

## UPCOMING HU BLOOD DRIVE

KATE ULRICH '29

Red Cross logistics coordinator and donor recruiter Catherine Orr believes that if you were to speak to the people in the waiting room of a blood drive, each would recount a different story as to why they give.

Madi Fleury '29 donates in memory of a lost loved one. Houghton University (HU) custodian Jamie Marshall gives because she has a valuable blood type. Peter McCracken '29, who has donated 25 times since the age of sixteen, gives simply because, "Why not?" Elizabeth Carpenter '27 donates because "...I think it's a good thing to do. I think it's important to have blood for people to use when they need it. And even though I'm scared of needles, I want to give blood."

The fire department will host one more blood drive this month on April 21. Orr urges students to show up.



A donor giving blood at a blood drive.

COURTESY OF MICHELLE GORDON / PIXABAY

"It's such a needed mission of caring for others, of alleviating suffering," she said.

Working with four Western New York counties—Allegany being her newest responsibility—Orr organized the six-hour event with several Red Cross employees and volunteers. Among the volunteers were several HU students.

For college campuses, particularly, Orr believes blood drives are essential. Young adults are "our future blood donors" who can continue to donate throughout their lives.

Due to health precautions like social distancing, blood drives slowed and available donors decreased during the pandemic, said

the College of American Pathologists. As a result, the United States experienced a severe blood shortage. Another consequence is that current college students are not as familiar with blood donation as previous generations. Orr commented that drives help to debunk common misconceptions about the process.

She encourages students to visit clinics even if they choose not to donate, so that they can be more informed about the process of blood donation.

Orr stated that although donors often worry about fainting or feeling dizzy after giving blood, actual fainting spells and intense sickness are rare. Both volunteers and employees are trained to properly examine and care for those who donate.

People are often misinformed about the medical requirements to give blood. "Last week, I was at a wellness fair, and three people in a row thought that if you were a cigarette smoker, you couldn't donate blood. And that's a myth," said Orr. She continued, "Students, especially, will ask about new tattoos and piercings... [and] anxiety medications, depression medications, birth control... and mar-

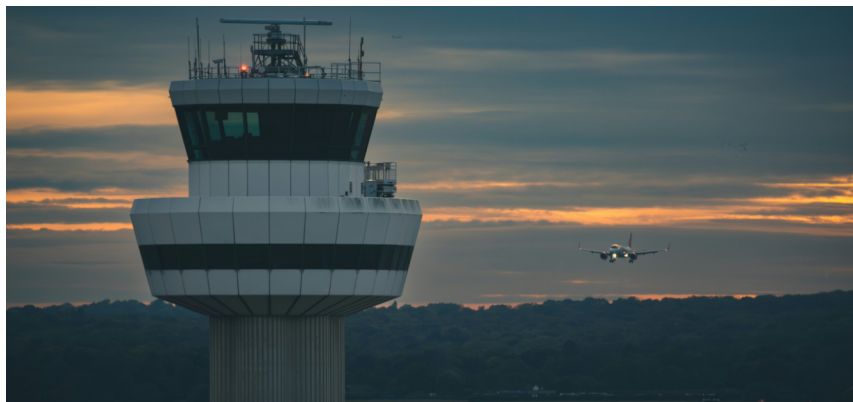
See **BLOOD DRIVE** page #2

## TSA Partial Shutdown

COLE DAVENPORT '28

On Friday, March 13, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers missed a full paycheck as a result of a partial government shutdown. As of April 12, 2026, more than 400 TSA officers have quit, leading to significant delays in airport security operations. This caused frustration among travelers, with many suffering from extreme wait times and missed flights.

The shutdown rests at a stalemate as Congress has taken its annual spring recess, despite the issue remaining unresolved. Many expressed dissatisfaction with Congress' handling of the issue, with many criti-



Air traffic control tower with a plane ready for landing at Gatwick airport.

COURTESY OF JOHANNES HEEL / UNSPLASH

cizing an apparent lack of concern. Bertha Waddy, a Supervisory Officer with TSA, stated, "It seems a little unfair—with the Congress people getting paid, and they're not coming to an agreement—it's like what's going on? You're messing with people's livelihoods." TSA agents

receive a salary starting at \$34,454, and for many, a missed paycheck can spell disastrous consequences. TSA workers started to receive partial backpay as of March 30, but for many who are unable to support themselves for weeks on the promise of backpay, they were forced to find

other jobs, leading to a shortage of workers. In the case of George Bush Intercontinental Airport, only two of the airport's eight security checkpoints were operational, leading to massive lines.

