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YEARS



THE HOUGHTON STAR

Volume 106, Issue 20

www.houghtonstar.com

March 19, 2010

BLACKOUT: Fireworks, Mafia & Acts of Vandalism

SATAN IN THE A**

photo by Wesley Dean

Graffiti reading "F*** Satan in the a***" was found on the side of the Neilson PE Center facing Steven's Art Studio and on the wall of multiple bathroom stalls in the Center for Fine Arts. The culprit has yet to be identified. Contact Safety and Security with information.

by Monica Sandreczki

The quad is usually a place for Frisbee games and sealing the deal for a future spouse, but on Tuesday night, students took advantage of the power outage to climb atop buildings, light fireworks, and commit random acts of vandalism.

Safety and Security took action and brought extra staff onto campus having "as many as four Safety and Security Staff on campus during the blackout," according to Ray Parlett, Director of Safety and Security. Further action included notifying the College electrician, contacting

Rochester Gas & Electric, and making sure no one was stuck inside the elevators. No students were found to be trapped.

After that, "[security] patrolled campus on foot and with the car to watch for incidents and to reassure people if they were concerned, recommending that they gather in the Campus Center, Music Building, or Wesley Chapel where there was some light," said Parlett.

There are two incidents that Safety and Security will be investigating. First, according to Parlett, "somebody drove a car across the quad sidewalk risking

the lives of all who were on foot in the area." Also, "graffiti was spray painted in a few locations on campus during the blackout. Offensive and ethnic remarks were sprayed on the walls of some bathrooms and hallways as well as the outside wall of the Nielsen PEC under the cover of darkness."

Maintenance will be evaluating if there was any physical damage to the property as a result of the power being off. At the time of reporting, there was no report of any significant damage to the physical plant caused by the power failure.

Thus far, Parlett does not know

the cause of the blackout.

Parlett said he believes that the blackout "extended at least from Portageville to Caneadea," and lasted just over an hour and a half.

During that time, there was a wide range of student responses. Some roamed the quad setting off fireworks and lighting sparklers and even laying out and watching the stars.

Sophomore Stewart LaPan said that he saw "really irresponsible people [who] were driving their cars through the quad at around 30 MPH"

Blackout cont'd on page 2

My Day as a Houghton Host

by Josiah Nunziato

As I slipped past the Houghton security guard stationed outside Dieter Board Room, where the Equality Riders were assembled, I wondered what sort of potential disaster I was entering. How nasty might people choose to be to each other? Hospitable name tags suspended by yellow lanyards, courtesy carafes of coffee, and gracious introductions by Sharra, Zachary Adams, Dean Brittain, and Suzanne Derksen did little to allay my fear that the Equality Ride visit would be marked by graceless exchanges of invective.

Host cont'd on page 2

Franciscan Friars Welcomed by Community

by Katherine Thompson

Houghton College recently had the privilege of hosting Franciscan friar, Father Glen, and the several novices he brought with him. From Tuesday to Friday of last week, the friars led chapels, attended various classes, and ate in the cafeteria with students.

Franciscan friars have been visiting Houghton campus since 1988 thanks to Dr. Mike Lastoria who, after reading the book *Spiritual Passages: The Psychology of Spiritual Development* by Father Benedict Groeshel, was interested in bringing the author to speak at a chapel. Because Fr. Groeshel was unable to visit Houghton at the time, Lastoria spoke with Father Glen. From the subsequent exchanges, a friendship developed,

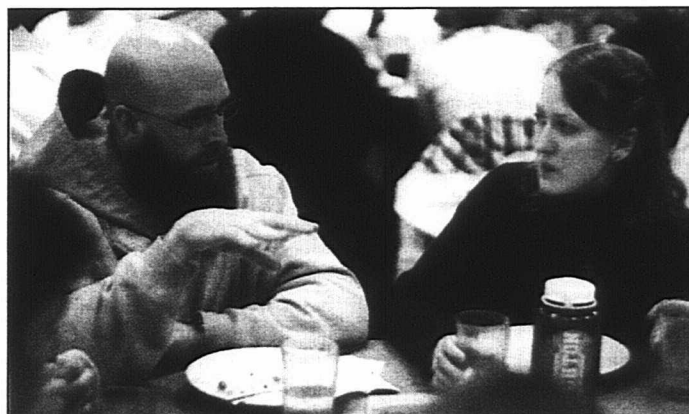


photo by Wesley Dean

Friars shared meals with students in the dining hall during their visit. They led chapel on Wednesday and Friday last week.

and the friars have now made their tenth visit to Houghton. During last week's visit, Father Glen spoke at two chapels, opening his time on stage with a remark about

being the first Catholic priest to speak in Wesley Chapel 22 years ago.

Friars cont'd on page 3

THE WORLD TO THERE

by Derek Schwabe

US Hands over Control of Prison to Iraqi Authorities

The United States released its control of a military prison to the authorities of the Republic of Iraq this week, giving them full control of some 2,900 detainees. The prison, located in Taji, Iraq, served as a detention center for low to mid-level insurgents, many of whom had been arrested by US forces during the temporary occupation. Only a minority of the detainees had actually been convicted of crimes, and many are expected to be soon released by either US or Iraqi authorities. Concern remains high among citizens of the newly established Republic, who still recall widespread incidents of prisoner torture under earlier regimes. The Taji prison is the second detention center to be released to Iraqi hands, leaving one final location under US jurisdiction. This final location, known as Camp Cropper, is known to hold the most dangerous criminals and is expected to be transferred later this year.

