



# THE HOUGHTON STAR

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## With no Director, Theatre Program Still in Transition

By Kristen Palmer

With the hiring of nine new staff members at Houghton, including tenure track-faculty in Biology, Business-Economics, Chemistry, Sociology and Intercultural Studies departments, a Director of the Libraries and Information Services, one-year sabbatical replacements in the Math department and Psychology, a one-semester sabbatical replacement in the Anthropology department and an interim in the Spanish department, the only staff missing is a theatre director.

The lack of staffing may explain why the theatre program is practically non-existent on campus this semester. While there continue to be the Shakespeare productions and the musicals run by the Music department, the semiannual productions put on by Professor Bruce Brenneman disappeared with his retirement.

Until his retirement, Brenneman, a member of the English and Communications departments, taught Principles of Writing classes, the Theatre Arts class and directed one play in both the fall and spring semesters.

The English department was able to cover part of his class load with the help of part-time staff members and convinced Brenneman to return in the spring to teach his Theatre Arts class. But when asked to continue to direct the plays, he declined.

"They asked me to come back this year and just do one show, and I said no," Brenneman said. "I didn't retire to come back and do shows again. I think it needs to be someone on the faculty."

This left the department with a dilemma.

"We don't have anyone to direct plays," said Douglas Gaerte, chair of the Communications department. "There is nobody in our faculty who is interested or qualified."

At this point, hiring a new director is not possible. A number of faculty requests were presented to the administration, but priorities had to be taken into consideration.

"They couldn't afford to fill all of the requests," Gaerte said. "They

• Theatre continued on page 3

## Student Government President Vetoes \$8,150 Allocation

By Katarina Kieffer

After a controversial debate that spanned three Student Senate meetings, the decision to give \$8,150 to the Gospel Choir to help fund a concert event was reversed through an unexpected veto by SGA President Peter Savage on Wednesday last week. Because of procedural requirements, Savage revoked the entire Club Event Fund (CEF) allocations for all campus clubs. The allocations were re-passed by the Senate at this week's Tuesday night meeting, but the \$8,150 request was not taken up again.

After the \$8,150 request was approved as part of the CEF allocations three weeks ago, student reaction was widespread and polarized. Student-initiated petitions circulated on both sides, and students e-mailed their student representatives to express either disapproval for the amount of money being spent, or express support for the ambitious student initiative.

As a result of this expression of

student opinion, in their next meeting the senate rescinded the funding allocations, set the previous week, before passing them again relatively unchanged and leaving the \$8,150 allocation to Gospel Choir intact.

In the meeting two weeks ago, Caitlin Cleland, a junior, was the senator who initiated the motion to rescind. As justification, Cleland offered that students in the junior class had "expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision;" she also noted that she felt there was "a conflict of interest," in that the members of senate who seemed most outspoken in support of the funding were members of Gospel Choir, the group that benefited. Other senators, including freshman Megan Toombs, countered that their constituents had expressed strong feelings as well, but in favor of the concert.

Priscilla Ozodo, the President of Gospel Choir, spoke on behalf of her club's request, outlining a bit more of the planning process, and re-emphasizing the value of bringing in a musically diverse

artist. "The whole idea of this thing came from the desire to bring a little more diversity to the musical front of this college...there wasn't much provided for an African-American background." The goal was to get someone that could cross boundaries: Nicole Mullen, according to Ozodo, "meets the need for diversity and is also the type of musician people will enjoy here."

At the most recent Senate meeting, Savage defended his veto. "I would go, I would enjoy it, I think it would be great," Savage said of the concert. He added, however, that he was "uncomfortable as a steward of the campus resources" with allocating that much money to a one-night event that he felt was under-planned.

While the senate had chosen to uphold the allocation of funds after the initial withdrawing, Savage had remained uncertain, and asked for a more concrete budget from the Gospel Choir leadership prior to exercising his power of veto. "Seeing the plan doesn't really change my

• SGA continued on page 2

## Creation Care Task Force Outlines Initiatives

By Laura Jackson

Since its first meeting last spring, the Creation Care Task Force (CCTF), chaired by Professor Paul Young of the Psychology department, has discussed everything from hanging clothes lines to introducing a community composting program. The CCTF, which was formed by the president's staff for a period of one year, sees itself as "encouraging and supporting ideas others have already had" about resource management.

Terms such as "creation care," "environmental awareness" and "Christian stewardship" have become commonplace on the Houghton College campus since the '08-'09 academic year commenced a month ago. Many students have voiced their opinions about the more visible environmentally-friendly practices, which include the appearance of numerous recycling bins and the disappearance of cafeteria trays. The Creation Care Task Force, the catalyst behind these changes, aims to direct the campus's focus toward environmental matters and how Houghton's identity as a Christian institution calls us, in the words of President Shirley Mullen,

to make good stewardship "part of our life together."

Although the CCTF has not set specific numeric targets, its goals for this pilot year are to decrease energy use and implement measures that will offset the energy the college does consume. A range of offsets are being considered at this time, including purchasing wind-generated electricity, reserving new areas of college property for regeneration into forest, financially supporting reservation of land elsewhere, and generating biofuel.

Additionally, Thomas Kettelkamp, professor of Recreation and Physical Education, whose Honduras Mayterm course has been planting trees for years, will lead a tree-planting initiative at Houghton. As over half of Houghton's 1200-plus acre campus is undeveloped or forested land, there are plenty of potential locations for such an undertaking. A demonstration tree-planting project may surface as early as this fall.

The Bicycle Initiative is also a topic under discussion. If the CCTF determines it is an avenue worth pursuing, this program would make communal bikes available for intra-

campus travel. Interested students, faculty, and staff could obtain keys to racks equipped with college-maintained bicycles and ride freely from site to site, re-securing the bike at their destination. This may encourage students who regularly drive from the flats and townhouses to bike back and forth instead. The security office has access to bicycles that have gone unclaimed in past years, so "essentially we have used bikes available," Young said, adding that many of them need tuning up. While similar programs have found success at urban colleges, the CCTF is still in the process of determining the practicality, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of a bike share program at Houghton.

Recycling has been standard practice at Houghton for years, but this program also underwent review. Maintenance representative Andy Cahill spearheaded the effort of introducing new recycling bins in buildings around campus. He arranged for a new company to pick up the recycling so that students, faculty, and staff can toss their waste into one of two bins marked "office paper" and "everything else" rather

• CCTF continued on page 2

Inside  
this  
Issue...

Artist Series:  
The Magic Flute  
Page 4

From the Editor's Desk:  
The Musical Dichotomy  
Page 7

Houghton  
in London Update  
Page 5



## THE WORLD OUT THERE

By Joel VanderWeele

### Election Update

With less than two weeks until election Tuesday, both campaigns are making their final push to convince voters that they are the better candidate. Senator Barack Obama has a clear lead in the polls, but the race is far from over. The third and final debate between Obama and Senator John McCain last week has been widely regarded as the toughest yet. As the presidential hopefuls sat directly across from one another, they were continually encouraged to address each other directly and point out their ideological and policy differences. Because he has been trailing in the polls, McCain needed the night to be a "game changer," and despite turning in his best debate performance to date, most commentators gave the victory to Obama.

