

THE HOUGHTON STAR

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Organizational Sustainability Task Force Prepares Recommendations for College

by Joel VanderWeele

Next Tuesday, the Organizational Sustainability (OS) Taskforce will announce 14-15 recommendations regarding the financial future of the college to faculty and staff in the third installment of the "State of the College" series. According to President Shirley Mullen, the "recommendations will be stated very generally; by November 15 or December 1 those things will be made more specific."

The OS Taskforce was commissioned in May and has been working since June to formulate recommendations aimed at "putting the college on a trajectory of financial sustainability, so year after year we don't need to piece together a budget," said Mullen.

Although they are responding to financial stresses recently brought on by the recession, the group hopes to address short-term losses in a way which achieves long-term sustainability and contributes to the college's flourishing.

"I'm very sympathetic to the worries that are out there now but I really believe that it's a very hopeful moment, not a dire moment. It's urgent, not panicked," insisted Mullen.

The focus of the recommendations will be on strengthening the "infrastructure commensurate with the kind of education students expect," said Mullen, "not luxury and not chasing the rankings."

Efrain Rivera, the new Vice President for Finance and Administration and co-chair

of the OS Taskforce, provided the financial context for the taskforce's recommendations on Monday at the second installment of the "State of the College" series. Providing financial data from the last decade, Rivera showed that past years of financial surplus were largely the result of gifts solicited from advancement and significant returns on the endowment. Years in which those two sources of financial support were down, expenses outpaced revenue and Houghton struggled to balance the ledgers.

Mullen and Rivera hope that these financial trends will change in order to give the school more flexibility when deciding what to

Sustainability cont'd on page 2

Bridging the Gap with Field Work: Prof. Ron Oakerson

by Emily Rinehart

Professor Ron Oakerson, Houghton resident since 1992, is glad to be out of the Dean's office and back in the classroom full-time. Since leaving the Dean's office, he has become a part of two departments: History and Political Science, and Intercultural Studies – in particular, international development.

During his years spent fulfilling the duties of Academic Dean, Prof. Oakerson had continued to teach classes in international development. This experience is part of what moved him towards leading a cohort of Houghton students on a 2009 Mayterm trip to Sierra Leone. While working both as dean and as a faculty member, Prof. Oakerson soon recognized the need for field experience – for a bridge between what's learned in the classroom and what exists in the real world – particularly for students studying international development. When the opportunity for field study in Sierra Leone came up, he was quick to capitalize. He found the Sierra Leone trip especially appealing because of its link with World Hope International, a faith-based relief and development organization which seeks to alleviate suffering and injustice through education, enterprise and community health. World Hope gave Prof. Oakerson and the rest of the Mayterm group rare access to government and tribal leaders. According to Prof. Oakerson, this sort of experience fills in the gaps to produce a truly educated student; application is priceless. He hopes all of Houghton's faculty will come to agree with him, and feel motivated to create more opportunities for student field experience.

Prof. Oakerson's favorite class

Oakerson cont'd on page 3

Students, Faculty Adjust to Four Credit System

by Adam Kneeland

After over a year of planning and preparation, Houghton has officially transitioned from a three to a four-credit based system. The change, intended to lighten the course loads of faculty and enable students to take fewer classes per semester, was officially approved in the 2007-2008 school year.

The switch wasn't equally complicated for every department: the science, philosophy, and intercultural studies departments were all essentially on the four-credit system as early as 2006. But there was a flurry of departmental meetings as each department reworked the Integrative Studies (IS) requirements and tried to ensure that no seniors would find themselves with no option but to stay for an extra year of schooling.

Professor Stephen Woolsey of the English department says that the change is, in part, "an attempt to simplify things" after receiving feedback from students who felt like they were going in "seven directions at once." It is a change, says Professor Marcus Dean, "from breadth to depth."

But if class length had been the only thing to change, then the required number of hours for each major would have increased, hence the reordering of IS and major requirements, credit hour limits, and curriculum. In some

Four Credit cont'd on page 2

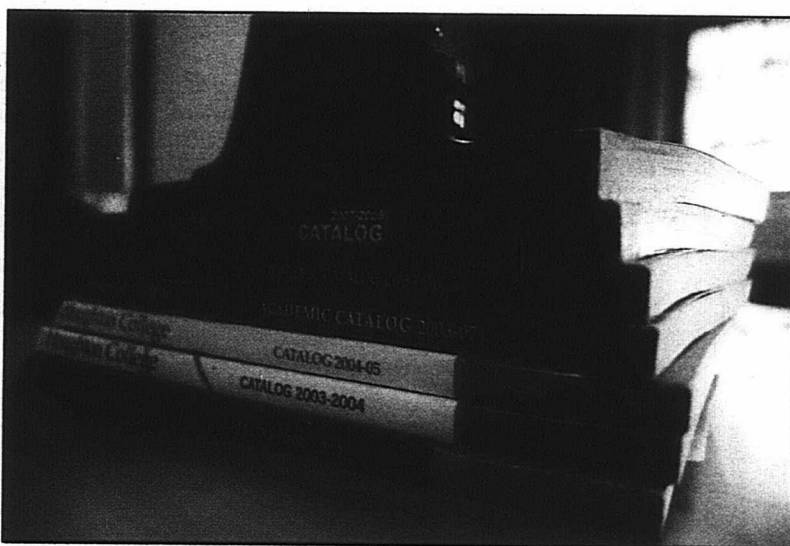


photo by Wesley Dean

This year, Houghton transitioned from a three to a four-credit based system.

