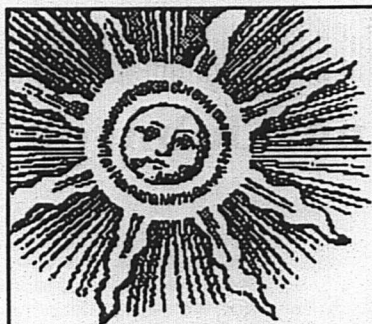




The Houghton Star

Volume 82.18

March 30, 1990

Decision by Numbers

Administrative "Spring Cleaning" Removes Computer Science Major

by Ivan T. Rocha

Adding to the recent controversy generated by the abandonment of plans for a social work major at Houghton, the administration has decided to discontinue the computer science major. This decision of the Academic Cabinet, according to Academic Dean Clarence Bence, comes as the result of a yearly administrative spring cleaning during which all the programs currently offered at Houghton are scrutinized by the Academic Cabinet and are reviewed "in terms of [the] long-range academic and financial well-being of the institution."

This year's "spring cleaning" was different only in that, according to Bence, the Academic Cabinet "met under a particular constraint given to [it] by the Board of Trustees to en-

deavor to find ways of being more efficient with our academic programs." According to Bence, the factors which generated this recommendation include predictions of a serious slump in college enrollment over the next five years, the phenomenal growth of certain programs currently being offered and shrinkage of others, and the addition of four new academic programs over the past four years. On the upside, Bence mentioned that Houghton has managed to maintain stable enrollment over the past few years despite repeated predictions of diminishing numbers of potential students.

The present situation has caused the Academic Cabinet to fear that "we [will] spread ourselves too thin." Being more efficient, then, involves deepening programs that indicate clear potential for growth, and eliminating small, unpopular programs. The art department, for example, is clearly on the rise and in need of at least one new faculty member. The computer science program, however, has been progressively dwindling over the past few years to the point that this year only six prospective freshmen have shown any interest in it.

Bence pointed to several factors which have contributed

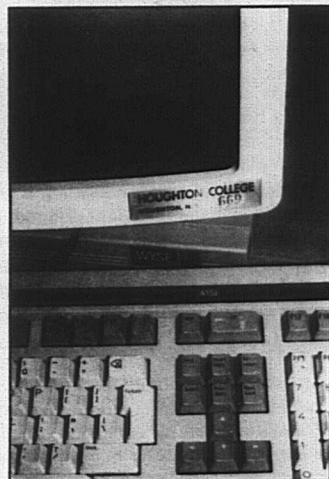
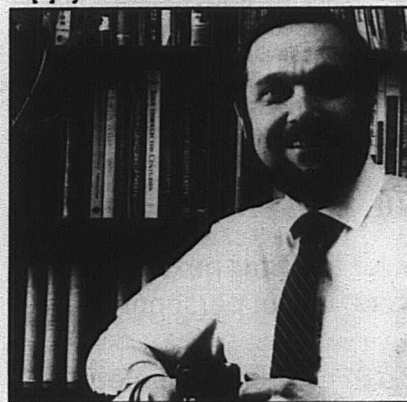


Photo by C. Daniels

to the wane of interest in computer science. "A few years ago," said Bence, "computer science majors were very hot, computers were new, colleges and universities were putting on computer science majors and were flooded with applicants." Recently, however, there has been a shift in the public's attitude towards computers, from an emphasis on designing, building, and programming new machines, to "software application," or, as Bence put it, "the user side." Houghton's program was designed for the technical side of computer science and, for

(continued on page 2)



Academic Dean Clarence Bence (I. Rocha)

An Interview with Prof. Janet Johnson

by Doug Spink and Dave Wheeler

Are you the only computer science professor?

I'm the only full-time professor in computer science. There are a couple of people in physics (Drs. Trexler and Saulley) who help out by teaching a few courses, as does the Director of Data Processing, William Roeske.

When did you become aware of the possibility that the college might drop the major?

Our discussion developed within the science division. We saw that numbers in Computer Science II were low; three people were enrolled. That course is a gateway to the upper-level courses.

As a group, we discussed what would happen if the computer science major was temporarily suspended. We were still discussing when the dean decided individually to make his recommendation to the president. I found out about the dean's recommendation about a week before it was made evident.

Is it true that no computer science course is required by any division?

That's correct, although there are courses such as Computers in Business taught within the different divisions. There's no general education requirement. I'm not talking about programming—not even a computer literacy course is required here. I just don't think that support for it is really strong right now.

I believe that this is unfortunate; 90% of the jobs that people enter after college have something to do with the computer. But I don't think that the present political climate is right for the addition of a general education course. I do believe, however, that the general education requirements will be studied in the fall.

Do other departments (business, etc.) teach their computer-related courses themselves?

Yes. Apparently, two years ago there was a decision the faculty that each discipline would take care of its computing needs. Some divisions (notably psychology) do a good job at

this; some do not.