Congress' return does not guarantee any sort of resolution; however, as the

debate surrounding funding for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shows no signs of concluding. Democrats and Republicans are unable to reach an agreement that would allow the DHS to resume its functions. Numerous resolutions have been proposed for partial funding that would allow the DHS to resume; however, all have been blocked. Further complicating the matter, President Donald Trump threatened to withhold action on any legislation until the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE Act), which calls for stricter voter identification regulations, is passed. In an address to the nation, he stated, "Congress should unite and enact this common-sense, country-saving legislation right now, and it should be before any-

See **TSA** page #2

## New Head Cross Country Coach Kari Elliot

ZILLAH REUKAUF '29

Houghton University's (HU) Cross Country (XC) team is buzzing with the appointment of their new head coach, Kari Elliot, and she is just as excited. As the team and Elliot prepare to make the change in leadership, there is a lot of excitement and nervousness. Liam Gilroy '29, a XC athlete, said, "I'm excited to see the opportunities she will bring and getting to see it come into play." Another athlete, Amy Collins '29, expressed her excitement, "I'm most excited to have a female coach just for like, a new perspective [...] I'm looking forward to building a relationship like I have with coach Hagar."

Under all the excitement lies one question: Who is Elliot? Previous head coach of both Agnes Scott College and Oglethorpe University's XC teams, Elliot is "a proven leader" according to Director of Athletics Matthew

Webb. She began her athletic journey young, joining her brothers in athletics, playing basketball, tennis and volleyball. For all these sports, Elliot practiced one thing in particular to stay in shape—running, which eventually led her to join track in middle school and XC in high school.

When college came around, Elliot had a plan. She was going to join the college basketball team; that was until she got cut. "It was like my world came to an end," said Elliot. Dusting off her feet and moving on, she walked on to the college's XC team, and now she has been running for the last twenty years.

Now that Elliot is making her way to HU, she said she would like to bring her expertise to a college she "really believes in," as HU's Christian heritage and Wesleyan tradition enticed her decision to coach here.

With any new coach comes changes, but El-

liot isn't looking to come in with a whole new regime right away. Instead, she's looking to get to know her athletes, take things slow and build a relationship with them so she can understand and push them in ways that build them individually. When it comes to winning, Elliot said, "I really do enjoy winning, I'm a very competitive person." She strives for excellence for God's glory in herself and in her athletes.

With faith standing in the center of HU, Elliot is happy to have a chance to coach in a place where she can express her faith more openly. Elliot believes that faith shouldn't change from location to location and has always done her best to express her faith in secular environments too. "I think that the most genuine signs of faith are probable in the heart and how we treat people, and I think that that's how I have and how I hope to lead," said Elliot. ★

TSA from page #1

thing else happens." Additionally, Trump urged TSA workers to continue to work without pay throughout the shutdown, stating on X, "Keep fighting for the USA. GO TO WORK!"

With the shutdown showing little hope of swift resolution, airlines have taken to finding solutions to mitigate damage. Maura Barrett, a reporter for Scripps News stated, "Some airports are trying to step up to help their TSA agents, we saw Seattle has launched a food pantry for their workers, Atlanta airport is giving its agents meal vouchers if they show up to work here, in Denver the airport has even encouraged passengers to donate gift cards to the agents, if they are willing to."

Many airlines waived cancellation and change fees to assist customers

with itinerary difficulties resulting from the shutdown. Allegiant Air's website states, "Passengers whose flights are scheduled to depart through April 30, 2026, can change or cancel their itineraries at no additional cost, making it easier to plan trips with confidence." According to CBS News, "United Airlines, which notes that it has already eliminated most ticket change fees, has issued a special waiver for travelers flying to or from George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston, where passengers have faced wait times of up to six hours due to TSA worker absences." It seems negotiations will continue, and airlines and TSA agents will have to work with partial backpay and major delays. ★

BLOOD DRIVE from page #1

ijuana, and those do not impact blood donations."

According to the Red Cross website, a person in the United States needs blood or platelets every 2 seconds. The organization is responsible for blood drives across the country that draw about 40% of the U.S.'s blood supply.

