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UPCOMING SGA ELECTION



COURTESY OF HANNAH SIEVERS

Students will have the opportunity to elect new members in the upcoming elections.

MAGGIE STROUT

As students have returned to campus and classes are in full swing, the Student Government Association (SGA) is getting ready for the executive and Freshman cabinet elections in mid-September. In addition to the usual Freshmen cabinet

elections, two executive seats are open for election.

The first position available in the executive cabinet is the Executive Officer of Diversity and Inclusion, a relatively new addition to the SGA cabinet which was occupied last year by Shaphan Hestick. Previously the SGA executive

cabinet consisted of a President, Vice president, Treasurer, and Secretary, and the SGA hopes that seeing new positions and a larger cabinet will show how the organization is growing and trying to express the voice of each member of the student body. The Executive Officer of Diversity and

Inclusion position is available because Hestick is currently running for Student Body President. He spoke fondly of the previous executive position he held, and asserts that the position "takes care of affinity groups for the sake of their affinity."

On September 17th at 7pm there will be a campus wide Q&A with the SGA executive cabinet and the running candidates. This will be an opportunity to ask the candidates questions about what they are hoping to accomplish with their position, as well as to voice any concerns that students feel could be addressed by the SGA. On September 18th ballots will be sent out and counted, with results to follow.

Students who are interested in running for executive cabinets or the Freshman class cabinet can pick up a petition from the SGA office and begin getting signatures from their fellow classmates. For executive cabinets members they must have a GPA of 3.0 and receive 75 signatures while those running for the Freshman class cabinet only

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Student Life VP departs

DAVID KRALT

Houghton College is currently without a Vice President of Student life. New and returning students alike may be wondering what that role entails, what happened to the last VP, and what comes next.

The role of the VP of Student Life is to ensure students are recognized at the highest level of administrative affairs. While decisions are ultimately left to the President of Student Life, the VP advocates for what is best for students in everything non-academic, this includes everything from athletics and club activities, to finances and housing.

Dr. Robert Pool was Houghton's acting VP of Student Life from 2013 to 2018. While here, Dr. Pool was a key factor in several major decisions. He was very much involved in Houghton's transition to a NCAA III division school, as well as the construction of the Kerr-Pegula

See **POOL** page 3

New HC App Revealed

JOHANNA FLOREZ

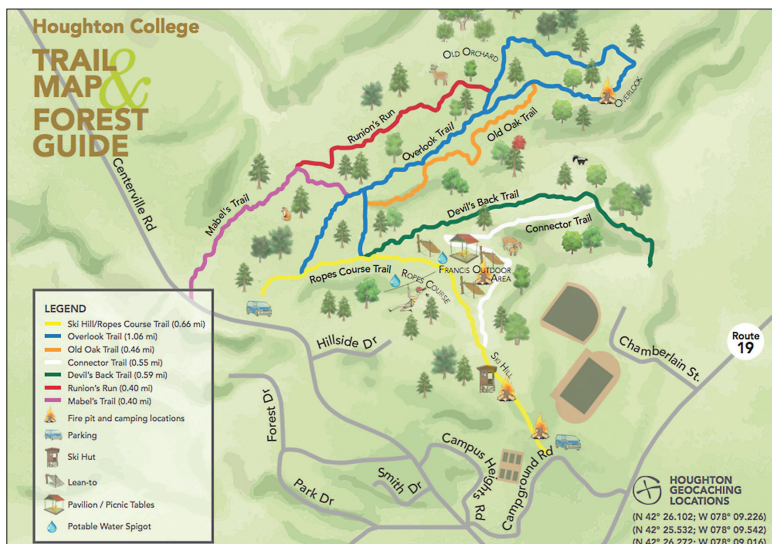
As of this summer, students and faculty can use the new Houghton app to stay up-to-date on campus events and access a variety of resources.

Jared Hobson, a junior majoring in Communication, lead the creation of the app over the summer. Hobson's initial team - including Elliot Spicer, Mallory Moore, Lauren Couturier, Olivia Flint, and Katharine Meyer (all currently juniors) - conceived the project during VOCA's Sophomore Leadership conference in February 2018.c. "When we were creating the app we really just wanted it to be a resource for students especially to be able to be more connected on campus," Hobson says.

The app is available on the iOS App Store and the Google Play Store. Upon downloading

See **GIANNINI** page 3

Introducing the Houghton Trail Map



The trail map includes a key with symbols for the various public resources along the trail. The printed version of the map was created in collaboration with Marketing and Communication

MELISSA HODDE

Hikers, fear no more: the Houghton trails can now be explored with the aid of a map. Although it is a longstanding feature of the college's wild

surroundings, the Houghton trail system remained in dire need of an updated map until the fall of 2017. As the semester progressed, Eco Reps and student Elijah Tangenberg '20

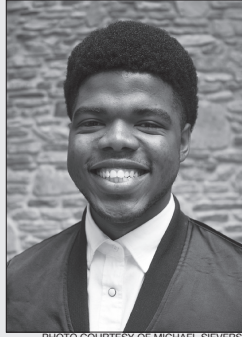
converged on the same idea: a GIS survey of the trails to provide a satellite-based map available to students and the public. While Eco Reps' first GIS project involved mapping the do-

mestic and wild trees around campus, they also wanted to create a visual of the seven miles of walking paths on Houghton property. Fortunately for the organization, Tangenberg had recently developed a web app housing a satellite survey of the trails as an extracurricular project for REC 227 in the fall semester.