What short and long-term effects do you believe the decision to drop the major will have on Houghton?

First, I'm pleased to see that the administration is taking the position that our current students will be able to finish their major.

We're trying to reorganize and put together a group of courses that will make up a minor and will appeal to other students. I'm thinking primarily of business students. We need to engage in preliminary discussion and contact

business students. Really, I could contact a lot of different departments, and see if there are needs that we can fill.

In the long term, if we could boost up numbers in the minor, perhaps we can graduate to a major. The major might have a different flavor, more practical, applicable in business. It may be called "information systems" rather than "computer science"; "computer science" is more pure and theoretical while "information systems" is considered more practical.

Decision by Numbers

(continued from page 1)



reasons which Bence claimed not to understand completely, has been steadily declining in enrollment.

The bottom line, according to the Academic Cabinet, is that "the numbers do not justify continuing the computer science major" and that "rather than to keep stretching that very small major out we should hold it as a minor and take some time to think over how we should reshape [it] to better serve the next generation of students." The decision to terminate the major is temporary and by no means irreversible.

When asked what would be done about the present computer science majors, Bence replied that "the present thinking is that those students who came to Houghton thinking there would be a computer science major will be given the

opportunity to graduate with that major." This will entail a diminution in the number of computer science courses being offered each semester to a level compatible with the computer science minor. In addition, the present majors will be provided for "through small core classes, independent studies, and private instruction." In terms of personnel, the future elimination of one teaching position as well as a general redefinition of responsibilities are currently being studied. The six prospectives who had an interest in the computer science major will be notified of its termination in due time and the college will no longer advertise the program. Dr. Fred Shannon indicated that these six students may be somehow worked into Houghton's program.

Would you like to work for the Star next year?
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Contact Ivan Rocha (278) or Dave Wheeler (433 or 210)



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Senate Report

by Stephen Varkler



Tuesday, March 27 marked the final Student Senate meeting chaired by the 1989-90 officers. At this meeting, Senate discussed the health center and the Student Activity Fee.

According to Health Services Committee representative Carolyn Basham, the health center will remain in its current East Hall location for the upcoming year. Nurse practitioner Dee Parker, however, will be leaving the college after this year.

Senate passed a motion stating that if a campus organization goes over its budget for one academic year, it cannot ask for an increase in budget for the next year. Also, after much discussion, Senate made proposals on how the Student Activity Fee should be allocated. According to treasurer Darren Chick, these recommendations will be given to the Financial Affairs Committee, which will then make recommendations to the administration.

Social Work: Cabinet's Decision Explained

by Ivan T. Rocha

When the controversy over the termination of the social work major exploded early last week, Academic Dean Clarence Bence was out of the country and could not be reached to provide the administration's view of the issue. No one else wanted to risk involvement and, as a result, the details of the Academic Cabinet's position remained unknown. This week, Bence proved to be very open and cooperative, and went to great lengths to explain the Academic Cabinet's decision.

The cabinet's decision boils down to the recognition that circumstances have changed considerably since the social work program was given the go-ahead two years ago, and that it is no longer feasible to continue the accreditation process. Houghton's rural location, requirements of the accrediting association, and the fact that most social work courses would not be taught by Houghton faculty (as a result of an agreement with Buffalo State University) are three of the obstacles now seen as insurmountable by the cabinet. The program is, in the cabinet's eyes, impracticable in light of the predictions concerning Houghton's levels of enrollment and growth throughout the next five years. Faulty planning? Bence would like to believe that, on a microcosmic level, it is a situation similar to what is now taking place in Eastern Europe: unforeseen and unforeseeable two years ago.

When asked about Dr. Larry Ortiz's two-year self-study, Bence replied that he would "be the first to acknowledge the amount of work and endeavor that Dr. Ortiz has placed in preparing the documents, the articulation agreements, and the program," but again referred to the "unforeseen obstacles" which contributed to the deliberations of the

Academic Cabinet.

Unlike the present computer science majors, prospective social work students have few options besides transferring to other schools. This, according to Bence, is because Houghton is not accredited to offer a social work major yet, thus there is no program through which to take these students until they graduate. Nevertheless, Bence stated that the administration will provide as much assistance as possible to transferring students, above and beyond what is normally done. Among other things, Houghton is negotiating with Buffalo State as well as other Christian institutions for an easier transfer of credits. Finally, according to Bence, "each case will be treated on an individual basis."

Comparing the process by which both the computer science major and the budding social work program were eliminated to a gardener's pruning a tree, Bence said that unfortunately "there are people who only see the [potential] fruit you are lopping off when you cut a branch." According to Bence, Houghton's future lies in maximizing existing programs as opposed to adding new ones. This said Bence, if handled wisely, should generate some growth within the coming years and a consequent increase in the efficiency of Houghton's programs.

CORRECTION

The photograph of Dr. Ortiz on page 1 of the March 23 Star was not taken by Chris Daniels as the caption indicated. The photographer was actually Ivan Rocha. The layout staff regrets the error.