Next Week: The *Star* goes digital at www.houghtonstar.com

THE WORLD TO THERE

by Joel VanderWeele

President Obama Delivers First Speech to UN General Assembly

On Wednesday, Pres. Obama made his first address to the United Nations General Assembly. He said that global issues exist and are grave, but that the United States cannot fix all of the world's conflicts independently. Obama said that he was "well aware" of his expectations of his position as president of the United States, but that all nations bear responsibility for conflict resolution because we "share a common future." Among the four pillars of global challenges were economic crises, climate change, peace and security, and the rise of nuclear use.

Gadhafi Slams United Nations Security Council

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi delivered a rambling address before the United Nations on Wednesday, attacking both the U.N. Security Council and the United States. At one point, Gadhafi called the permanent seats on the Security Council, held by the United States, Russia, China, France, and Britain, a "contradiction of the preamble [of the United Nations]." The speech, which took one hour and 36 minutes, also called for unity in facing climate change and food shortages.

Georgia Floods Kill Nine

Governor Sonny Perdue declared a state of emergency when serious flooding in Georgia killed nine people earlier this week. State Insurance Commissioner John Oxendine estimated that the flooding has caused an estimated \$250 million in losses. President Obama assured governor Perdue that his request for federal aid would receive prompt attention. The waters have started to recede, but parts of northwest and south-central Georgia, as well as the metro Atlanta area, were still under flood warnings on Wednesday.

Pope to Visit England in 2010

Pope Benedict XVI has announced that he will be visiting Great Britain in 2010, his first visit to the

country since May 1982. He was asked to visit by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, during a private audience in February.

Russia Open to Iran Sanctions

Although he has previously claimed that sanctions would be ineffective, Russian president Dmitry Medvedev signaled that he is open to future economic sanctions against Iran after meeting with President Barack Obama. The U.S. and Russia have previously disagreed over how to treat Iran, but Obama called his relationship with Medvedev an "excellent working relationship." Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the international community continues to have "serious concerns" that Iran's nuclear program could be used for military purposes and that Iran should be "ready to engage" on its nuclear programs at the October 1 meetings.

Brazil Urges Reinstatement of Honduran leader

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva says the international community should demand the reinstatement of Manuel Zelaya, the leader who was forced from the country at gunpoint in July. Secretary General of the U.N. Ban Ki-moon does not believe that it is the right time for intervention and suspended any assistance for November's planned elections in Honduras. Zelaya has been holed up in a Brazil's embassy in Honduras since Monday.

Governor Paterson Says He Will Complete Term

New York Governor David A. Paterson said on Wednesday that he will remain in office until his term ends in 15 months. Last week, President Barack Obama indicated that he would not support a Paterson re-election campaign. Paterson's wife, Michelle Paterson, called Obama's lack of support "very unfair." David's the first African-American governor in the state of New York and he's being asked to get out of the race. It's very unusual and it seems very unfair.

Four Credit cont'd from page 4

situations, two separate three-hour courses required to complete their major have been combined into one four-hour course. Because of the change in IS requirements, some students have discovered that they are no longer required to take a math course. On the other hand, the new system requires everyone to take three physical education activity courses in addition to Fitness for Life, instead of the one credit that was formerly required.

Reactions from the faculty and returning students are varied. Stephen Corell, a returning sophomore, says, "I am not a fan, speaking as someone who was going to double major but now can't. With the old system, you could take six high-level courses in one semester. But with the four credit system, the most full-credit courses allowed is four." The new credit hour format has made Corell's plan to double major in Psychology and Christian Formation impossible.

Tabitha O'Connell, also a

returning sophomore, explains, "I don't mind the new system, I just don't like the change and confusion it creates. ... I felt the three credit system covered things well enough." Professor Stephen Woolsey takes a neutral stance, but cautions that "the next couple of years are going to be complicated" and that a "wait and see attitude" is best. Other faculty, however have expressed outright dislike for the new system, and few people are wholly pleased.

Perhaps Dean best illustrates the common attitude toward the switch. When asked to explain the new system, he responded, "where to start?"

Faculty, as well as students, might report that they feel more stretched now as they attempt to make sense of the new requirements and arrangements. However, Woolsey stresses that the "students shouldn't suffer" because of the change, and that professors will keep an attitude of flexibility as everyone adjusts. ★

Sustainability cont'd from page 1

budget for.

"If your budget balances only when it doesn't include critical programs for growth and development, like taking care of buildings, you're not making enough fiscal flexibility," said Mullen, "Advancement should be funding vision, not daily needs."

The OS Taskforce continues to examine all areas of the institution, making sure that all the money being spent contributes to the flourishing of the college. "We don't want to scrape every area of the college because that makes everything weaker." Instead, said President Mullen at the first State of the College address on August 26, "we will complete this task by a combination of: cutting and reducing some programs that will allow us to focus more fully on our core mission of high quality Christian liberal arts education; increasing efficiencies throughout the institution; and shifting some resources from one part of the institution to another to create greater overall proportionality of institutional excellence."

Referring to the forthcoming recommendations, VP Rivera acknowledged, "Not everyone will like the decisions which are finally made, but these decisions

have to be made to avoid dealing with the interesting ups and downs we have dealt with in the last decade... If we do this well, we can emerge a stronger and more focused institution."

At the conclusion of Monday's presentation, Mullen pleaded with the faculty and staff in attendance "to not make students the battleground for what we want or don't want to happen... This is a discussion that should happen between faculty, staff, and the administration. [Students] should not be made the victims."

