



# THE HOUGHTON STAR

Volume 104, Issue 15

The Student Newspaper of Houghton College

February 8, 2008

## Richards Delivers Spring Hoselton Lecture on Global Warming

By Rebekah Miller

Dr. Jay W. Richards addressed the widely debated issue of climate change on Wednesday night during his lecture entitled "Environmental Stewardship and Global Warming." Speaking to concerned attendees about the implications of environmental stewardship, Richards pointedly and bluntly articulated his view on the issue of global warming, especially as it relates to economic policy and Christian morality.

Richards constructed his lecture around a series of questions. First, "Why should we care?" His answer, framed from a Christian standpoint, came from Genesis 1:28, which defines

humanity's relationship to the earth as being one of dominion. This is not, as Lynn White advocates, the domination of man over the earth, but instead the "dominion of benevolent Kings and Queens." This "basic argument of theological principles" places the care of the earth into the hands of humans, God's "vice-regents."

After expounding on the necessity of environmental stewardship, Richards outlined the three components that make up the definition of global warming: it must be shown to be catastrophic, human-induced, and involve unprecedented climate change. Richards argued that the typical proponent of global warming wrongly concludes that the temperature rise in

the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a result of increases in human-induced carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. While there is a correlation between carbon dioxide levels and temperature increase, the causation has yet to be proven. In fact, as he later put forth, carbon dioxide levels rise out of the ocean in response to rising temperature levels.

Richards then asked and answered a second series of questions. Is the earth warming? Are we the cause? Is it a bad thing? And lastly, would the slate of current slate of policy proposals make any difference? As to the actuality of a rise in temperature, Richards used widely-accepted scientific data to affirm a rise of temperature in the earth, but with severe qualifications. If

the starting point is around 1870 CE, he admitted, there is a definite temperature increase of about 0.8°C.

However, he quickly pointed out, this temperature increase is not unprecedented. A more extended view of the history of the earth's temperature reveals a significant warming period approximately 1000 years ago in the medieval era. Richards argued this era was most likely warmer than it is now, and this was before the Industrial Revolution and the greenhouse gas phenomenon, which has been blamed for the warmer temperatures of today.

This piece of data is directly connected to his second question: is the increase in temperature the fault of

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## Students, Faculty Attend Faith & International Development Conference

By Ben Tilson

From January 31 to February 2, twenty-six students and faculty members from Houghton College joined with others from around the globe at the Faith and International Development Conference, hosted at Calvin College, to share in discussion, lectures, prayer and worship focusing on the idea of sustainability in development.

At plenary sessions and in small breakout groups, professionals discussed changing worldviews, empowering the oppressed, entering into partnerships and remaining established in Christ. They gave testimony of successes and trials from work among

communities and shared their personal reflections on both foundational ideas and practical methods of engaging in community development.

Ida Mutoigo, the Director of Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, Canada, left those words – "What don't you understand about nothing? – to hang in the air as she stepped off stage on Thursday. Her message emphasized that in all of life, and specifically in the field of development, we can do nothing without Christ. This idea is embodied in John's gospel account of Christ's words following the last supper: "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can

do nothing without Me."

The goal of international development is to fundamentally change society by addressing issues of poverty and injustice. Development encompasses specific work in a range of fields from education to political advocacy to agricultural development. Individuals in the field are from grassroots movements and local ministries as well as from global political and financial institutions. Sustainability in development is the attempt to correct the fundamental issues within society that keep communities from flourishing in order to promote long-term growth. This growth is not only economic, but it includes spiritual, relational, and

political development, among its many facets.

According to Mutoigo and the other conference speakers, development is grounded in God's vision for the community. She challenged attendees to begin by asking God for His vision for the community. She continued by calling individuals to remain in the vine, to know that they are not alone, to focus on the fruit that lasts, to use appropriate tools and interventions to cultivate fruit in communities and to celebrate the work that God is doing. Houghton students found these words both challenging and encouraging; Clara Sanders, a sophomore, shared,

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## WORLD OUT THERE

By Thomas Lerew

**Women Used As Suicide Bombers**

U.S. and Iraqi officials declared that photos of two Iraqi women suicide bombers who detonated explosives that killed 100 people in a Baghdad market last week suggest the women had Down's Syndrome. Authorities speculate that the women were not aware that they were being used as suicide bombers when insurgents strapped explosives to them and wrapped them in clothing. It is believed that these women were likely chosen because the terrorists believed they would not be searched due to their disability.

**French President Sarkozy Marries Former Model**

President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, 53, married former supermodel Carla Bruni, 40, in a private ceremony last week. After divorcing his wife in October 2007, Sarkozy met and began dating Bruni in November of 2007. Miss Bruni has had relationships in the past with Mick Jagger, Eric Clapton, Donald Trump and Vincent Perez. The president becomes only the second French president to tie the knot in office, and the first since 1931.

