

THE HOUGHTON STAR

...wishing you Happy Holidays!

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December 12, 2008

Peter Savage Resigns as SGA President

By Clara Sanders

On Thursday, Nov. 20, members of the senate received an email from SGA President Peter Savage notifying them of his resignation, effective at the first senate meeting of next semester, due to his upcoming participation in the Go-ED program in Spring 2009.

After much thought and prayer, Savage felt that God is leading him to commit his next semester to Go-ED, one of Houghton's cooperative off-campus programs that concentrates especially on transformation development, peace building, and reconciliation. Savage first learned about the program during a spiritually transformative experience in Costa Rica over Mayterm.

"This summer was a time of great searching and spiritual growth in my life," said Savage. "I began to seriously question my intentions for running for Student Government, most of which I concluded were the result of selfish pride and ambition. I debated on resigning over the summer to give myself time and energy to focus on my own spiritual development, but could not ignore the responsibility I had accepted."

Savage informed the SGA cabinet of the possibility of Go-ED soon after Homecoming in October but waited to inform the senate until after his final decision had to be made November 15. He wanted to prepare the cabinet for the possible change in leadership and also seek its advice and counsel about his decision. Savage did not tell the senate until after his final decision in an effort to prevent division and strife that, if he decided not to go, might prove unnecessary.

At the Dec. 2 senate meeting, senators elected senior Michael Danylak, currently Speaker of the Senate, to succeed Savage next semester. Senior college senator Ryan Ledebur won a close race with fellow senator Joshua Nolen to assume the vacated role of Speaker.

According to the SGA constitution, only current senators or SGA cabinet members are eligible to run

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President Announces Spring Semester Budget Cuts

By Katarina Kieffer

In a town-hall meeting on Wednesday, December 3, President Shirley Mullen addressed a large audience of faculty, staff, and students on the topic of "Houghton's Economic Picture," ending with an unexpected announcement of a 20% across-the-board cut from all non-salary/stipend funds, effective next semester. While speculation has centered in recent weeks on concerns about next year's budget, especially on potential programmatic and faculty cuts, pressure from the economic crisis has grown. Stressing the need for "urgency" rather than "panic," Mullen specified that the impact of the current economic downturn on this year's budget could result in a deficit that may range up to \$2.4 million.

The proposed 20% reduction is part of a plan to adjust this year's budget by \$1.5 million in anticipation of possible effects of the economic

crisis. The cut will be from all annual budgeted items, excepting only those related to compensation. The various campus departments and organizations have been charged with "thinking creatively" to meet this reduction in their respective budgets. According to Mullen, the decision to allow the involvement of the affected bodies "offers all the opportunity to think strategically." Mullen also emphasized that this would also help allow for "partial restoration" of funds if "that becomes a possibility."

Mullen noted at least four factors that have contributed to the current situation. The first is the loss in the endowment—according to Mullen, "the endowments are underwater." While there is no guarantee where the market will go between now and May 31, 2009, the point at which Houghton would need to draw on the funds, the school might be facing a loss of up to \$1.5 million in available spending. The school of music and financial aid would feel

the largest effect from this loss.

Secondly, the college will need to put an additional \$200,000 toward its annuity fund in order to meet state requirements by the end of December. The hope is that some of this money will be recovered by May, but Mullen emphasized again that there is no guarantee.

The most pressing concern involves the banked-on sale of a cell tower on the West Seneca campus. The president's staff received notification several weeks ago that indicated that the company who was planning on purchasing the tower would likely defer the transaction until July, leaving the school without \$900,000 dollars it had planned on "for this fiscal year." Mullen pointed out that, while the loss in this year's budget is going to be difficult to make up, the sale will go through and will help alleviate next year's budget deficit.

The last factor is even more unpredictable at this point—

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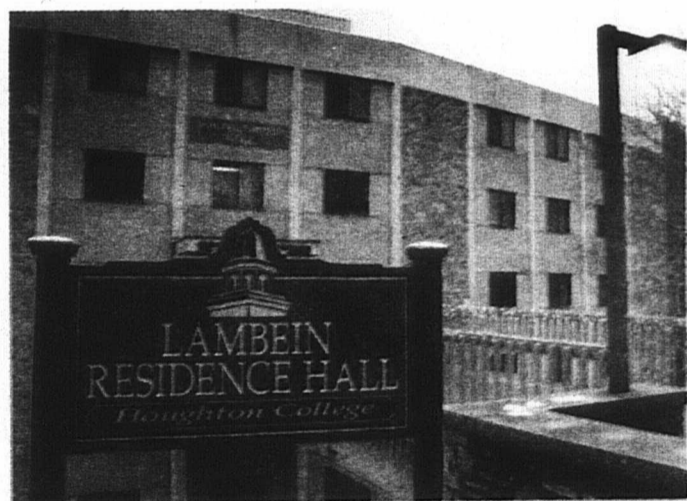
Lambein Considered for "Shared-Lounge" Dorm

By Ryan Ledebur

Most students realize that while Shenawana and Rothenbuhler halls are both theoretically handicap accessible, any student with a handicap would have a difficult time with the daily commute down the hill from Shenawana or up the hill from Rothenbuhler, particularly in the winter time. Both buildings are handicap accessible but are not actually in handicap accessible areas.

While Gillette is on the main level of campus, and has an elevator, each floor is only accessible by a set of stairs off of the main lounge. And while a ramp could be built, two accessible entrances and exits are required in case of emergency. Additionally, most of the bathroom facilities within the dorm likely would not meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Gillette could potentially be renovated to accommodate ADA standards, and although a renovation is likely to occur in the near future, it would be an extremely large and complicated project.

Not wanting to put off the creation of true handicap accessible living



Lambein may become both a men's and women's dorm.

space for male students, the college had but one option left to consider. Of all the dorms on campus, Lambein is really the only one that is genuinely handicap accessible. Therefore, the college is considering renovations to make Lambein into a "shared-lounge" dorm for both male and female students to truly have a fully accessible dorm for students of both sexes.

To be clear, no decision has been made yet one way or the other. A decision on whether or not this is

a viable solution needs to be made soon, however. Because of potential changes in the laundry room situation, the distribution of RAs, and other logistical and budgetary concerns, a decision would need to be made before RA selection in January since any changes would require a change in the number of male and female RAs.

While this potential solution may come as a shock to some students, such a change would not be against

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THE WORLD *Out there*

By Joel VanderWeele

Mumbai Attack

Following the devastating terrorist attacks in Mumbai, Pakistani security forces have conducted several raids on suspected terrorist camps in Kashmir, arresting fifteen. The raids are the first sign of a government response to the reports that the terrorists responsible for the deaths of 164 people were trained by the Islamic militant group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. LeT, which was banned in 2001 for an attack on the Indian parliament, has denied any involvement with the attacks. Tensions between India and Pakistan were elevated to dangerous levels when, following the attack, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh implied that Pakistan was somehow involved in the plot, an allegation that Pakistan strongly denies, putting the blame on "non-state actors." Both nations are armed with nuclear capabilities.

Stansted Demonstrations

Environmental campaigners "Plane Stupid" staged a demonstration at Stansted Airport in England, causing 52 flights to be cancelled on Monday. The group broke into the premises with bolt cutters at 3:30 a.m. and chained themselves to a partition they had set up on the runway. According to the group's spokespeople, they were concerned about the environmental implications of the expansion of the Essex airport, which was ratified by the British government earlier this year. Five hours after the demonstration began, 57 members of "Plane Stupid" were arrested and taken off the grounds.

Riots in Greece

Greek anarchists have continued to clash with police in response to the shooting of a Greek teenager in the neighborhood of Exarchia neighborhood in Athens on Saturday. According to police reports, two policemen were attacked in the neighborhood which is known for anarchist and anti-establishment groups and one of the policemen fired a warning shot which ricocheted and hit the boy. Anarchists across the Mediterranean country have retaliated by staging dozens of violent demonstrations, attacking police stations, setting banks on fire, and hurling petrol bombs at riot police. Knowing that Greek police are forbidden from security forces from entering school grounds, students in Thessaloniki have sought asylum at Aristotle

University, preparing petrol bombs and missiles for continued demonstrations. The Greek Prime Minister issued an apology to the family of the boy who was killed and expressed concern that "extreme elements" were using the tragedy as an opportunity to publicize their own political goals. A similar shooting in 1985 led to months of violence and the bombing of a bus full of riot police.