Once the recommendations are made, they will be discussed and brought before the Board of Trustees at their October meeting. "Nothing is a done deal until it goes through the Board," explained Mullen.

Rivera shares his duties as co-chair with Vice President for Academic Affairs Ron Mahurin. The taskforce also includes President Mullen, Board of Trustees representatives Bobbi Strand and Lynn Barnett, faculty representatives Ben King (Music) and Doug Gaerte (Communications), and staff representative Troy Martin (Financial Services). Citing the sensitivity of the subject, the faculty and staff representatives declined to comment. ★

Rothenbuhler Treasure Hunt × Nov. 6th



O, few many finish. Dozens will try. Although all can. You may win. So why not?

SGA President Zach Adams Seeks to Improve Communication With Formation of New Presidential Focus Group

by Monica Sandreczki

Student Government Association (SGA) President Zach Adams is creating a Presidential Focus Group in order to improve communications between SGA, the administration, and the student body.

The group, chaired by Senator Steve Ross, will be made up of seven to ten students, and will include several senators, such people as FYI leaders or sports captains, and other leaders of "affinity" groups in order to get a wide sampling of student

perspectives.

This committee is not made of members on the SGA cabinet because, according to Adams, he does not want to give the impression of "pushing our own agenda." The group will gather data on student life by means of surveys and polls and faculty, who will be invited to give their input on the issue at hand.

At the end of the six month data gathering period, Adams hopes to analyze the findings and present it to president's staff and student life to give them "insight on where to go in the future and to truly represent what students' needs are."

"The goal of the Presidential Focus Group is to facilitate better discussion about matters affecting students as well as exploring pertinent issues within the Houghton community. It is the aim to include as many students from a wide range of backgrounds and areas of campus to have a diverse and comprehensive discussion, while also a

small enough group to not be cumbersome to the task at hand," said Audrey Gillette, SGA vice-president.

According to Adams, SGA has been very intentional about building off of the 2008-2009 administration's goal of being more visible. Adams said that communication has not been lacking in past administrations, but he wants to have a farther reaching "comprehensive dialogue" with the students.

The focus group will be focused on getting the "average student's opinion" on issues regarding Student Life. The Student Life Leadership Team brainstormed ideas like technology, housing assessment, hospitality, counseling services, competency of staff, important conversations we need to have on campus, and emergency preparedness.

Most of the planning for this group has happened in the last month. According to Adams, "Student Life is not dictating this in any way," but it is important to know what they think the campus' needs are compared to what students think.

The goal is to have the focus group begin meeting in October, but it

will be the "chair's prerogative" to decide how it will be organized along with coordination with the other members of the focus group, as it relates to subcommittees working on different issues.

Thus far, there have been two SGA meetings, which, according to Gillette, have been very efficient. Adams said that the cabinet is very cohesive concerning its goals for the year and a "discerning senate who will be able to represent the students' views well."

He also said that Speaker of the Senate, Josh Wallace is working to invite the college's vice presidents to senate meetings in order to open up this dialogue. Wallace also hopes that discussion at senate meetings this year remains professional and to the point, saying that personal agendas and inappropriate comments would be "gaveled out of order." Later in the meeting, Wallace backed up his claim by he gaveling out of order the first joke of the year, delivered by Senator Ian Taylor.

At the first SGA meeting of the year, Adams requested that the senate not let extreme opinions overwhelm the voice of compromise. "My charge to you is to be proportional and fair." ★

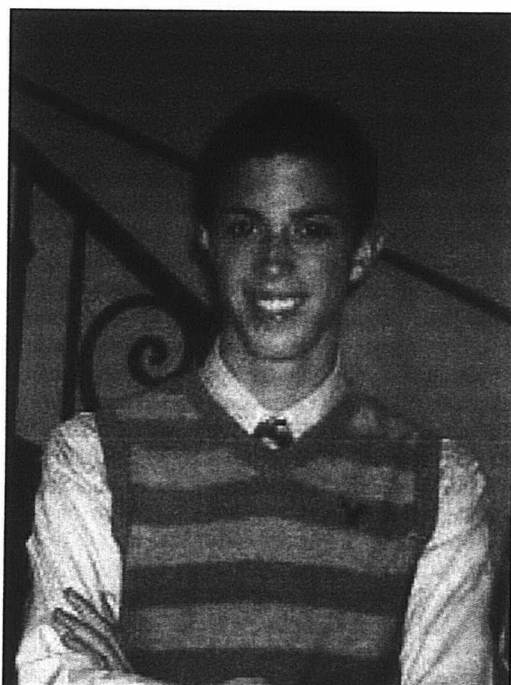


photo courtesy of SGA website

Zach Adams, Student Government president

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is Introduction to Democracy and Governance. The average student who signs up for the class is relatively new to political science and can still learn the information needed to create a foundation. Once a student has a foundation, they begin to develop. One of the things Professor Oakerson enjoys about Houghton is the chance to watch and guide students as they grow from freshman to senior. Having taught at much larger schools, like Indiana University and Marshall University, he appreciates Houghton's smaller size and tight-knit community.