And in Other News . . .

by John Chong



Lithuania

According to Lithuania's president Vytautas Landsbergis, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev is trying to split Lithuania's government in an effort to halt the republic's independence movement. He believes that Gorbachev is trying to cause dissent right at the top of Lithuanian government.

Gorbachev has kept close contact with Algirdas Brazaukas, the former Lithuanian president whose Communist Party was recently defeated soundly. When Landsbergis took power, he made Brazaukas deputy prime minister. Many experts say that Brazaukas is the only person able to negotiate Lithuania's independence with Gorbachev.

On Monday, Gorbachev assured U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy that he will not use force against Lithuania unless lives are threatened. A spokesman for President Bush, however, said that Gorbachev is using a "general pattern of intimidation" against Lithuania: Gorbachev has sent troops and tanks to reinforce soldiers in various Soviet garrisons in Lithuania, and additional troops have been posted at the nuclear facilities in the small republic. At the moment there is a psychological war between Moscow and Vilnius (capital of Lithuania). It is highly doubtful that Gorbachev will use the military to stop Lithuania's secession and threaten *perestroika* in the Soviet Union, as Gorbachev is using a Soviet method of dealing with impudent satellites: intimidation with tanks and guns.

South Africa

South African police opened fire on 30,000 protesters in the black township of Sebokeng on Monday,

killing at least ten people and wounding more than 350. The crowd was protesting poor living conditions by setting fire to the municipal office. Police used shotgun fire and tear gas to break up the uprising.

Police also used tear gas to break up as many as 20,000 marchers in Sharpsville, where demonstrators stormed a police station. Although no one was injured, "the situation is still volatile," according to

the police.

With the recent rash of white and black vigilante attacks, South African Law and Order Minister Adrian Vlok is warning South Africans to refrain from taking the law into their hands. On Sunday, a group of blacks halted a bus in Welton and stabbed six people to death and set the bus on fire. Last week, a black man was beaten to death by six whites.

Agri-Versions

by Prof. Richard Wing

In recent years, education/writing professor and former dairy farmer Richard Wing has sent several humorous efforts to various agricultural publications. The brief film synopses below are characteristic of his humor. You probably won't find these playing anywhere, and more's the pity. . .

In the Agri-version remake of "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?"

Bubba O'Roby stars in a mystery thriller about a horse show jumper who secretly is a talent spotter for Alpo.

In the Agri-version remake of "Butterflies are Free"

The State Office of Equalization and Taxation finally explains its new personal-property tax rules covering pets.

In the Agri-version remake of "The Miracle Worker"

Young county agent Wendy Wierd, performing credibly in an obvious work of fiction, demonstrates her ability to understand DEC wetlands rules.

In the Agri-version remake of "Raging Bull,"

In a spoof on technology and efficiency, the sole surviving and overtaxed source of next year's calves bellows a mooving appeal to the ACLU.

In the Agri-version remake of "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom"

An agricultural reformer faces great and gothic horrors as he takes on the greedy owners of the local savings and loan association.

In the Agri-version remake of "The King and I"

Governor Fencestraddle's wish comes true as Donald Trump buys Long Island, secedes it from union, and establishes a two-million-acre nuclear waste dump.

In the Agri-version remake of "The Razor's Edge"

R. Wayne Geezer, a concerned farmer from St. Ives, England, perfects a family planning technique for cats.

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Ghosts of Music Controversy Past

compiled by Kirk Nelson

What music should we listen to? This seems to be a continual issue amongst us Christians. Only Christian "pop"? Only orchestral? Only hymns? Last year we had the great Music at Al's Debate—which resulted in yet another survey. The articles below reminded me of that debate and the fact that we are uncomfortable with diversity. We all have different convictions, standards, and struggles, and I suppose our musical tastes are one place where these differences show forth—wouldn't it be "nice" if we were all the same? -K. Nelson

Juke Box Entails Controversy (Houghton Star, 14 November 1946)

Among other innovations in Houghton this year is a juke box in Twin Spruce Inn. Ever since the beginning of the year, this music box has been the object of much discussion, pro and con. Therefore, the question of the week is, "Is a juke box out of place in Houghton College?" The students of Houghton College speak:

- "If the management of Twin Spruce Inn had the privilege of choosing their own music and did so with discretion, I'd be in favor of it. But if they have to accept what is handed to them, I do not like it."
- "I think it lowers the testimony standards of Houghton College."
- "It's good to go down there and relax, and enjoy something besides the three B's."
- "Too much noise and confusion. It's not a matter of principle, but of good taste."
- "A visitor in Houghton said that the students should get together and drive it out of town. I'd like some good classical music there. Music's nice if you have the right kind."
- "I don't like juke boxes—period! I do not believe that Houghton is the place for one."
- "It may be all right at times, but when students turn it on after a revival service, I don't like it."
- "I like a juke box in Houghton if it used rightly. After all, there is a lighter side as well as a serious side to life."