White House Cabinetry

President-elect Barack Obama has wasted no time in naming who will serve in his Presidential cabinet. Modeling his cabinet after President Abraham Lincoln's team of rivals, Obama has named former Presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Bill Richardson as Secretary of State and Secretary of Commerce, respectively. Obama has also announced that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates will remain part of the White House Administration, at least for the time being. Heading up his economic team, seen by many as the most important wing of the administration, will be both Larry Summers as chief White House economic advisor and his former protégé Timothy Geithner, who will serve as Treasury Secretary. While Obama's picks have been lauded by many as the beginning of a new era, some concerns remain over whether or not Obama will be able to manage the big egos that he has selected to serve under him.

9/11 Suspects to Confess

Five defendants in the Guantanamo Bay military prison have written a letter to United States Army Colonel Steven Henley saying that they wish to make full confessions for their responsibility for the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. According to Henley, the letter was received in what was expected to be a routine hearing. It is unclear whether or not guilty pleas can be accepted in a capital case. The defendants, led by the self-proclaimed mastermind behind the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, face the death penalty.

Chicago Sit-Ins

Workers at Republic Windows and Doors remain shuttered inside their plant as they enter the fourth day of a highly publicized sit-in protest after Republic was abruptly shut down on Friday when Bank of America canceled its line of credit. The laid-off workers are taking shifts to

guard the products and machinery stored in the plant, saying it is their only remaining collateral in negotiating a fair agreement. Their demand for severance and vacation pay has become a symbol of the hardships facing so many workers in the United States in this time of economic turmoil. The protestors have gained the support of such high-profile figures as President-elect Barack Obama, Illinois Senator Dick Durbin (D), and Reverend Jesse Jackson. As a result of the sit-ins, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich has suspended business with Bank of America.

Military Jet Down in San Diego

A military jet crashed into a neighborhood in San Diego on Monday as it attempted to land at an airstrip in. The aircraft destroyed two houses in the area, killing two adults and a child. The Marine Corps pilot of the jet ejected safely before the crash and was taken to a local military hospital. The exact cause of the crash remains unknown. Local residents reported that they could barely hear the jet when it was flying a few hundred feet above the ground, leading investigators to believe that the engine had been shut off.

Haji

Nearly two and a half million worshippers traveled to Mecca this week to celebrate the annual Muslim ritual called haji. As one of the five pillars of Islam, haji calls all able-bodied Muslims to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca in their lifetime. Previous pilgrimages have been hurt by overcrowding and stampedes, but Saudi officials have reported that good preparations have ensured that the record numbers can worship in safety.

Markets Surges

Despite the news of record layoffs in the month of November, the Dow Jones index gained nearly 4% on Monday on hopes that renewed stimulus talks would revive economic growth. Markets in the U.K., France, and Germany also went up, following the trend set by Asian markets early in the week. The gains were a response in part to new economic stimulus plans in India and Japan and President-elect Obama's recently announced plans to invest in massive infrastructure projects to create government jobs for millions of Americans.

SGA Senate Scrambles to Meet Budget Reduction

By Katarina Kieffer

At last Tuesday's SGA Senate meeting, senators were charged with cutting the annual Campus Services Budget (CSB) by 20%, in line with decision of the President's Staff to reduce non-compensation funds across the board for the 2009 spring semester.

Peter Savage, the current SGA president, emphasized that the specifics of this reduction will be "a student discussion" in which the Senate has the final decision; in regular allocations of student funds, the Student Life Council (SLC) usually has the power to alter or affirm Senate decisions. According to Savage, this decision does not require the SLC's approval.

President-elect Mike Danylak urged the student body to keep the cuts in perspective: "It's shocking and it's something that will affect every student in some capacity, but it's something that as students we shouldn't panic about, and shouldn't be worried about our operations as a whole. Our student body will still function as it always has, we'll just need to be willing to make some sacrifices right now."

The Senate agreed that organizations and clubs that receive funding from the CSB budget need to give input to the determination of line-item funding and to submit their spring budgets as soon as possible. After ensuring that the Senate-at-large would receive the proposed budgets by December 25, giving the senators enough time to fully consider them, the Senate empowered the executive cabinet to compile the budget information from student organizations. The cabinet will then present a proposal for a revised CSB, reduced by 20% of the annual amount of around \$200,000, at the first Senate meeting of the spring semester.

Danylak outlined the cabinet's plan, which was drawn up in the day following the senate meeting: "The first step of the plan will be for the five largest organizations that draw from the CSB—SGA, CAB, the Star, Lanthorn, and the Boulder—to meet next week to discuss how much they can feasibly afford to do without in the coming semester. The second step will be to look to organizations and classes that would draw on a lesser level. Clubs will be addressed after that." The Senate's foremost concern expressed in the nearly hour-and-a-half discussion on the budget were that all organizations that might be affected be clearly informed

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for the vacated presidential position. Danylak is the fourth person to hold the office of SGA president in two years. Last year, Katherine Hamilton resigned in early September.

College senator Adele Cameron was surprised at the news of Savage's resignation: "I thought—another president stepping down again? I worry that the president's office has become something to be run for selfishly; candidates need to think ahead."

Savage acknowledged how his experiences over the summer and this semester have helped him realize that "there is no way I could completely be in touch with the student opinion. I have to search for what would best serve the needs of students and the college, longer than my time here, especially with the budget crisis."

Faced with balancing the needs of the student body with his own spiritual and personal needs, Savage took encouragement in the way that the SGA cabinet and senate have both operated with a "greater activity and degree of support" toward the college this semester.

"I hear praise from students and administration every day in regard to the work of the senate and its commitment to both working together and disagreeing wisely, contributing toward a unified vision," said Savage. "I would not be going [to Africa] under any circumstances if I didn't feel like Mike would do an amazing job with

it [the position of president]."

President-elect Danylak was shocked when he first heard in October about the possible resignation. Although "more openness would have been better" in regards to timeliness of the announcements, Danylak respects "the time for the long process to take place."

"I want to respect the decisions he makes and how he handles it; he is the president until he resigns," Danylak said.

Danylak also feels confident in the SGA's ability to adjust to the switch of president and speaker halfway through the year. There are a good number of leaders in SGA this year and "they can take over their own aspect of leadership" and continue SGA's progress toward becoming "the voice of the students," said Danylak.

Speaker-elect Ledebur said he was "surprised, but after hearing his reasoning, I felt that he could not help but make any other decision. It's difficult to fault people for following God's call, even though that call is hard for all of us to discern."

Many constituents are glad for Savage's opportunity to go on Go-ED and respect his efforts to follow the prompts of God but wish that the decision could have been made and announced sooner.

Ledebur commented that "the people who were around for Kate's resignation were disappointed that the SGA leadership would be disrupted again." Savage hopes

"It's difficult to fault people for following God's call, even though that call is hard for all of us to discern."



Photo from Senate website
President-elect Mike Danylak and former president Peter Savage at Senate.

that his resignation will in no way "impinge upon this position [of SGA president] because it is extremely important."

Danylak, Ledebur, and Cameron all feel positive in the SGA's ability to continue goals of accessibility, accountability, and transparency. As a graduating senior, Cameron hopes that SGA members will continue to take seriously "the responsibility of representation."

SGA will continue to become a body to which students "feel comfortable

coming to...with their legitimate concerns," according to Danylak. SGA has increased campus-wide emails and students receive the senate agenda by email every week. Ledebur hopes to update the website throughout the spring semester in an effort to improve communication.