Orr's chapter of the Red Cross assists more than 100 hospitals in Western New York. She said, "When one-in-six hospital patients is going to receive a transfusion ...

we need to keep these local hospitals, and beyond, safe, and with a stocked blood bank supply."

About 60% of Americans are qualified to donate. Annually, however, only about 3% give their blood, says the American Red Cross. "Most people don't donate because no one ever asks them, or they didn't know that it was so important and life-saving," Orr shared.

Orr hopes more students will support future blood drives at the Houghton Volunteer Fire Department. ★



### THE WEEKLY W'S

These Highlander teams took home the win this week.



#### MEN'S VOLLEYBALL

	1	2	3	4	FINAL
HOUGHTON	25	22	25	25	3
HILBERT	19	25	19	22	1

#### MEN'S TENNIS

	FINAL
HOUGHTON	5
NAZARETH	2

#### BASEBALL

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
HOUGHTON	0	2	2	0	1	1	X	6	5	2
ALFRED	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	5	8	3

#### SOFTBALL

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
HOUGHTON	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	6	0
HARTWICK	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	1

### EVENT CALENDAR

- APR. 17 — All Day, One Day Giving Challenge.
- APR. 17 — 1:00p - 5:30p, Softball v. SUNY Poly, *Softball Field*.
- APR. 17 — 3:00p - 5:00p, Cat Cafe!!!, *Paine 216*.
- APR. 17 — 8:00p - 9:30p, Choir Concert, *CFA Recital Hall*.
- APR. 17 — 9:00p - 10:30p, ODGC After Party, *Van Dyk*.
- APR. 18 — 1:00p - 3:00p, Alumni Women's Soccer, *Burke*.
- APR. 18 — 3:00p - 3:15p, Soccer Coach Recognition, *Burke*.
- APR. 18 — 3:30p - 5:00p, Alumni Men's Soccer, *Burke*.
- APR. 18 — 5:15p - 6:00p, Alumni Soccer Game, *Burke*.
- APR. 18 — 7:00p - 11:00p, Silent Disco, *CC Basement*.
- APR. 18 — 7:30p - 9:30p, Eastman Trombone Choir, *Chapel*.
- APR. 20 — 9:00p - 9:45p, Kevin's Pool Party, *Nielsen Pool*.
- APR. 21 — 11:00a - 12:30p, Student Research Day, *Van Dyk*.

check CampusGroups for additional information

# Letter to the Editor

DR. PETER MEILAENDER

Dear Editors of the Houghton Star:

I write to draw attention to a major issue of student concern that is in danger of going entirely unnoticed and for which our administrators should be pressed to take responsibility.

As students are aware, the women's dormitory Gillette Hall is currently undergoing extensive renovations thanks to a donor's generous gift. These are continuing and have reduced the hall's capacity during this academic year. Students have been promised more attractive rooms and modernized living spaces when the dormitory reopens next fall as East Hall.

Yet the true purpose of these renovations has not been widely discussed—even though it is hiding in plain sight, shielding administrators against potential accusations that they had never announced their true plans.

I was walking around the quad yesterday and paused to look at the large sign announcing the renovations. My eyes drifted toward the billboard's

lower left corner, and it suddenly hit me like a bolt from the blue. The scales fell from my eyes.

There you can read this proud proclamation: "East Hall: For Christ and Christ Alone."

The audacity of this plan is shocking. Who could have imagined it—a dormitory intended as the earthly dwelling place of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? For Him and no one else?

This raises serious questions. As it says in Acts 7:48, "Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses

cerns are far more pragmatic.

Like every Houghton Highlander, I too feel a rush of pride at the thought that Christ Himself will soon take up residence upon the Houghton University campus. Indeed, I probably feel that pride even more strongly than most, since I am—to the best of my knowledge—the only person ever to have served on the Houghton faculty whose name rhymes with "Highlander."

I also appreciate the tremendous recruiting tool this will offer our hard-

*"East Hall: For Christ and Christ Alone. The audacity of this plan is shocking."*

made by hands." Similarly, Acts 17:24 reads, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man."