Prof. Oakerson runs his classroom by working hard and expecting the same of his students. Regardless of class size, he tries to keep things interactive and discussion-oriented. Speaking about the kind of classroom he facilitates, Professor Oakerson echoes his motivation both for student field experience and for getting back to the classroom: the whole point is to grow. ★

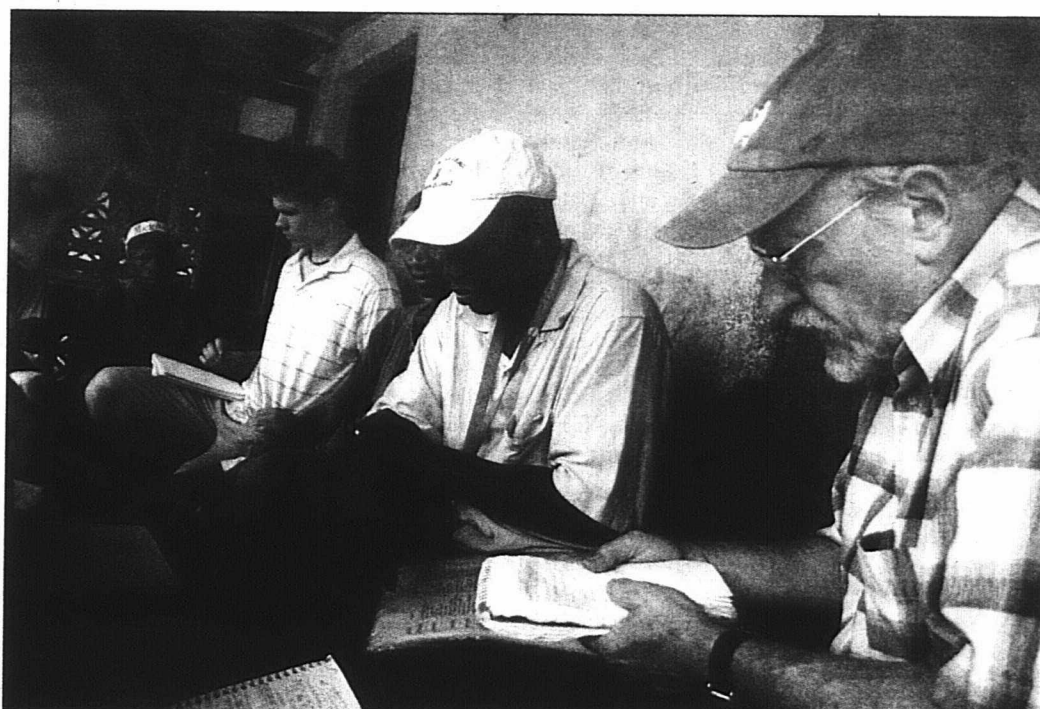


photo by Wesley Dean

Professor Ron Oakerson, far right, took students to Sierra Leone for the 2009 Mayterm. On the trip, Oakerson and students were able to interact with government and tribal leaders.

Writing Festival 2009 Emphasizes Discipline, Courage

Houghton welcomed writing professionals Matthew Dickerson, Scott Cairns, and Debra Rienstra to discuss the writing profession

Hannah Yanega

Each writer has a road to travel paved with courage, perseverance and discipline. These three attributes, forming a theme for the 2009 Writing Festival, gave the community of Houghton a chance to consider where the journey of life, both through writing and through faith is leading us all. Last week, Houghton's campus welcomed three guest writers to share, speak and interact with fellow writers, readers and faculty.

Each of the featured writers have learned, taught and experienced life in the world of professional writing. Matthew Dickerson, Professor at Middlebury College and Scott Cairns, Professor of English at the University of Missouri (Columbia) both shared insight on faith and their views on writing in the Friday and Wednesday chapel services. Debra Rienstra, a Professor of English at Calvin College focused most of her session on Wednesday discussing the powerful combination that words and spirituality create when combined in a writer's life.

In between lecture sessions, readings of their work, and interviews with the Houghton faculty, the writers had the opportunity to converse with students and faculty over meals. Banquets gave attendees a better



Photo by Veronica Dobson

Professors Lori Huth and James Zoller converse with guests of the Writing Festival

chance to get to know the writers in a more relaxed and personal setting. The variety of events drew many enthusiastic attendees.

Laurie Dashnau, Associate Professor of Writing, headed up the organization of this year's festival. She stated that one of the festival's goals was to celebrate the arts and provide an opportunity for "others in the craft of writing [to] come together for a sustained time of conversation, reflection, and fellowship." Since the festival's beginning in about 1999, it "has grown to feature more writers, sometimes an editor or publisher, and faculty here at Houghton College who are writers," Dashnau said.

Joanna Vance, one of the student attendees, felt that the festival really impacted who she is as a writer and a student: "Perhaps the best single word to describe this year's festival is 'vocation.' Within this word is held all of the perspectives by the three authors who shared with us— attentiveness, prayer, embodiment, and engagement with a steadying tradition...and with the natural world."

Along with vocation, this year's festival played heavily upon the ideas of risk, determination, and hope. In the final session, a panel discussion featuring Cairns, Professor James Zoller, Professor

Lori Huth and Professor Daniel Bowman, these words were defined and their meanings discussed by the participants. "Without discipline," said Huth, "I'd never have written anything at all. Add 'hope' to the mix. It makes all these three [courage, discipline, perseverance] seem worth it."

When it comes to taking risks as a writer, Zoller offered an interesting view on the subject. "[Writing] is my way of dealing with things... the risk is the decision I made early on to be transparent." Whether or not a piece was published, "it still had to be written."

