



THE HOUGHTON STAR

Volume 105, Issue 13

The Student Newspaper of Houghton College

January 30, 2009

The Evolution of Java 101

By Kristen Palmer

As a community member who needed some financial help, Aileen McCullum started a coffee cart in 2002 on the first floor of the Chamberlain Center.

"The cart started as a way to make a living," said McCullum. "There wasn't another good coffee place for miles, so the opportunity was there."

Two years later, the shop opened after a group of students, wanting to enhance campus life, went to work. The students were seeking an addition to the campus that they could call their own. The Daily Grind, later known as Java 101, was the perfect solution.

"Finding a space to turn into a coffee shop was initially challenging, but after several ideas were tossed around, they came up with renovating the campus center basement to create the space," said McCullum. "Funding for the renovation came from the SGA student projects fund and from Bob Van Dyk, Houghton Alumnus and Chair of the President's Advisory Board. The students asked me to open up the business in the space, and the rest is history."

Last fall, however, McCullum felt called to a more city-like atmosphere. She left Houghton and moved to New York City, leaving her business behind.

"Java 101 is a small business that needs the owner to be present to function well, so my intention had always been to sell it when I was ready to leave rather than keep it forever and run it from afar," the entrepreneur said.

Greg Bish, Director of Student Programs, and Aaron Sullivan, professor of Biology, took over from there, and as of January 1, became the official owners of Java 101. The duo has been in charge for less than a month but they have already brought about many changes.

"Over the past few years in my role of campus programming I was able to work with Aileen to help create a student-centered atmosphere in the shop," Bish said of his motivation to purchase the shop. "We worked together to provide opportunities for students

• *Java continued on page 2*

Master of Education in Literacy Program Postponed Personnel Shortage and Economic Crisis Cited as Reasons for Delay

By Monica Sandreczki

The launch of the Master's of Education in Literacy Education Program, which was planned for summer 2009, has been postponed due to personnel matters and the current economic crisis.

"There are no secrets here," said Ron Mahurin, Dean of the College and Vice President of Academic Affairs. "As sometimes is the case at any institution, you make good plans, and sometimes factors you never could have controlled or anticipated change. That's happened here and so rather than launching a program at this stage, we're stepping back and...evaluat[ing] what we would need in order to ensure a successful launch."

Cathy Freytag, Associate Professor of Education, explained that all teachers in the state of New York are required to have a master's degree.

Freytag said that the M. Ed. program is intended to serve graduates of Houghton's education program and also teachers, first in the immediate vicinity, and eventually in the broader area. The program, which is designed for those who already have elementary education teaching credentials at the undergraduate level, aims to help teachers help students be better readers and writers.

"This program really meets a need...of teachers in this area," said

Jan Buckwalter, director of Graduate Studies in Education and assistant professor of education. "Oftentimes they will have to travel to Buffalo and Rochester, so, in terms of geography, [Houghton would be] a nice location to have a master's program." As Buckwalter's area of concentration is literacy, she is particularly attuned to this problem of location. She also pointed out that the Houghton education department "desires to be connected with area schools."

According to Buckwalter, one of the programs that was negotiated as part of the M. Ed. program was student placement with AmeriCorps where students would be paid a stipend to serve their volunteer hours at a local school as an assistant language arts coordinator.

In the M. Ed. program, there will be a full-time and a part-time track, taking 15 months and 27 months respectively. Upon completion of the program, participants will earn a Master's of Education in Literacy.

Freytag indicated that the bulk of the work has been done in preparation for the program and now it is just a matter of finding the appropriate time to begin.

According to Mahurin, although this is a master's program, it is in no way an attempt to move Houghton towards university status.

Freytag, Buckwalter, and Mahurin all reiterated that there are no secrets regarding the program's delay. This

is simply not the opportune time to begin it.

Mahurin echoed the recent campus wide e-mail announcement in explaining the decision to postpone the start date. He pointed to recent personnel changes, saying, "The departure last summer of Darlene Bressler, who was intending to come back to the department, and some other developments have led us to step back."

External factors also play a role. Mahurin mentioned the economic crisis as well as wanting to "make sure that a program such as this one could really be offered in a way that would draw the right students to Houghton and would build on the strengths that we have historically had in our undergraduate education program."

In the fall, the education department will do "a much more substantial review" of the program as well as "what it would take administratively in marketing and communications, in student recruitment, and in budget for us to successfully launch a program in the future."

There is currently no estimated start date. According to Buckwalter, it is best not to project a date without having more information. She continues to look forward to what an M. Ed. at Houghton could offer the teaching community, saying, "I'm very hopeful about the program and very excited about it starting."

Student Groups "Get Creative" to Meet Budget Cuts

By Elise Speiser

At the close of the fall 2008 semester, the Houghton College administration announced a campus-wide budget cut of 20 percent for the spring semester. According to Greg Bish, the Student Government Association was asked to cut \$34,000 (roughly 20 percent) from the overall Campus Service Budget, which provides funding for student organizations, activities, and clubs, and is funded by tuition dollars. The Student Government responded by releasing a statement that acknowledges the necessity for such cuts, but "calls upon the administration of Houghton

College to recognize that student funds should not be taken, cut, or utilized without the consent of the students in the future."

SGA President Mike Danylak said that every student group has "made a sacrifice," but he also recognized that the "Big 5," the five groups that use most of the money in the budget, "shouldered the hit." The "Big 5" includes the SGA, the Houghton Star, CAB, the Boulder, and the Lanthorn. Danylak stated that "SGA cut 60 percent of their budget to set an example."

Perhaps the most obvious way the budget cuts will directly affect students is in relation to CAB events. Representative Tirzah Cook said CAB "plans to cut

down on large concerts because big name artists cost quite a bit." Instead, they will focus on the popular yet economically efficient coffeehouses. Students will continue playing during Tuesday night coffeehouses, but CAB also plans on hosting several larger specialty coffeehouses, and possibly moving "them upstairs to take advantage of the couches." Ellen Sortore, one of the CAB coffeehouse organizers, has "scheduled the band Orchard Drive to come on March 6. They are a local band from Rochester with an alternative rock feel to their music."

Lanthorn editor Chloe Ackerman

• *Budget continued on page 6*

Inside
this
Issue...