Tangenberg took on the project as a combination of service and learning, wanting to refine his skills with GIS (Geographic Information Systems) while simultaneously providing a resource to the campus. "I had worked with GIS before, and I'm probably going to continue working with it," said Tangenberg. He described the technology as "a very ubiquitous tool that people use for virtually anything that has to do with where data is on a map." His current project is helping to design ARC-GIS Hub, a data-sharing tool for a non-profit in his home state of California. "I'm interested

See **TRAILS** page 2

International // LGBTQ Progress in India



SHAPHAN HESTICK

Recently, the Supreme Court in India struck down Section 377 of the Indian Constitution, a holdover from the history of colonialism which criminalized "carnal intercourse against the order of nature." The offenses listed by Section 377 categorized consensual homosexual behaviours with bestiality, paedophilia, and rape.

Fortunately, the law has been nested within an extremely diverse culture of Hinduism. Hindu belief holds that the individual occupies a single moment in a continuous process of reincarnation

that ultimately releases the true self from physical limitations—and sexuality. The Hindu Vedas, dated at 6,000 BCE and regarded as the oldest scriptures in the world, prescribe rather than mandate sexual behaviours. They even describe appropriate behaviours for members of different castes or social and religious class systems.

The Vedic culture in India developed between 1500 BCE and 500 BCE. Hinduism, considered to be the successor of the Vedic religion, has profoundly impacted the formation of the country's history, culture and philosophies. Historically, many sects of the Hindu culture embraced a philosophy of openness to LGBTQ individuals. Historians acknowledge that pre-colonial Indian society did not criminalize or stigmatize same-sex relationships. Rather, there are historic records of transgender individuals serving in the Mughal court.

Modern societal homophobia was introduced to India by European colonizers. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was enacted by the British, and stood from 1861 till Thursday 6th Sep-

tember, 2018. The history of colonialism in India led to the development of a stigma of shame. From this point in history on, individuals who were known to be LGBTQ were considered to be an embarrassment against their family name. Colonialism introduced a deep tension for the LGBTQ-affirming sects of the Hindu majority in India.

As of 2011, almost 80% of the country's 1.2 billion people followed the Hindu tradition. This helps the outsider to understand why although Section 377 was legislated, its enforcement was considerably weak. The attitudes of the legal code and the Vedic texts—not necessarily at direct odds—do create a moral aggravation for people who wish to honour both. The Code, and eventually the culture of shame attached to homosexuality in India, led to LGBTQ people choosing to remain in the closet.

From the time of the introduction of the Code till recent times, public reception of homosexual behaviour has dramatically changed. In sharp contrast to the historical acceptance of homosexuality, LGBTQ individuals

have become vulnerable to honour killings, attacks, torture and beatings. These violent reactions to homosexuality are particularly prevalent in rural areas. Gay people in such areas are occasionally forced to marry into opposite-sex relationships.

Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was problematic for several reasons. The law codified an outdated colonial system of morality. It criminalized a wide range of consensual behaviours. While it did not manifest into a scenario of the mass incarceration of LGBTQ individuals, it did leave India's LGBTQ community vulnerable to discriminatory treatment, extortion, harassment and abuse.

In recognition of these challenges, there have been several attempts to repeal the law. The Naz Foundation petitioned the courts in 2001 to revise the Penal Code. They encouraged the courts to exclude consensual behaviour from Section 377. The Delhi high court agreed, noting that the criminalization of gay sex was a violation of rights to equality, privacy and liberty as upheld by the constitution of India. In 2013, the Supreme Court overruled

this decision, judging that only the parliament could amend the law. This drawn-out saga finally came to a head last Thursday. A newly constituted bench of the Supreme Court revised the decision and decriminalized gay sex.

Although the recent decision removes any legal justification of such treatment of gay people in India, it does not necessarily renovate the culture of abuse of gay citizens. Still, the court's jurisprudence expansively listed constitutional values of inclusion and democracy. Their judgments have been lauded as going further than comparable jurisprudence in the US and the UK. The courts expect that the ruling will clear the path for future courts to recognize LGBTQ rights in areas like employment and education and that sexual minorities could eventually divorce themselves from shame and fear when expressing their intimacies publicly.★

Shaphan is a junior majoring in Political Science, International Development and Environmental Biology

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in water management," he explained, "and it's one of the primary water-management tools out there - and understanding GIS is just a major asset no matter what you're planning on doing with geography, or design, or environmental policy." Despite this, he noted, "It's very rare to have a lot of undergrad involvement in GIS, and most of the time it's in the context of landscape design, or real estate - there's not a lot of environmental focus."

While Tangenberg notes significant improvements in GIS since the days when the trails were originally designed and mapped by a team including Coach Bob Smalley and Doris Nielsen (of Nielsen Center fame), the technology originated in the 1960's and was used to map the original trails with reasonable accuracy. However, the old map no longer gives a very good picture of what you would find on a hike in the Houghton forest. "Over time, the trail system kind of evolved," explains Tangenberg, "And over time

we actually experienced a period of trail loss." The T-shaped intersection between the Connector Trail and Devil's Back used to be a four-way stop, for instance, with the Connector Trail making another loop on the opposite side. This is the version of the trails recorded in Smalley's original map. "If you go there today," says Tangenberg, "There's a good chance you'll get lost, because that trail simply doesn't exist anymore."