**Microsoft Bids \$44 Billion to Buy Yahoo!**

Microsoft Corporation has offered \$44 billion to buy the popular internet search engine Yahoo!. The move could potentially unite two of the world's leading software and internet companies against Google. A legal battle is expected to be initiated by Google over Microsoft's attempted acquisition, and members of Congress have suggested that they intend to investigate the proposed deal as well. Business pundits speculated about a possible bid from Rupert Murdoch (the owner of *Fox News* and *The Wall Street Journal*), but Murdoch has said that he will not be making any offers.

**U.S. Loses Jobs for First Time Since 2003**

January marked the first month for an overall net loss of American jobs since 2003. An estimated 17,000 jobs were lost, putting even more pressure on Congress to pass a stimulus plan that some economists predict will add 70,000 jobs to the U.S. economy. The House passed a version of the stimulus package last week, but the process is being held up. The Senate has proposed their own version of the plan, adding \$45 billion on for seniors and other specific economically-disadvantaged groups.

**President Bush Proposes \$3.1 Trillion Budget**

President Bush laid out his final federal budget of his time in office on Monday, with the final figure totaling \$3.1 trillion. The budget marked the eleventh straight year of increased funding for the Pentagon, and also freezes domestic spending, including cuts for Medicare and Medicaid. The budget is expected to add an additional \$407 billion to the national debt, and is not expected to pass the largely Democratic Congress, as it is already offering sharp criticisms of the plan.

**Fighting Erupts in the Nation of Chad**

Violence erupted in Ndjamena, Chad last weekend as rebels attempted to overthrow the government by force. The fighting has continued this week as thousands of residents fled in fear. The UN Security Council has denounced the rebels for stirring up trouble in an already fragile country that has been overrun with refugees from Sudan, where the ongoing conflict in Darfur is a continual concern. French President Nicolas Sarkozy has suggested that if the fighting continues, France may step in to help return order to the former French colony.

**Houghton Indoor Track Team Sets Records, Prepares for Outdoor Season**

Benjamin Tsujimoto

Often overlooked as a winter sport, the Houghton Track & Field team has performed exceptionally in its first three events. After the RIT Invitational, the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Colgate University Class of 1932 Indoor Track & Field Invitational, and the RIT Black and Orange Invitational, twenty-three personal records and two Houghton College records have been set by the 2008 Highlander squad, the largest assembled in Houghton history. In addition, sophomore Kaitlin Fadden, an NAIA Outdoor Track National Championship participant last May, and the men's 4x400m relay have both earned automatic qualification to compete in the NAIA Indoor National Championships held in Johnson City, Tennessee. Coach Bob Smalley admits

that, while the indoor track season serves as a tune-up before the outdoor season for the fifty-three athletes, the team strives to be competitive.

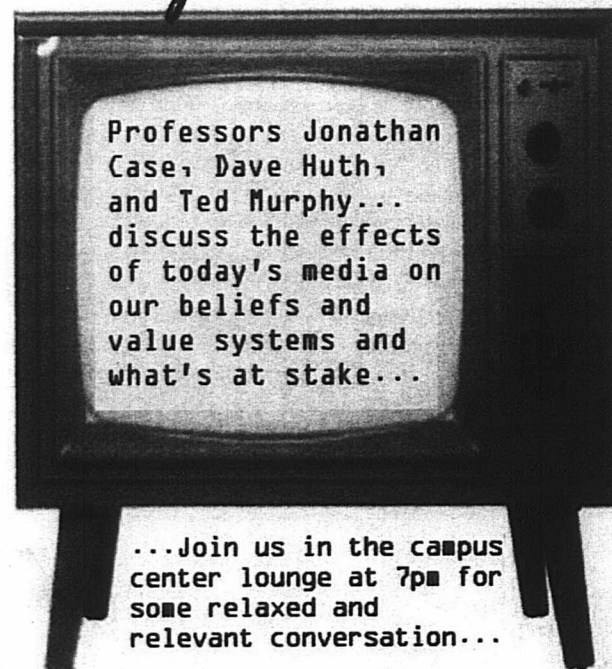
The sister of 2007 Houghton graduate and national championship participant Ryan Fadden, Kaitlin Fadden achieved her automatic bid at the RIT Black and Orange Invitational by finishing the 5,000 meter race in 18:18.89. Not only did she qualify for the national tournament, but she shattered the previous 5k Houghton record held by Naomia Castellani since 1993. While Fadden's early invite to Nationals surprised even her, she remains focused on the challenges ahead. "To me, it's actually easier to stay motivated now that I've qualified," Fadden admits. "Maybe it's partly out of fear; there are so many amazing runners running

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# CULTURE

# February 11th

# STATIC



Professors Jonathan Case, Dave Huth, and Ted Murphy... discuss the effects of today's media on our beliefs and value systems and what's at stake...