St. Francis Paper
Presentations

Page 3

From the Editor's Desk
Risky Business: The Danger
of Rules

Page 7

Houghton's Got
Talent Review

Page 5



WOL out there

By Monica Sandreczki

Pope Benedict XVI Revokes Excommunications

Pope Benedict XVI revoked the excommunication status of four bishops who were excommunicated in 1988 under Pope John Paul II. One of the bishops is a self-professed disbeliever in the Holocaust. There is concern among some Jewish communities that this has hampered the Jewish-Catholic dialogue brought out, especially after the Second Vatican Council. "It raises a question mark on the Catholic Church's own commitment to combat anti-Semitism, which Pope John Paul II described as a sin against God and man. If an individual is a Holocaust denier, which is a blatant anti-Semitic position, then how do you accept an individual as a bishop if he is in complete conflict with your official teachings?" said Rabbi David Rosen, the director of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations. All of the bishops, who have been reinstated in the Catholic Church, were members of the Society of St. Pius X, which opposed the Second Vatican Council's recognition of freedom of religion and opening up the dialogue between Catholics and Jews. However, Pope Benedict has said that he wants to put to rest the rift in relationship between Jews and Catholics.

Senators Hear FBI tapes

The Illinois state senate listened to FBI tapes against Gov. Rod Blagojevich. The tapes had been recorded secretly as wiretaps, in hopes of an allegation in this corruption case. Blagojevich is accused of bribery involving the senate seat recently vacated by President Barack Obama. He is quoted as having said that a Senate seat "is a...valuable thing; you don't just give it away for nothing," in the wiretapped conversations. Blagojevich was not present at his impeachment trial, due to his and his attorneys' boycott of it, but, instead, has appeared on various national media programs, such as *Larry King Live* and *Good Morning, America*.

Israel Expels Venezuelans

In response to the severing of ties between the two countries, Israel has ordered the expulsion of Venezuelan diplomats in Israel. In protest of Israel's offensive in the Gaza Strip, Venezuela ordered Israeli ambassadors to leave the country on Jan. 6, and the next week, Venezuelan leader, Hugo Chavez officially severed ties with

Israel. Israel and Venezuela had already been functioning on uneasy terms because of Venezuela's relations with Iran, which supports Hamas financially. However, the Venezuelan foreign minister has denied that Venezuela is anti-Semitic after being accused of having relations with Hamas and Hezbollah.

Anonymous Witness in Lubanga Trial Retracts Statement

An anonymous witness who was testifying against Democratic Republic of the Congo's former warlord and ex-militia leader, Thomas Lubanga, retracted his implicating statement. This witness was the first witness to testify and was hidden behind a screen, so was not seen by the public, but could be seen by Lubanga. He was testifying in the International Criminal Court that he had been recruited by some of Lubanga's "soldiers" on his way home from school, but retracted his statement after a break in the hearing. Child soldiers were supposedly used as Lubanga's bodyguards and to kill members of another ethnic group. Prosecutors are seeking a 30-year sentence for Lubanga.

Thai Police Tend to Immigrants

Thailand has recently changed from allowing the military to handle the issue of incoming Burmese immigrants to granting that position to the police. The military is said to have several cases of beating immigrants as they sail to shore, then sending their bodies back out to sea, leaving hundreds feared dead. These immigrants are fleeing persecution in Burma and denial of citizenship in their own country. Being handled by the police, the immigrants are to have trials and are now more likely to be treated humanely. Many of the immigrants, upon coming to shore, are suffering from serious cases of exhaustion and need medical attention.

House of Representatives Passes Obama's Stimulus Package

After just over a week in office, President Barack Obama's economic stimulus package has been successfully passed through the House of Representatives by a margin of 244 votes to 188. Despite a very public effort to set petty party differences, Obama's plan failed to garner the support of any House Republicans. According to Republicans, the plan costs too much and does not do enough to stabilize the economy. The stimulus plan will now go to the Senate, where Democratic party leaders expect it to pass by mid-February.

Simplicity Initiative's Media Fast Forum Focuses on Media's Effects on Behavior

By Abigail Nelson

On Tuesday night, the Simplicity Initiative hosted a panel discussion focused around this month's theme of Media Awareness. The faculty panel included Ted Murphy, professor of Art; Dave Huth, assistant professor of Visual Communication and Media Arts; and Doug Gaerte, professor of Communication.

The three professors answered a series of questions submitted by students in advance like, is it appropriate for Christians to use media as a means of sharing the Gospel? How has media-oriented communication affected the way people interact face-to-face? Does the media affect the way children view the world and does it have any impact on their mental development? Once the prepared questions had been answered, the forum opened up to spontaneous questions from the audience.

Daniel Minchen, associate professor of Communication and Business, sparked a discussion on whether or not media normalizes certain issues and desensitizes us to violence and promiscuity. While it is impossible to ascertain whether what is being shown in the media

is directly causing the evils we attribute to it, it remains self-evident that there is a correlation between society and the media.

"It's a bit strong to say that it is the only cause [of a shift in societal behavior] though there is a correlation," commented Seth Frndak, adding that it was interesting there were so many views presented.

When participating students were asked how the Media Awareness week had challenged them so far, responses were varied.

"Media is such a popular medium of communication today," said Simplicity Initiative representative Alex Vitale.

"It's so pervasive in our culture. The media awareness challenge gives us time to step away and allows us to see how it affects our

lives," added Resident Director Gabe Jacobsen.

"The forum on Media awareness really challenged me to think about why I don't watch or listen to certain things. I believe that certain things are universally 'bad' to put into your mind, but I need to have a reason other than personal sentiment to defend that belief," observed Ashley Couch.

Murphy finished by stating, "Our best defense is the art of practicing

• *Media continued on page 3*

"Our best defense is the art of practicing criticism...Media is powerful to be sure, but not more than relationships."

They perform. You vote.

Houghton's

got

SERIES PREMIERE JANUARY 24 8-10pm

SERIES FINALE JANUARY 31 8-10pm

Wesley Chapel



Students Present Papers on the "Counter-Cultural" Life of St. Francis

By Clara Sanders

On Tuesday evening, students and faculty gathered on the third floor of the library to hear Daniel Giles, Joanna Vance, and Katarina Kieffer read papers from their fall semester course on "St. Francis and the Franciscans."