Cameron emphasized that we should "send [Savage] off with our prayers" and lift up the new officers, as they transition into new leadership roles. ▀

"Global Conflict Day" Focuses on Multi-Level Conflicts

By Gordon Brown

From December 1 to December 5, the student-led movement, Nehemiah's Restoration, in coordination with the Student Government Association and Global Christian Fellowship, directed Global Conflict Week, a series of events for the purpose of addressing the issues of global justice and conflict, both on an international and interpersonal level.

Suzanne Derksen, a leader of Nehemiah's Restoration, a student social justice movement, said that even though December 1st was World AIDS Day, Nehemiah's Restoration had changed its theme from the AIDS pandemic, the topic of previous years, to the issue of conflict. Despite this change, it has been maintained that the intention hasn't been to shift focus away from AIDS, but rather to take a more holistic approach to the issue.

Professor Lisa Arensen, a speaker at the GCF event on December 3rd claimed that "As Christians, we pray for conflicts, but when it's over, we

switch to the next conflict." Rather than focusing on a single issue, Global Conflict Week has attempted to create awareness of conflict, including how conflict affects and is affected by other major issues such as AIDS, poverty, and justice. "All these issues are interconnected," said Derksen.

Although referred to as "Global" Conflict Week, Derksen emphasized that the focus of the week was not solely on conflict on an international level but also on an interpersonal level.

The week began by looking at issues on a large scale, such as Professor Arensen's lecture, "Peace after Conflict," on the country of Cambodia or the showing of the film, *As We Forgive*, on the subject of genocide. As the week progressed, the events became more centered on conflict between individuals, such as the prayer and reconciliation service held last Friday, December

"...conflict begins in the hearts of individuals."

5. "We're not immune to these problems." Professor Ndunge Kiiti said. According to Kiiti, that conflict affects Houghton as much as it does anywhere else. Derksen echoing this sentiment, said that "we need to be looking at ourselves and examining our own hearts... conflict begins in the hearts of individuals".

Feelings about the success of Global Conflict Week are mixed, as the impact of the events is, as of yet, impossible to gauge. However, the members of Nehemiah's

Restoration, as well as the faculty that participated, remain optimistic. Professor Kiiti noted that while the week's success has been "hard to assess," even if only a handful of students benefited, the week could be counted as an accomplishment. Professor Kiiti went on to mention that she was confident that an "ongoing dialogue" had been launched, creating conversations

among the student body on the subject of conflict and resolution on an "individual, communal, and global level." While many students have voiced appreciation for Houghton's raising of the topic of conflict, however many have also expressed disappointment that no solutions to the conflicts discussed were put forward by the speakers. One student stated that "The Global Justice Panel talked about a lot of issues, for a while it was a little bit bland..." Another student made a more disparaging remark by claiming "I thought that the information, that the awareness they brought to the topics was good, but intellectually it seemed to be a superficial covering. They brought awareness but lacked solutions." In all, while it would appear that those directing Global Conflict Week met their objective of creating a dialogue among the students, the students themselves had hoped for focus on conflict resolution, as well as conflict. ▀



Praxis: "Evolution" of CLEW to Take Place In the Spring

By Mich Warf

This spring, a new event is being introduced to the Houghton College calendar that focuses on community and spirituality in fresh ways. Spearheaded by professor of philosophy Benjamin Lipscomb, the week long program, known as Praxis, will consist of various speakers, gatherings, and activities that are meant to bring the entire campus together in a time of reflection on our communal Christian walk.

Praxis is the result of several months of discussion between Lipscomb and other faculty, and a small group of students who are passionate about making this event happen.

The word "Praxis" gives us our modern term "practice", and literally means to practically apply or exercise a theory, art, skill, or science. Senior Shannon Tilley, who has been involved with Praxis from the beginning, stated that "when the current Praxis committee began reflecting on what to call the new spiritual life emphasis week, many different options were considered as we tried to find the word to best encompass what we hope this new initiative will provide for our campus. We settled upon Praxis, as it exemplifies not only reflection upon our own spiritual lives, but the furthering of our faith into practical application."

When asked how the ideas behind Praxis came about, Lipscomb related a conversation

he had had with President Shirley Mullen regarding the possibility of increasing conversation about practical theology on Houghton campus, and by what means this could happen most effectively. Practical theology, according to Lipscomb, is reflection on what Christian faithfulness involves in everyday life, and Junior Benjamin Stanford, a member of the planning committee, added that it is reflection "with an emphasis on turning that reflection into action." "What difference does it make," Lipscomb rhetorically questioned,

"to be a disciple of Christ in any and every area of our lives?"

Praxis has been described as an "evolution" of Houghton's traditional Christian Life Emphasis Week (CLEW),

and will be taking place instead of CLEW next semester, and, if successful, in many spring semesters to come. Lipscomb emphasized that Praxis is to be seen not as a replacement for but instead as a "development of" CLEW, which has been, and will continue to be "an important landmark in the Houghton calendar."

However while CLEW is an institutional call to spiritual revival, Praxis is what Lipscomb dubbed "a revival of vision." Junior Josiah Nunziato, a part of the Praxis

think tank commented that "While CLEW was primarily shaped by a particular speaker who would guide discussion during the week, Praxis expresses a more diverse approach to theological reflection." The programs are similar in their specifically-themed approach, but Praxis differs "by providing opportunity for action called forth by careful dialogue and attention to the complexities of our life together."

One of the goals of Praxis is to spiritually enrich and theologically focus the public intellectual life of

While CLEW is an institutional call to spiritual revival, Praxis is "a revival of vision."

the college, and the elements of the week give every impression of embodying this goal. Stanford is "wicked excited about Praxis" for just this reason. "We worked really

hard to line up events that aren't just people listening passively to a lecture - although there will be lectures here and there throughout the week - but events that have people actually doing things, such as communion every night of the week, a communal meal between dorm dwellers and FaTs, and opportunities for service projects."

This year's theme for Praxis is hospitality, and Junior Jillian Parsons, another contributor to the Praxis discussion, sees great potential in the week's events for

helping the community to reflect on this theme. "I'm helping to organize Monday night's hospitality-themed coffeehouse," she stated, "which will bring students and faculty together in an atmosphere of live music, literature reading, artwork and food/drink as part of Praxis' kickoff."

A final event which is still in the planning stages, but is very much anticipated, is one that will bring children and families to campus in conjunction with Houghton's Allegany County Outreach (ACO) and Journey's End programs. Parsons hopes that "by welcoming these individuals to Houghton, spending time with them in the gym, at the pool, outdoors, and over lunch, we will have the opportunity to go beyond both conversing about hospitality and extending hospitality within our community to joyfully being hospitable to strangers in our midst."

This event will be an exciting step for the college, and, according to Stanford, "one that will be well-received by the campus." Nunziato is also very optimistic about the potential for Praxis, saying that "I believe that this event is a significant new occasion in the spiritual life of our college, because it calls attention to basic elements of our life and practice together. I look forward to the dialogue that will attend this week, amidst varied expressions of hospitality and considerable diversity of opinion."

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Santa Claus! *candy canes!*

7:30-10:30PM

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

IN THE STAR OFFICE (CAMPUS CENTER BASEMENT)





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college policy. Male and female Houghton student sleep within the same building in the College Flats and also on many of Houghton's off-campus programs, such as Star Lake and the London programs. The situation would be similar in Lambein with all male and female sleeping quarters segregated and separated by walls and doors.

No decision has been made yet whether the dorm would be divided on a floor-by-floor basis (horizontally) or vertically. Dividing the dorm vertically with the left half for one gender and the right for the other would require the building of dividing doors on all but the fourth floor. Additionally, RA distribution would differ depending on whether the dorm is

• *CSB continued from page 2*
of the mandated budget cut and allowed to have input; senators also expressed the need to give clubs and organizations enough time to organize and evaluate their budgets for next year.

Danylak also stressed that, while this will certainly be difficult, it is important to remember that "this is campus-wide: it's going to be tough, but we'll have to find a way."

As far as the permanence of these cuts, Danylak's understanding is that the 20% reduction will simply be in effect for the 2009 spring semester; however, he brought up the current discussion of perhaps cutting the CSB up to 50% for the 2009-2010 budget. While he emphasized that "nothing is certain at this time," he said that "future cuts [to student funds] will be fought against in the coming semester."