### Economic Turmoil

After sweeping changes to the financial system in the United States and much of the western world, stocks spiked last week on hopes that the economic downturn was nearing an end. However, despite some markets making record gains last week, global markets slid this week as poor quarterly forecasts hit the trading floor. Lending rates have improved, but major political leaders like George W. Bush and Nicolas Sarkozy have been consistent in their message that federal bail-outs are not a one-off solution to the global financial crisis. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has also been clear that he thinks this recession will not be over until some of the systemic problems have been corrected.

### India's Moon Launch

India made a huge step in its space program when it launched the unmanned spacecraft Chandrayaan 1 into orbit this week. The robotic probe will compile an atlas of the moon's surface and will analyze the elements and minerals present on it. The key objectives of the mission will be to search for water-ice and Helium 3, a rare isotope that is used for nuclear power production. If successful, India's probe will join the Chinese and Japanese probes that are currently orbiting the moon. They also plan on dropping an Indian flag onto the surface of the moon, fourth to be placed on the surface, after the US, Russia and Japan.

### Thai Prime Minister Guilty

Thailand's ex-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra has been sentenced to two years in prison for violating conflict of interest rules. Shinawatra illegally used his

influence to help his wife purchase prime real estate from the government at a cheap rate. Shinawatra fled to the United Kingdom in August, fearing that he would not get a fair trial due to rising tensions between Shinawatra's supporters and their opponents. The current Prime Minister, Shinawatra's brother-in-law, Somchai Wongsawat, has been politically paralyzed by protestors in Bangkok, demanding the resignation of Wongsawat because of his ties to Shinawatra. After finding the former leader guilty, the Thai Supreme Court encouraged the UK to extradite Shinawatra back to Thailand as quickly as possible.

### Trading Fruit, not Shots

For this first time in 60 years, India and Pakistan have opened a trade route through the disputed territory of Kashmir. The Himalayan region is claimed by both countries and has historically been a source of bitter dispute, but the two nuclear powers put their differences aside and celebrated together as a dozen trucks laden with fruits and spices crossed the line dividing the two countries. The trade was meant to strengthen the 2004 peace agreement between the South Asian neighbors. Despite the symbolic gesture of peace, there is still a strong military presence in Kashmir, especially along the "Line of Control," the strip of land claimed by both India and Pakistan.

### Somali Gunmen Control Pirates

Somali gunmen have rescued a hijacked Indian dhow and its 13 crew members after battling with pirates off the northern coast. Acting as freelance coast guards, the gunmen released the Indian crew and captured 4 of the pirates. Somalia has been without a central government since 1991 and has been plagued by violence for over 20 years. To make up for a lack of formal military presence, heavily armed militias patrol the waters for local authorities. This year alone, there have been 74 pirate attacks, 30 of which were hijackings. Nine of these hijacked ships remain in pirate control.

### World Series

The Tampa Bay Rays are making their first ever World Series appearance after fighting off a surging Boston Red Sox team which won games five and six after going down 3-1 in the first four games. This is the first time the Rays have ever made the playoffs and have never posted more than 70 wins before this year, when they won 97. They will face a powerful Philadelphia Phillies team which beat the Los Angeles Dodgers in five games to advance. The two teams have not met since Spring Training.

### • CCTF continued from page 1

than sorting through paper, glass, plastic, and cardboard products. Although the previous system enabled the campus to recycle over 10,600 cubic feet of cardboard last year, the committee hopes this simplified program will result in even bigger savings.

The Back of the Page Campaign, which CCTF representative Shannon Marriam, a junior, said "will be implemented in the coming months," challenges students to commit to double-siding papers and take other small steps to minimize paper waste. Some faculty have embraced this measure by cutting back on handouts and asking that assignments be submitted electronically;

however, senior Journey Osburn feels that many professors "aren't yet fully committed to cutting down on paper use."

The CCTF is also considering introducing indoor and outdoor clotheslines in yet-to-be-determined locations to cut costs and decrease the considerable amount of energy used to dry laundry.

While not all students have been aware of the measures being implemented by the CCTF, several expressed appreciation for the contributions their classmates have made to the effort. Marriam said seeing people "pulling soda cans out of the trash and putting them into the recycling bins" makes the time she has spent working with the committee worth it.

Erin Heisey, a sophomore, has also been pushed by her peers. "There are people within our community who have been concerned [with environmental awareness] in the past," she said, "and who have been

encouraging to those of us who don't know as much as they do."

Josh Wallace, a sophomore, expressed cautious support of these initiatives. "It seems as though we are pushing this a bit quickly, as there is a lot to consider... including the overall feasibility of many of these policies for an institution our size. We are large enough to make a difference by cutting waste, abstaining from the use of Styrofoam, and recycling everything we can, but far too small to benefit from switching our entire campus to wind/solar power, by

**"Understanding God's heart for the world will move people to take a more active role."**

converting each building on campus to geothermal heating, or by replacing each of the college fleet vehicles with hybrid or electrically powered vehicles."

He added, "While it is important for us to be mindful of the environment and the health of our surroundings, God has also called us to be financial stewards and I feel that focusing on our interaction with the environment at the expense of our institution's—and individual—financial health would be foolish, such as charging 28 dollars per person more to live in the townhouses per semester (an additional 340 dollars per house, per year) to switch to wind power from a source of energy that is even more readily available."

Although the campus is currently saturated with environmental initiatives, SGA Chaplain Susanna Thomforde-Garner, a senior, insisted that any practices the college adopts will only be sustainable over the long term if they stem from a God-centered vision. "Understanding God's heart for the world will move people to take a more active role" in environmentally friendly practices, she said.

### • SGA continued from page 1

thoughts," he told the senate.

Toombs questioned Savage, "If you've been having [these concerns] all along, why didn't you present it to us the first time, or even the second time we discussed it?" Savage responded that he was "excited to hear that a senator was going to bring back this issue to the senate as a constituent issue," but when the allocation was upheld a second time, he felt the need to step in. Questioned by the senate on how students had responded to his veto, he insisted that he had received "mostly positive responses."

After another long discussion that reiterated many of the points of concern previously asserted—the seeming impossibility of a balanced budget for the event, questions of ticket costs, whether a concert was the appropriate place to spend student activity funds, questions of setting precedent—Speaker of the Senate Mike Danylak encouraged the senate to "decide this issue swiftly...

clubs still need their money."

