

# THE HOUGHTON STAR

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THE STAR CELEBRATES THE SCIENCES

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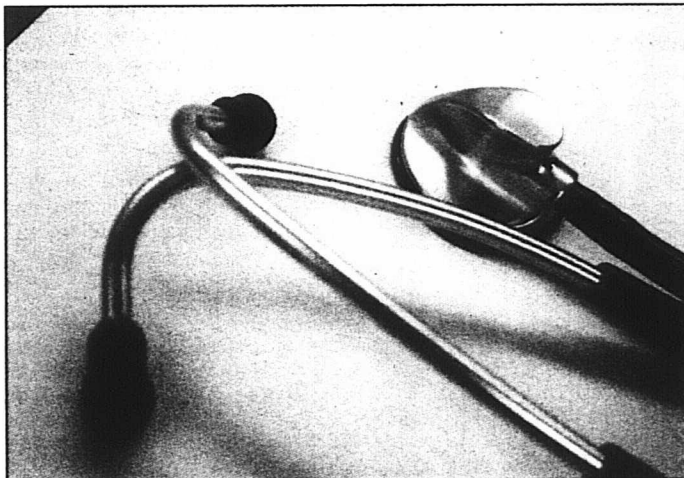
## Houghton Responds to H1N1

by Johanna Hummelman

Flu season is fast approaching and Houghton, like most college campuses across the country, is preparing for a possible outbreak of the H1N1 virus. Some students have reported flu-like symptoms and taken advantage of opportunities for self-isolation, but as of Wednesday there were still no confirmed cases of H1N1 at Houghton.

To prevent an outbreak on campus, the health center has posted many notices encouraging students to wash their hands, sanitize, and cough into their sleeves. In the event that someone does contract the virus, self-isolation has been strongly encouraged.

According to Sharra Hynes, Vice President of Student Life, the college has "an empty townhouse that we've set up for the alternate housing; we've provided linens, dishes, and Pioneer [Food Services] is delivering meals." Hynes also explained, "There's no forced quarantine, and we're not even using that word. We don't want students to feel like it is forced." Students who come down with flu-like symptoms



Health Center stresses that prevention is key photo by Wesley Dean

have the option to drive home, stay in their room if it is a single, or have Houghton take care of them.

Other schools, like the University of Pennsylvania and Emory University, have set up special phone hotlines and websites to keep everyone on campus informed. The message is almost universal: prevention is the most efficient handling of any outbreak.

To some students, the efforts seem excessive. However, H1N1

is a new virus; "we would never do what we're doing for the normal seasonal flu," remarks Hynes, "but this is such an unknown."

Houghton's Director of Health Services, Dr. David Brubaker, reports that H1N1 is highly contagious because "the primary means is respiratory. So on campuses where you have large volumes of people gathering, for chapel, for classes, something that's airborne is more

*H1N1 cont'd on page 3*

## New Science Honors Program Underway

by Kristen Palmer

A recent addition has been made to the First-Year Honors Program at Houghton — an addition that should make all incoming science majors very pleased. This fall semester is kicking off the first year of the Houghton Science Honors Program, a program that has been in the works for some time now. According to Professor Mark Yuly, physics department chair, the science department has been talking about this program for almost seven years and is glad that it has finally been put into action.

The Science Honors Program is expected to be a positive asset to Houghton for a variety of reasons, the first being that the program is interdisciplinary. The main course of the program is team-taught for three hours, three times a week by Yuly, chemistry professor John Rowley, biology professor Jamie Potter, part-time writing instructor Dan Bowman, and communications professor Douglas Gaerte. Students in this combined class will have an opportunity to learn hands-on, as a lab is integrated into the class.

"Oftentimes students are more interested in certain parts over others," Yuly said. "This class demonstrates how every topic is important to the process of solving problems. For example, one student may be particularly interested in biology, but he or she will learn that a biology problem cannot just be solved using biology."

"We hope that the students will understand the very interdisciplinary nature of modern science, including the importance of being able to work together and communicate their science," Rowley added.