"It is certainly my hope," the president-elect stressed, "that from both my time in SGA and my time as an Academic Policy Council representative that the needs and responsibilities to the students won't be overlooked in this time of crisis."

divided vertically or horizontally. While important, a decision on *how* to divide the dorm properly is not nearly as important as the question of *if* the dorm will be divided at all.

According to Joshua Nolen, student member of the Student Life Council, both the vertical and horizontal divide plans would still cost the College a substantial amount. Both plans would necessitate installation of handicap accessible restroom facilities, as well as automatic doors and other hardware necessary for ADA approval. Vice-President for Student Life Sharra Hynes noted that budget considerations, and not just student input, will play a role in the decision.

Hynes additionally stated that, "that some alumni and friends will be very excited about the possible change to Lambein given that it is motivated by a sincere desire to make our campus more accommodating and welcoming to those with mobility

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the possible impact on spring enrollment numbers in the college due to the economic downturn. Mullen emphasized the importance of being "proactive" in regards to this unknown factor, noting that most other colleges are facing the same uncertainty.

Mullen's proposed plan for dealing with the unexpected deficit is to approach donors to help with the "endowment issue," as well as investigate the possibility, already approved by the board, of drawing down principle to make up for some of the amount that would normally come from the endowment.

Savings from unfilled positions will also count toward resolving the deficit; while there is not a "hiring freeze" in effect, Mullen did say

impairments." In addition to noting the possible positive reactions, Vice President Hynes also mentioned that, "other alumni and friends may be concerned with the common lounge housing option given that it is a shift in strategy from the ways in which we have handled housing for first and second year students in the past."

As a member of the Student Life Council, Student Body president Peter Savage has played an active role in the discussion of handicap accessibility. He stated, "I think handicap accessibility is an important issue to the college and is one that needs to be addressed. The college needs to come up with an adequate plan and in that plan involve current students and administrators."

Former Lambein residents reacted as well. Junior Jennifer Steinhoff lived in Lambein her first two years at Houghton.

"Basically I'm on the fence about this issue. As an upper classmen I would be okay if I lived in Lambein and it was common lounge, but who is to say how it would have affected me as a first-year student," Steinhoff said. "One fear I have is that the option of common lounges may be chosen by the very people who need the boundaries that are provided by single gender residences."

Other former residents were more pointed in their opinion of the proposed plan. Senior Rachel Sherer is a former Lambein RA and the current Assistant Resident Director of Gillette Hall. She believes that had Houghton made a decision like this prior to her application to the school, she would have had to take

a very close look at whether or not she would want to attend Houghton saying, "I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have come to Houghton if I knew there was a mixed dorm."

Darius Crawford is a sophomore and a current Lambein resident. She says that one of the problems with the potential decision is that some students won't care one way or the other, but "a parent or prospective student might have an issue with coming to a college where something like it is allowed." When asked whether a decision to have a common lounge dorm would have affected her decision to Houghton, Crawford responded, "not at all."

Even male students were not entirely convinced the decision would have a positive effect on the college. "The chivalrous tradition of walking women back to their dorms would become greatly diminished, consid-

ering that men would not have to brave the wind tunnel in the CFA or the icy path by Roth, but merely have to cross a common lounge in which the greatest hazard would be an overexposure to public displays of affection," says senior Timothy Chen.

As mentioned earlier, no decision has been made yet, and will not likely be made until January. Because the decision is obviously an important and difficult issue, it is not being taken lightly. Vice-President Hynes emphasized that, "The decision will be impacted by student feedback, budget availability for the capital project of making the hall accessible and input from groups on campus such as the Student Life Council who has been studying this issue over the course of the semester."

"I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have come to Houghton if I knew there was a mixed dorm."

"The school might be facing a loss of up to 1.5 million in available spending."

that "great discretion" would be exercised in filling any unfilled positions. In addition, savings from the lack of post-season athletic competition and potential modifications to Mayterm programs will help meet the reduced number.

In addition to confronting the impact of the current economic downturn, Mullen also addressed two other budget processes that are part of what she sees as a "distinct but inter-related" budget program. The first is the ongoing 2009-10 budget

discussions that will meet the \$3.5 million dollar deficit, which was discussed in the last issue of the *Star*, and the vision of a budget for "long-term financial sustainability." The latter emphasizes "not just getting a budget for next year," but also "building a Houghton economy

needed to make our Houghton economy stable" in the long run. This might include planning for regular facilities maintenance, library resources, faculty and staff development, strengthening the endowment, and developing "benchmarked salaries" for faculty and staff.

Mullen again stressed that these two processes would have occurred at this point regardless of any external economic factors. "We are not in as difficult a situation as many colleges," she said, adding that while this is a not time to be overly optimistic, or "Pollyanna," the work of "long-term financial sustainability is a hopeful process." She also stressed the commitment of the current administration to "preserving a student body of high academic quality" and remaining "faithful to the core mission as an undergraduate Christian liberal arts college."



Highlander Men's Basketball Team Comes Back to Action

By Nick Fredette

As winter begins, a new season for coach Brad Zarges and the Houghton Men's Basketball team kicks off. The Highlanders started the season with a 1-1 record before hosting the Turkey Drive Classic, an annual tournament to raise money for needy families in the community on Thanksgiving. They showed a strong performance in this tournament, but finished in second place after a tough loss to Rio Grande University, 81-59.

Since the tournament, the Highlanders have played three games, winning one, which brings their record to 3-4. Their last game against SUNY Canton resulted in a much-needed win for the Highlanders. Led by junior Yannick Anzuluni, the Highlanders were able to cruise to an 18-point victory over the Kangaroos, 68-50. Anzuluni matched an earlier performance with a game-high 35 points, also grabbing 17 rebounds. This win was important in that it showed the team's ability to win on the road, as well as building a bit of momentum for the next few games.

The men's basketball team this year enjoys playing together, and looks forward to an exciting season. Junior guard Dan Tomlinson said, "It's a joy to be on this team! We are really looking forward to what the year has for us." The team has worked to create a sense of unity, something that may have been more challenging with the addition of six freshmen players. Three of these players come from the same high school, Schenectady Christian in New York. Jake Bowman, Petar Serafimovski, and Bryan Bishop all decided to sign with the Highlanders, although Bowman will not see time on the floor, as he is redshirted due to injury. The other three are Jaanai Beckford, Kenan Etale, and Ryan Andryshak. This group of freshmen has proven very efficient. Kenan Etale has started in all seven games this year, and is second on the team with 11.1 points per game. The six-foot business major hails from Hamilton, Ontario, and has enjoyed a prolific career in his first year with the Highlanders. The team has come together, and looks to improve on last year's 1-9 conference record.

• Sports continued on page 8



Photo from Artist's website

Ortlip Gallery Features World-Renowned Artist Ken Vavrek

By Megan Little

The heavy stoneware ceramic sculptures hang from the walls of the Ortlip Gallery with gravity-defying splendor. The precise and carefully designed forms intrigue the eye and the complex textures invite closer exploration, tempting the fingers to touch them. Friday evening, Ken Vavrek spoke at the opening reception of this new and exciting show of his ceramics.

Ken Vavrek was a professor of Jillian Sokso, one of the art professors here at Houghton.

However, because Sokso was not able to be present, Gary Baxter, another member of the art faculty, introduced the artist. Baxter told about how he had indirectly come in contact with the artist in undergraduate school many years ago, when he used a glaze that bore Vavrek's name.

In his talk, Vavrek spoke carefully and thoughtfully, thoroughly answering all of the questions that the students and faculty posed. He talked about how both his style and his methods had

• Gallery continued on page 8

Adoremus: 2nd Annual Christmas Prism in Review

By Monica Sandrezcki

This past weekend, Houghton's music department continued the newly developed Christmas tradition of Prism.

Prism combines instruments, choral works, visual arts, and dance into "a single powerful tapestry," says Ben King, Director of the School of Music and producer of Prism. It brings together different ensembles from Symphonic Winds and Philharmonia, to the Men's and Women's and College Choirs.