Professor Cameron Airhart, who taught the reading seminar last semester, did not want to "let the papers die on [his] desk," he believes that too often academic work is never recognized and shared, and these

three outstanding papers presented very different aspects of St. Francis's appeal. Giles entitled his paper, "The Poverty of Francis," concentrating on how Francis's pursuit of poverty reformed spirituality and western morality. According to Bonaventure, "no one coveted gold as Francis coveted poverty," a counter-cultural desire in the emerging profit-economy of the late Middle Ages. According to Giles, Francis felt that this pursuit of poverty would bring him to his true love Christ.

Christian reactions to the emerging mercantilism included both removal and reform advocacy. Francis's faith, however,

"synthesized personal spirituality and evangelical call." He sought poverty for the sake of joy and felt that poverty was his best way of serving the Church. His humility and single-mindedness appealed to clergy and laity alike, and, Giles affirmed, encourages believers today to follow their callings from God, whatever they may be.

Vance discussed the impact of Franciscan thought on art in her paper "With My Own Bodily Eyes: St. Francis and Artistic Sight." Francis's desire to realistically

depict the Nativity scene in Greccio reflected his desire to bring spirituality outside of the monastery, enabling physical vision to permit spiritual vision. Medieval artists such as G. Pisano, Duccio, and Giotto manifested the new naturalism and more literal

representation linked with Francis's focus on physical creation.

Pisano was one of the first artists to use the new Franciscan vision, emphasizing natural environment, textures, inner space and depth. Duccio's *Maestà* in the Siena Cathedral, begun in 1308, also concentrated on the Mother of Christ, reflecting Francis's devotion to both the Incarnation and Passion of Christ. Giotto, influenced by the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi,

applied the principle of spatial depth to flat frescoes, contrasting figures with scenery and architecture and enlivening Francis's view of humans as expressive and active characters in art.

Kieffer linked individual calling, group identity, and social roles in her paper "Francis' Choice: Finding Self-Awareness within Societal Roles." With the advent of a relative peace and developing commercialism in the late Middle Ages, social ills became more visible and humans began to recognize more choices in daily life, even in religion.

Francis's original name was John; however, when his father returned from a trip to France, he arbitrarily gave his son the name Francis. Although the Church looked down on such "unstable" names, Francis's name was integral to his personal and intense spiritual encounters. Although other saints have followed personal callings, Francis's was unique to him, affirming that God loves the individual, not just the aggregate.

Rejecting a focus on individuality, Francis encouraged a pursuit of authenticity in societal roles and a personal connection to a larger purpose.

After the readings, Professor Carlton Fisher inquired what kind of personal takeaway each student had gotten from the class. All three agreed that the class challenged them to ask themselves how they are living out their calls through choosing to simply act. Vance

emphasized that studying Francis revealed that "following the will of God is not necessarily extrinsic but can be from an intrinsic passion."

"The thing that was most challenging for me was attempting to read the primary texts and understand them the way a 13th century audience would have," said Kieffer about the class. "Especially when you're dealing with the lives of the saints, which are full of all sorts of bizarre, incredibly unscientific occurrences, the temptation is to try to explain them away; but there is so much to be found in instead attempting to have a medieval mindset and examine the writings that way."

Giles has found many ways to integrate the aspects of the fall seminar. "I have started to embrace Franciscan spirituality, which is a whole new way to look at the world around me," he said. "Francis really asks you the question, 'How are you living for God in your own way?' and I've been challenged by that daily. Francis' humility and grace has inspired me to try and think about new things, trusting the Lord to guide me as I follow."

"I received many positive reactions from a variety of people, even the day after, saying how much they enjoyed the evening," said Vance. "I can see this kind of presentation outlet being an excellent way for interdisciplinary conversation to happen on campus, and I would eagerly support such events in the future."

• Media continued from page 2

criticism. Art is meant to disturb. However, conversation salvages most of the damage. Media is powerful to be sure, but not more than relationships."

This month's focus on Media Awareness is intended to give students an opportunity to step back in order to critically evaluate the influence that the media has on our lives and determine whether that effect is positive or a negative as individuals, and as a community. Pulling away from the media allows us to recognize how much time we spend using various forms of media, how we are impacted by it, and how this affects our relationships with others and with God.

In addition to this week's panel discussion with faculty members, and a coffeehouse in February, the students are invited to participate in weekly 'fasts' from various sources of media; this week's focus is cutting back on leisure/non-school related internet usage.

"Hopefully this will lead us into awareness, provoke thought, and give us insight to see the effects of media on our society," concluded Jacobsen.

• Java continued from page 1

to perform, to encourage faculty-student interactions, and maintain the atmosphere that only Java 101 has on campus.... When Aileen completed her graduate degree from the Greatbatch School of Music and started talking about her next phase of life, post-Houghton, I started talking with Aaron Sullivan about what it would be like to take it on in a partnership."

Student manager Kaylan Reynolds likes the direction they are heading. "We have a new label design," said Reynolds. "We bought all new business cards, and Greg designed those. He also designed new menus."

While in charge, McCullum ran the business with an eco-friendly mindset. She made sure the products were organic and the cups were recyclable. Bish and Sullivan are looking to expand on that approach and have already switched coffee brands. The new coffee is entirely organic and fair trade.

"There are really only a few things we have changed and very few other things we plan to change," Bish said. Commenting on the change in coffee brands, he noted that "After lots of research, which I left to the scientist to do, we decided to transition to

Larry's Beans for our coffee beans. They are a small roaster in North Carolina who works very hard, as one of their slogans says, to change the world through coffee."

"The new company they're working with is...just a really cool company," Reynolds said, "Because you can track each bag of

beans back to the co-op of farmers in Ethiopia who grew the beans."

From a marketing standpoint, the new owners are planning to do more with advertising and public relations

for the business, according to Reynolds. New specials may also be offered. However, aside from these changes, said Reynolds, the shop will remain generally the same.

Baristas Bethany Christensen and Matthew Whittemore are okay with that, because they think Java 101 is just fine the way it is.