Nigeria Executive Dissolves Country's Cabinet

Only five weeks after his election, recent President Goodluck Jonathan has dismissed the nation's cabinet, in what many observers have called an attempt to concentrate power into fewer hands. Jonathan was recently appointed by the national cabinet after former president Umaru Yar'Adua was forced to cut his term short due to medical illness.

Cabinet members expressed concern and bewilderment, many unable to give a reason for the drastic executive order. Information Minister Dora Akunyili echoed these feelings, stating "He did not give us any reason and so I cannot give any reason." Observers are also worried, noting that this unexpected decision may aggravate a violent ongoing national situation between Muslim and Christian groups. Jonathan claims to have left no power "vacuum," announcing that permanent secretaries will assume the cabinet's former responsibilities.

Plans for Virtual US-Mexico Boundary Halted

The US government has announced a freeze of funding for a "virtual" fence designed to detect people illegally crossing the Mexico-US border, after encountering a series of problems. This virtual program, which utilizes camera, sensor, and radar technology, was launched in 2005 by the Bush administration with plans to be in full operation by 2011. Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, stated that the program was to be at least temporarily discontinued as it underwent critical review. Ms. Napolitano also declared that an additional \$50 million is being redirected to other security technologies including mobile surveillance, thermal imaging devices, mobile radios, cameras and laptops for vehicles used by Border Patrol agents. The decision was well supported, even by Republicans such as John McCain, who called the virtual fence program a "complete failure."

Blackout cont'd from page 1

and that student reaction could be described as "mass hysteria."

Caitlin Cleland, senior, who was in a Student Government Association meeting at the time of the outage, said that she stayed in her meeting for another twenty minutes after the power went out until they recessed, then spent her time playing a few rounds of the card game Mafia with friends.

"I personally thought it was bizarre that in my four years at Houghton I have never experienced

a power outage. I didn't really know what to do. I guess the other students were the same way. Some students did a worship jam session. Others got in their car and left campus. Others got in their cars and did stupid things. It must have been a full moon, or something," said Joe Covey, senior.

Even a Facebook group called "I Survived the Houghton College Blackout '10" was started and at time of reporting had 181 members.

Safety and Security would appreciate any information that would help identify the culprits of the two incidents. ★

Host cont'd from page 1

These moments represented an interpersonal purgatory, in which Houghton Hosts and Equality Riders had no proper basis to determine the motives or intentions of the other party. The conversations that broke that state of limbo were also the ones that gave me hope for a day of peaceful, loving conversation. During the morning campus tour, I initiated what turned out to be quite lively conversations with two of the riders about their lives, educational backgrounds, and aspirations for their respective futures. Their joy and graciousness inspired me with hope that grace might prevail in a context of difference. Instead of nameless, faceless protesters of unknown intention coming to campus, here were exuberant, intensely interesting young adults who had just completed their own undergraduate degrees, one of them at Wheaton College. Throughout the day, I would always be grateful for these rare moments of conversation unrelated to sexuality because of the way in which they emphasized the utter humanity of both guests and hosts.

Later in the morning, as groups of students streamed into the hotter-than-hell Dieter boardroom to participate in open discussion with the Equality Riders, I wondered if voices would be raised, hands thrown up in frustration, and cheeks reddened with fits of righteous anger. How glad I was to find that I'd been overzealously pessimistic about the restraint and consideration of both Houghton Students and Equality Riders! What transpired instead was the formation of small circles of students clustered around one or two Equality Riders, with students level-headedly asking questions and exchanging ideas about Christianity and sexual identity.

My own conversations with several riders indicated that they had come, not primarily to change college policy, but to dialogue with students, share their stories, and create allies. Although the riders did object to what they felt constituted specific targeting of homosexuality as sin in the Community Covenant, they did not focus their attention on vehemently denouncing college policy. Instead they primarily advocated for the creation of "safe spaces," where students could honestly converse about their sexual identities, without fear of ridicule from peers or reprisal from Houghton's administration.

Such a push for safe spaces was motivated by the Riders' desire for students to increasingly accept the validity of diverse sexual identities and expressions, grounding their need for acceptance in their own authentic expressions of sexuality. Upon finding that I deeply distrusted the practical validity of the phrase "Love the sinner, hate the sin," riders gratefully applauded recognition of

the difficulty of holding these two commitments together. Too often, the riders had experienced such intent as "Hate the sinner, hate the sin." In contrast to passing such immediate judgment, riders urged that students take the time to listen to other students as they struggled to make sense of their sexual identity and that they become advocates for the rights of such students. Too often, the riders felt that they had been reduced to "walking sex acts." Such an objection reminded me of the way conversations about LGBTQ issues so easily reduce people to mere issues or concepts. The visit of the Equality Ride thrust before the Houghton community complex issues of sexual identity and practice in the concrete, incarnated form of people and their individual stories.

The stories of many of the riders were marked by experiences of consistent rejection by the Christian Church and often by dismissal from family members. Such stories easily stirred up listeners' emotions, causing them to empathize with their hardships. Yet stories are tricky things. Such stories are invaluable in humanizing LGBTQ issues, in conveying the often devastating experiences of those in the LGBTQ community, and in urging a renewal of love in the Christian Church, yet it is difficult not to let the sheer emotional pull of such stories of victimization overwhelm Christian commitment to truth as well as to love. Such stories are certainly perspectival, and it is easy to use them simply to justify one's own behaviors. In such a storytelling context, conversations between Houghton students and the Equality Riders seemed to proceed peacefully and to involve the reciprocal sharing of ideas, yet it was clear that it was the primarily Houghton students who were being changed.