Along with the primary course, the students take calculus, philosophy, and a special western civilization course. The science

*Honors cont'd on page 2*

## DNA Sequencer Strengthens Biology Program

by Thaddeus Kwan

Over the summer, the arrival of a new DNA sequencer on the third floor of the Paine Science Center has brought with it much excitement for the biology department. While this technology comes at a high cost, the opportunity to make such a large investment was made possible by a grant from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundation specifically for the purchase of new lab technology.

In the cells of living things, genetic material comes in the form of chains of DNA. These chains are composed of subunits called nucleotides of which there are four different types. The different arrangements of the four types of nucleotides along the chains play a crucial role in what makes every living thing what it is. A genetic sequencer is used to analyze purified samples of DNA

fragments in order to determine the sequence of nucleotides in those fragments. By means of using four different colors of fluorescent dye to mark the four types of nucleotides, the genetic sequencer is able to determine

the order of nucleotides in DNA fragments. Determining the sequences of DNA samples allows for association of the sequenced DNA with all sorts

*DNA cont'd on page 2*



The DNA Sequencer will allow students to expand their experiments photo by Wesley Dean

# THE WORLD IS THERE

by Joel VanderWeele

## Medical Professionals Warn of Effects of Global Warming

Eighteen of the world's professional medical organizations have written that failure to agree to a new UN resolution in December will result in a global health catastrophe. Writing for the British Medical Journal and The Lancet, the group urges doctors to take a lead on climate issues. Earlier this year, a report printed by The Lancet, along with the University College of London, reported that the "effects of climate change on health will... put the lives and wellbeing of billions of people at increased risk."

## Scientists Closer to Curing Color Blindness

A group of American scientists at the University of Washington were able to restore full color vision to adult monkeys born without the ability to distinguish between red and green. Professor Jay Neitz and his team were able to introduce

therapeutic genes into the light-sensing cells at the back of the eye of adult male squirrel monkeys. The monkeys were treated over two years ago and tests show that their improvement in vision has remained stable since.

## Buffalo Mayor Wins Re-election

Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown won the Democratic primary with an overwhelming 63 percent of the vote. Despite accusing Brown of corruption, challenger Councilmember Michael "Mickey" Kearns of the South District only received 37 percent of the vote. The general election will take place in November.

## Fraud in Afghanistan Elections

According to the European Union's election-monitoring commission, up to one-third, or 1.1 million, of the votes for President Hamid Karzai in the August 20 Afghanistan election were fraudulent. Suspicions arose when a preliminary tally showed that Karzai had enough of a lead to avoid a runoff up to one recount.

## Honors cont'd from page 1

department is also excited about the research experience the program will provide for the students involved. "Students will learn how to effectively research early on, allowing them to be more prepared in the future," said Yuly.

The program is ultimately driven by a project. Over the course of the next few years, students participating in the Science Honors Program will learn to build alternate energy vehicles. "One of the benefits of this program is that it gives incoming students the opportunity to tackle a 'real-life' scientific problem in their first year of study," said Rowley.

According to Yuly, the program will also aid in the college's recruitment of strong science students.

"We hope that this program will benefit the college by attracting high quality, scientifically-minded students who might not be as interested in the other programs that we offer," agreed Rowley.

Out of the roughly 50 students who were invited to apply for this year's Science Honors Program, 21 were chosen after a series of intense weekends of interviews and tests. The department is looking to add another weekend to next year's process in hopes to create a larger waiting list. According

to Yuly, the department's immediate goal is not to grow in numbers but instead to focus on improving and developing the program.

The group just recently visited the oil refinery and museum of oil history in Bradford, Pennsylvania, and plans on participating in several other field trips throughout the year.

The professors involved with the Science Honors Program have high expectations for how the program will benefit the students involved.

"We hope that this experience will give the students a valuable starting point or framework as they go on to upper-level classes and collaborative research with faculty," said Rowley.

And the students seem to have had a great start to their intense program. "The Science Honors Program is a fantastic way to develop the ability to apply scientific knowledge to real word problems," said Andrew Evans, a member of the Science Honors Program.

The students' success would not be possible without the encouragement of their supportive team of teachers, who are thrilled that after many years of planning, they can finally implement the program.

"I really hope they're enjoying it," said Yuly. ★

## DNA cont'd from page 1

of processes occurring in living things, which extends to many important applications such as the study of genetic diseases.