The senate passed the CEF allocations without re-approving the \$8,150 request for Gospel Choir, essentially ending the issue and upholding the Presidential veto of the Gospel Choir funding. Because of the various delays, allocations are now nearly a month later than usual, which means that clubs have yet to receive funding for this semester.

Senator James Schneider, also a member of the Gospel Choir, spoke on behalf of the club's leadership in telling the senate that the club would likely give up on the concert this year. "We are tired of the opposition," Schneider said, "We feel as if there has been little support... it has been knocked down again and again."

The senate formally recommended that Gospel Choir continue to pursue their concert initiative, that they continue to fundraise, saying that if a smaller request were to be presented at a later date, the Senate may reconsider their decision.





## Faculty Profile: An Interview With Professor Justin Niati

By Sandra Stark

Professor Justin Niati, father of three, was forced to flee his homeland of the DRC before being relocated to the United States. He eventually found his way to Houghton College where he is now a beloved French professor. The following is a brief profile of his life.

STAR: Can you tell me a bit about your background?

Niati: I was born in Africa, in the country called the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wanted to be a Catholic Priest so I went to the seminary. But I had to quit because I did not agree with the administration. I found a discrepancy between what the bible said and the way that we were applying it.

So instead I went to school for journalism. I was a professional journalist for eleven years and I also taught journalism at different colleges. It was fun because I got the opportunity to travel and go around the world. As a professional journalist I was a television anchor, and also had my own magazine dealing with orphan issues.

This magazine is what got me into trouble with the government.

The magazine ran a program for orphans, putting on fund raisers and presentations. When I was doing this, some government officials were doing the same thing, but I noticed that in reality they were simply pocketing the money.

So I gave them a warning. I said that if they didn't stop I would publish their names. They did not like this, so I was arrested many times.

The last time was the hardest. They came and arrested me and ransacked my office. African prison is not like here. I was tortured.

With the help of my former students who were working for intelligence I was able to sneak out of the country and go to Nairobi Kenya. My wife and daughter joined me one year later. We became refugees.

But it was also a good thing, because Kenya is where I became a Christian. In fact I went to bible school and started a refugee ministry for French speakers. In

the meantime I got a job teaching journalism at Daystar University until March of 1995 when we were resettled to the United States.

STAR: What was life like when you first arrived in America?

Niati: I went to the University of Iowa with the intention of getting a masters in journalism. But there was confusion over the African grading system and the American grading system, so even though I was a straight A student in Africa, I was not accepted to the journalism program in America.

But across the hall was the department of foreign languages, and I met with one of the professors who actually happened to be from the Congo, and he recognized that I was a good student and understood my grades, and accepted me. So I got my masters degree in foreign languages.

But being a refugee is tough. I was an [important] man over there, you know, and I didn't want to do all

those jobs that refugees do. So I went to teach at Iowa state university for two years. Then I taught at the University of Nebraska, where I did my PhD and got my doctorate. Then a good friend of mine who knew that I was a Christian suggested that I search for jobs on CCCU.org, where I found that Houghton College was looking for a French professor, so I applied and got the job!

STAR: Are you in the process of writing a book?

Niati: Yes. I just published three books, and I'm working on another one. In 2007 I wrote a book on Human rights in 18<sup>th</sup> century French literature and freedom of the press. In 2008 I wrote a book on folktales from the Congo. A translated version is available in the Campus Store. I am now writing a morphological analysis of folktales and how they are structured. In addition to this I am writing a memoir of my life, as an African journalist coming to the United States, and as how an outsider I view American society.

STAR: Do you have any advice for Houghton students?

Niati: Be open to the world! Don't be narrow minded- politically, academically, or otherwise.

**"With the help of my former students who were working in intelligence, I was able to sneak out of the country."**

### • Theatre continued from page 1

were able to hire about half of what was needed. They just couldn't meet them all."

Since the administration was able to cover Brenneman's teaching load, the search for a new director became less of a priority. The administration also replaced teachers that were needed to instruct classes necessary to many students as a part of their majors.

"We had to work with our budget," said Linda Mills Woolsey, associate Academic Dean. "We have had wider institutional priorities, because there were other areas in the college that also needed attention."

With the dissolution of the theatre department, the Shakespeare productions and the Music department's musicals are the only remaining options, both of which are considerably more exclusive.

"The Shakespeare plays focus on a narrow perspective," Brenneman said. "It requires preparation for a certain kind of theatrical expertise. Shakespeare plays attract a certain kind of individual. The music department's musicals have certain requirements, mainly involving music majors. Musical aren't my first love."

Brenneman prefers straight drama

and in his career as theatre director, tried to offer a wide array of drama — to anyone and everyone. Students had to audition, but the offer stood for anyone interested.

"Auditions weren't restricted to Communications and English majors," says Gaerte.

This open opportunity led to great diversity in the cast — from music majors to science majors as well as staff and faculty members.

"I had many different disciplines represented in my cast," Brenneman said. "I had a biology major involved who thanked me over and over for the opportunity. It allowed students to get away from their concentration for a while, and it was a great way to get to know people they wouldn't have known otherwise."

Along with the diversity, Brenneman's theatre program offered lasting benefits.

"Teaching drama builds that self-confidence that people need," Brenneman said. "The program helped people learn to communicate better, use their voices, and was great for people who just have an enjoyment of performing. Theatre is a crucial part of the educational experience."

"A theatre program is important, because it brings people together and teaches them a lot about

working together to make something happen," Woolsey said. "A dramatic ensemble is a temporary team."

Woolsey would know, as she was heavily involved in theatre during her time as a student at Houghton. She played Mary Warren in "The Crucible" and St. Joan in "St. Joan."

"I didn't end up going into theatre," she said. "But I still benefitted from the program."

Not only would the restoration of the theatre program benefit the students, but also the college. According to Brenneman, who has helped with many admissions interviews, theatre is in high demand.

"We have so many incoming students who have come out of high school theatre programs," he said. "Many were so enthusiastic about it in high school that they want to continue it [in college]. It could be a great recruitment tool for Houghton."

Woolsey agreed, stressing the importance of strength in the arts.

"Art is where Christians can have a great impact in the world," she said. "Art has a good mission connection, in areas like worship, teaching and evangelism. God has made us to be creative."

With advantages like these, it is no wonder people are disappointed to

see the theatre program disappear.

"My fear is that once they let something like this go, it will be hard to get back," Brenneman said. Plans to reinstate the theatre program are in the works to keep this from happening.

According to Gaerte, the department would like to hire a person with some academic training who is able to direct plays.

"We will be looking to hire someone who has an MFA with a broad range of skills, including technical skills, and someone who is versatile," Woolsey said. "We want them to be able to challenge students with interesting pieces from a repertoire that includes classical and contemporary theatre. They should challenge the students and challenge the audience."

According to Woolsey, the hiring of a new director is "in the plan," but a timeline has yet to be set.