"It's fun to bring everyone together and focus those energies on one goal," said Brandon Johnson, Director of Choral Activities, who conducted several of the choral

arrangements.

According to King, for 37 years a Renaissance-themed musical festival and dinner, called the Madrigal Dinner, was Houghton's Christmastime tradition, but it had "run its course."

Johnson said that there were four years between Madrigal Dinners and Prism during which there were Christmas celebrations similar to the current Prism.

When President Mullen was selected as president, according to King, she hoped to reestablish a

signature event to take place around Advent and Christmas, so she asked the music faculty and staff to come up with a concept for an ongoing and recurring musical event. Thus the current concept of Prism was born.

President Mullen hoped to reestablish a signature event to take place around Advent and Christmas. Thus, Prism was born.

chapel, but the full performance surpassed that by far. This was a performance that would put even

Ebenezer Scrooge in the Christmas spirit.

In experiencing the performance, it was evident that the song "O Come All Ye Faithful" was an undercurrent throughout the performance. Although the song was not sung once in its entirety, the verses were sung one at a time throughout the program, almost acting as a transition between the four parts of the performance. The four parts flowed right into each other starting with "O Come....," then to "Sing All Ye Citizens....," followed by "Draw Nigh to Gaze....," and ending with part four, "Let Us Adore...." All parts are taken from verses of "O Come All Ye Faithful."

• Prism continued on page 7



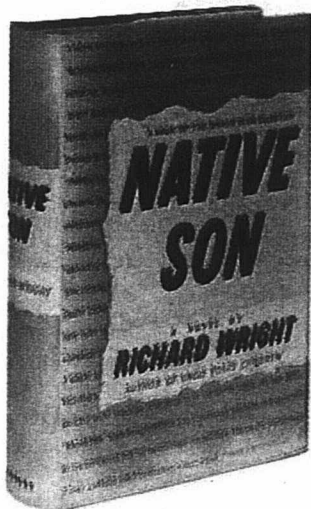


Book Recommendation and Review: "Native Son"

Here at the STAR, we care about you. Since time is running short to find the perfect Christmas gift, we want to help you out. We invited Professor Ted Murphy to recommend a book he believes is not only significant, but relevant for our time—despite the fact it was written in 1940.

By Ted "Murph" Murphy

"I'm no racist, but there is just no way I would ever vote for a Black for President" ...says the man being interviewed on National Public Radio. He says this with no sense of irony in his voice. He said what thousands of people said this past November: under their breath, in line while preparing to



vote, and some—like this man—said it openly and "on record." Hearing this, I immediately thought of Richard Wright's famous novel "Native Son" (and Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man," Toni Morrison's "Beloved," etc.) Wright's 1940 novel deals with the explicit and implicit nature of racism in American society at mid century (hence the ironic title, which has layers of irony and meaning the more you get into the novel).

But to read "Native Son" only as a book "about racism" is a mistake. The novel is first and foremost a profound story: a story of tragic proportions, of innate flaws, of societal complicity and a psychological study of a particular type of person our culture is still trying to understand. It is a great novel before it is a "black" novel or a work to be read in a "Black Studies" class or read during the month of February. It is unfortunate that some genres of literature tend to ghettoize certain authors—whether they are Jewish, black, or women writers and artists—these

sub categories turn far too many important works of literature into the venue Professional Studies. Even now as some of my friends are reading this, their minds are considering how I dare talk about a book like this without the proper credentials. Come on... admit it... it crossed your mind. That's OK, experts have a great deal to offer.

But I say read this book first as a great story. Bigger Thomas is one of the major characters in literature. He represents something that is always present in every culture. He is both an individual and

a product of his time—the place he grows up and the experiences that he carries into the crisis he is, at first, trapped by, and later for which he is completely responsible. If you need a break down of the plot I suggest you Google the book. I will not go into that here because some people do not like spoilers. They run flapping their hands over their ears like people fleeing from

hornets the minute I start to discuss the details of the plot. So this I will not do.

Let me just say that the book deals with a murder. It explores the interior workings of Bigger's mind when he is caught in circumstances beyond his control. The book has a momentum that drives you through the story; the pace and intensity reminds me of one of my

favorite writers, Dostoevsky, an author Wright was very indebted to for his ideas (see *Black Boy*, 1945).

I happened to first read "Native Son" while 9/11 took place. Then President Bush said on air, "I don't know why THEY hate us

so much. Why do they want to destroy our way of life?" He said this sincerely (or at least to me it sounded sincere). As I read Wright I was struck by how he was offering answers to this very question. I wondered if Mr. Bush had ever read this man's work.

No, the book does not speak to
- Review continued on page 8

Wright's 1940 novel deals with the explicit and implicit nature of racism in American society at mid century.



• Prism continued from page 6

Also, there was an emphasis on the three kings who came to see the Christ child. Their anthem, "We Three Kings," was integrated beautifully and impressively with "O Come All Ye Faithful." It was as if the audience followed them throughout their journey.

No one piece, no one song, could be labeled as better than another. From the beat of the drum in "Noël," to the race of the woodwinds in "Fantasy on a Bell Carol," and with Gretchen Hull's piano solos woven into the entire performance, it was a breathtaking performance. It culminated with the call of the trumpets to the choir in the Hallelujah chorus, which sounded like angels praising the Lord as they repeated the triumph that, "He shall reign forever and

ever. Hallelujah!"

Any audience member would have been awestruck by the abilities of the participants and the certainty that this is what the children of God will sound like as they surround His throne in Paradise.

"My hope is that the combination of those artistic factors brings [the audience] to a point of celebration and worship," said Johnson.

"[Prism] is impressive. I'm always impressed that the professors, especially Dr. King, can put together and pull off something this big because it's so involved," said senior Kristen LaVeck, who played the violin in Philharmonia and sang in the College Choir. "I hope that the audience perceived [Prism] as a worshipful and uplifting experience. I hope that they could immerse themselves in it and leave



Photos by Ian Galloway

feeling rejuvenated by it."

"Any musician wants the audience to be touched by the music in some way. I hope that they had the opportunity to worship God through this," said sophomore Gretchen

Hull, who had several solos on the piano and trumpet, and is a piano major with a trumpet minor. "The most valuable part of Prism is the audience's participation."



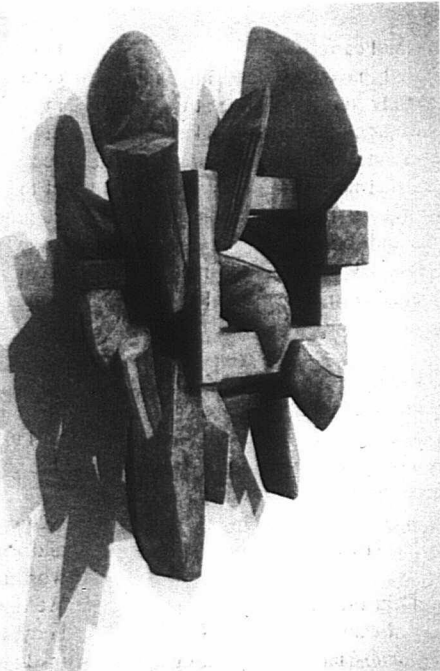
• *Gallery cont. from 6*

developed over the years. From 1975 to 1995, his art consisted of various abstractions of the southwest desert (pictures from this part of his career, which he calls his 'Desert Period,' can be found on his website at www.kenvavrek.com). In 1995, he left this subject matter behind to create works like those in the gallery, which explore form solely.

Vavrek's unique process begins when he "plays in three dimensions" with foam models which he paints in acrylic. He explained that he must follow these mock-ups religiously when finally working in clay. When he left more room for experimentation, he said, he would arrive at the final product and wonder why it looked worse than his original mock-up! The slabs of clay from which he constructs the massive geometric shapes are only 1/4 inch thick and have a hidden inner structure that keeps the clay from sagging. He mixes clay into his glaze so that it becomes a thick, putty-like substance, which he then applies with a pallet knife. This technique allows him to create the fantastic surface textures that make his pieces so visually interesting.