Music Notes, with guest columnist Warren Woolsey (1 February 1940)

One of the current fads among the long-haired musicians of the day is to treat popular music with cool disdain, if not to attack it with bombastic diatribes and thus gain for themselves recognition as standing for the highest and best things in life and, possibly, space in the newspapers. But except among these highbrows, some of them supercilious pedants pretending great affection for the classics they can comprehend no more than one who is colorblind appreciates a beautiful sunset, modern music, with its sometimes subtle syncopations and sometimes not so subtle rhythms, is, perhaps not a Pegasus to lift on wings of song to realms of pure delight, but rather "mighty pleasant listening". As far as I know, none of the leading bands of the day is interested in lifting mankind to a new high level, but rather in entertaining them here in a prosaic workaday world and making life a little easier to live and more nearly enjoyable. When I listen to the Glenn Miller's smooth, suave, sophisticated rhythms or the limpid, bell-clear tone of Tommy Dorsey's *I'm Gettin' Sentimental*, I'm not seeking moral uplifting, but rather mental relaxation. True enough, *Jumping Jive* can scarcely be classified as restful but there is something about its fierce intensity that is soothing, to me at least. This is especially true of Glenn Miller's unsurpassed version of his own *In the Mood*.

It is true that these popular tunes are here today and gone tomorrow. They are not lasting, but everything Beethoven wrote did not breathe the breath of immortality either. We make a mistake in comparing the music of today with that of yesterday without reservation, for only the best of what the masters wrote has survived the ravages of time. I maintain that some of the best that is being written today will live long in the hearts of music lovers. As an example I would submit George Gershwin's *Summertime* from *Porgy and Bess*.

In this penetrating analysis of the way Ludwig von Beethoven reveals his naked soul in the *elan vital* of the music he created, *Beethoven the Man Who Freed Music*, Schaffner says that Beethoven was the one "who, after

he had found his symphonic legs, was to free music from the fashionable set patterns of the rococo world." Beethoven was one of the first proponents of jazz. Many of the currently popular rhythm figures are of his devising.

Wagner was another musical iconoclast. For example, his *Tannhauser* was considered by the musical pedants of his day to be a radical departure from the rules of composition. Today, Beethoven and Wagner are gods of the music world.

It requires no great stretch of imagination to picture *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*, already a classic among followers of the art and science of modern music, in the days ahead as a model for the young aspirants to musical knowledge, some of them veritable Pygmals who daily pray to Aphrodites to bestow the warm breath of immortal life upon their cold, lifeless ivory statues. Although certainly most of the music that is being written today is nothing more nor less than an evanescent flash in the pan, it is by no means inconceivable that its effect will continue to be felt through the ages to come.

While neither *Yodelin' Jive* nor *Minnie Was a Moocher* is likely to live forever in the hearts of music lovers, there is little doubt that the facile grace of Jerome Kern, the refreshing melodic simplicity of George Gershwin, the genuine artistry of Peter DeRose, the haunting loveliness of Hoagy Carmichael refrains, the clever lyrics and adroit phrasing of Cole Porter and the musical genius of myriad others have at least a suggestion of the immortal about them.

An English lecturer in this country was heard to remark that his greatest surprise in America was that "a jitterbug is not an insect, but a human being acting like one." Be that as it may, these devotees of rhythm have a jitterbug jargon all of their own from which I borrow to conclude. Let's get hep; hep to Bach original and in Alec Templeton's *Bach Comes to Town*. Let's get in the groove and give an ear to music of all types from the long-haired variety to jam session jive. Let's not be ickies; let's give! So long, gals.

"There are segments on each end of the spectrum. On the individualist end, there are those who say, 'My individual rights demand that you play anything I want you to.' On the conservative end, there are those who are against rock music in any form, secular or contemporary Christian."
(Dean Danner, 28 October 1988)

Arts

I talked to Gary Baxter about his art and realized once again the value in art and its creator, the passionate artist. I was again, as an artist myself, inspired.

His ceramics are narrative illustrations rich with personal experience and symbolic meaning. By creating a synthesis of these two elements that extends formal artistic concerns, Baxter allows for a freedom in his work and an accessibility for even the casual "art appreciator."

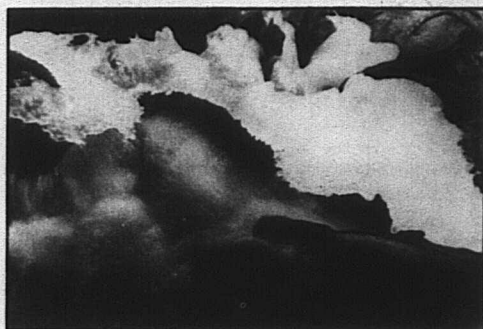
The creative process for some of these pieces has taken nearly 20 years to find fruition in a physical form. Baxter begins the process for his relief sculptures with mental images caused by a particular personal experience. It is only when he is able to connect that image/experience with something of greater significance (such as a political statement or social cause) that he will begin developing it through sketches, and finally finish it. Until his image or idea is able to extend beyond a personal level into the metaphysical, he is unwilling to pursue it.