...Join us in the campus center lounge at 7pm for some relaxed and relevant conversation...

hosted by Stephen Haras, Kyle Vitale, and Dan White





# Super Tuesday: Despite 24 State Contests, Both Parties Race On

By Jason Fisher

Super-Duper Tuesday proved to be less helpful in painting a clear picture of the presidential races than anticipated. Prior to Tuesday, most felt that Senator John McCain had captured the Republican race barring a massive meltdown. The Democrats had narrowed their contest down to two candidates, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, with the hopes that Tuesday's nation-wide primaries would produce a front-runner. After the returns were in, however, it was clear that we are back where we started. McCain will still most likely secure the Republican nomination but didn't score big enough to convince his competitors to drop out, while the race between Clinton and Obama is as close as ever.

Some of the more interesting storylines came from the two legitimate Republican candidates trailing McCain. While many considered the Republican contest a two-man race between

McCain and Mitt Romney heading into Tuesday, Mike Huckabee's surprising resurgence makes him at least as viable a candidate as Romney. Huckabee won some tight races in the south, including Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. The first significant news of Tuesday was, in fact, Huckabee's win in West Virginia, a state that Romney expected to take. The former governor's poor performance didn't end in West Virginia, though. Romney also lost some of the larger states like California and Missouri in which he was expected to be more competitive.

Senator John McCain, meanwhile, maintained his lead and momentum. While not as decisive a victory as some predicted, McCain carried nine of the twenty-one states up for grabs on Tuesday. According to the Associated Press, McCain earned a total of 703 delegates compared to Romney's 269 and Huckabee's 190 by the end of Tuesday's contests. Charles Black, McCain's senior strategist, puts his

total delegate count at 775 and claims that it is mathematically impossible for either Romney or Huckabee to catch him at this point. Many pundits have speculated that McCain will attempt to place Huckabee on the ticket to shore up the southern and evangelical vote. Other names being mentioned include Rep. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Florida governor Charlie Crist.

While Republicans can settle down into some sense of finality, the same certainly cannot be said for the Democrats and their supporters. In the week leading up to Tuesday, many projected Obama to surge past Clinton in delegate-rich states like California and Massachusetts. Despite losing Massachusetts by fifteen points and faring poorly in California, Obama won a symbolic victory by winning thirteen states to Clinton's eight.

When we went to the press, estimates differed over how many delegates had been won by Sens. Clinton and Obama. Clinton out-pollled Obama by fewer than

100,000 votes nationwide, re-enforcing the notion that the Democratic race is a dead heat. Looking forward, Obama is favored in the upcoming events in Louisiana, Virginia, Washington, Maryland, and D.C. Polls indicate that Clinton is sitting on a lead in the most significant states remaining, Texas and Ohio, who go to the polls on March 4.

Nearly 25 million people voted in primaries across the country, which certainly reflects well upon the health of the democratic process in America. However, the Democrats have more reason to be excited than the Republicans. When the numbers are split, the disproportionate nature of the vote become clear. 14.6 million Democrats went to the polls on Tuesday compared to only 9 million Republicans. While this obviously hints towards a much higher enthusiasm amongst Democrats compared to their Republican counterparts, it is too soon to predict whether a similar pattern will be seen in November.

*Track Team continued from page 2*  
at Nationals that it can be intimidating, and I think that helps keep me motivated." Lost in the spotlight of Fadden's achievement is the school record broken by freshman Heather Sayre in the same race. Running the 5k in 18:24.16, Sayre finished fourth and has a promising future.

Also, the men's distance medley relay (DMR) team, comprised of senior Steve Scott, freshman Johnny Kimani, senior Josiah Snelgrove, and junior Dan Ballard, ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in the NAIA with a time of 10:25.60, therefore qualifying

for the National Championship in March. Each individual in the event runs a different distance; the first competitor runs 1,200 meters, the second sprints 400, the third runs 800, and the anchor

finishes with 1,600 meters. While injuries are hindering Snelgrove, the DMR team appears poised to make a strong showing at Nationals.

While Fadden and the men's DMR team are guaranteed participation, the NAIA allows three male and three female athletes from each school, providing they surpass the minimum standard for National qualification, to attend the national tournament as

**To enter the outdoor season in prime condition, the team has emphasized both mental and physical toughness.**

a 'rite of entry.' So far, Highlander women are eligible to reach Nationals provisionally in five events: Darby Emerson has qualified in both the 800m and the 1,000m, Sarah Whipple has met the national standard for the 55m high hurdles, Naomi Christensen reached the required time in the 400m, and finally, the women's 4x400 relay

team of Emerson, Christensen, Lydia Parsons, and Kaitlin Smith achieved provisional status as well. While all of these athletes are capable of competing nationally, only three will be allowed to participate if they do not reach automatic qualification prior to March 6<sup>th</sup>.