Tangenberg hopes the up-to-date map will allow students to hike the trails with confidence and responsibility. "Mabel's trail, in my mind, is one of the trails that I would want to see more used," he specifies, "because it's just not on the beaten path for a lot of people. It's usually a trail that people get lost on . . . but it's a beautiful trail." According to Tangenberg, Mabel's trail was named for Doris Nielsen, "as a little signature on her role in the project". Tangenberg also hopes to see the map used in the maintenance and stewardship of the trails and in encouraging student account-

ability and engagement. "The one thing I would emphasize is that the trail system is there to be used," affirms Tangenberg, "and with the trail map, it's now much easier for somebody to navigate it and to interact with it better. And that's the whole reason why it exists in the first place. You can go out, learn about our area, walk around with friends, stay out overnight, use it as a retreat space and as a space to reconnect with your vocation in God."★

SGA from page 1

need 50 signatures. Petitions are due by September 14th at 5pm and once collected candidates will need to write and give a speech at the Q&A on September 17th. Current President Hannah Sievers is available for questions, and stresses her excitement in adding new members to an already strong and enthusiastic group of leaders. Students should reach out to the SGA or Dr. Bill Burrichter if they have any questions about the organization or what they can do to be a part of the SGA.★

POOL from page 1

Athletic Complex and expanding the Athletic footprint of Houghton College. Dr. Pool strongly believed in supporting students, whether it be through the counseling centre or otherwise.

This year, Dr. Pool accepted a position at Ashland University in Ohio as VP of Student Life after receiving the offer several times. "Dr. Pool left unwillingly," said Dr. Burrichter. "He felt a strong connection to Houghton, but had felt God calling him to Ashland U. It took a lot of consideration on his part, but Dr. Pool left on pleasant terms with Houghton. Some people didn't like him, some did, that didn't play a role in his decision to leave. Any administrative role will garner frustration by constituents."

Dr. Pool began his position at Ashland University on July 1st, 2018. Dr. Burrichter has taken his place as an Interim VP of Student Life from July 1st, until December 31st while a new Vice President is found. Due to Dr. Burrichter's role as

Director of Counseling, he will not oversee student conduct to avoid a conflict of interest. Instead, Marc Smithers will be fulfilling that role until a new Vice President is found.

On the search committee for a new Vice President of Student Life sits Dr. Michael Jordan, Shehan Rodrigo '19 and Emily Allen '20. Their goal is to find a new VP of Student life for the 2019 spring semester. "It's important that the candidate who is ultimately selected is one who embodies Houghton's mission as a Christ-centered, liberal arts institution," Emily Allen stated, "There are also some students on the committee who will be able to voice our opinions throughout the hiring process. Especially since the person who fills the position will have such vital interaction with students."

The committee's first meeting is Thursday, September 13, 2018.★

Write for the STAR!

Email us at editor@houghtonstar.com

HC APP

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it, users may select their role as either "Current Student", "Faculty & Staff", or "Visitor". They are then prompted to create an account using their Houghton email address, set up a profile with basic information, and complete a Welcome Survey indicating their interests. Users may link their Google Calendar and contacts to the app. After completing

these sections, users continue to the full contents of the app. The app organizes information and resources that students are likely to want to pull up quickly. It includes a dashboard of upcoming events in categories users have expressed interest in, a campus map, a separate trails map, building hours, the academic calendar, a faculty and staff directory, and shortcuts to other

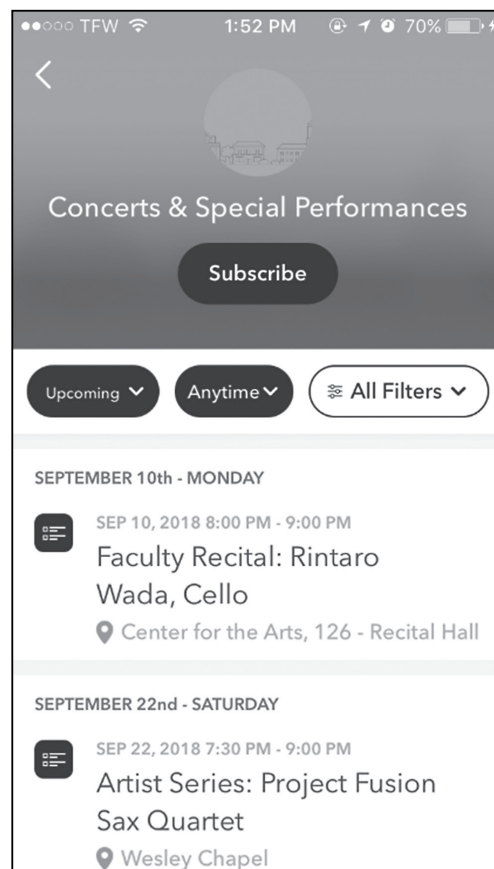
resources like Moodle and Student Self Service.

The app works using software from Involvio. Involvio's website allows app administrators to quickly revise the information visible to users, without users needing to update the app to see it. The team now responsible for the maintenance of the app includes Hobson, AC Taylor in Student Life, and Betsy Rutledge in the Admissions Office. Hobson spends several hours each week ensuring that the app remains "something that is always current for students."

In the first few weeks of the app's availability, student feedback has been largely positive.