"It is hard, especially now that our economy is in a state of uncertainty," she said. "However, we want students to know we are aware of this gap."

It sounds as though the administration has not closed the curtain on the theatre program. And in the words of Woolsey, "miracles do happen."

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## Cross Country Team Sets Pace for Upcoming Championships

By Darby Emerson

You have seen them out there running hard, whatever the weather, to improve themselves for their upcoming competitions. Today the cross country team has already run more than most of us will drive throughout the next few days. For them, a typical daily routine consists of morning runs, workouts at practice, proper nutrition, good sleep, icing, hydration and lifting. This intensive training has really paid off this fall for the Houghton cross country team.

This year's team, led by senior Dan Ballard, is setting a new pace for Houghton College cross country. The season opened well with the invitational at Oswego where the men's team won the meet, and the women took third. At their home invitational two weeks later, both teams came away from the meet as champions. Top performers on the women's team were Kaity Fadden, who was the first female Highlander in history to run a 5K in under the 18 minute mark, and two freshman women, Danielle Brenon and Jessica Bramhall, who have both been placing in the first three meets. For the men, top athletes include Dan Ballard, who has won three of the four meets so far, while



Photo by Megan Platt

Landry Jarvis, Jesse McConnell, and Chad Stauring at the Highlander Invitational.

Stephen Hine, Chad Stauring, Jesse McConnell, and Landry Jarvis have all placed in meets.

While these runners have topped the list, the team is deep with many talented runners. Last weekend the team competed in the Yellowjacket Invitational at the University of Rochester. At the meet the men's team took fourth. Dan Ballard won the race in 25:04.75, Stephen Hine took second within the team and 15<sup>th</sup> overall with his mark of 25:53.23, and Chad Stauring came in at 26:26.52, finishing 32<sup>nd</sup> for the

team is willing to work hard to see just how far they can get.

Although they face stiff competition in weeks to come, the cross country team is looking forward to the remainder of their season, determined to finish strong. As Dan Ballard put it, "Our focus right now needs to be on the next workout, the next race, the next good night's sleep. If we are faithful in the small things, we will be able to faithfully honor the Lord in the big things, like the NAIA National Cross Country Championships, if we have the opportunity to do so."

Cross country will compete tomorrow at the RPI Invitational in Saratoga Springs.



Photo by Megan Platt

Kaity Fadden approaches the finish.

8K run. The women's team also did well, placing fifth out of the 16 teams competing. Kaity Fadden led the team with an overall 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the 5K run with a time of 18:30.20, while Jessica Bramhall got 21<sup>st</sup> with a time of 19:08.84 and Danielle Brenon ran 23<sup>rd</sup> with a time of 19:17.92.

This weekend the Highlanders face their final meet before the AMC Championships next weekend, the Highlanders have their sights set high for the rest of the season. Along with strong talent, this year's

## Artist Series Performance Tonight: "The Magic Flute"

By Clara Giebel

Tonight at 8 p.m. in Wesley Chapel Houghton hosts The Mozart Festival production of "The Magic Flute," the first of this year's two full dramatic productions.

In the history of the Artist Series it had been common to include an opera in each year's program. Recently, however, this has become less frequent because so few opera companies continue touring with fully staged productions. This performance is not only fully staged, but is also accompanied by a full pit orchestra. Performed in the traditional German, this opera will include English super-titles projected over the stage.

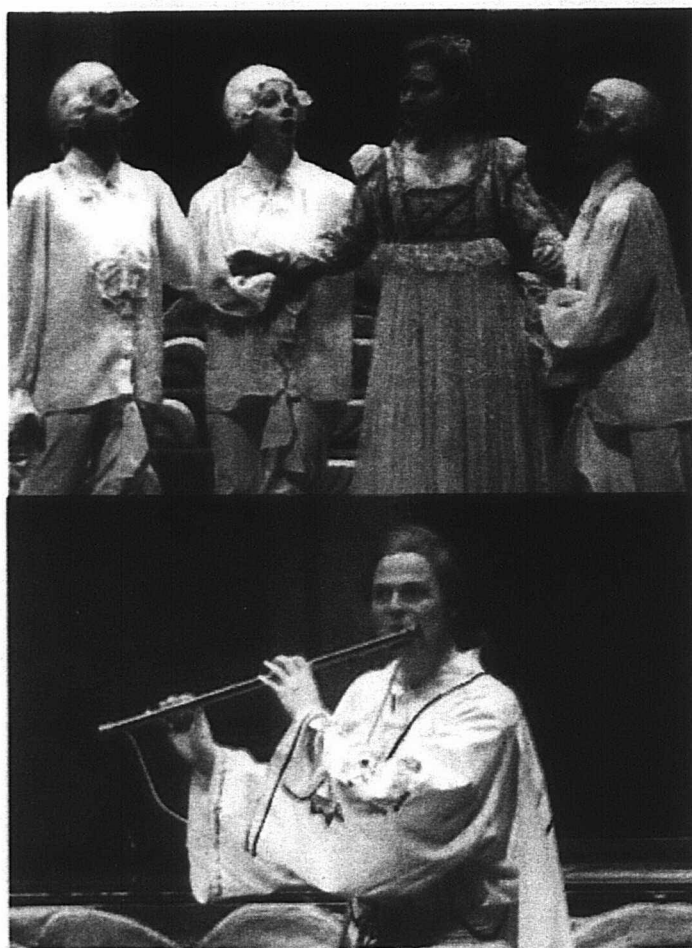
As Mozart's final opera, the story holds folklore, which would become prevalent in subsequent German Romantic opera. A rescue story, the opera follows Prince Tamino as he seeks to deliver the beautiful Pamina. Papageno, Tamino's bird-catching companion joins in on the expedition, and has his own wishes for a Papagena with whom to make a nest. The Queen of the Night strikes terror and grief in the characters, even her own daughter, and some characters are not what they at first seem. Both comic and dramatic, "The Magic Flute" is a

story of pride, foolishness, honesty and love and a wisdom which reigns over it all. The music is not only the vehicle for the story, it is part of the plot itself, as Tamino's magic flute, and Papagena's magic bells stave off the various dangers and trials of the journey.

The Mozart Festival Opera, a company affiliated with Teatro Lirico D'Europa has been touring in recent years, making its U.S. debut in 2003. The company is made up of artists who have toured in major roles both here in the United States, as well as in Europe.

The tradition of performing in German is a way of staying true to the opera's original situation in which Mozart wrote in German, the language of the common people, instead of the more elite Italian. As Singspiel, "The Magic Flute" is both spoken and sung, with all the dialogue written in spoken text, not in sung conversation or "recitative," giving it a more natural feel.

This is the first opera to be performed in the Chapel since the renovations, and in the words of Robert Galloway, professor of Piano and Music History, it looks to be a "no fail show." Tickets are to be picked up at lunch and dinner, free to students, and \$15 for other-



The Mozart Festival Opera will perform tonight at 8pm in Wesley Chapel.