In retrospect, Soulforce's visit was marked by gracious, peaceful conversations and by the sharing of stories that forced the difficult task of combining compassionate love for marginalized people and critical assessment of personal narratives. Ultimately, both Houghton Students and Equality Riders were quite pleasantly surprised by the quality, depth, and civility of the discussion. Despite sizeable doctrinal complexities inherent in the conversation, it was clear that graciousness and peace had overwhelmed possibilities for anger and name-calling. While disagreement still existed between the groups, both parties seemed to agree that unity might be found in the love of Christ for the marginalized. It was such love that allowed a difficult conversation to be concluded, not with many answers, but with an assurance of Christ's love amidst the complexities of a broken world. ★

Striving for growth and quality

Dr. Katie Buvoltz Named Assoc. Dean



photo by Wesley Dean

Buvoltz was, herself, a graduate of Houghton's PACE program.

by Renee Roberts

Last October, the Organizational Sustainability (OS) Taskforce recommended that the revenue from the P.A.C.E. program be maintained and strengthened. Katie Buvoltz has been appointed to provide the leadership for this new effort.

On March 1, 2010, Dr. Katie Buvoltz was named the Associate Dean for Adult and Online Education. Buvoltz, a graduate of Houghton College's Program for Accelerating College Education (P.A.C.E.) program, earned her MBA from Regis University and her Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University.

P.A.C.E. is a program that allows older students who have some college credit to return to school to complete their Bachelor's degree

quickly. Completing a Bachelor of Science degree in Management, students can usually finish in about 17 months. For older students juggling a family, job, and social life, this specialized program allows for a smaller commitment—only one night class a week and continual change—a completed three-credit course every five weeks.

When Buvoltz graduated from P.A.C.E., she dreamed of teaching in the program in the future. That goal manifested itself a year later as Buvoltz was employed by Houghton College and now finds herself managing the very program that began it all.

Buvoltz has plans to progress P.A.C.E. ahead. Her goals are high: manage the current program, develop a program assessment, research growth for the program, and modify and expand online

learning. Work is already being done on each of these goals to ensure their completion. In managing the current program, "growth and quality" are what Buvoltz strives for. She discussed how the program is growing to meet the expanding needs of students. "This year we are launching three minors—Leadership, Human Resources Management, and Marketing to our Bachelor of Science major in Management. We are also implementing additional 'pre and post P.A.C.E. terms' to help prospects with low transfer credits the opportunity to enroll in our program and allow current students to complete their degree requirements with greater choice and flexibility. The addition of online courses will help us achieve these goals."

As for the other goals, research for a program-wide assessment has begun. This assessment will "provide data that compares perceptions of students, faculty, and administration to determine program strengths and areas of improvement." Research is also being done on ways to grow—such as offering accelerated associates and graduate work. With the introduction of online courses to traditional students this summer, P.A.C.E. will be integrating this resource into its program, offering, as Buvoltz states, "another tool in delivering a mission-consistent, quality liberal arts college experience."

While this research and growth sounds promising, P.A.C.E. still struggles with the economic repercussions of the recent past. P.A.C.E. saw a drop in enrollment when the economy took a hit, yet,

Buvoltz remains optimistic about the future saying, "As the economy hints at recovery, we are seeing slow gains in enrollment as adults are recognizing the clear need for a bachelor's degree to even be competitive in today's market place." The program will not petition for more money, but will instead rely on utilizing its resources to "increase the inquiry pool." Buvoltz noted, "We have found a direct correlation to increased inquiries and increased enrollments. Our ultimate goal is to support the mission of Houghton College while we reach out and serve the adult population of Western New York."

When asked to comment on the rewards and challenges of her job, Buvoltz commented on how much she enjoys seeing her students succeed. She also noted how cohesive and driven her staff is: "[They are] aligned to do whatever it takes to help our students succeed."

Buvoltz will face the challenge of trying to expand the enrollment numbers while "in the midst of a significant learning curve that comes with [a] new position." She sees these challenges positively, and said, "I possess a general sense of urgency that is tempered by my learning curve and strong desire for quality control every step of the way. The sense of urgency keeps me highly motivated while the learning and quality control guards and guides my actions and keeps me from simply reacting to the urgent. It is a healthy mix that I strive to keep in balance. I look forward to the coming days!" ★

Friars cont'd from page 1

"You can still see the burn mark from the lightning bolt," he joked.

Senior Josiah Nunziato said of these chapels, "I thoroughly appreciated the way in which Father Glen drew our attention to the historical nature of Christianity, situating us in the context of the great people of faith who have gone before us in doing God's will."

The friars led several forums during their visit, and also held an instructional mass. Concerning the mass, Father Glen aptly related to attendees the reasoning behind the various practices that are a part of mass, while simultaneously upholding its sacredness.

Senior Lindsay Hansen, who was in attendance, said, "I thought

the instructional mass was one of the most profound spiritual events I've been to on campus in my four years at Houghton. It was amazing to have Christians of varying beliefs come together and acknowledge their differences along with what can be learned from those differences...The instructional mass brought our similarities to the forefront in a very powerful way."

The friars held a talk on reconciliation and identity in Gillette Hall, as well. The discussion primarily centered on what it means to live a life that is grounded in Christ.

Junior Deborah Johnson was particularly struck by Fr. Maximilian's words, that love is a choice and not a feeling. Because of this, "the pith of our identities as Christians, then, should be this

choice to love: Christ loved."