Previously, purified DNA samples from students' lab assignments had to be sent to Cornell University for sequencing. While this was inexpensive, the arrival of the Biology Department's own genetic sequencer gives students at Houghton an opportunity to have hands-on experience with complicated technology and procedures. "It's the kind of piece of equipment that some of our students would need to use once they get into the real world," said Professor Matthew Pelletier, chair of the department.

The new genetic sequencer also allows for added depth in the laboratory component of the biology classes. Pelletier mentioned plans for conducting a lab in his Genetics class involving DNA fingerprinting – a technique that can be used to distinguish one person from another and has applications in such fields as forensics. Another planned project for next

semester's Human Genetics & Disease class involves taking DNA samples from volunteers across campus to test for the occurrence of genetic factors that contribute to cystic fibrosis. The

DNA sequencer might even be used for a collaborative research project involving plant breeding in Sierra Leone.

Apart from the expanded capabilities that biology students

will have gained after graduation, the DNA sequencer may also be of interest to prospective students, as many small colleges do not have the opportunity to use such special equipment. ★



The new DNA sequencer opens up new possibilities for research.

photo by Wesley Dean



# Paine Science Center Awaits New Expansion

by Heidi Harrington

Several years ago, the Board of Trustees recognized the need for a place where science majors and faculty could interact more efficiently. This recognition was also accompanied by the promise of funds. Since then, Houghton has been exploring the possibility of adding a new wing to the Paine Science Center. Houghton's science faculty has also been working hard to ensure that the addition serves and accommodates students.

"Houghton is known for the interaction between the students

and faculty. We want to make our science building more conducive for that atmosphere," said Professor Mark Yuly, physics department chair. The staff, along with President Shirley Mullen, has been working on a building design that will fit the needs of future science students.

There have been a number of proposed building designs, but no final decision has yet been made. Professor recommendations, science honors labs, and student study and tutoring rooms are all being considered in the expansion.

Professor Irmgard Howard, chemistry department chair, clearly

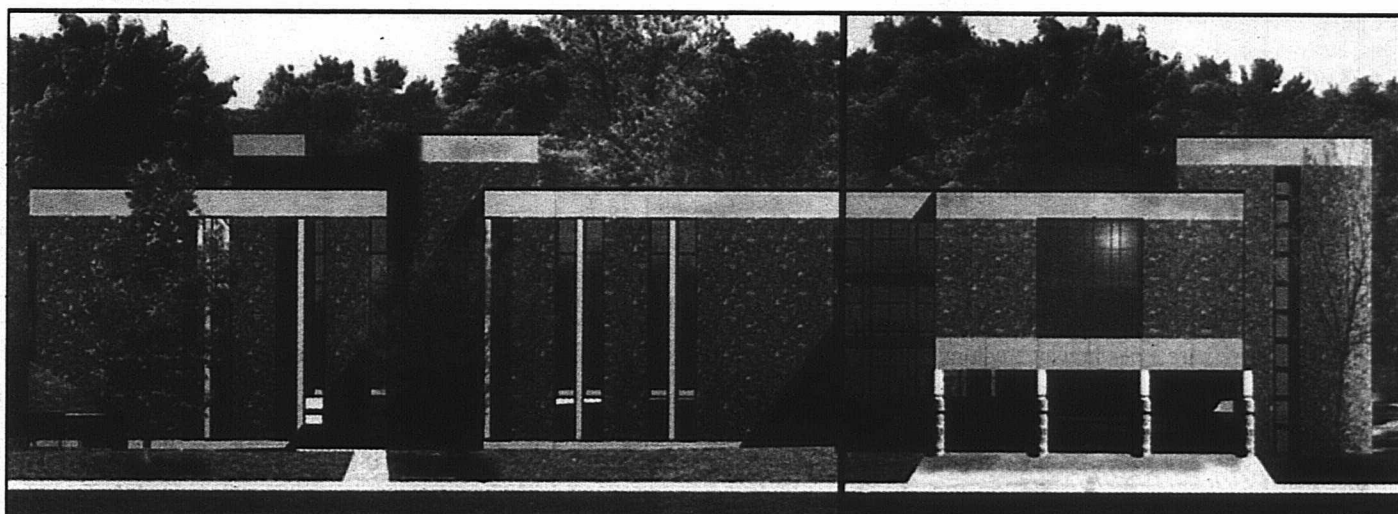
addressed that the whole project of renovations is not to fix an outdated, run-down system, but to maintain a high functioning level of science and continue to equip students for their careers and to glorify God.