Dashnau prefaced one of her last questions with a quote by Jack Leax describing the acceptance of "the silence of not writing, the silence of keeping back my poems until I have tested them in time, the silence of having the poems rejected." A place where all writers end up struggling is in the shadow of rejection or of work that didn't blossom into greatness. There is still hope for writers facing the difficulty of that acceptance, insisted Cairns. "The silence of the things that don't come about... those were not wasted time, or wasted effort. You have to trust that. If you want to do this, you can do this— incidentally, you can't do it alone." ★

Gallery Preview: Shelley Thorstensen

Jeffrey Andersen

World-renowned printmaker Shelley Thorstensen will be giving a public lecture this Saturday night at 7 pm at the opening reception of "The Preponderance of Evidence," a showing of her recent printmaking works in the Ortlip Art Gallery.

"Biographical, illustrative, and spiritual" are the words that Houghton Art Professor Jillian Sokso used to describe the work of her former teacher. "She uses characters, symbol, and icons to talk about her experience—her past and where she feels she's going." Her works are almost strictly abstract; the floral patterns that she includes function not as representational subject matter but as identifiable motifs in the subtly nuanced compositions that she has created. Her works are formally masterful, especially in terms of color theory, composition, and line. They speak in the spontaneous vocabulary of line drawings, but with the weight of intent that one supposes must be behind marks that come through the printing process. There is a great variety of size in her work—from

pieces roughly 9 inches by 7 inches to some more than five feet by four feet—but all of them demand a certain level of intimacy to perceive the finesse of her mark-making.

Each of her works represents a tremendous investment of time and labor (some involve as many as 20 plates and four different processes), and are indicative of—if not influential on—a movement in printmaking and art-making at large which seeks a return to craftsmanship. "Something is happening in art and design," said Sokso. "We are seeing a renewed emphasis on how things are crafted, in response to the digital age. I think what Shelley is doing—because her work is so laborious—is asking people to reconnect to a media and... reminding us of the physical enjoyment of craft." Sokso predicts that printmaking will not be replaced by digital imaging the way that digital photography has replaced film photography. Whereas the quality of digital prints is now indistinguishable from film prints, printmakers like Thorstensen are making a place for their work distinct from digital imaging by



Rhyme and Reason, Lithograph of its methods.

their process-specific effects and the tactile quality of their work. "It's a bit of a macho thing to rejoice in—to choose to do something one way when there might be an easier way to do something similar," continued Sokso. "It's like choosing to pick up a rock with your hands when you have a forklift." There is also an irony in the way that the medium invented to make the reproduction of images and messages easier is now securing a place for itself through the difficulty—and the unique quality—

This show is a selection of works that was previously on display in The Print Center, in Philadelphia. It will be on display through the month of October. This is a singular opportunity for the Houghton community to encounter a nationally recognized printmaker and her work. Come to the opening, and be prepared to visit many times afterwards to investigate these works as they so demand. ★

Too Christian, and Not Christian Enough

Part three of a three-part series in which Houghton community members review this year's Houghton Reads selection

Peter Meilaender

Christianity has a P.R. problem. That, in a nutshell, is the message of David Kinnaman's book *unChristian*. On the basis of substantial interview and survey research, Kinnaman argues that non-Christians ("outsiders"), especially young ones, have come to view Christianity as hypocritical, judgmental, out-of-touch, antihomosexual, and overly politicized. To a lesser but significant extent, even young people inside the church increasingly view it in the same terms. Without a concerted effort to counteract these negative perceptions, Kinnaman fears, the church risks losing an entire generation or more of Americans who regard it as irrelevant to their lives, if not downright offensive.

Kinnaman is more concerned with helping Christians realize that action is needed than with laying out any particular agenda, and he is vague about how we should respond. Still, I think it fair to say that his is a call for a "kinder, gentler" Christianity (my words, not his). Christians must learn to be less concerned with judging and condemning others, certainly less stridently antihomosexual; they must rely less on political action and more on direct personal encounter with others; they must move outside their comfortable Christian circles and seek to engage outsiders on

their own terms, without in the first instance seeking to win them over through conversion efforts; and, most of all, they must learn to listen. Only through patient efforts to understand outsiders and their perspectives can we win the receptive audience that may eventually lead people back to Christ and His church.

As I say, this is all somewhat vague; rather than giving advice, Kinnaman prefers to illustrate his point through examples of people living the authentic Christian life he envisions. The vagueness of Kinnaman's prescriptions makes them in some ways difficult to quarrel with. After all, who thinks that Christians should be mean and nasty? And it goes without saying that we

should be thoughtful in our dealings with others, doing unto them as we would wish to be treated ourselves.

Nevertheless, I think this vagueness allows Kinnaman to obscure a problematic characteristic of the book's outlook. We might say that he manages to be both too narrowly Christian and also not Christian enough.

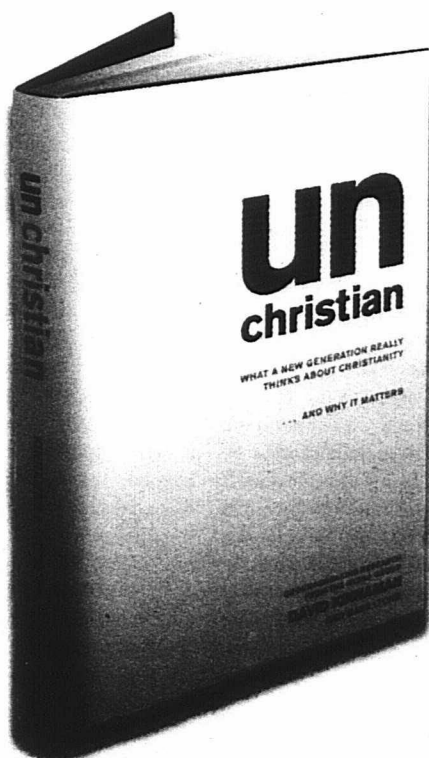
On the first point, I should clarify an earlier remark. I said that Kinnaman believes Christians

have a P.R. problem. This is not quite accurate. Rather, he believes that at least some Christians have a P.R. problem. For instance, he is not speaking about the Missouri Synod Lutherans with whom I grew up. (All of whom would have regarded Kinnaman's constant references to