# Houghton in London Update: London in Print

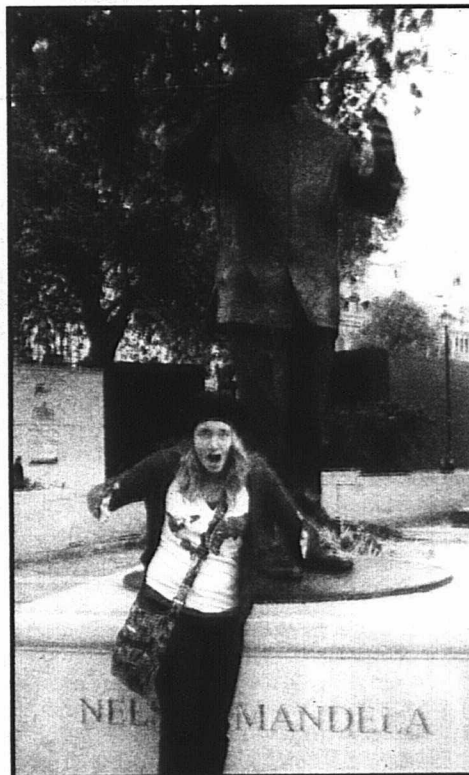
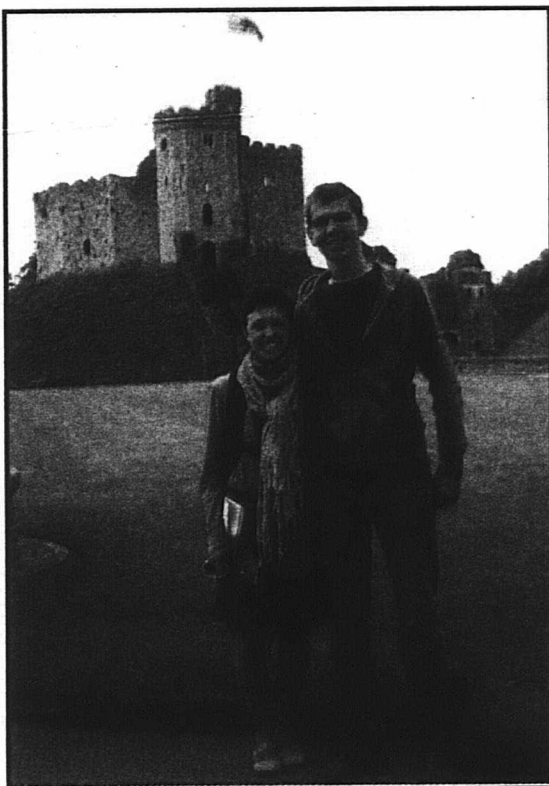
By Joel VanderWeele

"In every headline we are reminded that this is not home for us"—*Where is Home?* by Bloc Party

The lyrics from this song resonate with me as an American living in London, home of some of the most sensationalist journalism on earth. At every tube stop, the adverts for the Evening Standard catch your eye with bold headlines like "Suicide Bomb Backer Runs Ken's Campaign" and "Tube Review: No One is Safe." Although the stories in London tabloids are usually biased and misleading, they do offer an interesting look at the life through a London lens.

The front pages are dedicated to big international and business stories, often revealing the prevailing political sentiment of London. For example, in the last three weeks, in the midst of the global economic collapse that is always a day away, there have been several mentions of Vice Presidential nominee Sarah Palin. These low-brow articles blame the Alaska Governor for everything from stock market woes to current U.S. foreign policy simply because she believes in creationism, and only mention her inexperience as a side note. Here in the UK, it is generally accepted that Darwinian evolution is the only explanation for the development of the world as it is today. Anyone who claims otherwise will likely be forced to open their wallets, take out a £10 note, and apologize to Charles Darwin himself, who adorns the bill opposite Her Royal Highness the Queen.

Flipping past the usual celebrity gossip to the centerfold, you get a taste of London culture. It is said by our own Dr. Airhart that London is home to more languages than any other city in the world. Open to the events page at the center of every tabloid and you will believe it: Diwali celebrations, salsa lessons, feasts for Eid ul-Fitr, advertisements for the new tapas bar, North African culture festivals, Australian speed-dating parties, etc. There are too many ethnic groups in London to keep track of. Just when you think you've narrowed down the language you keep over-hearing down to Spanish or Italian, you hear something closer to Russian. Walk a couple more blocks and you're surrounded by signs written only in Korean. As intolerant as they are about creationism and the fundamentalism that's associated with it, Londoners have created an atmosphere of tolerance when it comes to cultural and ethnic diversity. Members of every ethnicity imaginable live side by side in peace, creating a rich cultural fabric that you'd be hard-pressed



find anywhere else in the world.

Now turn to the back pages, just before the daily sports roundup, to the weather updates. The weather predictions in London are somewhat comedic, as there are only so many ways to say, "cool with a chance of rain." From what I can gather, it will be between 45 and 65 degrees until mid-December, when we make our way back to the cold, clean air of Western New York. On those chillier days, we will wipe our soot-filled noses and say to ourselves, "at least it's not as cold as Houghton."





## Poking Back at Facebook: Tagging a Problematic Picture of Relationships

It's about time for a serious status update on how social networking is affecting friends and friendships in the Houghton Community.

by Shane Marcus

Here at Houghton, I often find myself frustrated, persistently confronting rumors concerning my friends and quite often, myself. Many of them I can laugh off, but occasionally I'll hear one that is particularly jarring, whether about me or a close friend. As time passes and the rumor is repeated, it is simultaneously more frustrating and often more hurtful.

While I notice that particular phenomenon, I also frequently encounter one that I consider to be in the same vein. It goes something like this: "I didn't know we weren't Facebook friends! I had to add you so we could be friends for real!" The somewhat worrying implication – and occasionally directly made statement – is that Facebook controls everything. Or at the very least, that it is an accurate indicator of reality.

This, of course, is a gross falsehood. I can't actually tell you anything about many of the 921 friends that I have on Facebook. It's also likely that I haven't physically met a good chunk of those people. Yet I have another dozen friend requests, and, really, what's the harm?

The ultimate online social networking tool may also be the ultimate destructor of real-life friendships. While this link may seem rather tenuous, consider these ideas:

- You can keep 'involved' with your friend's emotional status via your daily mini-feed.
- You can keep 'involved' with your friend's relationship status via the little red heart next to their names.
- You can vicariously share all your friend's experiences by browsing through their pictures.
- You can meet friends of your friends (and their friends too!) and "hear" all kinds of new stories about the people around you.
- You can let your friends know you've been thinking about them – just by giving them a little 'poke'.

And you can do all of this without having to leave the room – stalking has never been easier!

