visual communication major.*



# A Tale of Two Zip Codes



ANTHONY BURDO

JOE GILLIGAN

Tonight, along Houghton’s Genesee river banks, I cast my fishing line and hear the ghost of Charles Dickens howling - “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.” Downstream there was a sense of the best of times. The affluent citizens of the Pittsford area kept warm in their gas-fueled homes after tending to their white-collared professional careers and driving their new BMWs through the streets of one of the most successful elite super zip towns of America. Upstream the working class folks of Belfast were heated by the glow of a wood stove, modestly getting by driving in a late model Chevy pickup coming from their blue-collared job in one of the poorest counties in the state.

My fictional scenario dramatizes the national

economic debate called income inequality. Yet, as a whole, the two Genesee Valley towns offer a glimpse into the true root of the cause of income inequality between the new elite class and the lower middle class. While many carelessly characterize Pittsford as greedy, selfish, and very secular, the irony is most affluent towns are following traditional American values more so than their working class counterparts. While we have always had rich people in the US, it appears that cultural norms that once glued us together have created a chasm between the classes. In the 1950s, there weren’t super rich towns. The rich and poor lived together, worshipped together, and sent their children to the same school. Today, the rich live in super zips, also known as the zip codes with the highest per capita income and college graduations in the country; yet, the glue (i.e. education, marriage, religiosity, and community involvement) holding income classes together is coming apart. We know a college degree creates higher earning potential. In Pittsford, over 70% of the population has a college degree, with a median household income north of \$130,000. In Belfast, just 12%

“Today’s war on inequality will double down on these misguided policies and expect a different result.”

of its citizens have a college degree and have a household median income of \$40,000. Colleges provide proficiency in a specific majors and create networking opportunities with fellow students and alumni alike to secure future jobs. Local companies recruit students who will transition quickly at their firm. In the Genesee Valley, engineering firms recruit from Rochester Institute of Technology, hospitals will recruit nurses from St. John Fisher College and NGOs recruit at Houghton.

Marriage is the cornerstone of our culture and creates stronger economic and social power for children. Single family homes accounts for a third of the reason why income inequality has grown since 1979. In Belfast, the divorce rate is nearly twice that of Pittsford. We have recently seen the rise of assortative mating by couples subconsciously using college degrees to screen marriage prospects such as many Ivy

league alums marry other Ivy league alums. Such clustering of educated married couples into Pittsford creates a brain drain from lower middle class towns.

Community volunteerism helps develop what social scientist Robert Putnam calls “social capital”. A community with high social capital is more likely to have members that volunteer in their youth sports leagues and their fire departments. It will also be place where neighbors help a family that loses their house to a fire or an unemployed father trying to find a job. These communities tend to have lower crime rates, better health, great public schools, and better economic growth rates. Pittsford boasts one of the top high schools in the nation and list over 30 community events including parades, festivals, concerts, dances, and outdoor movies. Belfast only lists five.

Finally, there is religion. Church organizations create nearly half of the charity and

half of the volunteerism in this country. According to psychology professor David Myers of Hope College, people that are religious tend to create a happy community and a happy community tends to be contagious. Living in Pittsford you are 65% percent more likely to belong and attend a church than Belfast.


In the 1960s President Johnson declared a war on poverty. More than fifty years and 22 trillion dollars later, we have not changed the poverty rate. The war was lost because many of the programs crushed our traditional values and failed to calculate human nature. Today’s war on inequality will double down on these misguided policies and expect a different result. My contention with Pittsford and the super zips isn’t their success or affluence; rather, “they don’t preach what they practice” notes Charles Murray, a social scientist

Let us pass policy to increase equitable education through tax vouchers for private and charter schools, strengthen marriage by eliminating the marriage tax penalty, and restore good paying blue collar jobs by eliminating unnecessary regulation on construction, fracking, lumber mills, fishers, farmers and coal miners.

As I throw my fishing line into the Genesee River for the last time tonight, I think of the preaching of Jesus who said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”★

Joe is a junior business and accounting double major.

“While many carelessly characterize Pittsford as greedy, selfish, and very secular, the irony is most affluent towns are following traditional American values more so than their working class counterparts.”



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# Artist of the Week

## Rachel Wright

// senior art major

I make art to “deal with the ghosts chasing me around”. - Kenneth Adkins



ANTHONY BURDO



“ I really enjoy forgetting. When I first come to a place, I notice all the little details. I notice the way the sky looks. The color of white paper. The way people walk. Doorknobs. Everything. Then I get used to the place and I don’t notice those things anymore. So only by forgetting can I see the place again as it really is. ”

– David Byrne, *True Stories*

## Titles & Media

*clockwise descending*

Grown Over Graves, *oil painting with collage*

Our Graves In Stained Glass, *oil painting with collage*

Zanzibar Sea Cloud, *found materials*

Genderfluid Sunset, *oil painting with collage*

Skylight In Your Skull, *oil painting with collage*

Cameo, *mixed media*