While Coach Smalley and the team are pleased with these individual and team performances, there is little time to bask in success as the outdoor season rapidly approaches. To enter the season in prime condition, the coaching staff has emphasized both mental and physical toughness. In addition to the grueling daily workouts, each individual may enhance performance by perfecting fundamentals and becoming more comfortable in each event.

Christensen, the Houghton record-holder in the 55m, 200m, and 400m indoor events, explains her methods for improvement. "I never ran track before my sophomore year of college, so I

started out basically knowing nothing about sprinting," she said. "Learning how to come out of the blocks has helped me a lot with shorter sprints. Also, learning how to deal with the mental and physical pain of a 400m dash has helped me to run it faster. It really is a mental game." The senior has gained valuable perspective following an injury in the second outdoor meet last spring; she competes with the same intensity both indoor and outdoor because she understands the physical obstacles and possible misfortunes that a collegiate athlete faces.

With four meets scheduled before Nationals, the automatic qualifiers will strive to remain healthy and improve their times, while other members will work to trim their times to reach the national standard. Once the indoor season draws to a close, Houghton College will host two invitational meets in April as the squad seeks to achieve national acclaim.



## Art Review: Plot Influential—A National Printmaking Exhibit

By Stefan Zoller

One of the unique and intrinsic characteristics of printmaking is the ability to produce the same image again and again. Unlike a painting or sculpture, which are one-of-a-kind pieces of art, printmaking allows for a work to be seen in many different places simultaneously. The new show at the Örtlip Gallery, comprised of 26 images by 24 artists, is centered on the disease-like way in which prints—and thus ideas—can be spread from person to person. This ambiguous theme allowed for infinite interpretations by the artists, while at the same time providing a thread to tie them together loosely. Most major printmaking processes are represented throughout Plot Influential (many pieces utilize several), adding further to the show's variety and strength.

Drew Iwaniw's silkscreen "Satan's Little Helper" finds success with its quick and exquisite lines, hinting at the sensibilities of Gonzo artist Ralph Steadman as well as urban graffiti artists. The energy and movement

in Iwaniw's slashing, blood-red line creates a sinister mood, further enhanced by the tooth-like forms attached to a crude but menacing skull. Satellite dishes, telephone poles, and cables crown the skull in Golgotha-inspired silhouettes, giving the piece an environmental/political edge.

Houghton art faculty and resident printmaker Jillian Sokso contributed two pieces to Plot Influential, both of which display her skills as a collagist and colorist. In "From the Vine," a silkscreen and collagraph, the violently hewn shape of a black bird descends upon a passive, open-beaked silhouette of another. Printed overtop are textured forms of flowers and grain along with sections of textile patterns in gold and green. "Who Told You That You Were Naked," another silkscreen and collagraph, also uses a combination of recognizable forms juxtaposed with abstracted patterns. Using horizontal orientation, a dark rectilinear bar centers the piece and gives it a symmetrical composition. Overlaid are crimson apples and a slew of partially obscured serpentine lines.



Iwaniw's "Satan's Little Helper."

Isadora Bullock's mystic etching "Utopia" is an excellent display of the distinct subtleties and line quality so prized in etchings. Forms similar to trees, beehives, and water ripples are placed thoughtfully amongst dense constellations of short, delicate marks. Bullock achieves the loose precision

of a Rembrandt, while referencing the surrealist leanings and compositional elements of Miró and Gorky.

Scott Stephen's photo-intaglio and cyanotype "Untitled" is perhaps the most somber and silencing piece in the entire show. The top third shows a picture of a door, chained and locked shut. Its near-perfect symmetry and hard edged geometry create excellent contrast with that of the smaller image immediately below it—another door chained shut, but covered with creeping vines and vegetation. This picture is surrounded by bold brushstrokes and drips which lead the eye downward to an image of a single feather.

Plot Influential possesses only a couple of low points, which are more generic than bad. The woodcuts of John Hitchcock and Bedrich Kocman pale in comparison to the freshness and vitality seen in the rest of the show. Seen as a whole, however, Plot Influential holds an excellent variety of technique, style, and subject matter, which proves to be its most substantial asset.

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"The conference really challenged lots of my ideas of development, challenging me to think about why we as Christians desire this change in the world."

The challenge came not only from speakers, but also during periods set aside for talking with other attendees. Friday and Saturday lunches offered opportunities to sit at tables designated for discussion on particular subjects. At these tables, students met to discuss topics like "Community Based Healthcare," "The Role of Indigenous Women in Sustainable Development Programs," and "Mobilizing College Campuses." Houghton professors Dr. Ndunge Kiiti, Dr. Paul Shea and Dr. Ron Oakerson each led table discussions.

Networking with organizations took place throughout the conference. Display tables were set-up where attendees

could speak with representatives from various organizations about specific programs, internship opportunities, as well as ask deeper questions about field work.