"Christ followers," rather than to "Christians"—a perfectly useful word. I thought—as an odd verbal tic.) Nor is he talking about the Roman Catholics in whose circles I have run for much of the past decade. As he indicates early in the book, his research and arguments focus specifically on evangelicals, and especially born-again Christians. This is, to be sure, a large, influential, and culturally visible slice of Christianity. Still, it is worth remembering that Kinnaman is not describing negative perceptions of "the church," or of Christians as a whole, but of a specific spectrum that overlaps largely with what we might simply call the religious right. (Interestingly, those negative perceptions coincide almost perfectly with standard media caricatures of the religious right.)

A focus on a church that is much smaller than the Church, and a conception of Christ followers that excludes many Christians, combined with a dose of ethical advice that could be gleaned from almost any self-help book. This is not *unChristian*. But it is both too Christian, and not Christian enough. ★

(Professor Meilaender's full review of *UnChristian* and a more detailed explanation of why it is both too Christian and not Christian enough will be available next Friday, October 2, at www.houghtonstar.com)



www.houghtonstar.com

...coming October 2, 2009

LANTHORN CHAPBOOK SUBMISSIONS DUE DATE CHANGE:

SUBMISSIONS NOW DUE SEPTEMBER 30

GO PRAYER

Monday 1:45-2:15pm Emily Rinehart Meg Sonnekalb	Tuesday 10:15-10:45am Erika Harlow Meredith Toombs	Wednesday 12-1pm Prayer and fasting with MercySeat in Presser Hall
Thursday 2:30-3:00pm Kathryn Dygert Paul Murphy Nathanael Smith	Friday 4:30-5:00pm Jern-yi Chung Stephanie Forsythe	Saturday 4:30-5:00pm Hannah Garcia Elizabeth Goggans

Located in the basement of the chapel

A Reader Responds, Challenges Forschler's "Time Well Spent"

by Gerad Gentry

A Greek friend of mine is currently studying in the US with the hopes of becoming an ambassador. Having lived most of his life in Turkey, he has much to learn of American culture before such a dream can be realized. With such a goal in mind, he considers how best to fully understand and engage in the American way of life. Although taking walks, playing football, RPG games, and the like are prominent aspects of the American life, he needs to engage on a whole different level. He must understand just how deeply rooted individuality, materialism, autonomy, comfort, beauty, and "freedom", are to the average American. He must understand what American democracy is; and what constitutes a good life for most Americans. For someone in his position, we would not seriously advise learning these national values through osmosis while resting and playing. We would advise concentrated courses of study as a method for understanding, as much as possible, this different way of life. This is not to say there is no value in engaging in the leisurely activities. In fact, involvements in

things like bridge jumping may help him better understand the American version of "fun". It may also help him to relax and process in a way that pure studies would not. Nevertheless, we would be doing him no favors by saying, "don't go to so many lectures or read so many books about the American worldview and the political system. Go take a walk in the woods; then you will be more likely to reach your goal of a rich and insightful perspective on American culture."

Similarly, for Christians seeking to live a life that stems from and embodies the love of Christ, it is vital that we delve deeply into the core tenets of Christianity. It is important, as Nathan Forschler indicates, to go out and enjoy being alive in God's creation—although bridge jumping may be an ironic way to celebrate being alive. Yet such enjoyment (or worship) is something that is good to do in addition to a rich delving into Christian living and a Christocentric worldview. Bridge jumping and other leisure activities are things we can do on our own time most of the year. Listening to individuals who have

It is vital that we delve deeply into the core tenets of Christianity

spent much of their lives learning what a life lived for Christ looks like is not an opportunity that we will often have. How much better, then, for the college to offer a week where such lectures are available than to offer a week set aside for walks and bridge-jumping. I do find taking time to enjoy God's creation to be of great value, but I don't need the college to set aside a week for such participation in the natural world.

To take up Forschler's tone and respond to his observations: First, if chapel and related lectures are attempts to draw attention to important aspects of the Christian life, then a week where there are more such events is aptly an "emphasis" week. Second, the individual who thinks that chapel is about emphasizing the importance of "attending services" has clearly not listened to many chapel talks. Third, the aim of CLEW is not, as Forschler suggests, to give us more Sabbaths. If it were, his point would be valid. Forschler is right that there is a balance to be had, but let's emphasize good things (such as doing ordinary activities like

gardening) without feeling the need to downplay other important aspects of life (such as reading the works of a great theologian or even someone like Nietzsche). Finally, Forschler's concluding paragraph had some excellent points. To quote him, "The most important things about the Christian life involve moving and living and what goes on after the service."

In Conclusion, and to support what I take to be Forschler's underlying sentiments, we should seek out practical, down to earth ways of being involved in our community, actively living the love we are seeking to know. Some suggestions for involvement: Journeys End, Allegany County Outreach, Praxis week, and most of all, full engagement in each moment that we come into contact with those around us; our family on the phone, our roommates, hall-mates, and those we pass on the sidewalk. Chapel and the "lecture" are excellent institutions for aiding in our movement from mere wonderers to rich sojourners.