I don't want to unequivocally say that all these things are bad. I hesitate to take the final step of deleting my Facebook account because I have several friends overseas, and Facebook provides me the easiest way to stay in contact with them. It allows me to quickly see how they are doing, know how I can pray for them, or see what they are up to.

But I don't think most of us here at Houghton use Facebook in that

capacity. We certainly don't speak of it that way when we Facebook-stalk each other and are indignant upon finding out that someone has somehow neglected our digital relationship (despite having one in the flesh)!

What does the important status of Facebook say about the kinds of people we are and the kinds of friendships we are developing? We go to a neutral information source to seek out the personal details of people's lives, because it's easier.

**What does the important status of Facebook say about the kinds of people we are and the kinds of friendships we are developing?**

We find ourselves upset if we haven't gotten a wall post back – in twenty-four hours. We are scandalized when a friend suddenly

has a relationship we didn't know about. We fume when a picture of us is posted, yet doesn't get tagged. The digital aspect of our friendship is just as, or more, important to us than the actual experiences themselves. We can toss the everyday interactions, the intimate conversations, the awkward and painful silences, and still be 'friends' thanks to the wonders of Facebook.

Is it any wonder, then, that we very often find ourselves the subjects of so many insignificant rumors? We value the tiny details that are

thoughtlessly expressed online more than the intricate tapestry of sustained interaction and intimate knowledge of each others personalities, characters and lives. And at that point, we blow so many of those details out of proportion, creating rumors, scandals and lies about things and people that we shouldn't even have second thoughts about.

We care more about the sidebar telling us that we have lots of friends than about knowing who our real friends are. We care more about what kind of things Facebook tells us are important than the things that our friends regard as central to their lives (why doesn't Facebook have an "I'm struggling with" application?). And at the end of our four years here we'll walk away with just a handful of people vital to our lives alongside many hundreds of 'friends'. I just don't think that it's worth it!

So take a few minutes and re-examine the way that you talk about Facebook, the way you share that piece of gossip about so and so, or the way you talk about a person, instead of with them. And if something about a friend catches your attention on Facebook, just ask them about it. That way, you can do everyone a favor and keep one less rumor out of the mill!

*Shane is a senior Religion and Sociology major at Houghton College.*

## A New Testament Perspective on an Old Testament Commandment

As Christians under grace, it is difficult to know where the many areas of the law fit into our modern lives, and the Sabbath is no exception.

by Brian Casey

Houghton's emphasis on Sabbath, along with the recent "Simplicity Initiative" treatment of the concept, leads to reflection. Though in my childhood I was required to treat Sunday differently in some aspects, it was not explicitly a set of "Sabbath" concepts that was enjoined on me during formative years. Still, later in life, I found myself almost bending over backwards to make Sunday a more "normal" day, because every day is God's day for the Christian, of course.

Sabbath is, after all, a Jewish thing. Today, ethnic Jews who believe in Jesus as Messiah may choose to keep the Sabbath in a Jewish manner; as far as I can tell, doing so does not violate any Christian principle. But Sabbath is Jewish in its origin, and that origin had me, an Irish-English-Welsh-Scottish-German-Swiss mutt, ignoring the idea for too many years.

I even confess to having glossed over the Sabbath principle, to an extent, during my first year at Houghton. I suppose that, had I honored the principle more, I would have been more blessed. This year, I decided on a more-or-less specific guideline or two for honoring Sabbath. The time frame is somewhat fluid, but it starts on Saturday evening. And I do feel good because of the commitment,

and blessed so far.

I would like to hold out this view: for the Christian, Sabbath is a principle, not a law. (Though the New Covenant scriptures speak of the "Law of Christ," this Law appears to be more of a concept than a tangible, or even literal, law.) I know of no New Covenant scripture that labels Sunday the "Christian Sabbath," as though the old law were to have been transferred to a new day of the week in all its specifics.

Other Old Covenant laws are made obsolete in the New Covenant, but this is not to say that every old law is without meaning or purpose now. Rather, it is that there are now better, deeper, more living-and-breathing principles that eclipse the old ones. For instance, try these:

Clearly, we should not kill. Jesus both fulfilled and trumped that law in His teaching and in His living.

Clearly, we should not serve, or sacrifice to, "gods" other than YHWH. Jesus' apostle Paul articulated the principle of living every moment of life as—and here we might imagine him using the now-familiar two-finger quote mark gesture—"temple service" (the notion implied by the Koiné Greek *logikon latreian*) or even as *proskuneo* "worship," which is a different, but related, concept.

And many other Old Covenant laws are fulfilled and given new life in the New. I would suggest that

it is incumbent on us not merely to adhere to Jewish laws, but to do better than they did. After all, they were but pedagogues—literally, "child-guides" or "schoolmasters" to lead us to the Christ (Galatians 2). In the case of Sabbath, it is not enough to submit to seventh-day (or first-day) rest; the purposes of the original Sabbath, to which we were being led, must be perpetually explored. Under the New Covenant, the principle is more important; the literal original is not the end, but the means to a transformed end.

Even under the Old Covenant, as Jesus pointed out in an interaction with the Pharisees, there were allowances made for those whose life-rhythms didn't readily mesh with the weekly Sabbath norm. Surely these allowances may be carried through to, and even expanded in, our time. Specifically, in our setting at Houghton College, and given our academic requirements and schedules, I want to find ways to honor the God-ordained notion of Sabbath, fostering spiritual health and growth, but not slavishly holding to Sabbath patterns.

Should we rebuke those who worked so tirelessly on Saturdays and Sundays to make the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of the College a celebratory reality? Should we hire only non-Christians to work in food service and Safety and Security on Sundays? And should students be banned

from computers and classrooms and practice rooms and study groups on Sundays? Surely there is more to it than this.

It's more important that I answer Sabbath questions for myself than for others. And what does all this mean for me? Well, my life-rhythms are different from those of the ancient Hebrews. They are not solely weekly rhythms! I could make a case for their primarily being yearly, in fact; there are also aspects of my life that are more daily than weekly. Seasonal and "semesterly" changes occur for me, as well. Perhaps, based on these other rhythms, I could build in life-silences and withdrawals from the normal "grind." Yes, my primary Christian assembly on Sundays gives the week a rhythm, too, but the weekly one is not the only one.

It is for freedom that the Christ set us free from the Old Law. For me, there must be some freedom to live my life on an academic calendar without fear of having trampled the (Jewish) Law. Still, I plan to continue to find ways to rest, rejuvenate, recreate, and even "take breaks" in ways that honor the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12).

Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath, guide my heart, head, laptop fingers, and feet as I try to find ways to live as you desire.

*Brian Casey is an assistant professor of Conducting and Horn.*





## Letter to the Editor

Recently the topic of diversity has become a much talked about issue on this campus, and I figured as a minority student, I should share my views on the matter.