Unlike most ceramicists, who fire their work multiple times in the kiln to achieve different effects and colors, Vavrek only fires his pieces once. He said that he decided to do this when he realized that he had all the colors he needed at the one high temperature, except for canary yellow, which he sadly misses.

Since moving away from art with specific subject matter, Vavrek feels his work has become more



related to music. Both art forms work in pure, abstract terms, not directly commenting on any specific subject. Rather, music creates beauty through tensions in sounds and harmonies and Vavrek creates beauty through tensions in color and form. Out of this similarity came two of the titles for pieces in the show: Sextet and Quintet.

At several points during and after his talk, Vavrek commented on Houghton's art community, saying he was very impressed with it and emphasizing that we should be thankful for such a supportive group of people.

If you were not able to make it out to Friday's opening reception, it is definitely worth your while to take a few minutes to wander the gallery during its open hours, from 9:00-6:00pm, Monday through Saturday. Stand in awe before Commander, peer at Descalade from all angles, and allow Gala to excite you.

Vavrek's excellent work deserves every bit of its fame and Houghton College is fortunate to have the honor of displaying it.

• *Review continued from page 7*

Islam or political ideologies (not explicitly, at least). What it speaks to is the core of the disenfranchised, giving voice to those who are the victims of a cultural world view which limits some for the advancement of others. It addresses how it feels to be a person limited and beset by a "system" designed to work for a privileged few.

It is interesting that it is not the overt bigots that set in motion the situation that is the heart of the tragic crime Bigger commits.

It is the soft-headed-well-meaning-liberals who fail to comprehend how their curiosity of urban black culture, the world Bigger lives in, can (and will) lead to the horrible situation of the crime. They say "Take us where you eat" ...oh the dangers inherent in such "tourism of the other." Be careful. Be very careful.

At one point Bigger looks up to a plane flying overhead and says "Maybe they right in not wanting us to fly..." 'cause if I took a plane up I'd take a couple of bombs along and drop 'em as sure as hell." A chill ran through me when I read this. Here Mr. Bush... listen to this. Later Bigger says "They will never listen... not until these towers come tumbling down." Well now.

Ultimately "Native Son" transcends the specific nature of race in American culture and speaks a universal message—like all great literature. Who today worries about the politics of early 20th century Ireland when they read Ulysses? It helps to know—it enlarges many of the ideas—it's good to know, but one can be pretty unaware and still find the more vast human condition at the center of the book (but this is starting to sound academic and I can hear Professors begin to shuffle their papers, so let's get out of here...).

I voted for Barack Obama (perhaps the next version of "spell check" will stop trying to change Obama to Bema). Why he or anyone would want to be President is beyond me. I don't even want to be department head. But he is to be our next President. So, it might be a good time for many, as we enter this historic moment, to read (read outside of class—for yourself) a work that is still capable of holding ALL of your attention, without the pressure of classes.

(Caution, Editorial Comment: The real goal of the general education is to create readers. Houghton does this well. It might also create scholars...but what we really want is readers. Jonathan

Franzen says "For me, today, there is nothing sexier than a reader." Important that. In this I partly found my mate. Pay attention.)

Surfing the net or listening to certain radio stations or TV commentaries, I can still hear voices... certain

opinions... that sound frightened. And pretty frightening, really; they have a tinge of judgment, of threat. Voices that sound like ones I have heard before.

Not everyone who is critical of our new President is a racist—that is sheer nonsense. If you think that is what I am saying, you are mistaken. Obama is not beyond criticism and the party he represents is in deep—very deep—with all the problems we face today. But it is not a reasoned voice that I hear.

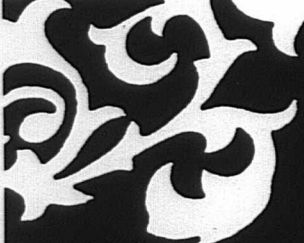
It is that other voice... the one I heard as a boy growing up outside of Cleveland. The voice that is pretending to be "just stating facts" or "common sense," the voice that kept saying "they don't value life they way we do." Today these voices sound strangely like voices from another era...say, oh...1940?

• *Sports continued from page 6*

The Highlanders seek to accomplish this goal as a team, and will need continued good performances from many players. Defensively, senior Bruce Mourhess is considered to be the team's defensive specialist. A captain, Mourhess is usually tasked with defending the most prolific scorer on the opposing team, but also takes charge as a leader. Another team leader is captain Billy Evans. Though working with fewer minutes on the court, Evans is still very productive on the floor; he has 11 assists in the Highlanders' seven games. On the offensive side of the ball, the Highlanders look to Yannick Anzuluni. He leads the team in points, rebounds, steals and

blocks. Anzuluni has 24.9 points per game, 17 steals and blocks, and 11.6 rebounds per game. In the second week of the season, he was named American Midwest Conference player of the week, shooting 50% from the field and averaging over 28 points per game for that period.

The Highlanders will travel to Rochester this weekend for the RIT Tournament, where they hope to continue their strong performance on the road. Coach Zarges continues to emphasize hard work in practice in order to fully prepare the team for this upcoming tournament. "We know what we need to do to win; now it's just a matter of getting it done in a game," Dan Tomlinson said. Good luck, Highlanders!



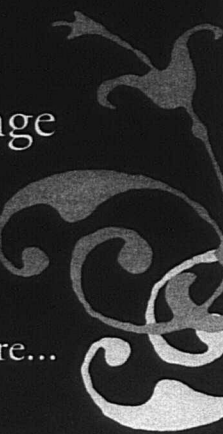
reading day

wednesday dec. 17

starting at 10am
campus center lounge

photographs, cards,
bowls, jewelry, mugs,
prints, paintings, and more...

sponsored by the Artist Guild





Letters to the Editor

Dear Editors,

I was disappointed to read Joshua Nolan's article and find that the author fails to adequately represent his opposition, offering up red herrings and guilt by association. So in the interest of balance, let me give just a few points on the other side. First, the claim that banning gay marriage is "a policy of discrimination based on religious morality" is historically inaccurate. There is no constitutional protection for gay marriage because no one in three millennia of Western culture ever dreamed of calling such a thing a "marriage," whether Roman, Jewish, Christian, Celtic, Nordic, or other. Consider that even those ancient Greeks who glorified homosexual relationships never gave them legal standing as "marriage." Clearly they were not held back by bias of religion or personal habit. And if traditionalists are rejected because of association with religious beliefs, we should equally reject gay marriage because its advocates claim the "love your neighbor" idea (again, religious).

Second, there is no "right" to demand that the sexual activities of your choice be endorsed and subsidized by the state. Yet the homosexual lobby wishes to wield the power of the state to give tax money to subsidize a pseudo-spouse as a "dependent." And this leads to a third consideration: marriage is the fundamental political unit of the state, the building block of society (an idea found already in Aristotle). One cannot easily limit the repercussions of breaking and radically redefining this institution legally. If the state's definition of "marriage" must now be any two people who wish to cohabit, then why not any three or four? Objections

to polygamy will be moot. Shall we legalize concubinage and give men a half deduction on taxes for a half-wife? What about mileage and housing allowance for mistresses? Why not allow incest? Where will this nonsense stop?

If you think this cannot happen, look around. Many polygamists are eager to seize this opportunity. Already several media empires have begun to explore polygamy in America with fiction such as HBO's "Big Love." Finally, the gay lobby desires through these legal measures to gain not equality but dominance; to use the power of the state to suppress all opponents. Countries that have legalized gay marriage have also proceeded to take legal action against anyone who criticizes it. Not only state employees but even pastors have faced fines or jail time in Sweden and Canada for the so-called "hate crime" of condemning homosexuality. Already in this country those who criticize the gay lifestyle will lose their jobs in schools, universities, government offices, and elsewhere. This is no joke. I refuse to surrender the good of this country to a new despotism that has no justification but lust.