Gerad Gentry is a senior Philosophy, Writing, and Art major

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the spark of lively conversation regarding chapel policy. Along with several other students, I find myself perplexed with new disciplinary crackdowns. I am not sure whether the administration is actually focusing on enforcing old policies, or if they have simply decided to create some new ones.

My hope is that recent crackdowns will not squash attempts at positive conversation about the purpose and future of chapel. Perhaps the general feelings of unease about chapel policy reflect a need to start talking about more creative, more comprehensive means of integrating faith and learning. I, like thousands others, am guilty of scanning in just to get the credit and get out, not fully engaging in the format or speaker. We all know that our spirituality is by no means contained or fulfilled in the walls of the Wesley Chapel.

Why not use our creativity to think about alternate ways of getting chapel credit? Why not get chapel credit for small group discussions, or for watching a thought-provoking film and talking about it? Why not get credit for going to Wellspring Ministries or for other service opportunities?

I believe that the purpose of chapel is to affirm our corporate identity as part of the larger body of Christ, and that it is critical to pray and worship together. But I also believe that it's time for an honest discussion about truly engaging faith and learning, and how to best shape our weekly chapel services to better meet the needs of the community. The Committee on Spiritual Life (CSL) would welcome suggestions and creative ideas about alternate means of receiving chapel credit.

-Suzanne Derksen, Class of 2010

Dear Editors,

It should be noted that a "controversial" comment allegedly made by Vice President Hynes in the September 11 article "Student Life Cracks Down on Chapel," and further commented on in a letter to the editor in the September 18 issue, has been taken significantly out of context. Monica Sandreczki's original article states, "According to [Vice President Hynes], students who are not attending chapel 'are unable to be a part of the community.'" Vice President Hynes, in fact, made no such comment at the question and answer session on September 8. What Vice President Hynes did say was that students who fail to meet the chapel attendance requirement more

than once have demonstrated by their actions that they choose to no longer be a part of this community.

No one enjoys enforcing the chapel attendance policy. Nevertheless, if we claim chapel attendance as an important part of a Houghton education then we owe it to our students to actually back up that claim with actions that prove consistent with our beliefs. Unlike our previously ineffective and inconsistent practices, this new implementation actually accomplishes this, and despite popular belief, we are still significantly more lenient than many of our peer institutions.

If Ms. Sandreczki had actually been present at the question and answer session, rather than getting her information second-hand, then we might at least base this discussion on accurate statements.

-Brian Webb, Office of Intercultural Student Programs

Editor's Note:

Mr. Webb is correct to say that Ms. Sandreczki, the writer and primary reporter on the piece "Student Life Cracks Down on Chapel," was not present at the question and answer session. The Star regrets, however, that it failed to mention the contributions to the article that were made by Micah Warf, Associate Editor, who was present at the informational session.

Disgusted? Delighted?

Just confused?

We want you to be part of the conversation.

Letters to the editor (signed) should be 350 words or fewer and be submitted by Tuesday at 7 p.m. to star@houghton.edu

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.

From the Editor's Desk...

Are We the Community Finding Comfort in an Illusion?

by Mitch Edwards

Community. No, not the new NBC show starring a wrinkled Chevy Chase, but the word mentioned countless times during one of President Mullen's chapel addresses. It's a word that encapsulates so much for so many of us, yet it is often difficult to describe. In one instance it can cause excitement, in another, great haunting. Over the past four years I've done a lot of thinking about the concept of community, and I think now I'm more confused than ever before.

As a young adult living in a western, postmodern society, its no wonder so many of my thoughts have recently revolved around the concept of community. It's the catch phrase of our generation. Employing the word to illustrate a point is almost as trendy as sipping an organic chai latte while taking credit for discovering a band that no one else has heard of. Unfortunately, often the meaning of community ends here, in its ambiguous association with what is generally agreed to be desirable

and "hip".

Now don't take me wrong, I love the fundamental idea of community. I think we are meant to live with one another; sharing experiences, bouncing ideas off of those around us, arguing, reconciling, celebrating, and reaching a greater understanding of how we are all to fit in this thing called life. What irks me is how sometimes, just sometimes, the concept of community is valued and claimed without really being present.

Take, for example, the way we use the word community at Houghton.

We call ourselves a Christian learning community. Why not just a Christian learning institution? Are we members of something different from or greater than an institution? Or, is our motive for calling our school a community solely based on the mere fact that the word "community" evokes a greater sense of belonging than the word "institution"?

There are many benefits to calling Houghton College a community. For one, we get to euphemize the otherwise

boring and bureaucratic into the warm, fuzzy, and seemingly religious. We call Rules and Regulations a "Community Covenant". We label a discussion on disciplinary actions a "Community Dialogue". I'm not sure about you, but I'm more hesitant to break a "community covenant" than an institution's rule, and I'm more willing to attend a "community dialogue" over a "discussion on disciplinary actions". Well, I was more willing, until I found out what it really was.

Of course, I can't write this entire article and not acknowledge that Houghton exhibits something resembling community. Most people can testify to being attracted to Houghton for some reason unrelated to its academic excellence, sports programs, or off-campus opportunities. It's the feeling you get when you realize how many people you've waved to while walking once around the quad. Or maybe it's the experience of actually knowing your professors. Or, better yet, maybe it's the comfort you sense when standing in chapel,

surrounded by fellow students. But is that community? Forgive me for being frank, but those are simply results of a small student body, a high teacher to student ratio, and a keenly enforced requirement.