"With no other place on campus that provides such an environment, Java 101 is already a facilitator of the Houghton community like no other," said Whittemore. "So, I believe they hope to change little

for the time being."

Christensen agreed. "The new owners are trying to keep things as similar as possible and trying to keep the atmosphere the same," she said. "I would make no changes, because it's a great place to work."

McCullum established a friendly environment and has faith in what

"Java 101 is already a facilitator of the Houghton Community like no other."

Bish and Sullivan will do with her "baby." "Greg and Aaron are full of great ideas, and I have full confidence that whatever changes they make to the shop are ones that I would have

made too," she said. "Together, they not only have a passion for coffee, but also a dedication to the students to maintain the original purpose for the shop, which is to enhance student life and encourage community. I'm really excited to see what's in store for the place."

Bish also emphasized the importance of Java 101 in the community. "We really want to continue the commitment to the Houghton College student body."



Ballard's All-American Career Shines in Track & Field, Cross Country

By Margaret Boecker

This past year, Dan Ballard became the only Houghton male athlete to be named NAIA All-American in both track and field and cross country. Called "a rare athlete" by Coach Matt Dougherty, Ballard holds 8 Houghton College school records in track and field.

"Dan has established himself as the top male distance runner in Houghton College history," says head coach Bob Smalley. Having never run cross country before coming to Houghton, Ballard has exceeded everyone's expectations during his four-year career at Houghton.

"Dan has a special quality to him," says Dougherty. "He has the ability to balance intense academic studies... while also participating in numerous campus clubs and honors programs. Add to that the rigors of training and he has exceeded what one would expect."

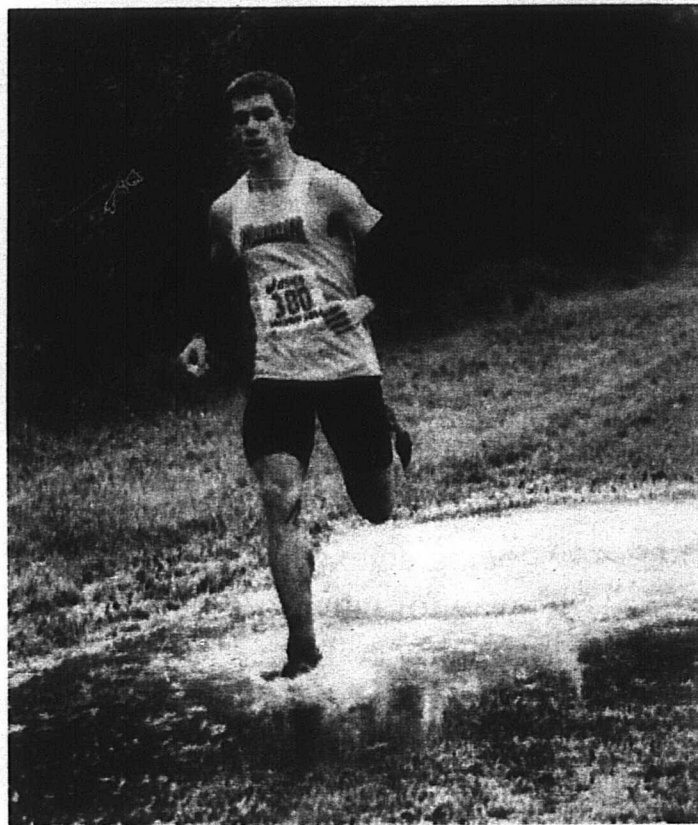
And the success has not come without cost. Depending on the season, Ballard's running mileage ranges from 45-80 miles per week. This mileage is comprised of 30-40 minute morning runs two to five times weekly, practice from 4-6:15pm five days weekly, races on Saturday, and what Ballard calls the occasional "long but relaxed" jog on Sunday. This combined with a strict eating and sleeping schedule is where Ballard's athletic finesse stems from.

The actual root of his success, however, comes from a much deeper place. Teammate Landry Jarvis claims Ballard's running ability does not lie in the "length of his legs or the speed of his stride, but in the size of his heart and the

limitlessness of his drive." Ballard's no-limits frame of mind is apparent when it comes to his numerous awards. On the cross country team he is a three-time qualifier for Nationals, this past year breaking the school record for the 8k (the metric equivalent of the five mile), taking 13th out of 331 with a time of 24:49. On the track and field end, Ballard ran on the American Midwest Conference championship 4x800 Relay team in 2007 and the Distance Medley Relay Team at Nationals in 2008. The 2009 season has just begun, but only one meet in, Ballard has already added to his long list of school records; his time of 8:44:82 broke the 3000 meter run school record set in 1998. Smalley believes that this season "Dan will add more accomplishments to his resume."

Ballard says that being an All-American was not his goal from the outset, but became his goal when "I had teammates and coaches that believed I could do it... their belief in my ability as a runner has allowed me see what I am working toward and have strength to work hard day after day."

The teams Ballard runs for have played an important role in his success. While personal goal-setting is an important aspect in all sports, cross country and especially track and field tend to be individualistic in nature, each team member striving toward a personal best time. Ballard, however, is consistently described as going out of his way to looking out for the team's best interest, according to teammates and coaches. Jarvis commented that "after a race, when all I can think about is my own pain, Dan is always there to ask me



Ballard is esteemed as the top male distance runner to ever race at Houghton.

how I did and congratulate me... he once told me 'it's great to make it to Nationals individually, but it would mean so much more to me if we could get our team there'."

Coupled with high honors as an athlete, Ballard's academic achievements demonstrate a tremendous aptitude to utilize his gifts. A Math and Physics double major, he has received the NAIA Scholar Athlete Award on three occasions. Smalley stated that, in addition to athletics and academics, he also has a "passionate desire to be involved in spiritual action

and development opportunities on campus."

Ballard's teammates say his unbounded drive on the track results from the deep roots he has in his faith. This is displayed through "his attitudes and hard work, building others up, and being a strong leader," according to teammate Steve Scott. Ballard describes his determination as means of "learning how to pursue something passionately, disciplining myself to achieve the prize, and sacrificing those things that would distract me or weigh me down."