"The building is just one element to make sure that we have exceptionally trained science students," said Professor Kristin Camenga, Assistant Director of Science Initiatives and science department coordinator.

A specific "price tag" has not been placed on this project yet because the science faculty has

not made a complete list of what they feel must be included in the building. A building consultant is being brought in to aid in the financial and design aspects of this. The hope is to begin groundbreaking within the next few years.

The upcoming Celebration of the Sciences is being used to express the importance of this new expansion and to look at the successful past of Houghton's science department. The faculty would like it to reflect Houghton's vision for maintaining the high standards developed over the years. ★



Plans to add to the Paine Science Center have been in the works for several years and include renovating classrooms and adding an extra wing. This design shows the new wing extending towards the Luckey Building.

image courtesy of Katherine Jaycox

## H1N1 cont'd from page 1

easily spread." The close quarters of college life and the typical age of college students play a role in susceptibility. "What we're seeing is that there's a blip in H1N1," says Brubaker, "where a higher percentage of the severe cases are seen in the healthy adults, which is different than we see in the seasonal flu."

Students at high-risk are advised to come to the Health Center even with mild symptoms; high-risk includes "those with underlying medical problems; diabetes, asthma, heart disease."

The American College Health Association has reported that 72% of college campuses have reported cases of H1N1 and that the flu is being contracted at a rate of about 18 cases per 10,000 students. Washington State University has reported that 2,000 of their students have come down with flu-like illness.

Although the flu remains relatively mild in most cases, it can be deadly when compounded with a pre-existing medical condition. The death of a Cornell University student last week brought the national death total up to two.

H1N1, the first officially declared worldwide pandemic in 41 years, is a virus characterized by fever and influenza-like symptoms that include

sore throat, sneezing, runny nose and fatigue. Similar to the common cold, there is no cure for H1N1, but there are a number of ways to reduce the effects of symptoms. The real cure is time. However, when combined with unstable health or a pre-existing

us." Having a good immune system won't hurt, either. "Exercise, good sleeping habits, and healthy lifestyle choices will make your body best prepared," agrees Brubaker.

If you do come down with flu-like symptoms, "contact the health



Director of Health Services Dr. David Brubaker photo by Wesley Dean

medical condition, H1N1 can lead to an untimely death.

The flu season is typically October-November, and as the fall draws near, Hynes is hopeful that Houghton can prevent an outbreak. "That's why we're heavily advising the hand-washing, cautionary things, versus the reactive things," remarks Hynes, "because the reactive things aren't going to be as helpful for

center," says Brubaker, "from there we can decide what testing is necessary." The seasonal flu shot will be available on campus September 21<sup>st</sup>, at a cost around \$33 as it is not covered in Houghton's United Health insurance. The H1N1 vaccine is still pending a release date from manufacturers, but as soon as it is ready, Houghton hopes to have it available to all students for free.

H1N1 isn't the first flu pandemic to hit the United States. Since the 1900's there have been several crises, and responses have become more efficient over time.

The Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918 was a viral subtype of H1N1, and the name came from its wrongly attributed origin, Spain. Symptoms included fever and hemorrhaging, which confused doctors, who misdiagnosed patients with cholera or dengue. The deployment of military forces in WWI accelerated the spread of the virus and the death toll was a staggering 50 million worldwide, in less than two years.

In 1968, the Hong Kong Flu killed over 1 million people worldwide, most of whom were elderly. This flu was characterized by fever, sore joints, and loss of energy.