They note the results of the app team's work to keep information updated. "I do love the app and I like that they keep improving it. It is very helpful to have and I use it regularly," says Sarah Evans, a first-year student. Hope Barnes, a sophomore, also comments on how "practical and user-friendly" the app is.

Despite the praise, portions of the app have yet to reach the full potential envisioned by its creators. While the app includes the ability to create groups, which can be home to dorm events, team announcements, or club discussions, Barnes says, "The one downside to the app is that I don't think many people know about it, making the group chat function pretty pointless at the moment." Becca Loomis, the ARD and current senior who created the Gillette Hall group, also notes the need for a larger user base to take advantage of the groups feature. "The more people who get the app and use it," she says, "the more useful it will be." Hobson agrees that this feature is as useful as students make it for themselves. "We especially want clubs



to be signing up and creating groups," he says. As they do, users will be able to easily scroll through a list of all the clubs meeting on campus, fulfilling the app's major goals of accessibility, awareness, and involvement.

Going forward, the app team hopes to more seamlessly integrate students' class schedules so that as they view events, the app can automati-

cally warn them of conflicts. In the meantime, Hobson says, "I'm really excited because I'm hoping that it opens people's eyes to the idea that there is so much to do on campus and there are so many ways to get involved."★

Nine New Professors Teach Fall Classes

PAIGE COLLINS

This year at Houghton College, the student body is privileged in welcoming nine new professors. Many are familiar faces, according to Michelle Hillman, Public Relations and Communications Specialist, as five of the nine professors are Houghton alumni who are returning to their Alma Mater to teach. These new faculty members occupy a variety of departments and are teaching courses all the way from 100-level introductory classes to Senior Capstones and everything in between.

The student body met Dr. Jethro Silva as the worship leader in chapel during the first week of classes. He is a Professor of Music Industry and Director of Technical Arts for the Greatbatch School of Music. He is teaching Intro to Music Publishing and Marketing, Survey of the Music Industry, Recording and Studio Technique, and Introduction to Pro Tools. Also in Greatbatch news, Houghton welcomes Assistant Professor of Music Education Dr. Sara Massey. This



Dr. Jethro Silva lectures to Houghton College students in the Greatbatch School of Music

semester she teaches Elementary School Methods, Student Teaching in Music, Student Teaching Seminar, along with Music and Christian Perspective: An Introduction.

2004 Houghton alumna Dr. Laura Hopkins will be joining the education department as

Assistant Professor of Education. She is teaching Foundations of Language and Literacy for Diverse Learners I.

Another 2004 Houghton alumna, Walter Hopkins now teaches Spanish Level 1, Crossing the Bridge: Intermediate Spanish, and French Lev-

el 1, as Assistant Professor of Modern Languages.

Houghton also welcomes two new faculty in the Philosophy Department: Drs. John and Heidi Giannini, Assistant Professors of Philosophy. Dr. John Giannini is teaching Reason and Religious Belief during the

first half of the fall semester, and The Nature of God during the second half. Dr. Heidi Giannini is a 2006 Houghton alumna and is teaching ST: Pascal. Both professors are teaching Philosophy Colloquium alongside Professor Lipscomb.

Dr. Christian Esh, a 1998 Houghton alumnus, joins Houghton in the History department as an Associate Professor of History. Dr. Esh currently teaches American History Survey.

In the Stevens Art Studios, Houghton welcomes back Aaron Harrison, a 2001 Houghton alumnus who has taught at Houghton College before. He is an Assistant Professor of Art and is teaching 3 Dimensional Design this semester, as well as Ceramics I.

Finally, in the Spring of 2019 Houghton looks forward to meeting Michael Ritter, Assistant Professor of International Development.★

The British are Coming (Back)

CALEB FESMIRE

It's an afternoon in late January and a Houghton student is standing in the John Ritblat Gallery in the British Library in London, England. The room is dimly lit to preserve the items contained within, and the patrons spread throughout speak in low tones. In the center of the gallery, sealed in a glass case, are documents from the mid sixteenth century to the very earliest years of the seventeenth. The student has been assigned to study these documents, one of which was a letter handwritten by Queen Elizabeth I of England, to her designated successor James VI of Scotland in 1603, over four hundred years ago.

This is what it is like to be a part of the Houghton Honors in London program. London, England is so steeped in history it is high impossible to walk five minutes in any direction without running across something of significance. The architecture of the city is a medley of styles from throughout the centuries, from medieval churches that have survived



The 2018 London Honors Cohort in the garden of the Highbury Center, where they lived for during spring semester

PHOTO COURTESY OF CALEB FESMIRE

for a thousand years, to the towering Shard (constructed from 2009 to 2012) and everything in between. Scattered throughout are museums, each home to hundreds of painstakingly preserved works of art and artifacts from all eras of human history.

It is for this reason that one of the Houghton Honors programs has chosen this city in which to study the develop-

ment of Western Society. It is one of the only places on earth that so much history can be viewed in such proximity and ease, and this makes it ideal for the kind of program that is Honors in London.

For those unfamiliar, Honors in London is one of two liberal arts-focused Honors programs here at Houghton, in which a group of a little more than twenty freshman

are flown across the ocean to spend their second semester of college in London. At breakneck pace they make their way from the Reformation to the present day over the course of twelve weeks of study (with about one total week of break throughout). Each week covers a specific era and theme that the students engage with directly through art, literary works, and a sampling of mu-

sic, all of which culminate in a paper that synthesized everything they studied that week into a five-page essay.