The friars also led a forum on the Theology of the Body, explaining that, because humans are created by God, we are good creations. In attendance was Junior Olivia Butz, who expounded on the forum: "As the Father and Son love and give to each other in the bond of love, the Holy Spirit, so Adam gives himself to Eve, who in turn gives herself completely back to Adam, in this mystical bond that signifies something transcendent."

A few of the friars then performed at a special coffeehouse in Java 101, where even standing room was difficult to find.

During their visit, students were eager to interact with the friars. Lastoria happily witnessed a "community" between the friars and students.

"I walk up the stairs to the

dining hall and see, spread out at the tables, a couple of brothers here and there, and the sisters over there, with students filling the other chairs. Conversations, with some intensity, some seriousness, and added always is laughter. The 'instant' community the students feel and the similar response by our visitors."

According to Lastoria, the friars felt greatly welcomed by the Houghton community.

"Sister Teresa said it well in a note she left for me upon their departure... 'We have been most edified by the loving welcome we have received from the students. I can only imagine how pleased our Lord must be to see the faith and genuine desire to grow in holiness that is prevalent in the hearts of your young people there.'" ★

Candlewick: Fiendishly Funny and Sadistically Satirical

by Christopher Hartline

Although not for the faint at heart, those who are easily offended, or young children, Josiah Armstrong's newest play, *Candlewick, A Goblin Tale: A Fantastical Tragedy in 3 Acts*, combines biting satire, fairy-tale creatures and the horrors of psychotic suburbia to create a play as unique as they come. Armstrong describes the play as "an exploration of the roles of Good and Evil in our world by looking through the lens of characters caught up in a surreal blend of a film noir-like 1940s America and a dark Grimmian fairy tale." It could best be described as a combination of the movies *Shrek*, *The Princess Bride*, *The Devil's Advocate* and *Underworld*.

The play revolves around parallel narratives: one, a 1940s suburban town called Sylvan Gardens, the other, a fairy-tale world—baker, candlestick maker and all. This fairy-tale world is punctuated by the quiet and playful music, which adds a sense of merriment and childhood fantasy. However, as the play transpires, Armstrong blends the two worlds leading the audience to wonder what is real and what is not. Sylvan Price, the sadistic and disgusting town patron, acknowledges the audience's fears and wonderment, saying, "everything is not as it seems."

The hero of the story, named the White Angel and played by Michael LaScala, attempts to protect the town of Sylvan Gardens from the Demon Wolf and finds that there is much more evil afloat than anyone could have possibly imagined.

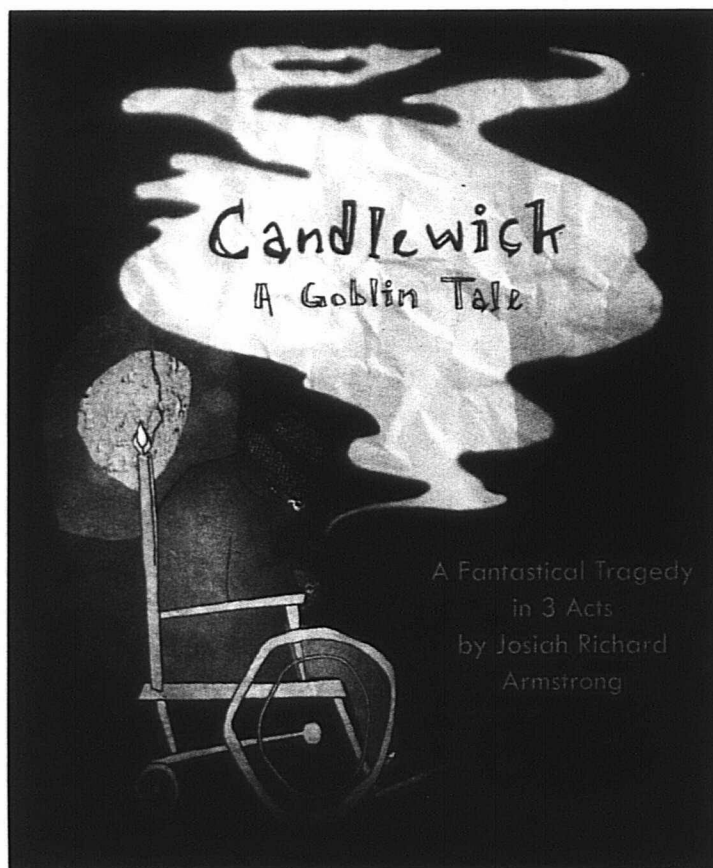


photo courtesy of Sarah Mast

Candlewick will be performed Thursday and Friday at 7 & Saturday at 1:30.

Although the plot is somewhat confusing as it switches back and forth between worlds, it is carried by the captivating performances of Cameron Gayford as Price and Luke Klingensmith who plays the bloodthirsty Keaz Kazula. With every shrieking laugh of Gayford and bone chilling growl of Klingensmith, the horror of the plot becomes more and more apparent.

Junior Ryan Clark also shines as Gil Rosenberg; a young, naïve Masters student on the verge of a physical, emotion and mental breakdown. His sense of independence and youth is juxtaposed with his dependence on the cigarette always hanging from his lips, which creates a complex character that is both intellectually inquisitive and morally conflicted.