Evident in both the artist's ceramics and photography is his concern for the environment. He feels that nature and the environment can be represented either positively or negatively. In viewing his ceramic pieces, one is able to sense criticism of the environment and pointed political statements. And yet within his photography, amidst the psychological aspects, one sees nature as beautiful and represented positively. Baxter explores the abstract qualities of nature and the beauty in natural formations in this work.

Baxter considers it vital to connect his art to society and create something relevant to this generation. He wants the meaning of his pieces to extend beyond aesthetics and penetrate lives in a broader way. He refuses to be bound in his expression as an artist simply by visual, design qualities; his art is a communication between the artist and his society. As the painter Ben Shahn wrote, "we, as artists, may exist upon the fringe of . . . reality or we may be an essential part of it. . . ." Certainly Gary Baxter has chosen to be the latter.

Ice Fishing on Silver Lake

an interview with art faculty member Gary Baxter, whose work may be seen 13 March through 11 April in the Wesley Chapel Gallery. By Brangwynne Caves



untitled piece by Gary Baxter

Final Artist Series Concert Features Chanticleer

Chanticleer, a male *a cappella* group described as "America's premiere vocal ensemble," will perform at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, April 6. Chanticleer will appear at Wesley Chapel as the last artist Series Concert.

The only full-time professional *a cappella* ensemble in the United States, Chanticleer is highly acclaimed for its expressive and artistic interpretations of music ranging from medieval to Renaissance to modern, from folk to popular to gospel. Although specializing in early music, the group performs not only solemn Gregorian chants but also barbershop tunes and lighter pieces, including their signature piece which features a

rooster's crowing. Chanticleer has often been compared favorably with Britain's The King's Singers, based on its highly trained, pure, and precise voices.

The ensemble was started in 1978 by Louis Botto in San Francisco and is now directed by singer, conductor, and arranger Joseph Jennings. Composed of eight to twelve singers with a vocal range from countertenor to bass, Chanticleer has toured throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, performing in Salzburg Festival in Austria, the Voices Festival in Holland and in Washington, D.C. and New York City. Frequently featured on Minnesota Public Radio's "St. Paul Sunday Morning" broad-

casts and Garrison Keillor's "A Prairie Home Companion," the vocal ensemble has released four recordings, including *Psallite! A Renaissance Christmas* and *Chanticleer in Concert*. Chanticleer will also perform at an AIDS benefit concert for Project Open Hand in San Francisco this spring.



Chanticleer. Tickets are available through the Houghton music office, 567-9400.

Sports

Intramural B-Ball: Winding Down

by Kevin Fuller



The intramural basketball program has seen some changes this year. In previous seasons, basketball ran from late November until early March. This year, basketball has been scheduled solely as a second-semester sport.

After a slight adjustment, players seemed to be reacting well to the change. "We have both Men's A league and Men's B league, along with the Women's league," said intramural supervisor Brian Beck. "Everything seems to be going just fine."

The Men's A league is designed for those select players who are skilled enough to pass,

dribble, and shoot intelligently and competitively, yet remember that everything is still a game.

1. **Havenwood:** Mike Barker and the boys from way up on the hill rest untouched on top of the A league, with a 6-3 record to back them up.

2. **The Over-The-Hill Gang:** They may feel over the hill, but Jeff Humbert and Company are closing in on Havenwood, right behind them with a 5-4 record.

3. **Jam Session:** The players from Luckey are holding steady in third place with a record of 4-5. They are hoping to pull to .500 if they can win their next match-up.

4. **The Far Side:** Can Peter Roman and his admissions colleagues give Jam Session a run for their money? At 3-4, it looks like they have a good chance.

5. **The Cellar Dwellers:** Unfortunately, Dave Squitteri and the rest of the team are living up to their name, with a record of 3-5.

There is a distinct difference between A league play and that of the Men's B league. The Men's B league consists of those who love to play basketball, but do not care for the A league's intense level of competition. There is one consistency, though: teams in both leagues are ever striving to improve.

1. **The Snipers:** With a record of 8-1, Mike Gustafson's team has dominated the league.

2. **6ll:** 3rd West has proven to be a contender in the league, sticking close behind the Snipers. Mark Wanger has accumulated some very good shooters and a tough defense, which has kept 6ll well in the hunt at 6-2.

2. **Accumulated Garbage:** Also at 6-2, Mike Ralph has put together a tough team that is looking to oust Mike Gustafson and the rest of the Snipers.

3. **Of Age, Not Of Interest:** Watch out! Eric Brown, Dave Perkins, and the rest of the team can apply a press that will torment their opponents and can dominate them on the boards. Natalia King isn't afraid to lay a pick on anyone, either. At 6-3, this team can tighten this race up considerably.