Is it as grueling as that sounds? Oh yes. Is it worth it? Most definitely.

To be confronted with history so intimately was an experience unlike anything else. To be able to read William Wordsworth's "Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802" and then stand on that very same bridge to watch the sunrise (or at the very least attempt to: London is a very cloudy city) is surreal, just like looking down at a page of paper and knowing that it was handwritten by Leonardo da Vinci, Jane Austen, or Queen Elizabeth I of England. The Honors in London program is full of such moments, little encounters with the past that radically reshape the way its students view the world. It is a far more personal study of art, of history, of philosophy, and of science the likes of which cannot be replicated in a traditional classroom—the city is the classroom, and all western history is the teacher. And it is awesome. ★

Houghton Students in Tanzania

KYLA NIES

What does it mean to "use your heartbeats well"? This was the question posed to a group of Houghton Students as they sat under a thatch roof, watching the vervet monkeys play in the trees, on a cloudless morning. Though they sat in front of a stereotypical chalkboard, with their pens and papers before them, this was anything but a normal spring semester.

For the past 17 years, Houghton (and other partnering colleges) have been sending groups of 20-25 students to Masumbo—a rural campus just outside of the city of Iringa, Tanzania—to study development, anthropology and biology in an intercultural and hands-on setting. It is a program focused on experiential learning, in which everything that is learned in the classroom is immediately applied in an authentic context. For example, students would learn about the flora and fauna of an ecosystem in the classroom, and then go experience the land for themselves on safari - or debate sustainable development strategies, and then

visit the places in which these strategies are being carried out.

The climax of the trip was a homestay, during which students were sent out to live with Tanzanian villagers for eight days; working when they worked, eating what they ate, and worshipping where they worshiped. It was a culminating experience, which challenged students to join their classroom knowledge of culture, history and language with the everyday experience of rural Tanzanians. "Homestay is one of the things that blares in my mind when I think about Africa... it helped me begin to learn some of the cultural nuances and some of the things that you can't really see on the surface" said senior Alana Meyers. In addition to homestay, students got to engage with East African culture by visiting the Maasai people, watching Wahehe dancers, experiencing Tanzanian cuisine at places like the iconic "Hasty Tasty", playing lots of football (soccer) and enjoying the landscape that sustains such an abundance of life.

When not out exploring, students running along the Masumbo campus home. It's a spacious



PHOTO COURTESY OF KYLA NIES

The students at church on Easter Sunday, during their homestay in Mbeya, Tanzania.

field shaded by huge umbrella acacia trees and complete with an open air picnic hut, the "Twiga"—where students had class, and tiny "bandas" (huts) where students lived in pairs. The Ruaha river flows close by and students spent their afternoons lounging by the rapids or soaring over the river on the zipline. Senior Maggie Clune offered this vivid description: "My place had turned into a muddy brown river with rocks lining the paths. It had Bandas running along the treeline and a giant thatch roof classroom

with couches perfect for napping. My place was suddenly a little hut, filled with art, that monkeys jumped on the roof of to wake me up in the morning. It was where chipates [an African version of a tortilla] quickly turned into a campus favorite and our professors became our best friends. I had my home, I had Houghton, and now I had Tanzania..... Masumbo created a safe place for me to sit and think about but what the future will hold for me. It gave quietness and peace to work through the

changes that would be made when I got home."

The semester in Tanzania program is designed to grow students in more than just an academic sense. Students attended chapels focusing the connection between God, ourselves, and the earth and wrestled with what it means to experience life together in a small close-knit community. In the words of Hannah Sievers, the semester "immensely altered my view of people, nature and God." ★

Learning in Sierra Leone

HONUS WAGNER

The Kalanthuba Chiefdom is a newly de-amalgamated chiefdom in the Northern Province of the West African nation of Sierra Leone. Through professor Ronald Oakerson, Houghton College has been sending research teams to the region for some years and developed a relationship with the chiefdom. This year's visit was prompted by a request that Houghton students return to do research after last year's baseline development study was conducted, which locals found immensely helpful for directing development efforts.

This past May, the stu-

dent research team studied agricultural marketing, ecotourism feasibility and community school formation. After a brief stay in Freetown, they set out to Kalanthuba to conduct interviews in villages every day for two weeks. The experience was intense, physically, academically and emotionally. Travelling from village to village gave them a taste of rural life in Sierra Leone and allowed them to make meaningful connections with locals.

Once the research period was over, they frantically compiled our findings in preparation for a meeting with community stakeholders at the end of the Mayterm. Other members of the team stayed

an additional three weeks for internships; the ecotourism team worked with the Bum-buna Watershed Management Authority and the schools team worked for the chiefdom, writing project proposals and helping initiate school formation in a remote section. This included a 20-mile, overnight trek to meet with stakeholders to begin the formation of the future Ronald J. Oakerson Community Primary School. For students interested in the outcome of these teams' research, there will be forthcoming reports in addition to the information provided here.

Community schools are what they sound like; schools created and operated by a com-

munity. None of Kalanthuba's seven community schools are government-approved and do not receive government funding or teacher salaries. Teachers work voluntarily, subsisting on token payments, alternative livelihoods and family support. They work on behalf of their communities, utilizing what skills they have as they teach the standard curriculum all Sierra Leonian teachers use. Enrollment and attendance are low due to poverty, agricultural needs, poor road infrastructure and food insecurity. Education is an urgent need in Kalanthuba due to the staggering adult literacy rate of two percent.