Major organizations represented at the conference included World Vision, the Mennonite Central Committee, and World Hope International. There were also some lesser-known organizations present, such as the Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization (ECHO), an agriculture research organization offering study and internship opportunities for students interested in the intersection of science and global issues. Micah Challenge, a global Christian network of organizations that are seeking to keep global leaders accountable to poverty reduction agreements, was also present and shared about supporting development through prayer and

advocacy.

The Houghton participants were encouraged to see that many other college students share their vision and desire pertaining to development. Junior Briana Shaffer reflected the group's sentiments: "[The conference] allowed us to establish relationships with other college students who share the same passion to bear the fruit of Christ as we live among the broken of the world."

Plenary speakers also emphasized the theme of bearing fruit for Christ. Erno Jean Louis, a Haitian businessman, insisted that students can be the "new missionaries... creating jobs for people." He shared his personal story of beginning a company in Haiti and later using the stability and resources of his company to help other Haitians begin businesses. His company is a "shelter" for new businesses where owners can

learn business management skills. When the new businesses are safely established, they are released from Erno's shelter company and allowed to grow independently, creating jobs for more Haitians, many in some of the poorest and most dangerous parts of the country. Success stories like Erno's encouraged students with the hope that they can make a difference in the world.

"[W]hen ones tries to think about such things it can be overwhelming and almost like the whole situation is hopeless," said junior Jaadin VanAmburg, "but with all that [the speakers] talked about and hearing all that is already taking place to change things, it seems possible that we can and will make a difference...We can start small with changing little actions ourselves [and move] to trying to get our campus more aware of issues."





## A Christian Economic Model In Chapel? Oh, No — Not Again!

A reader responds to the chapel message delivered on Wednesday, February 8 by Dr. Jay Richards, who later delivered the Hoselton Lecture in the evening.

By Meic Pearse

Having made myself unpopular last semester for my comments in these pages on the ridiculous arguments of one chapel speaker (After the Big Swoosh) concerning Nike and child labor, it was strange to hear exactly that topic addressed in chapel again on Wednesday. This time, though, Jay Richards of the Acton Institute showed how thoughtless attempts to legislate child labor away can make things much worse, and that attention to our (westerners') own history on this topic would make us more prudent.

Still, Richards' chapel talk left me feeling uneasy, rather than vindicated. His economic analysis is dead right — but that's not the point. My question is: What does his 'sermon' have to do with worshiping God, or with biblical instruction? And the answer, frankly, is "nothing at all."

His late-in-the-show reference to Gen. 1:26-27 was a mere rhetorical

flourish, and his application (God is a creator; we are made in His image; so we are and should be wealth creators) was as much of an exegetical stretch as the pleas of Ol' Swooshie that Jesus' command to his disciples to care for the poor somehow translates into socialist public policies. Neither of these dishonest arguments works at all.

The fact is, Richards' case for a market economy makes sense simply in its own terms. I've believed that since reading Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose* a quarter of a century ago: it was an unanswerable argument, and so I recognized my own youthful socialism for the mere adolescent posturing that it undoubtedly was. Everything I've observed since has confirmed the rightness of that change of mind, and the self-defeating folly of socialist projects. But I can't claim that this view of mine is somehow distinctly *Christian*. To insinuate, as Richards does, that free markets are somehow 'biblical' is as dishonest as

the arguments of the assorted leftist whingers who, until Wednesday at least, seemed to have a monopoly on being invited to speak at Houghton.

In favor of Richards' (and my) economic views, Christians might point out that free markets keep a tight connection between an individual's actions and outcomes — so helping us to own responsibility and keeping us moral. Trading relationships foster mutual interdependence, and so a vested interest in the well-being of people who are quite unlike ourselves — thereby promoting harmony. And they discourage unnecessary dependency and sloth. But even I can think of counter-arguments to each one of those points; my adherence to them is a mere balance-of-disadvantages judgment.

In truth, there is no 'Christian' economic model — any more than there is a Christian legal framework, or style of music, or Christian politics. And that for the very prosaic reason that Christianity is not a basis for running

society-as-a-whole; it is a transcendent calling and a personal commitment to discipleship. To claim otherwise is to deny what Christianity is, and what the church is. Jesus taught that "My kingdom is not of this world," but Christians ever since then (OK: since the fourth century) have competed to sneak an ankle around the leg of the throne to that kingdom, and to quietly shuffle it under their own behinds and their own projects.

Of course Christians can participate in public, economic and cultural life (otherwise, what on earth am I doing being a professor?) and, when they do so, they will — or should — bring distinctively Christian insights to bear on what they do and the contributions they bring. And they will exhibit Christian behavior as they do so. But they will not have any illusions that some one particular model for human affairs is 'biblical'. This side of the *eschaton*, we have only 'better' and 'worse.'