"Babette's Feast:" On the Edge of a Particular Thought

By Katherine Thompson

Winner of the 1988 Oscar for Best Foreign Film, "Babette's Feast" was adapted from the Isak Dinesen short story into a film by Danish writer/director Gabriel Axel, who uses this film to communicate a spiritual message that goes beyond the elements of plot and characterization. Set in Jutland, Denmark, the film follows the quiet lives of two sisters, the daughters of the founder-leader of a Christian sectarian group that practices an austere, simple way of life, shaping themselves by their religious convictions. Though neither sister ever married, both had crossed paths with suitors, one sister with a soldier, and the other with an opera singer. Continuing their father's work after his death, the two sisters define their lives by their piety and religious activity.

Years later, the sisters take in

a French refugee, Babette, to be their maid. Babette acclimates to their way of life, and, for 14 years, does her work as a servant, which includes preparing the village's staple diet of split-cod and ale bread. When Babette is notified that she's won the lottery, she asks the sisters if she may make the congregation a true French feast, to which the sisters reluctantly consent. The congregation agrees to keep their minds on higher things than the taste of the food to protect themselves from the sin of indulgence. The elaborate meal elicits a surprisingly strong response from the group, and not just to the food. A contentedness is also spread, healing old quarrels between members of the congregation. It is later revealed that Babette was a famed culinary artist in France, and this meal cost her the entire winnings of the lottery.

Anyone looking to classify "Babette's Feast" as a religious

film would have to go beyond the explicit religious features. The film's overt religious subject matter is the least significant part of the film; it is there to merely emphasize its spiritual implications. The true spirituality rests in the balance that is finally gained by the end of the film. Axel works to show the loss one undergoes by standing on the edges of one particular thought. The extremity of denial practiced by the congregation gives the viewer a sense that something is lacking—not only in their lives, but in their worship. Though the viewer is able to respect the devotion of the sisters, the sense that, as they are "perfecting" themselves to know God, they have lost some aspect of God in the extremity of their devotion cannot be ignored.

The constant demeaning of sensual engagements suggests that God cannot be found in such things. Axel contrasts this particular strain

of Christian thought with the acknowledgement that the Divine can be sought and discovered in the textures of the created world, which is represented in the film by the meal Babette prepares. This contrast gives the viewer the end product of balance, where there is a realization that both restraint and enjoyment can be practiced in the same realm. Just as a feast satiates the appetite of the hungry, the congregation is brought from the fringes, where they had tended to one mere aspect of their spiritual lives, back to a centered spiritual experience that gives them a sense of peace and fulfillment. "Babette's Feast" intentionally leads the viewer to question his or her own perspective on experiencing God and to reexamine where we stand: are we standing on the fringes of one particular thought, or are we striving for a centered understanding of how to experience God?



A Firsthand Review of Houghton's Got Talent, Round One

By Daniel White

In the days leading up to Saturday night's Round 1 of Houghton's Got Talent, one thing preoccupied my mind everywhere I went: the nagging question of whether or not Houghton really did have any talent? Sure I'd seen the occasional wooden-sword fight on a spring afternoon, the acrobatics of folks playing Frisbee on the Quad, or the sound of music majors tirelessly

practicing in the CFA, but with the warm weather far south of here, had all talent gone into hibernation as well? Understandably, I walked into the Wesley Chapel Saturday night with some healthy doubt.

The main level of the Chapel seemed just about filled to capacity as freshmen and seniors alike came out to see if this highly publicized CAB event was all the silhouetted break-dancer on the posters made it out to be. These doubts of mine

did not last long, though. In fact, they were resoundingly walloped right into the frozen depths of Shen Pond. Houghton is apparently brimming with talent; we're a veritable menagerie of beat-boxers, rope-jumpers, song-writers, ventriloquists, and jugglers. As one of the coordinators of the event, Alaina Williams, was quick to point out, "Just walk through the campus center and you are sure to see someone displaying some sort of freakish talent."

Alex Vitale, the host of "Houghton's Got Talent," started the night out by welcoming the crowd and introducing the trio of judges or "talent experts" to the stage: Rex Thunderblade, aka Luke Sanford, your classic rootin' tootin' cowboy one part Roy Rogers and two parts Gene Autry; Dr. Charles Worthington III, known in Houghton as Jesse Woolsey, whose monstrous moustache was almost as big as his highbrow ego; and balancing out her long-winded counterparts, the charming Regina Starwind, also known as Jenny Miller.

No time was wasted as Vitale introduced the opening display of home-state pride as Long Islander Alex Glover did an electric cover of the Sinatra classic "New York, New York." However, as the night progressed the performances were not just limited to musical numbers. Mitch Weaver and Ben Stackhouse both hypnotized the oohing and aahing crowd with their juggling expertise. Weaver performed under black lights with neon tennis balls like some discotheque run by Andre Agassi and Stackhouse balanced on a see-saw contraption while juggling clubs and other random objects.

When asked what he'd be doing to prepare for this Saturday's final show, Stackhouse, who was voted number one of the six performances to make it to Round 2, said, "I'm hopefully going to do some more daring and dangerous things." Unfortunately, the audience for Round 2 will not experience knives, chainsaws nor fire-related juggling, as Safety and Security outright forbade any such feats unless CAB was willing to "take out an 8 million dollar insurance policy on him." What we can expect from

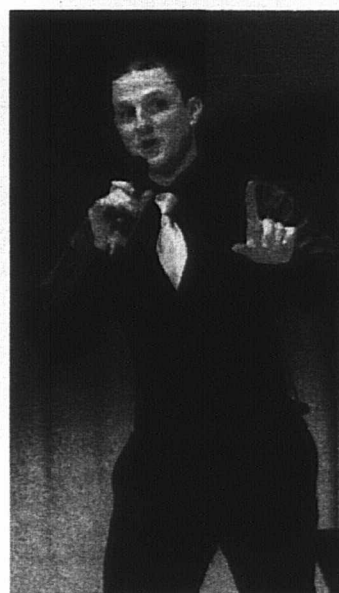


Photo by Mike Wise

Vitale acted as host.

Stackhouse is "another epic song and more tricks!"