I will leave the theologians to sort out these matters, however. My own con-

working Admissions staff as they tell prospective students about Houghton. What could be a more compelling reason to attend this university than the prospect of residing on the same campus with our Lord Jesus Christ? Granted, the prospect of encountering

*"...Shenawana Hall...is notorious for being...suitable only for residents of a quite primitive character."*

Jesus on a daily basis while traversing the quad could prove a less comfortable experience than some people imagine—but let the students worry about that after they have enrolled and paid their tuition.

In spite of these advantages, students should press the university about the housing dilemma this new initiative will surely cause. Although the student body has shrunk over the past 15 years, Houghton remains badly in need of adequate student housing. One of the two male dormitories, Shenawana Hall, is notorious for being barely habitable and suitable only for residents of a quite primitive character. When the newly rechristened East Hall becomes unavailable to our female students, two of the university's four residences will be either unavailable (East) or unsuitable (Shen).

What are our female Highlanders to do? Where will they live? Do we intend to erect a tent city out on the quad, exposing our young charges to the brutal winters of western New York? These are the questions that all students should be asking President Lewis and Vice-President for Student Life Bill Burrichter.

It is high time for these secret housing machinations to end. Transparency—that is all we ask for. Every Houghton student deserves a roof over his or her head and a bed to sleep in. Christ demands nothing less of us. ★

Respectfully,  
Peter Meilaender

Professor of Political Science  
Dean of Religion, Humanities, and Global Service

## SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be less than 300 words

SUBMIT TO  
star@houghton.edu

Have an opinion you want to share?

**CONTACT**  
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The mission of the Houghton STAR is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have been the ideals of Houghton University since its inception. This is done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

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## Movie Review

### Project Hail Mary

DOMINIC LARSON '27

Book-to-movie adaptations are infamously hard. They are either huge box office hits or they anger entire fanbases and studios lose millions of dollars. When I heard that Andy Weir's 2021 novel *Project Hail Mary* was being adapted into a high-budget blockbuster film, I was both highly skeptical and nervous. Last semester, I wrote a STAR book review stating that, "Project Hail Mary is the closest thing to perfect sci-fi storytelling that I have ever seen or can even imagine" and gave it a 5/5 score. The movie adaptation had a lot to live up to.

The film's opening minutes added to my skepticism. They breezed through the contents of the novel's first chapter, leaving out details that made the first chapter iconic. In the book, Grace spends the entire first chapter trying to figure out where he is and what is going on. He is highly confused and disoriented after waking up from years of cryosleep. In the film, Grace recovers almost instantly and answers his questions in minutes. The first third of the movie plays out like a montage of events from the first quarter of the book, replaying scenes from before Grace left Earth. It features Grace alone on his ship, called the Hail Mary. This segment of the film is still highly enjoyable, but the pacing feels off. However, the pacing notably settles in with the introduction of Rocky, the secondary main character in the story.

Despite the uncertainty I held around the beginning of the movie, from the moment Rocky's ship approaches until the very end of the film, *Project Hail Mary* is a hugely satisfying adaptation of its source material. The scene in which Grace spots Rocky's ship is highly entertaining. Grace tries to outrun the approaching vessel in the Hail Mary and fails when Rocky's ship mirrors the Hail Mary's every move, foreshadowing future interactions between the two characters. The film takes its time building a heartwarming companionship between Grace and Rocky, which ultimately serves as the driving force of the remainder of the story.

Grace and Rocky's friendship would not have worked without Ryan Gosling's masterful performance as Grace. Gosling spends a majority of the film acting alone, even when he is acting alongside the animated rock spider puppet. Every moment appears equally real, genuine and believable to me, which is

what made the acting stand out. Rocky, on the other hand, was brought to life using a mix of puppetry and animatronics, with James Ortiz working as the main puppeteer and providing his voice. Rocky is as endearing on screen as he was in the book. The filmmakers did a remarkable job visualizing a character who is essentially a faceless rock spider. I could go on about the character of Rocky for an entire review, but I will spare you. Just know that he is potentially the most lovable character I have ever seen on screen.

The strength of the film's visuals goes far beyond Rocky's design. Producers Phil Lord and Chris Miller made it their goal to use as little CGI as possible. In addition to bringing Rocky to life in the most practical way possible, they had full sets built for the Hail Mary itself and found ways to believably film Grace's spacewalks. As a result, the film is easily able to fully immerse the viewer in every scene. The visual that struck me the most was the Petrova line, a line of radiation-consuming astrophage that travels between stars, which was visualized by a dazzling, ethereal red trail of light that was impressively also filmed without CGI. It was a magical sight to see on a large theater screen.