-Terence Paige, Professor of New Testament

Dear Editors,

Why is the library so hot? I hate it. I'm sitting in the library trying to work on papers that are long past due, which is quite difficult when I am extremely distracted by being extremely uncomfortable. I feel as if I have a fever, yet this "sickness" only comes on as I walk through the library doors. I don't know how this environment can be conducive for studying when everyone in the library is either sweating or falling asleep. The temperature is ridiculous. I have to sit next to an open window just to somewhat regulate the temperature of my

small carrel.

I have not done an extensive study on the temperature of the library, but I did just take a good 3 minutes from my studying to locate a thermostat (the only one I could find on the first floor—although, I did only look for 3 minutes) and saw that it's at a nice cool 77 degrees and heat is still pouring out of the heater next to me.

Can someone please cool the library down? We don't need it that hot, the books don't need it that hot, and it would probably save some money (especially since I wouldn't be heating the outdoors with the open window).

-Tirzah Cook, class of 2009

Dear Editors,

I want to thank Mr. Swarts of the Micah Challenge for taking the time to reply to my concerns regarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). I wish to respond to a couple of his points.

Mr. Swarts mentions that independent organizations will be implementing the MDGs. This does not, however, change the fact that the UN is still the plan's orchestrator and would gain immense amounts of power. The UN has written the MDG policies and will select the organizations that will implement them. If the organizations don't live up to the UN's standards, they will not get funded. The UN is still the boss.

We have no assurance that any of these policies will be implemented in a truly redemptive and Biblical way. We would do a great disrespect to God's sovereignty over all of life to think that there are not Christian and non-Christian ways to seek improved healthcare, economics, or education for a society. We have NO power to hold the UN accountable to truly redemptive policies as they are not an elected body. Once we hand them the money, we won't be able to control

how any of it is used. In fact, the criticism has already been made by many that the implementation of the MDGs would increase abortion access in these societies, via some of the organizations the UN would commission. The goals do not, to my knowledge, prohibit this. The UN already gives human rights awards to pro-abortion organizations. This is the worldview of the governing body we are asking to affect the minds, societies, and economies of the third world?

I firmly disagree with Mr. Swarts that this is the third world's only hope. The church, working with NGOs to find solutions to poverty and brokenness, must independently work as the hands and feet of Christ. We don't need a distant governing body, or international socialism, to mediate between us and the third world.

-Spencer Johnsons, class of 2012

The HOUGHTON STAR is dedicated to the free exchange of ideas, and encourages community members to participate in the discussion. Ideas expressed in these pages reflect solely the opinion of the writer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit any contributions for reasons of length or decorum. Letters to the editor (signed) should be 350 words or fewer and be submitted by Monday at 7 p.m. to STAR@houghton.edu.



Faith in Action.
January 18-24

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"What is one thing you'd like to see change at Houghton next semester?"

...students respond

To see this community come to a better understanding of time and what a gift the present truly is.

— Emily Stairs, Freshman

It would be useful for buildings to be open on Sundays and longer on the other days.

— Jens Hieber, Junior

As a music major, I'd like my free time back.

— Ashley Aran, Sophomore

I would like to see more poetry/open mic nights for aspiring writers and poets.

— Renee Roberts, Freshman

I would like to see the administration, faculty, and students work together with mutual respect, realizing that only through prayer and recognition of Christ within each other can we weather Houghton's budget and mission issues as a unified body.

— Clara Sanders, Junior

Remove the giant rock in front of Gillette and instead install a statue of a unicorn reared back on its hind legs, with Ted Murphy riding it.

— Timothy Chen, Senior

I would like for Houghton students above all to take President Mullen's advice: focus on community, in the simplest ways of loving our neighbors as ourselves and striving each day to step outside ourselves and our comfort zones to carry each other's burdens.

— Deanna Hoffman, Junior

One thing I would like to see changed: More interest in expressed appreciation of the ways Houghton succeeds in being an institution that aids in Christian flourishing; and continual and sincere attempts on the part of students to do good in the community.

— Gerard Gentry, Junior

Energy waste cut (lights being left on in buildings long after no one is in them; doors and windows in buildings being left open; places like the library and Roth that can get inordinately hot just turning the thermostat down, etc).

— Benjamin Stanford, Junior

I would love to do away with the 12:00 class time slot because it creates too many problems with scheduling.

— Laura Jackson, Junior

I would like to see paper cups and bowls available in the cafeteria instead of styrofoam ones and a better campus recycling and compost program in general.

— Bethany Little, Senior

I'm a freshman and from my perspective, things are fine.

— Christopher Way, Freshman

I would like Houghton students to have a greater connection with the community surrounding the college.

— Bryan Overland, Sophomore

I'd like less puddling of water/ice in the middle of Houghton sidewalks as I walk to class.

— Dan White, Junior

I want stairs cut into the hill of the art building and/or better lighting in the building.

— Sheri Tuttle, Sophomore

I would like to see people take advantage of the opportunities that we have here and pursue excellence in everything that we do.

— Jeffrey Andersen, Junior

Free tuition!

— Marc LeMaire, Sophomore

"Gifts I Never Asked For:" A Letter from the President

President Mullen expounds on the state of the college, the economy, the budget crisis, and what it all means for Houghton's future.

I am grateful for the invitation from the Star Commentary Editor to write an "end of semester" letter to the student body in the light of recent discussions about budget and the general state of the economy. I am delighted to do that—and would certainly invite ongoing dialogue with any of the Star's readers on these and other issues.

I can well understand student concern at this moment. You have enough to worry about with your own exams, papers and personal lives without having to wonder about the college budget! Any discussion about "tight budgets" and "potential cuts" can be unnerving—and when one is only hearing bits and pieces, it is hard to know what it all means. While there is not space to speak in detail here, I want to set the current discussion in context and also to assure you that there is every reason to believe the college will emerge stronger, not weaker, out of all that is happening. In fact, I want to assert that this moment may actually be one of those "unasked for" and seemingly unwelcome circumstances that turns out, in the long run, to be a gift.

First, let me say that Houghton, like all of higher education and the rest of our country and our world, has certainly been affected by recent downturns in the general economy. Having said that, we have been affected far less than many of our sister institutions in both the public and private sectors. While I do not in any way want to minimize this

situation, I also want to say that the measures we are taking to deal with this year's budget (taking an across-the-board cut in non-compensation operations budgets and other smaller items) are, in part, precautionary, precisely because we don't know what the next few months will bring. We are trying to draw on the strength of the entire community to help us creatively conserve resources, while also continuing to provide a high quality educational program.

Second, much of the current budget discussion is related to a two-to-three-year process of budget reallocation, re-alignment, and long term strategizing that would be happening even if we were not in the present economic environment. We are seeking to adjust the distribution of faculty positions to better accommodate the overall needs of a high quality Christian liberal arts curriculum for our time. (While we will be cutting positions in some areas of the college, we are, at the same time, adding in other disciplines that are in grave need of additional faculty. We are speaking here of approximately 8-10 positions—or about 10% of faculty positions that might migrate from one department to another over the next couple of years.) In no way do I want to minimize the impact of these changes on particular individuals or departments, but I do want to put the quantitative impact in context and also affirm our belief that the overall program of the college can

be strengthened by this work.

At this same time, we are seeking to create a long-term budget model that acknowledges the need for such things as salary benchmarks, increased endowment for student scholarships, and regular repair and replacement of facilities and equipment. We are trying to strengthen Houghton for the long run—not just for the next two-three years. This process involves learning to think together as a college about our priorities—and what we as a college are being asked to do in the world. Of all the good things that need to be done in the world, what are the things that we are called to do, and how do we organize to accomplish those particular tasks well?

We are conducting this process in a very upfront way, and with input from various consultative bodies within the community. Perhaps part of the current angst is a bi-product of our very effort to be open and direct with the community.

I am painfully aware that nothing I say here will compensate for the short-term negative impact of this process on particular people and particular departments within our community. But I also want to affirm that this process can be—if we allow it to be—a move toward strengthening Houghton for the long term. And this is where the "gift" aspect of the present situation comes in. When all is well in the economy—no one wants to sit

around and talk about channeling our priorities as an institution. The task seems too abstract and painful. The current economic picture in the larger culture provides an impetus to such vigorous collective self-examination! In short, we are being goaded into doing what we ought to be doing anyway as faithful stewards of a college that we want to thrive—and not just survive—for the next 125 years!