The team of Zina Teague and Joanne Jacques were another crowd favorite, bringing some native Brooklyn step-dancing into the quaint hamlet of Houghton, where dancing in general is still a bit of a novelty. As Teague says, "I tried out because...it would be something different to have in the show." Their ridiculously entertaining routine propelled them, too, into the final round of the competition. Out of 15 original qualifying acts only Stackhouse, Joel VanderWeele, Hannah Barney and Jordan Green, Jonny Geeze, Holly Motheral, and Teague and Jacques were voted to proceed.

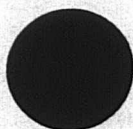
This Saturday's show should include both high energy and high stakes: There is a \$150 prize for the winning performance and \$75 for second place. Our Round 2 contestants are gearing up for tough go of it 8pm Saturday night. Beatboxing Motheral forecasts some "unique and slick performances" while guitar-toting Green is planning on bringing the "energy and excitement" to a new level. Whatever the case may be, we can all rest assured that even though the ice and snow may have crusted over our campus, Houghton is still a hotbed of legit talent. But as my favorite PBS friend Levar Burton always said, don't take my word for it, go see for yourself.



Photos by Mike Wise

15 acts were narrowed down to 6, who proceed to the final round on Saturday.

SPOT.



**February 7.
10:00 PM
Wesley Chapel**

java 101
espresso, coffee, tea, smoothies

Houghton College Campus Center Lower Level
One Willard Ave. Houghton, NY 14744

java101@houghton.edu 585.584.2866
Monday-Friday 7:30 am - 11:00 pm
Saturday 11:00 am - 11:00 pm
Sunday 11:00 am - 8:00 pm

Congratulations to the STAR on a great first semester!

**Bring this coupon into JAVA 101 in the
Campus Center to receive 25¢ off any
one specialty drink or smoothie.**

One coupon per person/drink/purchase valid only on a specialty
drink or smoothie. VALID ONLY ON Friday, January 30, 2009.

Barista: use discount (-) for 25¢ and save coupon for accounting



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As students, we have been following, some more diligently than others, the recent reform of the Community Covenant. We hear about it all the time in e-mails and in chapel, and it seems that every issue of The STAR has an article about it. Last week, The STAR reported that this semester the taskforce will be examining issues like hospitality, the alcohol restriction and global justice. Nearly everyone can agree that hospitality and global justice are good things. In contrast, the alcohol policy may bring up strong feelings on both sides of the issue.

Although some are quick to say, "if you have a problem with signing the covenant, then don't come here," Christians should be at the very least willing to engage with different opinions.

While I was growing up, my father was a raging alcoholic, which contributed to my parents' divorce and later my leaving him. When I left his house, I said, "Call me when you're willing to stop drinking to see me." He never called. It seems that I should think drinking is really bad all the time no matter what.

I don't, but regardless of anything I have to say, there will still be those who think drinking is bad or that drinking is okay in moderation.

I could easily draw bible verses out of context to support either side. However, I think the real issue that needs to be addressed is not whether drinking is okay but whether or not drinking is appropriate for the community we are trying to create at Houghton.

Many students have a drink from time to time against a policy, which forces them to lie or risk punishment. They cannot be full members of the community because they are forced to hide a part of who they are. In addition, the fear of getting caught may prevent those who have a problem from seeking help. This is a problem.

I also recognize that there are plenty of problems that come with alcohol. Because of this, I in no way support unrestricted alcohol use on campus. I also cannot support a restriction of alcohol that causes students to live in fear and secrecy if they want to have a beer with dinner. We say that we want to build community. Is not allowing drinking in certain circumstances in fact tearing down the community? Would there be harm in developing a policy such as sister school Wheaton College that allows students who are of age to drink off campus under the provision that they do not come back to campus drunk?

This is an issue with many facets that must be handled with care and cannot be spelled out in every detail here but I challenge

you to think about why we have the policies we have and to challenge them if you see fit. (Note: by this I mean going through the proper channels, not simply throwing a kegger on the quad claiming Jesus threw the biggest kegger ever, as a religion professor once proclaimed in chapel.)

--Kerry Brogan, Class of 2009

Dear Editor:

In last week's From the Editor's Desk, "Thinly Veiled: Is Our Evangelism Clothed in Love or Condescension?," Katarina Kieffer justly criticizes a recent chapel demonstration which appeared to have been designed with the object of entertaining rather than educating. Toward the end of her discussion, however, she raises some questions about the place of the Bible in salvation: "God does, after all, tell us that he reveals himself in the natural world, and since the Bible that we know now really came into existence sometime after 300 C.E., I don't think that the Bible is essential for salvation. And since I have yet to find a passage in which it claims that for itself, I'll continue believing that God, and God alone, is powerful to save, with or without a book."

I affirm the idea that God, and God alone, is "powerful to save." But even if a red-lettered, leather-covered, gold-edged Bible is not strictly essential for salvation, its

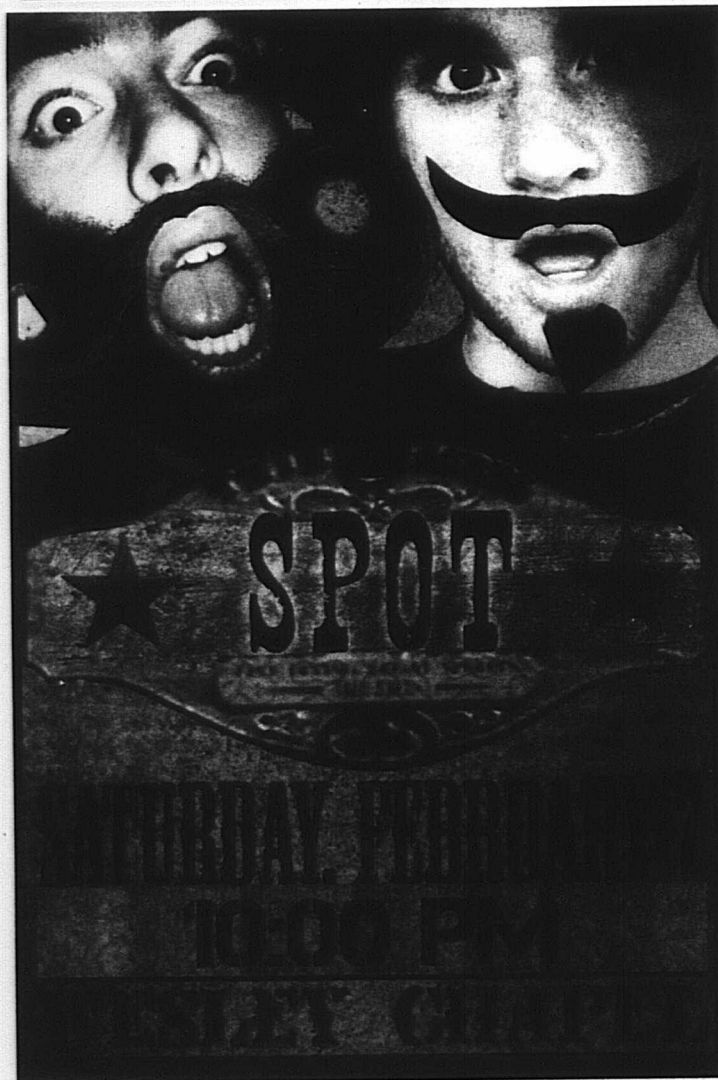
message nearly always is. The gospel accounts of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection communicate the essential truth that God came to earth to extend the ultimate form of grace to a fallen people.