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human action? The popular stance has been that, as a result of the Industrial Revolution, carbon dioxide output has increased and trapped the heat inside of the Earth's atmosphere, which has caused a rise in temperature. Richards argued that although carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas, it is insignificant when compared to other greenhouse gases produced such as water vapor. While in a controlled, scientific environment carbon dioxide has been shown to trap heat, our atmosphere is diverse in its contents and much is still unknown about its functions and interactions. Additionally, there are other possible causes of the rise in temperature, such as increased solar activity.

The third and "little-considered" question posed by Richards considered whether global warming, if it is taking place, can be shown to be a definitively bad thing. In any kind of interaction,

he stated, there are always trade-offs. Some places may be intolerably hot or suffer under draught. However, the colder places will warm up, and the increased amount of carbon dioxide lends more food to plants and thus aids with food production. As some suffer, others will benefit. Currently a resident of another dreary Michigan winter, Richards humorously quipped, "I actually think [global warming] would be better."

Even if we agreed that global warming was a bad phenomenon, Richards posed a last question to the audience: "Would the presently advised policies make any difference?" His immediate answer was no, citing the Kyoto protocol. This UN-sanctioned agreement enforced a mandatory cut in carbon dioxide emissions for the countries who signed. While the U.S. Senate rejected this proposal 95-0, Richards pointed out that many countries signed

the agreement in hopes to lower emissions by 5% from levels in 1990. Many experts predict that if the plan was fully implemented, temperatures in 2050 would have dropped a mere 0.07°C, a number that is "statistically undetectable." Along with such a minimal difference, the plan would cost the global economy anywhere between \$10 and \$50 trillion.

Richards compared the cost of the Kyoto plan with a worldwide water sanitation system that would be a relative bargain at \$200 billion. "These are the kinds of things you have to weigh," he said. When it comes to making policy addressing global warming, it is necessary to "think really, really hard." It is not enough, he argued, to simply have good intentions. Richards offered no alternative policy proposals that could effectively deal with global warming. He did not specify, however, whether or not he felt that substantive

policy was actually needed.

Richards expressed his hope that the audience would leave "being able to... recognize there are separate and distinct issues to global warming." While environmental concerns are high priority for many prosperous countries, there are still poverty-stricken countries where much of the population is only trying to find the next meal. Richards argued we should help other countries become more prosperous so that they can rearrange their priorities as well. There is more at stake in the world, he stated, than a slight raise in temperature.

Richards also emphasized real-world solutions and in-depth thinking that considers long-term effects and subtle implications. Concern for national environmental policies pales in comparison to concern for the contaminated river in the backyards of many Americans.



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## Smoking: The Last Prejudice

Weighed against other members of the Evil Trinity of Sin, smoking is comparatively innocuous. Why prohibit it?

By Peter Meilaender

The college faculty recently voted to endorse the revised guidelines on dancing proposed by the Community Life Taskforce. The Taskforce also has plans to review college recommendations with respect to alcohol. Yet according to Taskforce members, there are no serious plans to reconsider the prohibition on the last member of the Evil Trinity of Sin, smoking.

How can this be? According to my sources, Taskforce members regarded the smoking ban as a matter about which there is simply no debate and which is therefore in need of no review. This is unfortunate, because of the Big Three Thou-Shalt-Nots, the prohibition on smoking clearly has least justification. (For those whose suspicions are being raised, let me say that I have never been a smoker and have no secret longing to become one. Though I admit that pipes have a certain flair.)

I myself think that theological objections to any and all alcohol consumption are misguided. Like the rest of creation, alcohol can be used appropriately and inappropriately, and if an adult wishes to have a beer or a glass of wine with his or her meal, I have no objection. I would therefore relax the somewhat ambiguous prohibition on drinking by faculty and staff. Nevertheless, there are ample reasons for maintaining a dry campus. Alcohol use among students, even those of legal age, can be tremendously disruptive to the life of a college. Student drinking has a host of negative consequences, ranging from sickness and hangovers to wasted weekends (pun intended) to emotional and psychological harms, especially those resulting from an increase in casual sex, which frequently accompanies alcohol use. All of these detract significantly from a college's ability to perform its academic function. Even if one had no

moral qualms whatsoever about alcohol use, its academic consequences among students more than justify having a dry campus.

There are also serious reasons that might justify a prohibition on dancing. The effects of dancing on academic life are more indirect than those of drinking, but they are not negligible. I attended a college located, like Houghton, in an extremely poor and rural area, where nearly the only forms of weekend social entertainment for students were the dances sponsored by fraternities. I am not yet too old to remember the sort of dancing in which twenty-year-olds tend spontaneously to engage. And we cannot think seriously about such dancing unless we recognize that it, like the music it accompanies, is for the most part extremely sexual. That, after all, is precisely what makes it so much fun. Probably no force is more powerful in the lives of young men and women than eros. We tend not to take dancing very seriously, I think, because we tend not to take eros (or, for that matter, music) very seriously. The potent ability of eros to wreck young lives would be grounds enough for caution. But eros also disrupts academic life. We can be grateful when it does so in tame ways--the young man who misses most of a lecture while trying to catch the eye of that cute young woman two seats over. We should beware more severe disruptions--the young woman unable to complete her assignments out of distress over a pleasant flirtation that escalated into a now-regretted sexual encounter. As it happens, I support the recommendations to permit some student dancing. But it will affect academic life, and there are at least plausible grounds why one might wish to restrict it.