In this very moment, I am keenly aware of the treasure of this college community. This past week—when we have sought to see more clearly both the pain of this world, (e.g. Global Conflicts Week) and God's gift of hope (Christmas Prism)—has reminded me once again of the gift of this place—a place where we seek to bring together honesty and hope—for our own lives and for the world.

I wish you all a restorative Christmas. I know that some of you are going into difficult circumstances. Let us pray for one another in these coming days—that we will be renewed by the mystery and hope of God's coming to be with us in this world, that we will be agents of joy for those with whom we spend this season, and that we will return with energy to resume together the calling of this community. I look forward to ongoing conversation in the New Year!

In Grace, Peace and Hope,
President Mullen



From the Editors' Desk...

A Christmas Wish List: Hopes for the New Year at Houghton

The Editors write about what this semester has taught them, and what they hope to see in the coming year in our community.

From Kat, Editor-in-Chief

In a time when the global economic crisis is worsening already horrific living conditions in many countries around the world, it may seem trivial to focus on problems at Houghton, and even more trivial to look at issues involving student leadership as something to be taken seriously and talked about. There is very real suffering going on, after all; shouldn't we be focusing on alleviating that, rather than fixating on our own small actions and the small actions of those around us?

A year ago, I would have said yes. I was the Associate Editor of the Star at that point, and I was convinced that the world was too complex and full of too much pain for me to hold a critical opinion; love for me meant accepting faults and bearing burdens, not discussing them. What did my thoughts truly matter, anyway, given the enormous amount of thinking going on throughout the world? It always seemed presumptuous to think that somehow I might say something worthwhile.

The key, though, is that in order to lead or serve, you often have to step away from "I" and do things that you simply aren't comfortable with; you have to sacrifice things, and you have to ask others to sacrifice, as well. I suppose you could respond that we already take ourselves too seriously at Houghton; the stress-levels are unreal, you might say, why would you want to add more by taking on some sort of leadership or service position? I suppose that's a fair point. We may indeed take ourselves too seriously, but we certainly don't take others seriously enough. We are called not to do what is easy, but to do what is right—to not only attend to our own interests, but also the interests of others.

Perhaps you feel called to someday serve God in a country halfway around the world; maybe you envision yourself as a wealthy businessperson in the future. Regardless of what you are looking forward to, remember where you are now: these are the people, this is the place, that you are called to serve through fighting the good fight, and that often means getting hopelessly bogged down in personal, political, and painful struggles. For better or for worse, that is the essence of love in a fallen world, and that is what we profess as our calling. Perhaps we will take on larger struggles later on, but our starting point must be in the small realities of our day-to-day lives.

If we truly believe in the miracle of incarnation, that God—transcendent, metaphysical God—embraced the messy reality of life on earth, saw the remnants of all that was good, and was willing to die for the hope of redemption, then we must be willing to fight the same, seemingly hopeless battle.

From Margaret, Culture Editor

My wish for Houghton this year is that we learn how to better take care of one another.

All of the critical issues developing around the budget cuts has left me feeling quite helpless. It is a feeling I've had not just once in my life. If anyone has ever had a parent lose their job, you know what feeling I am referring to—it's wanting to do something to help, wishing you could provide for them, longing to contribute, hoping to give some—any—kind of support. But because you have no direct control over the situation, because your involvement extends only as far as your relationship with them, you feel as though there is nothing you can do. In many ways, we are in a position similar to this as we conjure up thoughts of the people we know and love being affected in some way by the budget cuts. In such sensitive situations as this, a great deal of damage can be done without a great deal of effort. How we respond as students is critical. I remember one instance when I heard someone say my dad couldn't keep a job. Yes, our response is truly critical—words can be of the utmost damage.

It's in times like this that I'm grateful for the areas in my life over which I do have control. While circumstances are ever changing, I'm constantly in control of my actions, for example. I have the power to choose what words come out of my mouth. I'm able to make decisions based on either selfish interests or what I know will benefit my neighbor. Needless to say, I think we need to choose wisely how we react in the coming months. The powers that be in this situation need our diligent prayer. Those who will be affected do, too. My wish for Houghton this year is that we learn how to better take care of one another. And I want us to live in peace, because the promise of peace is one we so rarely remember is continuous, and is ours.

From Amy, Campus News Editor

It's 4:20 a.m. and this Star staffer is looking at her watch, wondering where her week has gone. Finals are looming and assignments are being piled on and submitted back and more than one student is overwhelmed with the sudden time shortage. This semester, the campus experienced a taste of tight schedule as the classes begin the switch to the four-credit system. This created problems, not only in personal matters for students, but also in other areas of campus life (chapel and class attendance, for example).

When time becomes so crunched, it seems more necessary to try and manage it, which can often lead to cutting previously important things from one's schedule. Suddenly, a homework assignment is a higher priority than chapel, or that extra study time is more important than attending a class. A palpable pressure can be felt on campus as students and professors alike speed-walk along the icy paths. Eating has become a non-priority as the days fill up, leaving one to scrounge for Pop tarts in the wee hours of the morning.

Next semester promises to be even less rational in the arena of time management when looking at the schedule. Classes that meet at a particular time one day may meet at a completely different time later in the week. I struggle to recognize a pattern in my weekly calendar and can only imagine the horrors that will follow when I begin to get busy next semester. Hardly encouraging chapel and class attendance, the schedule will take some getting used to by all on campus. My Christmas wish is this: I'd like to see a more considerate approach to the time obligations of students and faculty alike.

From Micah, Commentary Editor:

I'm tired of religion being a limiting factor of the intellectual life at Houghton. I'd like to see Christian faith here be the foundation for a kind of radical thinking that this college has never seen. I'd like to see students so teleologically anchored that they're not afraid to challenge and question every belief they hold. I want to hear classrooms echoing with fervent discussions on fascism, abortion, evolution, euthanasia, homosexuality, capital punishment, obscenity, polygamy and Taoism. I don't want people resting in the arms of Christ—I want them finding an assurance in their Savior that allows them to fearlessly and vigorously explore the vast expanse of human thought.

Houghton and its students claim an impressive amount of global engagement. But I wonder how picky we're being in choosing which world issues are worthy of our actual, intelligent engagement. We are perfectly willing to explore and challenge ourselves with discussion on dispensationalism, atonement, or predestination. But there is an almost tangible shortening of the intellectual reigns when a patently "non-Christian" topic is introduced. Marx or Sartre or Kinsey in the classroom is all well and good, but isn't it unwise to let their ideas go any deeper into your brain than your repository of possible exam essays?

I believe it is not. I believe that Christ's perfect love should motivate us to want to understand this cracked world and its inhabitants as much as possible, so that we can clearly see where and how to spread the grace of God. I also want to believe that Christ's perfect love can drive out our fears of being led astray, of falling from salvation, or of resurfacing from our intellectual sojourns with the "wrong" set of answers.

Of course I believe in absolute truth, the sovereignty of Scripture, and the teachings of our faith. But what good will those do us if we are afraid or unwilling to plunge into the darkness of the world with the light of truth?

So what do I want to see at Houghton in the future? I want to see an academic community that isn't afraid to stare a fallen world in the face. I want to see students that respect their fellow humans enough to talk with them, not down to them. I want to see a college full of people who are confident of finding sparks of God's redemptive love in even the deepest and darkest passages of human consciousness.



artist: **LAURA** OF THE WEEK: **DAY**

Notes from the artist:

Ever since I was a kid I have always loved magazines. There is something about communicating with art and words that fascinates me. This influence is pretty evident in my work, especially 'how great a debtor', where a combination of text and images to communicate a theme, idea, or message.

Another major influence in my work is color. I live and breathe and thrive off of rich and varied color. 'Lust: from the Seven Deadly Sins' showcases my love of rich, vibrant colors.

Laura is junior Art and Communication double major.



how great a debtor, Digital Manipulation



Lust: From the Seven Deadly Sins, Digital Manipulation