4. **Human Speed bump:** Don't let their name kid you. Chris Bergstrom's team is far from being rotten with a 4-5 record.

5. **The Crusaders:** The defending champions have been in a bit of a tailspin, hurting from the loss of shooter Steve Alderman and others, but Jeff Bitterman's team, at 3-4, still has a good chance to do well in the playoffs.

6. **The Stoics:** Matt Roth's 3-5 team is much better than its record may imply. Consistent shooting and a conventional style of play make them tough if they can pull themselves together. If the Stoics find some consistency during the last few games, watch for them to be the sleeper in the playoffs.

7. **The Rubber Duckies:** At times Bert, Ernie, and the rest of the Sesame Street gang may look better on the court, but Derek Tenant's 2-7 team has a great time. Ask Mike Tullio about his Jordanish moves under the backboard!

8. **SS Sprint:** Shawn Kursing's team pulled out of the cellar on Tuesday, shocking the Rubber Duckies and boosting their record to 1-6.

9. **Who Fouled Out?:** At 0-6, Ted Kenneth will have to come up with some magical managerial techniques if his team will see the playoffs.

The games are winding down in both leagues, and teams are preparing to compete in the upcoming playoffs. Best of luck to all!

Track: First Invitational Displays Growth

by Kevin Fuller

The track season got underway on Saturday, March 24 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, as Monrovia College hosted ten men's teams and nine women's teams at its annual invitational. Houghton's men's team finished in eighth place, while the women placed seventh in the invitational.

Despite the team's average finish, Coach Ken Heck is pleased with the individual improvement which he noticed. "I intentionally enrolled into bigger and more competitive meets for this season," explained Heck. "This gives our runners a chance to compete against tougher competition. I'm looking not so much at the success of the overall team right now as I am the improvement of the individual."

Several Houghton runners performed very well at Monrovia, considering the fact that it was the first invitational of the year, along with the challenge of running in 35-degree weather. Marion Austin had a big day for the women, finishing third in the 3000M with a time of 11:21, and qualifying for the NCCAA nationals by winning the 400 hurdles. Pamela Bigham also qualified

for the nationals in the javelin, and exhibited a strong performance in the high hurdles. Caroline Schiller was strong in the shot and disc events, and Laura Hayes was impressive in the triple jump. For the men, Zach Brian finished strong in the 1500M with a time of 4:31, despite a great deal of strong competition. Phil Ginter placed fourth in the 100M, and Rollie Duttweiler missed qualifying for the nationals in the hurdles by two tenths of a percent, finishing with a time of 61.3 seconds.

The men's team has been set back by a bit of inexperience, for there are only three seniors out of the twenty-one members of the team, but Coach Heck believes that they will continue to improve. "The women's team is a lot stronger person for person," said Heck. "The men have been hurt by some ineligibility problems, but they have done well considering the point in the season."

The track team will travel to Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania next Saturday to participate in their second out of nine invitationals at Susquehanna University.

Opinion

Dear Editor:

I am responding to Barry MacTamaghan's article in the last issue, as it seems symptomatic of many students' theological backgrounds.

Barry maintains that we are not to associate with Christians who "practice" sin (where "practice" implies intentional repetition, habitual action, etc.).

Barry supports his thesis with

direct biblical references which condemn such habitual sinners as the practicing homosexual. It seems to me that proof-texting is very easy. What is more difficult is to admit that the main message of the rest of the Bible directly conflicts with these references; that the Bible and God and religion and truth are **paradoxical**, that they don't make simple sense.

Credo of a Radical

by Mark Shiner



Okay, folks, you've got me pegged. Yeah, I'm the campus deviant, resident atheist, whore-monger, whatever you like. And it's probably good that you've got me thus pegged, because if you didn't, you might have to look my challenges to your comfortable "spirituality" straight on. You may have to consider that a different perspective might be helpful in coming to grips with your own faith. But hey, you're safe. Continue to sit around the dinner table tonight, eager to find ways of shredding my arguments. Don't let me make you think.

I've been pretty hesitant to print any sort of credo thus far, for fear of alienating a lot of people. But at this point, I don't think that's as much of an issue. So I've decided to put my neck on the chopping block and come right out and say just what I believe. Have you got your swords sharpened? OK? Here it is:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,

true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For me and for my salvation he came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary and became human. For my sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

I guess that about covers it. I trust that I haven't offended anyone too deeply. If I have, please forgive me.

Soldiers of Christ: At ease.

Another thing that is difficult for us to admit is the fact that we all practice sin, intentionally and regularly, but also secretly (especially if we believe that we will be expelled if found out). For example, if masturbation is a sin, then at least 75-80% of us cannot be forgiven and must be ostracized. If not, then those of us who regularly lust, who are conceited, or who are greedy are, according to Barry's scripture references, not acceptable to true Christians.