The student research team found that there are community level structures in place for development aimed toward the betterment of educational and social infrastructure. Communities give what labor and finances they are able to after a social entrepreneur initiates formation. Communities have a high level of investment in these schools, but the support is limited due to poverty.

The team's research sought to identify where the critical need lies, in order to help build upon existing programs. Their internship focused on this as they wrote proposals for the chiefdom to give to NGOs to reinstate communal agricul-

ture, provide tools for road-building labor groups, finish school construction and an environmental education project.

Beyond the academic, the Houghton students had various encounters that impacted their lives and expanded their worldview. On the trek to Kamakolo, the team visited a nearby village where a scene pierced their hearts. A woman was singing songs of lament outside of her home, where her son lay dying of edema. There was no way to get the boy treatment due to the village's remoteness. At the end of Mass, in honor of the Day of the African Child, some young children from the parish gave brief presentations on development issues. A youth group from Magburaka also came, telling of their mission of empowerment and development. The students, encouraged in knowing that work is being done on the ground, furthered by courageous yet unknown individuals like these who daily take up the cross in service to their people, satiating the thirst of Jesus in the hearts of the poor. ★



The Sierra Leone team, with Professor Oakerson

PHOTO COURTESY OF FACEBOOK

Adventures From East Meets West

VIVIAN RIVERS

This past summer, Drs. Meic Pearse and Stephen Woolsey crossed the Atlantic with their thirteenth cohort of the East Meets West (EMW) Honors Program. EMW entails a full semester's workload during the spring semester, culminating with travels throughout the Balkan Peninsula — including Hungary, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, and Italy — for three weeks in May-term.

EMW helps students grow inside and outside of the classroom. Studying the literature, politics, history, and theology of the Balkan region broadens students' worldview beyond a Western perspective to a more global outlook.

EMW combines intensive academic experience and geographic engagement with the very places studied and discussed in the classroom — notably Sarajevo, Bosnia; Dubrovnik, Croatia; Belgrade, Serbia; Budapest, Hungary; Venice, Italy; as well as many more.

EMW travel is rigorous, involving near-constant movement from one beautiful place to the next. However, aside from Emmy Erisman getting lost in Budapest on the first day, a debit card being eaten by an ATM, having to run a mile and a half with luggage through the streets of Zagreb, and

getting locked out of the hostel in the middle of a hail storm, the trip was an absolute success.

The EMW program is unique in the fact that one of the professors not only has a home in Croatia, but opens his doors to students each year in order

to ensure they have the most enriching experience possible. Dr. Pearse's connections in the Balkans gave his students this past May-term a wide variety of educational opportunities. Everywhere the students went he was an able guide and a fount of

important knowledge needed to fully appreciate all of the ancient treasures encountered along the way. He also ensured that the program included authentic Balkan perspectives during the trip, so some of his former students, who now serve in missions across the region, accompanied them.

One significant encounter occurred when students were given the opportunity to sit down and talk to high school students one-on-one about life in Croatia. Being able to hear directly from peers provided an entirely different perspective of what life would be like along the Adriatic Coast. Curiosity about each other's culture created a safe atmosphere for conversation: Croatian students giggled at commonalities in American life, and Houghton students learned about their thoughts about current politics, favorite football teams, and even Jesus. ★



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIVIAN RIVERS

EMW Cohort 13 sitting on the famous "Bridge on the Drina" in Visegrad. Students had read "The Bridge on the Drina," a literary classic telling the tales of this very bridge

Intentional Positivity and Hope



JARED HOBSON

As ordinary people living our lives in 2018, I think that all too often we let ourselves slip into a nasty habit of dwelling in garbage. For as much as there is to complain about (and, trust me, I recognize that it's difficult to navigate Facebook for more than two seconds without wanting to bang your head against a wall) there is just as much good we could instead focus on. And that's what our energy should be directed towards.

Near the start of 2018, I was convicted that

we shouldn't waste our energy on things we cannot control. Unless you and you alone are responsible for something that goes wrong, don't waste valuable time focusing on the issue. Did someone cut in line in the dining hall? Is it unbearably warm and humid outside? Cell phone not running as fast as it used to? None of that is actually your fault. To live a better life we must let go of these everyday (more or less) annoyances and intentionally choosing to focus on the good.

Now, I'm not saying that everyone should stop

what is truly valuable and worthwhile. A big part of this mindset is grounded in self-care and allowing there to be time and energy to step away from others and take genuine care for yourself. This isn't a matter of being willfully ignorant to the problems in the world, large or small, but an effort of choosing to take a stand against letting it all affect you personally.

If nothing else, day-to-day life feels a lot better and brighter when hope is on the mind instead of misery. I've found that all the small problems

now is the time that we need too terrified to think past hope the most. We need to graduation, for staff, show love and be loved, faculty, and parents back and we can't do that when home. For everyone, we complain about how hot really. Dwell on the good, it is outside or how much and don't waste energy on we hate Mondays. We're the bad. It takes effort and wasting our energy when we definitely won't come easy, should be putting it toward but think of how better loving one another. the world could be if we all lived a little bit more positively.★

This is a message for the first year student who is struggle to adjust to college life; for the senior

Jared is a junior majoring in Communication.