But smoking? Smoking is the only member of the Evil Trinity of Sin that has absolutely no repercussions for academic life whatsoever. It interferes with the functioning of the college

neither directly, as drinking can, nor indirectly, as dancing might (and drinking certainly does). Furthermore, unlike both drinking and dancing, smoking threatens harm to no one other than the smoker. Any concerns about second-hand smoke are easily met by banning smoking in public buildings, as the college would certainly do. The solitary smoker standing 20 yards from the nearest building during a Houghton February surely does no damage to this academic community at all. Indeed, the experience is its own punishment. The prohibition on smoking can appeal only to unadulterated paternalism for its justification. There are excellent reasons for a ban on student drinking, and plausible ones for a ban on student dancing. But there are no good reasons for a ban on smoking by those of legal age.

The real reason, of course, why there is no debate about the smoking prohibition has nothing to do with academics or the purposes of a college and little to do with morality at all. There is no debate about it because in this respect Houghton has failed to rise above the prejudices of the age. There is one group remaining in American society that it is perfectly respectable--indeed, socially praiseworthy--to persecute under cover of law: smokers. In a bizarre act of displacement, our contemporaries, increasingly relativist in their morals, have transferred all the crusading zeal of an earlier era to stamping out this offense against the idol of the age, Fitness.

Pity the poor smoker, the last acceptable object of bigotry. Not for long, though. In recent years we have learned that red wine, tea, coffee, even chocolate are good for you. Can tobacco be far behind?

*Peter is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Houghton College.*





## Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor,

As I was perusing the Bible the other day, I stumbled upon a verse that is familiar to all on Houghton's campus, 1 Peter 2:17, "...Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." (NIV) This verse didn't particularly surprise me, as I have seen it proudly displayed many times, covering the hairy backs of Shen Men for four years now. What did surprise me was that the 'k' in king was lowercase - judging from the shirts, I thought the upper-case 'King' was a reference to the Big King (not to be confused with the BK King, or Dr. King, for that matter). Taking a look at the context, it seems to be instead calling for submission to the leader of an earthly nation, and in some translations even reads "emperor," leaving little room for other interpretation. Now, of course I'm not saying we shouldn't honor God, nor am I lobbying for nationalism, but come on Shen, get it right!

To close on a positive note, let me talk about cookies. I enjoy the cookies at lunch; they make such an easy snack on the walk to my 1:15 p.m. class. Freshness, gooey centers and consistent quality make these one of my favorite desserts that Pioneer offers (#1 on the list, of course, is that fudge cake). However, did anyone else notice that one type of cookie was missing last semester for no good reason? Yes, I am talking about the school-favorite chocolate chip cookies. It seemed they only had those discs of goodness once a month, which isn't nearly enough to satisfy my craving. But this semester, rejoice! - the cookies are back to their biweekly status (that is, if you're fast enough to grab one before I do). Thanks, Pioneer, you got it right.

Sincerely,

Tristan McCray, Class of 2008

From the Editors' Desk...

## Time to Light(en) Up

Houghton's smoking ban is bad policy and unnecessarily punishes the unfortunate smokers among us.

By William Airhart

I've never been much of a smoker. A pack of cigarettes can be a pricey expenditure, and my teeth are already slightly yellowed from drinking too much coffee. I can't even imagine the hysterics that my mother would go through if she found out that I had taken up smoking. No, I have to admit: smoking is not something that I find appealing.

But I have friends at Houghton who *do* find it appealing. Much to their chagrin, however, Houghton has forbidden students from smoking altogether. It's a dreadful policy that isn't needed, with a rationale that doesn't hold up under scrutiny. (If you haven't already had the pleasure, please take a moment to glance at Prof. Meilaender's article on the same topic on the adjoining page.)

It's simple, really: smoking is its own punishment. In the state of New York, for example, smokers can expect to pay at least \$1.50 in taxes per pack of cigarettes. Travel to New York City, and you'll see that tax more than double. These taxes, in turn, pay for everything from road repair to health coverage for children. We can no longer discriminate based on race, gender, sexual preference, or social class, but we can still force those unfortunate smokers among us to pay exorbitant fees to fund our street maintenance. A recent report on National Public Radio highlighted another inadvertent punishment that society places upon smokers: smokers tend to receive poorer medical treatment compared to their non-smoking counterparts. They even die younger, helping us offset the rising costs of health coverage for seniors. Self-inflicted punishment, indeed! What cruel person would wish to punish these poor souls any further?