As well as the juxtaposition

of Clark's character, the plot is focused on other factors in opposition. Whether it is good versus evil, seen even in the costumes of the town hero the White Angel and Kazula dressed in all black, or the parallelism and blending of reality and fairy-tale, Armstrong creates a questioning attitude for the audience. Some may find the characters and dialogue shocking and even offensive, but that is purposeful. Sophomore Lindsey Houghton said, "it deals with issues that the school is uncomfortable with talking about openly." This includes some jarring language and one character's homosexuality. Houghton added, "The world is sad and this play portrays that without apologizing for it."

Armstrong says his inspiration came from "the works of the Brothers Grimm, Bram Stoker, Alan Moore, and the music of Tom Waits." This unique and thought-provoking play should be seen by anyone who has an interest in fantasy and fairy-tale as well as by those who seek an opportunity to question the mores of our time. What is good and what is evil? What is real and what is fantasy? Does the White Angel save Sylvan Gardens from the Demon Wolf, the bloodthirsty Keaz Kazula and the psychotic Sylvan Price? According to Armstrong, "everything just came together in an odd way. And you know what...it worked." You'll have to decide for yourself.

Candlewick will be performed Thursday and Friday at 7p.m. with a matinee Saturday at 1:30 and is absolutely worth your time. ★

The Houghton College Lecture Series

Presents

George Pyle,

Reporter for the *Buffalo News* and author of

Raising Less Corn, More Hell:

*The Case for the Independent Farm and
against Industrial Food*

"The Salt of the Earth"

Monday, March 22

7:30pm, Schaller Hall

Copies of Mr. Pyle's book are available at the
Campus Store.

The Gettysburg Address was 272 words...

The Houghton Star is dedicated to the free exchange of ideas and encourages community members to participate in the discussion. Ideas expressed in these pages reflect solely the opinion of the writer. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit any contributions for reasons of length or decorum.

We want our readers to be an integral part of the conversation.

...We're giving you 350

Letters to the editor (signed) should be 350 words or fewer and be submitted to STAR@houghton.edu. If letters to the editor don't appeal to you, register at www.houghtonstar.com and comment on our articles online.

Claremont Trio Offers "Brilliant" Performance

by Andrew Dibble

For years the Houghton College Artist Series has engaged an eclectic array of musical ensembles for on-campus concerts. Friday evening's concert featuring The Claremont Trio exhibited a rare combination of technical facility, musicality, and stage presence. Comprised of a cellist, violinist, and pianist, these Julliard graduates has been touring and recording for ten years and command an immaculate level of technical and interpretational brilliance, earning them the justifiable hailing as the ipremier trio of its generation.i

The program began with Haydn's Trio in A Major (Hob. XV:18). The trio dazzled the audience with a charming interpretation of the piece, still retaining key features of Haydn's simplicity. Perhaps the best exhibition of the technical mastery of the musicians could be seen in the frequent display of the iHaydn Grand Pause,i a musical gesture of silence, separating musical phrases. The Claremont Trio cut into the grand pauses with such secure and cohesive synchronization, one wondered how it could be three separate instruments.

Technical and musical precision abounded during the second piece, Cassadois Trio in C Major, in which the Claremont Trio explored the vivid spectrum of color found in Spanish music. In contrast with Haydn, the trio left the

traditional reservations of the classical style and found their expressiveness in the moods of conventional Spanish music set by a 20th century composer. Brimming with imagery and homage to the culture of Spain, the piece made good use of percussive rhythms and virtuosic solo lines, and pushed the instruments to their limits.

The highlight of the program was perhaps the Mendelssohn Trio in D Minor. Key to this piece was the delicate and highly intricate phrasing, and the subtle and expressive interplay between the cello and violin. Even amid the diverse timbres of piano, violin, and cello, the trio was able to create near-seamless melodic lines.

The trio kept the music in the forefront at all times, never letting their impressive stage presence or instrumentality overwhelm the character of their programmed selections.

After two enthusiastic curtain calls, the trio closed the evening with an encore selection from Paul Schoenfield's iCafe Music.i This contemporary, jazz-like piece, while a far stylistic cry from the rest of the program, delighted the audience with jaunty images of a street cafe.

The trio commented on what a privilege it was to be able to play at Houghton. It is to be hoped that the Claremont Trio understood what a privilege it was for the Houghton community to enjoy an evening of such fine artistry. ★

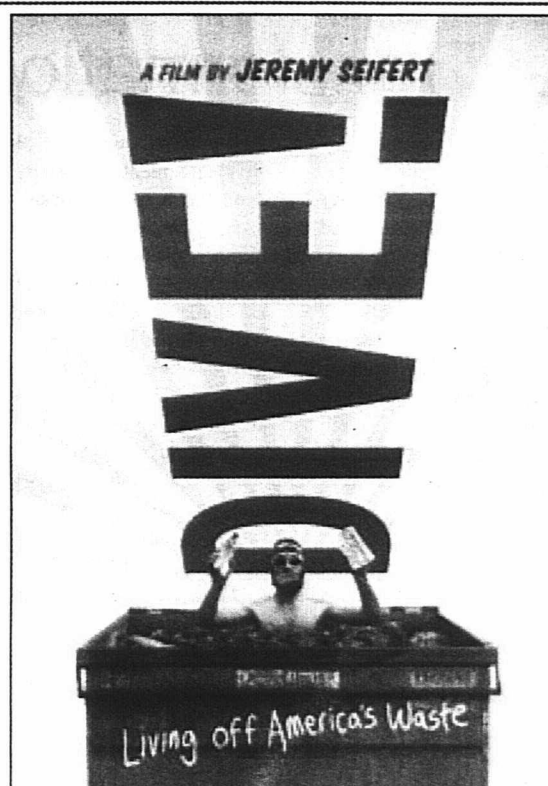


photo courtesy of treehugger.com

Review: Dive!

by Gordon Brown

Despite competing with the Franciscan friars' jam session, the Environmental Club's showing of the film "Dive!" still managed to attract between thirty and forty students. Dealing with the issues of food waste in the United States, filmmaker Jeremy Seifert and his friends documented both the staggering amount of food discarded by Americans and the practice of "dumpster diving," or raiding dumpsters behind grocery stores for thrown away food. After the showing of the film, a panel was held to discuss the problems the film raises, primarily the conflict between obedience to the law (dumpster diving can often count as a form of trespassing) and a moral obligation to not squander resources that could be used to help others.