"Hope is just as contagious as despair; in a world of conflict and hatred, now is the time we need hope the most"

caring about everything bad that happens. "I failed that test because I didn't study? Who cares? Yay!" No. The glory of not wasting emotional energy on all the stuff you can't control is that now there's an abundance of energy to take care of

I face tend to make my outlook cloudy and skewed. Choosing to have hope reveals all of life's small treasures that too often go missed. And hope is just as contagious as despair; in a world of conflict and hatred,

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The Martyrs In the Altar



DANIEL BERRYMENT

This summer I had the opportunity to travel to Italy and Greece on a trip which included cenotaphs claiming the bones of my favorite poets and theologians, icons and artworks which animated the passion of the saints. I entered the tomb of Peter and walked where Paul walked in Acts 17, proclaiming to the philosophers that the God they had been searching for had in fact come to rescue. Museums burst with history, and churches exploded with light and the presence of God. Yet, among all of this, nothing compared to the religious experience I had at

a building which I think we often consider secular: the Roman Coliseum.

Once the jewel of Rome, people gathered there for cheap food and violent spectacle with the sick slogan of "Bread and circuses." Now the Coliseum stands, weathered and tired, the carcass of a magnificent beast which once consumed human flesh in droves. A plain cross stands on one side of the arena, overlooking the desolate pit - a reminder of Christ's triumph over sin and death. In John's Apocalypse we hear the martyrs crying in heaven, "Sovereign Lord, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?" But, at least here, Babylon has been cast down, to the rejoicing of the prophets and saints. Whether many Christians were martyred at the Coliseum, we don't know. cursory research tells me that before the 17th century it was rarely regarded as holy. This

"There is much to learn about how to be a martyr, dying to ourselves and our own desires."

is however the site where Ignatius of Antioch, a student of John, was fed to lions while praying that his sacrifice make him "God's wheat ground by the teeth of beasts, that [he] may be the pure bread of Christ." History also tells of a monk named Telemachus who abhorred the violence committed in Rome and burst into the arena to protest. The discontented mob had him stoned, but his death moved Emperor Honorius to put an end to the slaughter. As perfect love, Christ says, "This is my body, given up for you, in all that he does." The martyr, as faithful disciple, repeats this unto death.

"Martyr" comes from the Greek word for "witness."

"Christianity is a martyr's religion. It is about giving up our lives to Christ just as the Son gives himself to the

Christianity is a martyr's religion. It is about giving up our lives to Christ, just as the Son gives himself to the Father and the Father to the Son. All of the saints are martyrs, even the ones who are not burnt at the stake. This, I think, is the reason behind our fascination with faith journeys. A good testimony witnesses The Gospel more powerfully than the most beautiful church window. I think that we sometimes take the wrong lesson from the martyrs, developing a persecution (or martyr) complex. We know a lot about expecting God to vindicate our arguments, choices, and identities when our enemies won't. But on the flipside, there is much to learn about how to be a martyr, dying to ourselves and our own desires. We are still sinners and sin has consequences. Its greatest effect is a fractured relationship with God and neighbor, where we do not give ourselves fully to him or each other. Martyrs were

the first saints revered in the early church. Where the rest of us had to live out our lives in conformity with Christ as a perpetual sacrifice being perfected by continuing growth in virtue, a martyr, by proclaiming the Gospel up until the moment of her death, could at once present her whole self as an offering to the Father. Morbid? Certainly, but when we remember that our foe is death and the power of hell, we must be ready to face it. Paul writes of purification coming "as through a fire," and Jesus qualifies that his followers must "take up their cross daily and follow me."

All of this, by the way, is the secret to Catholic devotion to Mary. She is the greatest of the martyrs, even though she was never slain. When the angel came to her, she did not protest as so many others had. Rather she responded, "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be unto me according to your word." That is, here Christ, take my my will, my body, and my life. They are yours. Come, be made manifest in me and through me into the world.★

Daniel is a Senior majoring in English.

Op Eds and SNL: Why the Opinions Section Matters



MICHAEL SIEVERS

ANNA SCHILKE

My sophomore year of college, I discovered SNL.

I saw my first skit sitting cross-legged in a Lambein double, at the ripe old age of nineteen. Many die-hard fans will probably be shocked by this, but I grew up without YouTube and still don't spend much time there (which is not to say I'm without vices. I just don't count cat videos among them). Every once in a while, however, I indulge. Especially when I'm upset about politics. Like eating mashed potatoes after a bad day, there is nothing that makes me feel better about our government than watching someone impersonate our government.

My junior year of college, I stopped watching SNL.

Not because it wasn't funny anymore, or because the humor got too raunchy. I stopped watching SNL because one day I realized that it had – unconsciously – become a source of political information. It was an innocuous enough affair. My dad and I spend much of our time together arguing politics; we both love it. And one moment, in the heat of a fierce debate (which I was absolutely winning) he asked “where did you hear that?” The image of Leslie Jones floated through my mind, and I realized I had just used the premise of an SNL skit to back up a political position. I'm a journalist. It was a moment of deep shame.

My senior year of college, I've become the editor of an Opinions section.