As far as homosexuality is concerned, many of you are convinced this is a sin. If you also remain convicted that practicing homosexuals have no right to be included and accepted as Christians by Christians, let me challenge you on your assumptions. To you, perhaps a homosexual act would be intentional (since you cannot imagine being involved in such an abomination [read: social repulsion]), but for many people, many who know and love Jesus, homosexual expression is normal, caring, and healthy. They've grown up with it. And if it were not for social and religious condemnation, such as expressed in Barry's article, they would never doubt that they are just as loved by God and just as acceptable to the rest of Christians, who are all intentional, unworthy sinners.

The kind of Christianity which requires shunning of practicing homosexuals and the rest of practicing sinners such as myself is not Christian, in my opinion. Rather, it seems centered on an egotistical need for a sense of comparative social and moral superiority, and an utter fear to abandon the smooth and familiar in search of the difficult and elusive truth.

Sincerely,
John Morris

"It is difficult to admit that we all practice sin, intentionally and regularly, and also secretly."

Dear Star:

This letter is written in partial response to John Morris' letter published in this same issue. I am Barry MacTarnaghan's roommate and I have spent a large portion of time discussing with him the matter to which John is responding. I would also like to address this issue now in an attempt to bring greater understanding to all involved. What I am about to say are my thoughts and feelings, gathered after much evaluation, prayer, and honest searching in the Bible. I don't claim to know it all, but I want to express my ideas, knowing that God uses others to bring me to a greater understanding of Him. I even believe that He can use me to further others' understanding.

Christians do sin, but they attempt not to. God and Jesus love sinners. Jesus came to die for sinners, demonstrating the greatness of his love for us (the sinners). Jesus died for us as sinners, but not in order that we should continue to sin, but that we should repent and be empowered by the Holy Spirit to sin no more. I believe these ideas to be central to the Christian faith.

Christians, therefore, are those followers of Christ who are attempting, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God, to live sinless lives. Unfortunately, we (I designate myself as a Christian) often fail—that is, we still sin. As Christians, we should not be satisfied with failure—we strive for perfection. This is not to say that we should beat ourselves to death every time we sin, but that we should ask God for forgiveness and strength to commit this sin no more. This is the Christian that I try to be. I fail miserably in my attempt to live as God wants me to. Each time I fail, though, I ask God to help me not to fail again. It is a slow process, one I don't expect to complete, but He strengthens me with each failure. In no way should any Christian disassociate with another Christian who has this attitude. We should support and encourage one another to overcome

Goodbye Stress?

by Jenna Gieser



While I was reading a magazine that there really wasn't time to read, I came across a very interesting idea. A small column talked about how stress was becoming a thing of the past. Obviously, I was interested, because it would be silly to continue being stressed if, as was being suggested, stress really wasn't what was ailing me. The column went on to say that our problem wasn't stress; it was our lack of coping mechanisms. If we simply learned to cope we would be free from stress once and for all. It was all a matter of semantics to me—a twisting of words to make us all feel better—but we do need to feel better about now so maybe it's not such a bad idea. Anyway, I thought I'd pass the information on.

Last week I came upon the most remarkable "new" coping mechanism—it's called the flu. Having the flu on the worst week of the semester when four exams and a paper were staring me in the face completely changed my perspective on stress. Suddenly coping was the only option left as I poured fluids down my throat, ingested cough drops by the box and clutched my Kleenex box. It's amazing how well life went on without me.

After skipping almost all my classes for four days I came to a startling conclusion! If you spend a whole week in your room, studying between naps and bottles of grapefruit juice, and going out to take an exam now and then, you aren't really any farther behind than you would normally be.

What, I asked myself, was the cause of this phenomenon? The answer has two very simple parts: (1) during the average week stress eats up most of your extra time and energy. If you are sick, there is no extra time or energy for stress to take over. (2) Procrastination takes place normally due to "stress-induced paralysis." If you don't have the stress you have less procrastination, so even with your limited energy when you have the flu you still get more done than when you are hitting your maximum stress capacity.

Stress may not be on its way to obsolescence, but it doesn't have to ruin the rest of your semester. When you just can't take it anymore, try having the flu, or at least pretending you have it. Sometimes a teddy bear and a Kleenex box are all the coping mechanisms we need.

our failures through the grace of God. I wish that everything were this simple. Unfortunately, it isn't. There are people among us who claim to be Christians and yet continue to purposefully do that which they know to be sin. These people do not only condone their own sin, but they rejoice in it! These are the people whom I think Barry is speaking about when he talks of disassociating ourselves from those who practice sin. We, as Christians, cannot accept those in our midst who refuse to repent of their sin. We cannot agree to worship with someone who proposes to call himself a Christian and purposefully live a life of sin which he has no intention of changing.