Before entering Houghton College in 2005, I was well informed that it was a predominately Caucasian community. For my whole life I had grown up surrounded by black family and friends and members of the Caucasian race were minorities to me. However, feeling a bit apprehensive, I decided to put my best foot forward and have a good attitude towards this new experience.

As anticipated, I was one of about four other minority students who entered Houghton College in the Fall 2005. Within the first month of being a student here, my apprehension had disappeared. People I met made me feel comfortable in what was to be my new "home" for the next four years. Sure, they were some that had clearly never really interacted with a "black island girl" before so during this first month (and even to this day) I had to answer many ridiculous questions about my home, hair, culture and accent. But I did not mind this: it was part of the learning process.

Three years later, and many friendships along the way, I have seen a significant change in Houghton's attitude towards diversity. The number of freshmen minority students entering the college this fall alone was at its highest and even doubled the total number of minority students on campus. I believe the college has been going above and beyond its duty to attract more and more minority students. As a black student, I believe this to be a good task being undertaken by the college.

In my three plus years attending Houghton College, I have never encountered the narrow-minded way of thinking towards diversity that has been alluded to by other minority students. In fact, the college community has been very welcoming to me as not only a black student but also an international. Not once have I felt ostracized or prejudiced against because of my race or nationality. Everyone is always ready to listen, share and embrace you for your uniqueness. This makes the college a nice welcoming place to be even though it is not as diverse as some may think acceptable.

But what really is diversity? How do we measure Houghton's level of diversity? Is it really only by the number of minority students it is able to enroll each year? Or is its involvement in programs that promote diversity and equality among other races, denominations and cultures? If the latter is indeed a definition that explains diversity, Houghton College is a diverse college. With study abroad programs in many parts of Africa,

From the Editors' Desk...

## Turning Up the Volume on Truly Diverse Music

Houghton's visiting artist line-up is falling further and further behind today's standards of good taste

by Amy Buckingham

Along with family outings and much anticipated rejuvenation, this year's October Break commenced with the unexpected campus wide e-mail sent out by SGA president, Peter Savage concerning the funding allocations requested by and, at first, granted to the Gospel Choir. Pinpointed as the major concern over the recent funding given to the Gospel Choir to host a Nicole C. Mullen Concert, Savage addressed the irresponsibility in allocating such a large amount of money for just one event, given the overwhelming lack of interest and enthusiasm.

While there are many important issues raised by these goings-on that needed to be considered, most worrisome for me is the topic of musical taste. In my remaining years as a Houghton student, will I continue to be subjected to generic Christian pop? Looking over the musical acts brought to Houghton in the past five years, there are few that stand out to me as works of musical merit, exceptions being artists like Denison Witmer and Scratch Track.

As much as I may appreciate these artists, however, the majority of acts such as FFH, John Waller and now Nicole C. Mullen leave me feeling like I've had too much cotton candy and spent far too much time listening to my local Christian radio station. While I realize that these artists are encouraging to many fans, hence the musical genre "Inspirational", I refuse to believe that other, perhaps more talented artists, both secular and religious, are not at least equally so, and potentially more, encouraging.

I was once asked, "why don't you listen to Christian music?" While my first answer was something along the lines of, "because it all sounds the same," this question started me thinking more critically about my musical choices. Yes, much

Christian music sounds the same, but that is an unfair generalization, as there are definite exceptions – Michael W. Smith, for example. Turning on my radio, I began to listen to the lyrics of the popular Christian songs being played. They are encouraging and uplifting and really proclaiming the glory of God. These songs are a great form of worship. But one of the problems I find with such music is not in the lyrical content or the intentions behind the songs, but rather the way in which they portray Christianity. Paraphrased, many songs have the same basic concept, one something like this, "My life is miserable right now, but You are so great that I know everything will work out perfectly."

I think this is misleading, especially to new or potential believers. Christianity is not easy, and having God on your side does not mean that everything will sort itself and you'll be happy. I realize that not all songs are saying this and that if they are, that may not be the intention, but I also understand that the ultimate interpretation is up to the listener.

I greatly appreciate truth in music. Lyrics like "we lift our hands and pray over your body/ but nothing ever happens" by Sufjan Steven in his song Casimir Pulaski Day are very obviously not hiding anything. They recognize the hardships that come with life, that affect Christians and non-Christians alike. I think lyrics like this help in understanding that although we are believers, we are not given situational preference over non-believers. Bad things happen to everyone. All we can control is how we react to them, either with or without God's help and guidance.

While Houghton's musical track record stands in dismal insipidity, I am not without hope. We have more options than Nicole C. Mullen and FFH. Prime examples of what an interesting and diverse musical calendar could look like at a place like Houghton are two fellow members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Messiah College in Pennsylvania and Calvin College in Michigan. Stemming from their popular Festival of Faith and Writing, Calvin started the Festival of Faith and Music in 2003 in an attempt to intersect Christian faith and popular music. Some artists featured at this festival

were Anathallo, Neko Case, Half-Handed Cloud, Over the Rhine, Denison Witmer, and Sufjan Stevens, a repeating performer.

Along with Calvin, Messiah brings in well-known Christian AND secular artists, organized by the Student Activities Board. In past years,

musical acts like Wilco, Feist, Bob Dylan, Nickel Creek, The Decemberists, Iron & Wine, and Mates of State have played at Messiah, as well as Jeff Deyo and Matt Wertz. In fact, the line-up for this year has already included Ingrid Michaelson, Brooke Waggoner, and is anticipating performances by Conor Oberst and Ben Kweller. With such promising examples of fine musical taste at Christian schools, I can only hope that Houghton is not far behind, and with this small step in the direction opposite Nicole C. Mullen, this hope is quickly being realized. If the Arcade Fire came to Houghton, I would be at that show!

Amy studies Humanities and Art at Houghton, and serves as News Editor.

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the United Kingdom and many other missions' opportunities worldwide. Houghton's students are constantly exposed to experiences that allow them to become involved in a diverse community as a huge part of their education experience.

So is diversity such a big issue that we should be granting ridiculous amounts of money for one concert? Or should we be better stewards of our money? I strongly believe that we should not compromise careless budgeting with the excuse of becoming more diverse. We are already a diverse college, all we need to do is look around us and appreciate it for what it is.