We're all familiar with the dramatic ill effects of smoking on our health.

But it is inappropriate for Houghton to prohibit and further penalize individuals who are already being significantly penalized for choosing to engage in a legal activity. Naturally, we don't want our students to smoke, and we'd like to encourage them to quit. If a student is dumb enough to ignore the dangerous effects of smoking, however, then they're certainly willing to smoke covertly while at Houghton. By forcing these students into the dark, they stay beyond our sphere of influence, and we never have the opportunity to dissuade them from smoking. Indeed, students with a more serious addiction will likewise be more willing to seek out treatment if there is no possibility of discipline.

Despite the mean-spirited nature of our prohibition, however, I'm sympathetic to the argument, that Houghton should ban smoking precisely because it is unhealthy. With such serious long-term consequences, one could argue, it would be irresponsible for Houghton *not* to prohibit smoking. After all, we're trying to produce *well-rounded* scholar-servants who have healthy minds, bodies and hearts, right? Doesn't smoking detract from that goal?

If only Houghton took such an argument seriously. As we pick on smokers, we turn a blind eye to all of our students who rarely exercise and/or grossly overeat. Poor dietary habits during college, equally as damaging as smoking, lead to unnecessary weight gain and encourage behavioral patterns that are difficult to break. With this weight gain comes a boatload of serious health consequences, including increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and diabetes, and decreased sexual performance, among a myriad of other

problems. In fact, a good argument can be made that the short- and medium-term effects of overeating are much worse than that of smoking.

I'm not arguing that enjoying a delicious double bacon cheeseburger from Big Al's shouldn't be allowed. (Though you might want to consider a cigarette instead.) Just as we shouldn't monitor students' smoking habits, we shouldn't monitor their dietary habits, either. We should encourage students to lead healthy lives by encouraging them to eat well and to avoid smoking—but we shouldn't force them to do either. I suspect that Houghton turns a blind eye to overeating because it's impolite. (We wouldn't want to hurt anyone's feelings!)

Despite possible ill effects, we don't monitor the dietary habits of students. Why do we monitor their smoking habits?

In a crude twist, though, we pick on smokers because it's easy. This seems to me to be the perfect example of bad policy.

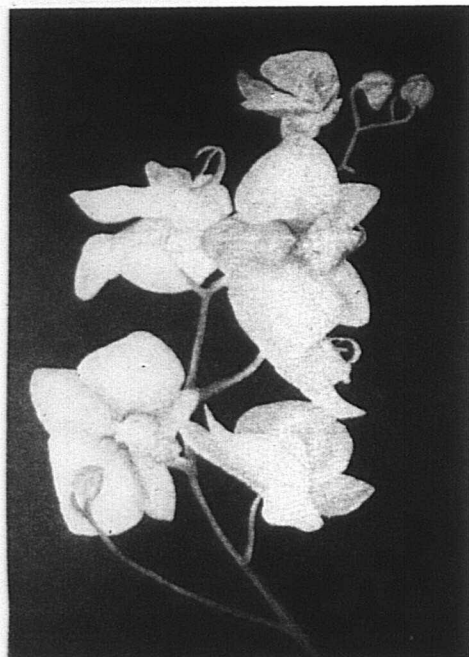
To be clear, I'm not suggesting that Houghton should encourage students to start smoking inside of classrooms, bumming cigarettes off strangers, or congregating outside of the Campus Center before chapel. I can even imagine a reasonable policy that doesn't allow students to smoke on campus, period. But we need to stop discriminating against smokers because it's easy or popular, and we need to get over our prejudices and hang-ups about smoking. The Wesleyan tradition, after all, is not remarkable because of an opposition to smoking. (Or because of an opposition to alcohol, by the way; but alas, I've run out of space.)

William is a senior Political Science major and serves as editor-in-chief.



featured  
artwork

ARRYN  
PRINCE



Orchids, oil painting

Note from the artist:

Art is a universal language. No matter where you are or what language you speak, you can always communicate something through art. One of my favorite things in a piece of art is the color. I love the emotion that color can express. I love the lively and gestural strokes from a brush, and the forms that shape a clay pot. It is so neat to be a part of art and make creations, being both inspired and trying to inspire others. I am so thankful for the gifts God has given me. I hope that eventually, through my work, God will use me to reach out to others. Hebrews 13:20-21 "May the God of peace equip you with everything good for doing His will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever."

Arryn is an Art major with a concentration in Ceramics.



Embers, oil painting

SUDOKU  
CHALLENGE

Submit completed puzzles with your name at the Star office. One correct puzzle will be selected at random and the winner will receive a Sudoku puzzle book!

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This week's puzzle is by Eric Liddle, a freshman Math and Computer Science major from Albion, N.Y.

He is currently in London, but remains a diehard Sabres fan.

Answer to last week's crossword puzzle is printed to the left.

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