SNL isn't fact. It is based on facts, but it does not contain sources or quotes or peer review. It's opinions. It's humor. It's people taking real life events and examining them, drawing inspiration from the world to make an audience think. Fundamentally, this is also what a good opinions piece does. Traditionally, Opinions Editors have started the year by talking about the purpose of this section. Why do we have an Opinions section? What does it do for us that the Features or the News section cannot? What – as a reader – do you need to know

about the articles you will find here?

To start, I want to define an “opinions piece” or “op ed” (opinion editorial). It is a newspaper article that presents a subjective argument about a chosen topic. This is slightly different than an editorial, which presents a subjective argument about a chosen topic from the perspective of the newspaper. And it is very different than a News or Features piece, which does not present an argument at all but merely facts. So for example, say I wish to write an article about how Metz is now stocking papaya in the salad bar. If this article was a Feature or

create an argument that lines up with the pre-determined voice and character of the STAR. I would then write this argument into an article and publish it anonymously, because it represents the opinion of the paper as a whole. If I were to write and op ed or opinions piece, however, I would write my own thoughts on the papaya issue (for the record, I endorse all exotic fruit options), and publish it under my name.

In the Houghton STAR, we do not have straight editorials. This is because the newspaper does not have a pre-determined voice or character to generate them. Rather, the STAR exists

publishing the opinions of students for students. There is no political party line or “Houghton propaganda” that characterizes this section. It is rather characterized by the people who chose to write for it.

So back to the question of what might be in an Opinions Section and why we need such a section at all. I cannot promise that everything you read here will be provable or objective. That's not what an opinions article is designed to do. It will not contain the sort of information you can quote to your father in a political argument. What it will contain is perspectives – ways of looking at the world that will challenge and enrich your own. We need this. We need to hear the opinions of our fellow students, and we need to learn to both express our thoughts and respect those of others. This is not possible until we recognize the difference between Opinions and other sections, just as we must recognize the difference between an SNL skit and a press release. Only when we understand the both the limitations and unique strengths of the medium will we be able to fully take advantage of the humor, insight, and ideas that are shared within it ★

Anna is a senior majoring in Writing.

“The STAR exists to represent students: their news and their opinions... it is characterized by the people who chose to write for it”

News story, I would only write about things that can be proven: what inspired our cafeteria to take this action, when the papaya might start appearing, if it will go to the left of the cantaloupe or the right, etc. If I were to write a straight editorial on this same issue, I would present the opinion of the STAR staff. Melissa, Kayla, Michael and I would have a vigorous debate about papayas v. pineapples, and

to represent students: their news and their opinions. Our constitution states “The mission of the Houghton Star is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency, and integrity that have characterized Houghton College since its inception. This will be done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought.” The STAR fulfills this mission through editorials – through



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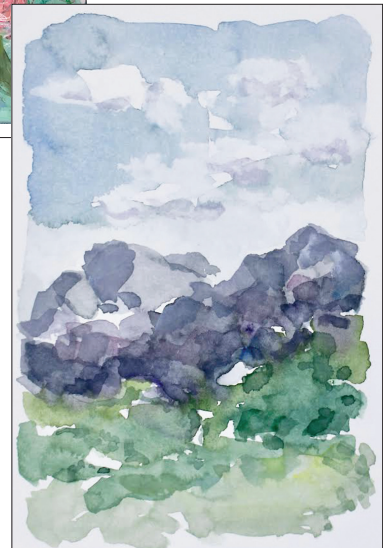
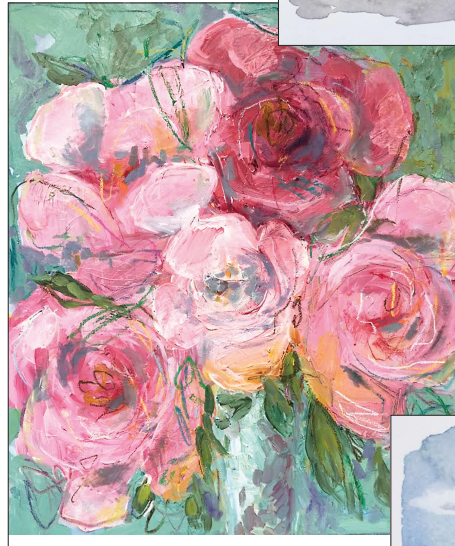
Artist of the Week

Abigail Taylor

// senior studio art major



PHOTO COURTESY OF EMILY VANDENBOSCH



“I love painting flowers.”

“I love colors, light, and bold abstractions. Most of my pieces are done in oil or watercolor paint. I feel a commitment to making art that expresses feelings of happiness and joy, pieces that I can pour myself into and know that the viewer will be able to access the emotions I’m trying to convey. My style tends to stay loose, less concerned with realistic details and more concerned with the energy and vibrancy of the subject I’m pursuing. I paint a lot of plants, landscapes, flowers, and I’ve also done some colorful, purely abstract paintings. Last summer, I opened an Etsy shop. I sell prints of my favorite pieces, original watercolor and pastel works, and my favorite item: t-shirts that feature a watercolor of a potted plant and the words “plant kindness” underneath. I love that I can use my art to inspire others to be kind and see the beauty in everyday scenes. Besides painting, I’ll be spending senior year finishing up my studio art major and two minors, education and psychology. I also work at the Welcome Center and I’m the student director of the Campus Activities Board. This year my studio time will focus on creating a body of work for the senior show in the spring and preparing my portfolio for graduate school applications. I plan to get my Master’s and pursue a career as a high school art teacher.”