These people are not lost, however, and we should by no

means stop loving them. Our love must be firm. We should love these people and continually invite them to repent of their sin and be restored to the Christian community. I would suggest that there is a lack of this kind of love in the Christian faith as a whole, and specifically at Houghton College. I am inclined to think that it is this kind of love that Mark Shiner was intending to endorse when he wrote his "Gay Men Swim" article [February 23]. It is a love that I struggle to have every day for my fellow Christians, and I believe that it is the love which God wants us to have for each other. May He grant that we should have this love in an abundance which only He can provide.

Sincerely,
David J. Lennon

Dear Editor:

I have already read John Morris' letter in this issue, and I must respond to it immediately. I will not allow John's article to occupy anyone's mind for an entire week before defending my original letter.

Most of this letter will respond to specific parts of John's letter. First, he states that "'practice' implies intentional repetition, habitual action, etc." I do not see how he can make such a claim. Admittedly, I am the one who said I was using "practice" to refer to intentionally performing sin. However, I *never* would use "practice" to mean habitual action. I recognize that the first definition in my dictionary of "practice" is "to do or perform habitually or customarily." But, it continues the same definition by saying, "make a habit of." The same dictionary defines "habit" as "a constant often *unconscious* inclination to perform an act, acquired through its frequent repetition." Another definition it provides is "an addiction." Both of these definitions imply that there is very little, if any, choice involved.

Maybe we should look at some other definitions of the word "practice." *The American Heritage Dictionary* (the one I've been using) also provides the following defini-

tions for "practice": "to exercise or perform repeatedly in order to acquire of polish a skill" and "to work at." These two definitions imply there is a choice. Thus, I use "practice" to imply intent (as I stated in my first letter). The only thing left to look at is the definition of "intent." It means "purpose" or "having the mind fastened upon some purpose." This refers to something that one hopes to achieve or attain. I hope that clears up John's thinking a little.

My next specific defense is to combat John's claim that I support social and religious condemnation. I do not. Condemnation is properly left up to God. I argued that we should not associate with *Christians* who practice sin. (I emphasize "Christians" for those of you who didn't get it straight the first time) Not associating with someone does not mean condemning him. I am very much against condemnation, but I am not against telling someone that they have sinned. I am also not against disassociating with Christians who practice sin.

Third, I agree with John—we are all unworthy sinners. However, I disagree with him about being intentional sinners. I have already shown the difference between sinning and practicing sin. Yes, we all

have sinned, but not all of us practice sin.

Lastly, John states that "the kind of Christianity which requires shunning of practicing homosexuals and the rest of practicing sinners such as [himself] is not Christian." I hope he doesn't mind my rephrasing his statement in accordance with the definitions I have provided. John seems to say that Christianity is unchristian if it requires the disassociation of people who claim to be followers of Christ but purposely disobey him and rebel against him.

To wrap up the matter, let me make a few brief statements. God knows that we are going to make mistakes. He expects that we won't *want* to make mistakes. He wants us to strive for perfection, even though we'll never get there. He offers his assistance in our quest, but we must be on the quest to receive the assistance.

Respectfully,
Barry S. MacTarnaghan

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Editorial

Explaining Ourselves

by Dave Wheeler

We have logical reasons for most of our actions. Most of us make decisions on the basis of some discernible criteria, rather than by capricious whim (most of us, anyway). We then defend our actions and decisions by reasoned arguments in their support, arguments which serve as explanations, rationalizations.

There are logical reasons for dropping the current computer science major and the proposed social work major. Similarly, there were logical reasons for attempting to do away with field hockey and for denying tenure to Dr. David Meade. For that matter, there are several logical reasons for putting a low-level nuclear waste dump in Allegany

County. Very good arguments exist for all of the above.

As a matter of fact, I can think of logical, effective arguments for many possible actions. For instance, I can refuse to reach out to hurting friends because of my crammed schedule. Jamie Lindsay provides me with another example, as he often gives me well-developed arguments on the folly of getting up in the morning. Most of us are familiar with Hitler's arguments for the elimination of "inferior" races. Etc.

The point is, as you may have guessed, that we can provide a rationalization for anything we do, if we try hard enough. Some of these rationalizations are quite good and justifiable, such as the decision to minimize the computer science program; according to Dr. Shannon, current computer science enrollments across the U.S. number only a third of the figure of five years ago. Some arguments have less validity, because they are flawed (my refusal to reach out to people is based on the flawed assumption that the value of my

hurried activity can ever equal the value of the suffering human being) or vague (the social work program was dropped because, well, things have changed).

There have been some decisions and actions made at Houghton over the past three years that I consider unwise and inconsiderate. There have also been several actions I consider wise and generous, such as the willingness to let the current computer science majors finish their majors here. These latter actions, I believe, stem from a desire to be servants to God and to one another.

Perhaps if all our actions and decisions stemmed from that desire—to attain to servanthood—they would be wiser, and would bear more positive fruit. Hold yourself—and me, and this institution—accountable to this concept. Perhaps then we'll see institutional revival—something that I've never truly seen. Be really neat if the first one I see is here at Houghton, y'know?



Before he thanked his producer, he thanked his creator.



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