I've experienced elements of community at Houghton, but not through declaring my loyalty to a document or reading a textbook during chapel. I've experienced elements of community through choosing to live alongside close friends. From my experiences, community cannot be imposed by an institution.

So, let's call a spade a spade. At the end of the day, Houghton is first and foremost an academic institution. A college-whether we like it or not. I'm all for striving to create and enjoy a sense of community on this campus and in this area, but I certainly don't want to pretend that Houghton College's interests lie principally with community. After all, illusions only disappoint in the end.

Mitch is a senior History major and is the Commentary Editor

100 Years: Carolyn Miller

2009 marks the 100th year of The Houghton Star. To celebrate this occasion, we have invited previous editors to contribute editorials which will be printed throughout the year. This editorial is from Carolyn Miller, class of 1960.

Yesterday I attended a meeting of the editorial committee of an international linguistics journal that SIL International publishes in cooperation with the Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development of Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand. *MON-KHMER STUDIES: A Journal of Southeast Asian Languages and Cultures* doesn't have a huge circulation, but it has a fairly significant impact on the niche market of Southeast Asian linguistics.

This morning I looked at the assignments I took away from the meeting. I am to edit an article on "Rhythmic pattern and corrective focus in Vietnamese polysyllabic words." Oh, and there's another one on the "Phonology of So (Thavung)." Deadlines loom and electronic copy is needed. Who will be the volume editor for the next volume?

Sitting in my inbox is a request from Houghton College to former Editors of the *Star*. How about a reflection on 100 years of publication

of the *Star*? "What role did the newspaper play when you were a student?" So, that wasn't a hundred years ago, but it feels like a long, long time. It's not only when I'm sitting on the editorial committee of a journal that I am thankful for my experience on the *Star*. I could never have dreamed the impact the experience would have in my life as I have had occasion to write articles, prepare position papers, give speeches, and simply report on events. I'm reminded of Doc Jo's journalism class in which we learned to write quickly, succinctly and analytically upon assignment. And then to put it all into practice on the *Star* staff -- the planning, assigning, badgering, correcting, and pushing to meet deadlines. There were late nights and tight budgets. And the joy of working with a team that was enthusiastic and full of fun.

Then there were the editorials... Groan! What did I possibly have to say that would be relevant or important or make a difference in anyone's life? What did we collectively need to be grappling with? What were we concerned about? Those were not fun! Maybe time has mercifully blotted out the experience, but I don't remember a single editorial. What I do remember, and what came across strongly was the dawning realization of the importance of words. Watching students read what came out of the

print shop and was put in everyone's box. The impact of words. Words that informed, that chided, that wondered, that laughed. They were our words, and the accountability for what was written was ours. That was something we all learned, I think, but it was particularly something I learned as editor. Something I've never again been able to take lightly.

Last week I was up-country working with members of a small language community on the translation of the book of James into

their language. We hit the passage on the immense potential for good and evil of the spoken word. A small spark that sets a forest on fire. That's a powerful image for people who live in highland areas. But how do you describe the role of a rudder to a people who live far from any body of water? I was struck by James's cautionary note, "we who teach will be judged more strictly." I wonder if the same does not apply to "we who write." It's worth a thought!

2009- 2010 STAR Staff

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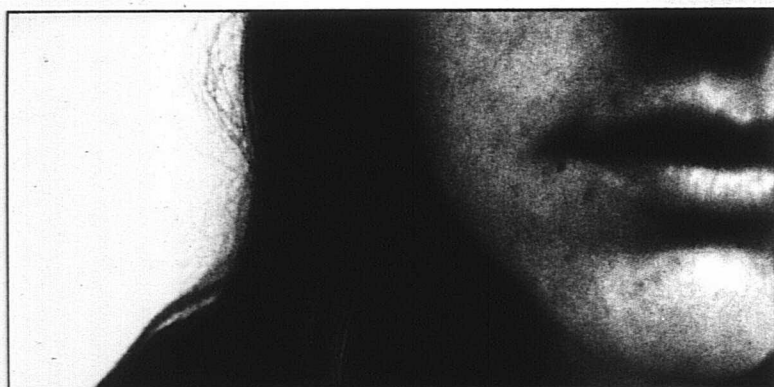
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artist OF THE WEEK



Artist's Note: For me, the camera can act as a cradle between the eye and the subject matter, explicating the meaning that is behind a moment. Lately I've been working to color a photograph with a sense of nostalgia, emphasizing that what I've been able to capture has been lived, and any meaning tied to that moment has been established.

KATHERINE THOMPSON



sudoku

THIS SUDOKU IS
EASY

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

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

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

Prize: Leroy Townes and the Lone Stars' album!

THIS SUDOKU IS
HARD

Crossword Solutions, 09/18

LARK	ETTA	WHUPS
IMHO	QUIP	HANOI
VIES	URLS	ORION
INTHEAFTERMATH		
DOTELL	HEN	
RBI	HMO	GDAY
SSN	OZZIE	BURNS
THESWEETSCIENCE		
EARLS	AMAH	LOER
WHO	ALE	ROI
MSG	OX	TAIL
HADNO	CHEMISTRY	
PADUA	LOCI	ERAS
BLANK	OAHU	LETO
JERKY	PROM	FEEL

Congratulations to last week's winners, Marc and Allie Smithers!