While the event may not have been as widely attended as members of the Environmental Club had hoped, what the showing lacked in size has been made up for by the impact had on those who attended. Clara Jacob, junior, said, "The documentary did definitely have an impact on me. I knew that food waste was a problem, but I had no idea that America wastes roughly 25% of what it produces and yet so many people go hungry even in our country. I think that the video made a good point about how people have grown to disregard the value of food and the hard work that goes into producing it, in the same way that credit abusers do not understand the value of hard work that goes into earning money."

Lia Thomassian, first year, said,

"Food waste is something that I have thought about for a long time now. It is a frustrating, overwhelming problem because of the nature in which the problem has manifested itself. There needs to be a way for grocery stores in particular to cut the amount of food being wasted and to somehow redistribute it to those in need. The documentary 'Dive!' reminded me to be conscious about my food waste, and also to be an advocate and raise awareness for conservation of food."

Colleen White, the president of the Environmental Club, echoed these remarks, stating "From the responses during the panel discussion I'd say the movie definitely had an impact on the people watching. People seemed to be eager to educate others about the problem and find solutions for our campus."

The Environmental Club is currently planning to assist the Buffalo Park Conservancy for Martin Luther King Service Day on March 27. Another documentary, "Food Inc." will be shown in the Chapel on April 14. "Dive!" will be available in the library for checkout for students who are interested. ★

Do you ever break the Community Covenant?

Wouldn't think
about it

4%

Results from
51 votes

Very
occasionally,
but
unintentionally

22%

Sometimes, but
I feel guilty
about it

12%

Often; I just try
not to get
caught

63%

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**Black-Eyed Susan
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22 w main, angelica

Mar 20 Jonny Geeze

Folk / Acoustic Rock-Pop / Original

Mar 27 Bethel Steele & Sierra Rocks

Alternative Folk / Rock / Country

Plus, more musical sounds in the Commons at Cafe
Lunch M-F 11-2 • Dinner Sat 4-11 • No Cover

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Real Transformation or Mere Counterfeit?

by Mary Valvo

During his lecture on Monday morning, Dr. Michael Pucci urged us to "Get up and go!" - to stop ruminating in our pews about the many ways the body of Christ *could* transform the world and start doing it. But, he warned later that evening, it must start on an individual level: the institution known as the Church cannot transform the institutions of the world unless the individuals within the church have been fully transformed themselves. At first glance, it seems that if there were ever a place to pursue this transformation, Houghton College would certainly be it. Upon deeper reflection, however, it seems to me that Houghton's mantra, "Transforming People. Transforming the World," still falls short.

My concern is not that Houghton College isn't devoted to shaping individuals of integrity and Christian character, it is that Houghton is doing so under a counterfeit definition of transformation. Perhaps it is easy for our campus to look at the rest of the world and assume that we are transformed: after all, one doesn't typically see female students in scantily-clad outfits or hear grunts of profanity in the weight room—not like public universities of "the world." Here students can speak freely about their faith and express it as often and obviously as they want. For these qualities I am grateful, but not entirely convinced that Houghton is as much about transforming students' hearts and minds as it is their habits and outward expressions.

This counterfeit transformation takes many forms, which include but are certainly not limited to, the

Community Covenant. Because of this agreement signed by every student, our behavior doesn't (read: shouldn't) include activities like smoking, drinking, and sexual promiscuity. But if the covenant is so hotly debated, opposed and ignored, how convinced are we that these behavior-modifying attempts are bringing us any closer to bringing God's kingdom, the Gospel, and His Word to the world?

When a family member visited me one weekend last semester, we spent an enjoyable late morning together in conversation over coffee before heading up to lunch together. As I took my plate to the belt, a friend approached me and jokingly accused me of "sticking it to Jesus" because she could tell from my jeans and sneakers that I hadn't gone to church. While I was amused by her comparison of Jesus to "the man," I think what caught my attention even more was my own self-consciousness. Are people really noticing that I look like I would rather sleep in than worship God? In fact, I feel the same guilt when I forget to silently pray before every meal in the dining hall. Does this make me look less grateful than everyone else? If I slip while working in the dish-room and release an expletive so profane that it makes Ozzy Osbourne sound like Mr. Rogers, am I somehow less

of a Christian than everyone else who would have expressed their pain in less colorful language?

Perhaps Houghton College's undertaking of transforming our habits, speech, and expressions points to a deeper problem: maybe we're not that much more transformed into Christ's image than the rest of the

Anyone
can sit in a
building every
Sunday or quit
smoking, but true
transformation
involves a
lot more than
perfect Chapel
attendance and
moral habits.

world. Can you call it transformation when we're just as caught up with appearances and vain self-consciousness as Hollywood's airbrushed, anorexic world? It's much easier, I suppose, to embark on a transformation that simply involves checking off items on the "Transformed" to-do list: "Went to church even though I didn't feel like it; check! Quit smoking; check!" This isn't to say that being a disciplined Christian or giving up an addiction is easy. But is that really what it takes to be a transformed individual through and through, to be so changed by God's powerful love that the inspiration to "Get up and go!" is not just a great idea but a lifestyle?