-Shonnelle Trotman, class of 2009

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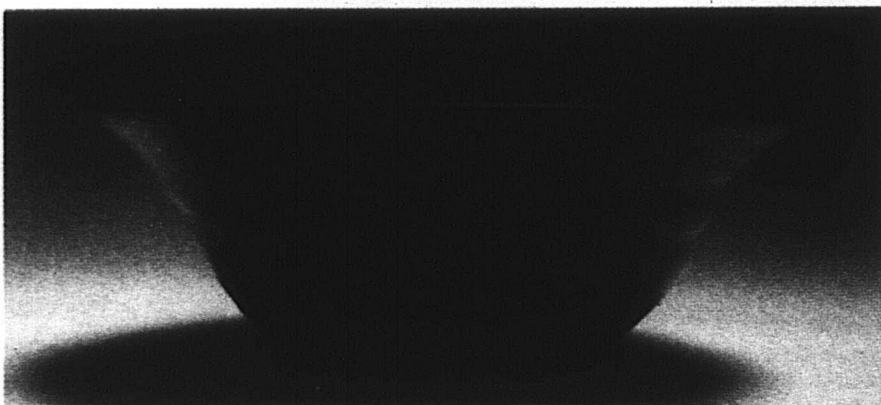
# artist: OF THE WEEK:

# MARC LEMAIRE

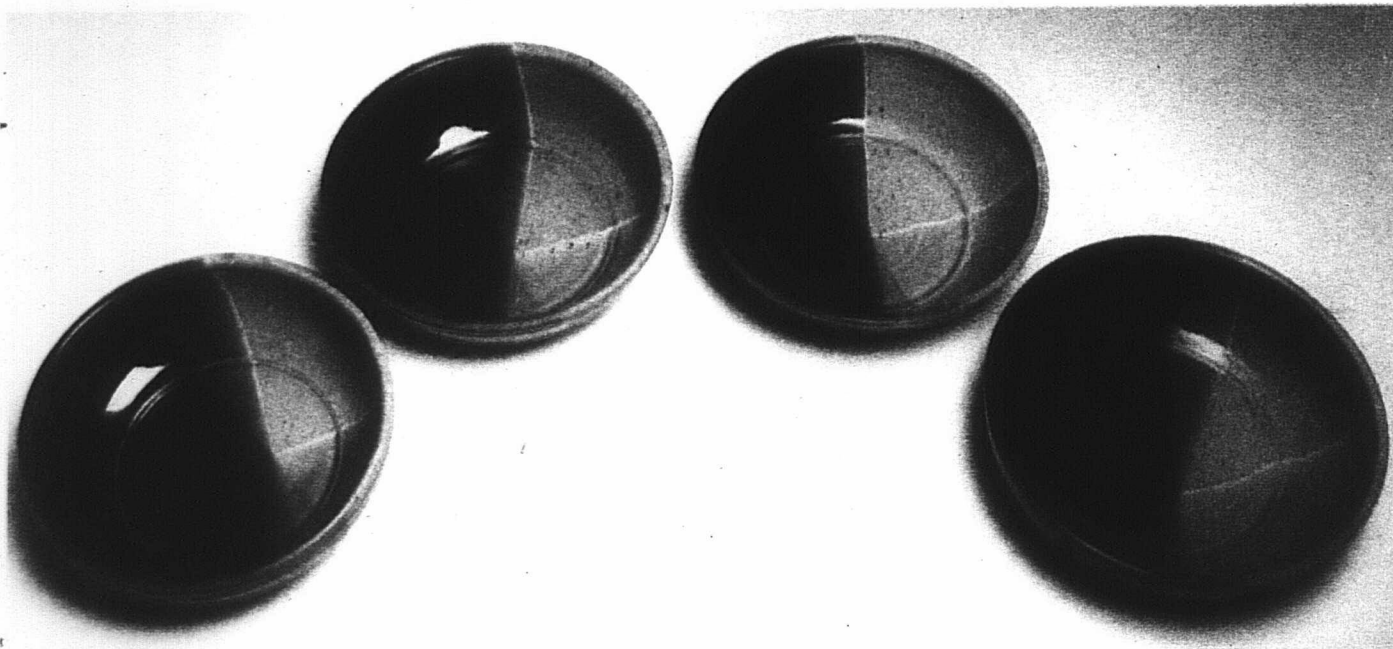
## Notes from the artist:

Ceramics is an art that I find unique in its potential for functional and aesthetic possibilities. I set these characteristics as my goal when creating a piece or set of pieces. Specifically the form of a bowl provides a great range of shapes and contours that allow for a sense of personality yet remains a functional piece. The form of a bowl is also conducive to displaying the glaze on both the exterior and interior of the piece. The relationship between the form and glaze can also be used to convey a character onto the piece.

*Marc is a sophomore Art major and plans to concentrate in Ceramics.*



*Serving bowl, ceramic*



*Set of bowls, ceramic*

## New Ortlip Gallery Exhibit "Fare Trade" Opening Tonight

By Jennifer McGuire

Recently, the faculty of Houghton College's Art department exhibited their artwork at Birmingham Southern College (BSC) in Birmingham, Alabama. Tonight, in reciprocation, the work of BSC's Art department faculty will be showcased in the exhibition aptly named "Fare Trade." This trade of visual delight will feature the works of Steve Cole, Jim Neel, Kevin Shook and Paula Venz.

This mixed media exhibit features paintings, photographs, prints and sculpture. Although the "concepts and themes are all different," according to Jillian Sokso, Ortlip Art Gallery director and Houghton Art instructor, the unifying element of the exhibit is that the work is by "artists from the same community." All of the

participating artists have a national and international show record.

For students with an interest in science, or those who enjoy spectacle, "Fare Trade" is worth seeing merely for Kevin Shook's mixed media work, which integrates printmaking with photography. The massive six-foot steel plate is so large and weighty that it required heavy-duty industrial magnets to be put into the wall in order to display it. Shook's interests, explored in his artwork, include biology, biological defects within the human body and cellular imagery. Shook received his MFA in 2004 from the University of Delaware.

Steve Cole, whose artistic interests include drawing, mixed media, painting and sculpture, serves as an associate professor at BSC. Cole writes of his work, "A work of art completes itself when

the viewer is an active participant. My hope is that the audience of my work will interact on several levels. My intention is to connect ideally with our primal need for play." Cole received his MFA from Florida State University.

As an assistant professor at BSC, Jim Neel's artwork is expressed through drawing, photography and sculpture. Serving as the director of BSC's Durbin Gallery, Neel also has spent time as a photojournalist, covering various conflicts in Central America. Neel's work has appeared in several magazines and publications, such as *Esquire*. A two-time award winner of the Artists' Fellowship in Visual Arts by the Alabama State Council for the Arts, Neel received his MFA from the University of Alabama.

BSC associate professor Paula Venz specializes in photography

and design but has supplemental interests in sculpture, the history of photography and popular culture. Venz finds that "The subtle connection is a recurring interest in the emotional aspect of visual contradiction, containment and human relationships. Through my explorations, I hope to connect with the universal nature of human experience." Venz received her MFA from Ohio State University.

The opening reception, complete with food and beverage, will occur this evening, at six o'clock in the atrium of the Center for the Arts. "It will be a fun evening open to everyone," says Sokso. The "Fare Trade" exhibition as a whole, Sokso assures, "will be worth seeing." More information about the artists and their work can be found at BSC's website <http://www.bsc.edu/academics/art/fac-staff.htm>.