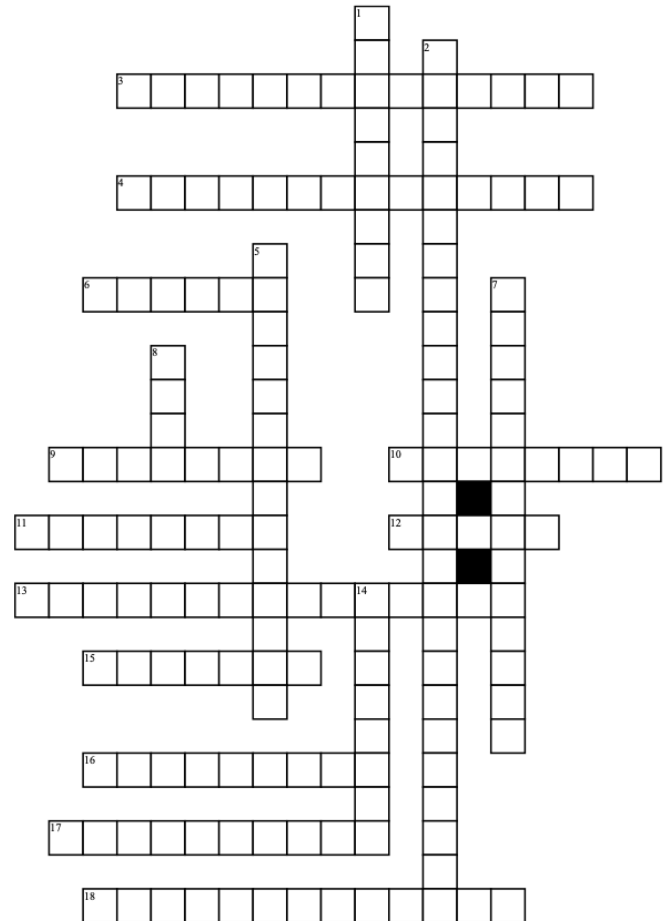
Due to the movie not having enough space to fit everything from a nearly 500-page book, some things are inevitably cut short or left out. The scientific elements of the novel took the biggest hit. The book features extensive exposition diving into the science of astrophage and taomoeba, two fictional entities that are very important to the overall narrative, which was removed in the film. My guess is that this choice was an intentional choice to make it more accessible to casual viewers, but fans of the book may be disappointed. Most of the other omitted material is from the flashback segments of the novel, such as the bombing of Antarctica to slow climate change and building a giant astrophage-breeding farm in the Sahara Desert.

All in all, the last two-thirds of *Project Hail Mary* more than make up for a slightly rocky (or rather Rocky-less) start. With Rocky's arrival, the film reaches a flow state, combining exciting sci-fi sequences with huge amounts of heart in a package that is sure to delight die-hard fans of the novel and newcomers alike. Amaze! Amaze! Amaze!  
Final score: 4.75/5 ★

## Puzzles of the Week

### MOVIE-RELATED THINGS

Provided by wordmint.com



#### Across

- Who plays Iron Man in the Avengers?
- Who won the academy award for best actress in 2020?
- Which Alfred Hitchcock thriller is notorious for its shocking "shower scene"?
- Which movie was incorrectly announced as the winner of Best Picture at the 2017 Academy Awards, during the great Oscars flub of all time?
- What is the most popular movie Harrison Ford has starred in?
- Popular movie released in May 2017 based off of a TV show from the late 80s filmed on a beach?
- Both Indiana and Indy are nicknames. What is Dr. Jones' first name?
- Which Star Wars movie was the highest grossing?
- What is the popular streaming service to watch movies, tv series and documentaries available in Canada in 2011?
- What is the number one Christmas movie watched?
- What streaming service features Pixar, Marvel, Star Wars, National Geographic, and Disney?
- Who is the highest paid actor in 2019 worldwide, earning 89.4 million dollars last year?

#### Down

- What flavor of pop tarts does Buddy the Elf use in his spaghetti in Elf?
- Who won the academy award for best actor in 2020?
- What was the 1st Harry Potter Movie: Harry Potter and the ....?
- Which character sings Let it Go?
- What is the highest grossing movie of all times?