When Dr. Pucci turned the conversation over to the audience on Monday night, one student reminded us that because we are so filled with God's love, it should overflow into every area of our lives so that we can't help but go out and do all we can to transform those around us. If that's really true then why isn't that really the case? If we really do believe that

as Christians we are plugged into the ultimate source of love that has the power to raise the dead, then why is it so difficult to imagine any other way of helping the poor than working in a third world country or raising money for them at home?

My point is not to offer numerous suggestions as to how to change the world, it is only to suggest that our preoccupation with habit transformation is inhibiting us from overcoming what appears to be a desperate need to ascribe more meaning to surface-level changes. Sponsoring an impoverished child in Africa throughout her education is wonderful, Pucci stated on Monday evening, but it doesn't change the likelihood that her only means of support upon graduation will probably be the money she makes from prostituting herself to the local coal miners.

I confess, I'm not completely sure how to solve all of the world's problems or guarantee that none of the changes I attempt to make won't backfire or completely fall apart. But something tells me that that little girl in Africa isn't waiting for me to show up for every single Bible study before I figure it out. Anyone can sit in a building every Sunday and listen to a sermon or quit smoking, but true transformation involves a lot more than perfect Chapel attendance and moral habits. Micah 6:8's command to, "Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly" is a simple but profound blueprint for change. Whether or not we use every resource, every talent, every idea to bring the details into reality is up to us.

Mary Valvo is a senior English major

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Writing in the March 12 issue of the STAR, Joel Vanderweele stated he could not shake his allowing political opportunists (call them the anti-religious right) to stoke and exploit his fears.

Let us examine some political realities. The term religious right in the US was first used in the decades following the turbulent 1960s. Evangelical Protestants and conservative Roman Catholics felt that the country was literally coming apart at the seams. Violent protests against the unpopular Vietnam War, assassinations, Watergate, and the legalization of abortion in all 50

states were just a few of the issues that caused the political awakening of what became known as the religious (or Christian) right.

For the most part, the religious right found a home in the Republican Party, where it has remained a voting bloc to this day.

The counter-point to the religious right, the "secular and religious left", is to be found mostly in the Democrat Party.

In the rough-and-tumble world of politics, any voting bloc becomes fair game for criticism. The religious right is certainly no exception. Fairness dictates though that when we as Christians criticize, we do it with open minds and hearts. We should strive to be above the petty squabbles and inter-Party power struggles that too often divide the two major political parties.

Some of the criticism leveled against the religious right is fair and

stems from this unfortunate fact: while many of its leaders claim to be Christian, their words and actions belie that fact. Followers of Christ can (and should) be held to higher standards. When we as Christians fail - especially in a public venue - we risk bringing shame and ridicule to our Lord and Savior.

The concept of human beings "falling short of the glory of God" is not new, however. It is a phenomenon that neither began with the advent of the so-called religious right, nor will it end until Christ sets up His Kingdom.

The criticisms Vanderweele cited are valid. I hope he understands, however, that for every gun sight manufacturer he lists there are probably hundreds of pro-life clinics ministering to troubled women in their time of need. Clinics that are run by people who may consider themselves part of the religious

right.

For every Christian group distributing controversial bumper stickers, there are hundreds ministering to families in trouble. Groups consisting of people who may consider themselves part of the religious right.

I hope Vanderweele also allows that the "secular and religious left" is a force to be reckoned with, and yes, even feared. During the 2008 presidential campaign, we heard the names William Ayers and Rev. Jeremiah Wright. Mr. Ayers was a founding member of the radical 1960s group Students For A Democratic Society (SDS). His group was responsible for much violence and bloodshed in the 1960s, including bombings of public buildings.

Rev. Wright, pastor of a large inner-city Chicago church, became

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From the Editor's Desk...

Welcoming the Other, Seeing Beyond Difference

by Mitch Edwards

It's Sunday morning and the Church service is about to be brought to a close. The pastor lets the last few words of the benediction slip through his mouth and your family politely excuses itself from the pew, making a b-line for the foyer doors. After a drive in the minivan that could be compared to a Jason Bourne action scene, you arrive home and your mother rushes to the kitchen to check the temperature of the pot roast. You help your sister set the table with the "fine" dishware as your father covertly catches the score of the football game. The doorbell suddenly rings—The Johnsons have arrived for Sunday dinner.

I'm guessing that many of us have experienced a similar scenario at one point or another. In Western Christian culture, the post-church lunch invitation seems to bear the same traditional authority as the Nicene Creed. Unfortunately, this act also seems to signify the extent to which we think about hospitality.

The term "Christian Hospitality" enjoys a privileged position within our society. Its recitation evokes images of opened doors, caring embraces, and warm meals. But who is usually on the other side of these images? Who is the one walking through the opened door, the one being embraced, the one receiving the warm meal? If I were to guess, the individual most likely receiving Christian hospitality is someone who shares similar characteristics

with the individuals performing the act: a new couple at Church, an old friend, a visiting missionary and her family. My point being this: how often do we show hospitality to those who are markedly different from us?