There are cases in which people have come to acknowledge and worship God through the witness of creation alone (the Bible itself speaks of nature's witness, as in Job 12:7-9), but these instances are often exceptional. The general revelation of nature, which—due to humans' unbelievable thick-headedness—was insufficient to convince us of God's existence and goodness, does not replace the special revelation given in the form of the Bible.

The Bible not only reveals Jesus' redemptive work, but also contains the bulk of our knowledge about God's ongoing role in salvation history and provides countless guidelines about how His followers are intended to live.

It is for these reasons that my father distributes Bibles with the Gideons and that my aunt and uncle have spent the last decade translating the Bible into a language the Nakui people of Papua New Guinea can understand. Regardless of the exact date of the Bible's canonization, we must remember it was canonized for a reason.

--Laura Jackson, Class of 2010



• Budget continued from page 1

said their budget was cut "by half, so a significant amount." Conceding that this will affect the publication, she also pointed out, "We can actually do everything, but with less quality." She has observed the positive attitudes of those involved, saying, "I've been seeing an extreme willingness to sacrifice." As a result of this, Ackerman revealed that the theme of the Spring 2009 Lanthorn will be Sacrifice.

Boulder editor Ashley Hackett explained how the yearbook staff is approaching the budget situation, saying, "All of the money that is given to the Boulder is used for purchasing yearbooks. With budget cuts, it will be hard, but we have been brainstorming ways to make this year's yearbook the best it can be no matter how much we have in our account. After being overwhelmed with the surplus of yearbooks from previous years stocked up in our closet, we are re-evaluating how many yearbooks we should order. This will cut back the price we spend on yearbooks this year."

Hackett reiterated that although "the budget cuts affect every organization," they will "in no way...hinder their overall objectives."

The Star has also been affected by

the budget cuts. "Recognizing the significance of this problem, the Star offered more than 20 percent of its budget to help meet the cut," said Editor-in-chief Katarina Kieffer. "Given the amount of money we offered, we shouldn't even be able to print right now. We have, however, some funds left over from years where not a lot of money was invested in developing the paper's infrastructure, so with some creativity, that should help us get by this year."

While the "Big 5" have made the largest sacrifices, smaller groups have not ignored the crisis. Many smaller clubs and organizations "really took it upon themselves to look at their budgets," says SGA Commissioner of Finance, Jonathan Brooks, "and we'd like to express our thanks to them for doing so."

Out of the \$9000 of remaining money allocated to student groups, only about \$4000 was requested, leaving what Danylak calls "a good security cushion," and prompting him to admit, "I'll be surprised if groups don't get what they ask for."





From the Editors' Desk...

Risky Business: What Praxis Taught Me About the Danger of Rules

A look at how European traffic patterns and American playgrounds explain why Protestant evangelicals are afraid of genuine hospitality.

by Joel VanderWeele

Hospitality requires a lot of us. Not only that, but it often leads to awkward, uncomfortable, and even tragic situations. As a result, many people, myself included, practice a kind of watered-down hospitality; this "smile at the stranger" hospitality grants the giver the satisfaction of being kind to strangers without committing them to the inherent risks involved in opening your life to someone who hasn't been vouched for. But without risk, what's the reward?

As Professor Jonathan Case explained in his Praxis session, welcoming the stranger will always yield 'unknowable' results. John Caputo, summarizing Jacques Derrida in his book "What Would Jesus Deconstruct?", puts it this way: "the only way to eliminate the risk built into hospitality is to eliminate hospitality itself by screening the guests so carefully in advance that every trace of welcoming the other has been extinguished... We are always put at risk whenever we welcome someone, just as we are put at risk whenever we love or trust or believe in someone, and the greater the love or hospitality, the greater the risk."

According to Robert Putnam, author of "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community," evangelicals are unwilling to take the risk of hospitality. Putnam divides social connection into two types: bridging and bonding. Bridgers make frequent and long-lasting connections with the wider community while bonders make strong connections within their own group; a strong community has a healthy balance of both. Evangelical Protestants, as it turns out, are some of the most prominent bonders in the U.S. but often fail to extend their social and civic activities outside of their own church community. Bridging, the more risky of the two types of

social connection, is apparently not an evangelical strength.

Why are evangelicals, who are supposedly dedicated to spreading the love of God to others, so bad at connecting with strangers? For the same reason that Americans experience more traffic collisions than Europeans and, oddly enough, that American children are becoming more reckless. We have lost sight of the value of risk.

In London, when a pedestrian wants to cross the street, they go to a "zebra" crossing. This crossing

area has a blinking street lamp and white stripes on the pavement. There aren't any clear rules attached to a "zebra" crossing, and as many Houghton students know, the first couple times you cross a London street,

it's a bit scary. The blinking lamp doesn't change colors to indicate when it's safe to cross, cars are not required to stop (this is not the British equivalent to a stop sign), and as long as you stand on the side of the road, bikes, cars, and buses will continue to zoom on by, ignoring your panicked look. But as soon as you take a single step into the roadway, every vehicle begins to slow down to let you cross.