In his book, "What Would Jesus Deconstruct: The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church," John D. Caputo approaches the issue of Christian hospitality with a critical eye and a will to restore something that has gone astray. Caputo posits that most Christians show hospitality to those who "serve our pleasure or our interests." While the original meaning of hospitality was to "welcome the stranger," the phrase has been softened over time and manipulated to mean "welcoming those who you would like to be with anyway." Consequently, recipients of hospitality require an invitation to feel welcomed; an invitation being the positive result of a process by which the host selects the people he or she wants to be with. In this social equation, hospitality results from an intentional invitation.

But isn't this way of thinking about hospitality unnecessarily limiting? If we were to take hospitality seriously, for what it really means, would we not be showing hospitality to those who are noticeably different from us, those who embody the "otherness" of the stranger? Caputo passionately believes so.

If we were to take hospitality seriously, would we not be showing hospitality to those who are noticeably different from us, those who embody the "otherness" of the stranger?

Last week, my thoughts on this subject were provided realistic dimensions with the coming of two different groups to campus. In unique ways, these two groups were seemingly of the stranger's "otherness." The members of the first group to visit campus professed their sexual orientation to be either gay,

lesbian, transgender, or questioning. The majority of students on this campus profess to be heterosexual. The members of the second group to visit campus professed their identity as friars and nuns within the Franciscan Order of Roman Catholicism. The majority of students on this campus profess to be members of Protestant

denominations. While the Soulforce riders sported red t-shirts, the friars and nuns wore habits. Members of both groups were distinctly different from the majority of the Houghton community, so as to embody what we might call "The Other."

However, despite the degree to which these visiting groups embodied "The Other," it would have been terribly difficult to see the members of the groups as simply that. Through interacting with those who personify whatever "The Other" is for us, we usually come to see that intrapersonal commonalities overshadow

intrapersonal differences. For instance, when talking to Andi, one of the Equality Riders, it would have been nearly impossible for me to see her exclusively as a lesbian. Similarly, when talking to Brother Mark Merry, one of the Franciscan friars, it would have been nearly impossible for me to see him solely as a friar. This is the beauty of interacting with those who we consciously or subconsciously perceive as "The Other." Through taking the time to listen to their story, one's preconceived barriers of difference are shattered by the overriding bond of our common humanity. Just as Andi is so much more than a lesbian, Mark Merry is so much more than a friar. Everyone has a story that transcends the misleading limitedness of social categorization.

So, in talking of hospitality, let us improve upon our practice of welcoming "The Other." Let us move beyond the comfortable confines of familiarity and invite those who are markedly different from us. Caputo's hope is that we move even further beyond this by "welcoming the unwelcome," and "inviting the uninvited." This radical hospitality, or hospitality that is truer to its original meaning, will inevitably lead to the erosion of barriers which are separating us from genuinely understanding and caring for one another.

Mitch is a senior History major and is the Commentary Editor

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somewhat infamous for a sermon he preached in which he uttered the following: "... not God Bless America, but God D*** America."

What do these gentlemen (Mr. Ayers and Rev. Wright) have in common? They are not only "hard" leftists (Ayers of the secular variety and Wright of the religious), but they are close associates of our President. Barack Obama was a member of Wright's church for 20 years. Ayers was a friend and mentor of Obama's when he started out in Chicago politics.

Can we cite Ayers' and Wright's associations with the President as an undue influence of the "religious and secular" left?

In closing, let us appreciate and not bemoan the fact we have an abundance of information

sources. Unlike the days of Vietnam and Watergate with its two wire services and three major networks, there are today literally hundreds of information outlets. Politically liberal, conservative or in-between - we can find a source of information we are comfortable with. We should, however, be careful to pray for wisdom and discernment as we process information. Not every bit of news is true, just because it is "in the paper" or "on the TV."

So as we enter into and participate in the world of politics, let us take Jesus' words in Matthew 10:16 to heart: "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

- Ed Cole, Houghton College Tech Services

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Summer in the City, Oil on Canvas



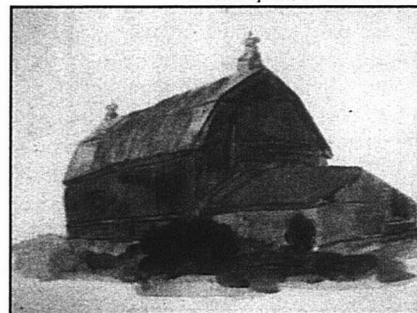
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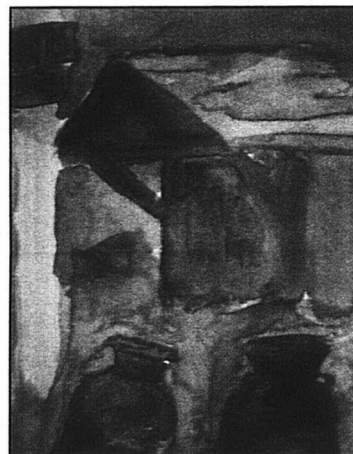
In Budapest, Oil on Panel

SARAH MAST

A note from the Artist: We are made in the image of a Creator God, therefore we must create. It doesn't matter who you are, and it doesn't matter what this looks like, but the world is too beautiful to passively sit by.



May Morning, Watercolor



At Grandma's House, Watercolor

OF THE artist WEEK

THIS SUDOKU IS
EASY

Prize: Leroy Townes and the Lone Stars' album!

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

Bring your finished sudoku puzzles to the STAR office clearly marked with FULL NAME.

THIS SUDOKU IS
**KIND OF
HARD**

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

Congratulations,
Ian Taylor,
winner of last
week's sudoku!

The Star will only accept one puzzle per student per semester.

sudoku CHALLENGE