This system would certainly have tragic results in the U.S., and there's a clear reason why. British roads, and European roads in general, are a pain to maneuver around. Many of them were designed before the onset of cars, and the ones that were designed with cars in mind are unpredictable and have annoying things like roundabouts and speed bumps rather than easy-to-read traffic signals. European roads force drivers to constantly make their own decisions about what is

safe.

American highways, on the other hand, are brilliantly designed to take the decision making process right out of driving. Wide lanes, huge traffic signals, strictly enforced speed limits, roads with no turns for miles at a time... the list goes on. Americans frequently eat, shave, do their makeup, and even read while driving. They do this because the road does not require their focus; all the necessary decisions have been made for them.

But despite having larger cars,

safer roads, and better traffic signals, Americans are 140% more likely to get seriously injured in a car accident than our friends across the pond and driving has become the number

Why are evangelicals so bad at connecting with strangers? We have lost sight of the value of risk.

one cause of death and injury for Americans aged 5-27 (safecarguide.com). We American drivers are taught not to make decisions for ourselves, so it shouldn't surprise us that when we are finally confronted with a situation that requires a swift choice, we make the wrong one.

As a similar trend towards restrictive structures can be seen in the world of playground design. It sounds silly, but playgrounds provide a wealth of knowledge about how we view child development. For example, when I was in first grade, my school's playground had at least three metal climbing structures that were over ten feet tall. I recently discovered that my favorite jungle gyms were deemed too dangerous and had been replaced by a colorful plastic structure made up of a series of low ramps with high railings. The woodchip ground cover had also been replaced by a rubber material to provide a softer landing for falling children.

Child safety is of course extremely important, and I'm not advocating taking 7-year-olds skydiving, but it's important to realize that the playground is more than just a place for kids to play; it is also a vital part of the learning experience. Just as children are taught reading, writing, and arithmetic in the classroom, the playground teaches them to test their limits, manage risk, and make decisions about their own safety. The playgrounds of today deprive children of this process, protecting them from anything that could have negative consequences. Besides the fact that a playground without risk is no fun, it also teaches children that they will be safe from harm, regardless of the decisions they make.

I believe that many evangelical communities treat themselves like American roads and low-lying playgrounds. In an attempt to keep people from potentially harmful situations, restrictions are made. These rules, in turn, lead people to believe that the restricted activity is categorically unsafe, when in truth, most everything fluctuates in an instructive way, like alcohol or chapel attendance. When we let restrictions make our decisions for us, we grow accustomed to predictability and shy away from the risks involved in love, trust, and hospitality.

In order to be consistent with President Shirley Mullen's request to "ask the Big Questions," Houghton ought not to pretend the answers to those questions have already been decided for us. To do this, we must examine our attitude towards rules. By loosening the reigns and accepting some risk, perhaps this evangelical community can learn to put our ideals into action.

Joel is a junior Math and Philosophy double major and serves as Associate Editor.

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**.

2008-2009 STAR Staff

Katarina Kieffer
Editor-in-Chief

Micah Warf
Commentary Editor

Margaret Boecker
Sports and Culture Editor

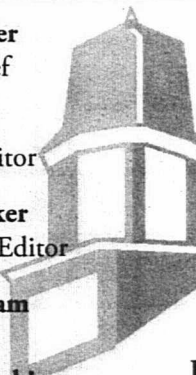
Amy Buckingham
News Editor

Monica Sandreczki
Freshman Intern

Joel VanderWeele
Associate Editor

Clara Giebel
Cassie Gunn
Laura Jackson
Kristen Palmer
Ryan Ledebur
Re-write Staff

Prof. Ben Lipscomb
Advisor





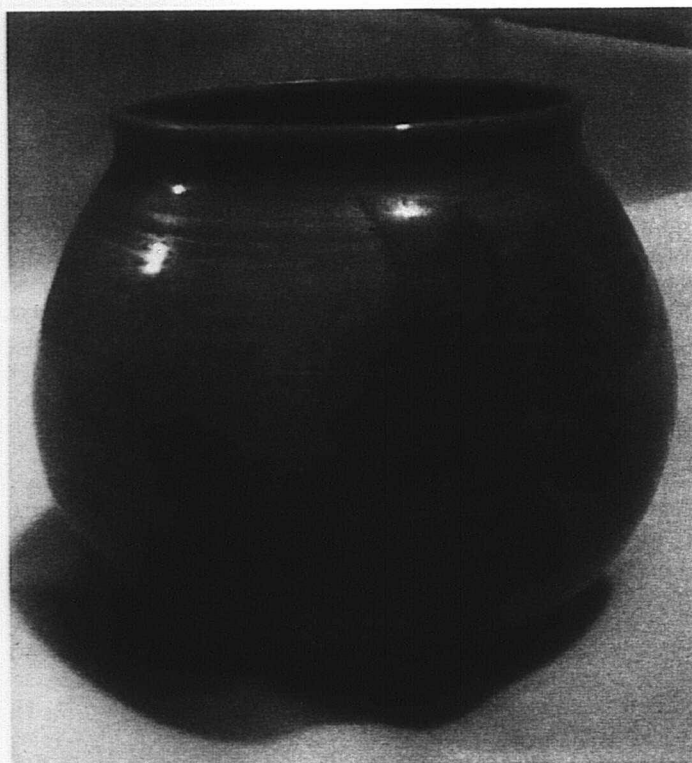
artist: OF THE WEEK:

KIM PISCADLO

Notes about the artist:

My favorite thing to do as a kid was to play with play-doh. I admit I still do sometimes. Alright, maybe all the time. I love the idea of creating something out of nothing; the idea you can a lump of clay into anything you want to. I didn't start getting into ceramics until my freshman year of college. After taking my first ceramics course, I fell in love with it. Now I am creating something new! I found a way to transfer my photography images onto my ceramic pieces. It took me one semester to figure out the best process on how to achieve this. The outcome was amazing. I love the interaction that the photograph has with the ceramic piece. I hope to continue this when I graduate and bring new ideas to the plate.

Kim is a senior Art major with concentrations in Ceramics and Photography.



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

SU DO KU

Submit your
completed
puzzles at the
Star office for the
chance to win a
Sudoku book!

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