Although SARS was not technically a pandemic, it was a national concern. The SARS virus has been put on the backburner as the virus is no longer a threat due to the newly developed vaccine. However, the realization of how poorly the situation was handled led to the development of more efficient systems. Information and strategies to confront new viruses are more readily available to health officials as well as the public, which is noticeable in the present handling of H1N1. ★



## Faculty Profile: Professor Irmgard Howard, Chemistry

By Amanda Wilgus

Professor Irmgard Howard is a well-known and well-loved chemistry professor, not to be confused with her husband who also works at Houghton, Professor David Howard. She and her husband have worked at Houghton for 40 years. During this time Howard has taught General Chemistry, Biochemistry, Nutrition, and Impact of Science on Society. Among her former students are current Organic Chemistry professor Karen Torraca, Safety and Security Director Ray Parlett, Communications professor David Huth, and librarian Brad Wilbur. During her time at Houghton, Howard mothered four children, one of whom is an executive producer for the Discovery Channel. (The next time you are watching your favorite Discovery shows such as "Survivorman" or "Storm Chasers" look for Bill Howard's name in the

credits.)

Howard is also famous in her own right. In 1989, Howard joined a group of writers and musicians known as "The Bandits." As part of this group, Howard wrote songs to protest the use of Allegany County as a "massive storage facility for all of the radioactive waste in New York." The group recorded several cassettes, the first of which is displayed at the Smithsonian, and traveled to other counties to perform and protest. Dr. Howard was also the sole author of the biology section of the Allegany County Technical Taskforce's response to the Radioactive Waste Commission. As a result of The Bandits' efforts, the response from the task force, and a demonstration by Allegany citizens, New York Governor Cuomo called off the deposited radioactive waste in Allegany County.

Now, Howard uses her song writing abilities in her classroom.

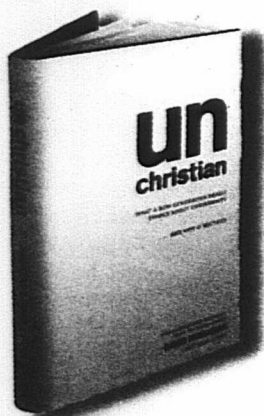
When students struggle to remember difficult concepts in her classes, Howard writes songs to help them remember. She brings her portable keyboard into class and begins singing songs such as the "Amino Acid Groupie Song" (sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"), the "Ballad of the Mole", and "London Forces Falling Down." These scientific numbers have been compiled into a booklet that is scheduled to be released during the Celebration of the Sciences on September 19th. ★



Professor Irmgard Howard Photo by Heather Hahn

## The unChristian Side of Houghton: Another Student Reacts

Part two of a three part series in which community members review the Houghton Reads selection. Next Week: Professor Peter Meilaender



By Sonja Mindrebo

Christians are seen as "hypocritical," "anti-homosexual," and "judgmental." Are you surprised? America's increasing dissatisfaction with the Church is no secret, unless you've been living inside a hermetically-sealed subculture where driving two miles to the nearest gas pump passes for "living in, not of, the world." However aware you may be, you probably don't understand how pervasive and specific those ill feelings are. Now you can, thanks to David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons, co-authors of *unChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks About Christianity...and Why It Matters*.

Kinnaman and Lyons support their claim that, "Christianity has an image problem," through extensive polling by The Barna

Group, a leading research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture. Here is a look. Large slices of the American population, ages 16 to 29, view Christianity as "too involved in politics," "sheltered," and "insensitive to others," as well as those previously mentioned at the top. With thousands interviewed and polled, Kinnaman and Lyons statistically analyze hard data and draw conclusions about the "outsiders'" view of Christianity. Can we really be this awful? In short, yes.

Taking a blow-by-blow look at the descriptors, Kinnaman draws from his analysis and makes suggestions for corrective action that appear largely prudent and wise. He avoids cultural posturing and points out that Christians will never be voted Most Popular but ought to be giving offense for the right reasons. Jesus stirred things up; he challenged everyone who listened. He didn't look to make life comfortable; however, he chose his righteous battles wisely, debated earnestly, seldom grew flustered or impatient, learned the culture and genuinely loved the people. We want to be like Jesus, right? Kinnaman challenges us to put some muscle and action behind our good intentions. How valuable are stagnant good intentions?

If you read this book, or any

others like it (Dan Kimball's *They Like Jesus But Not The Church*), don't let the unsettling notion that most of your unbelieving peers in this country probably look down at you as being ignorant, sheltered, and judgmental cause you to lose sleep and feel self-conscious in public. Do something! Sometimes we become lazy as Christians in America. Perhaps this laziness is due to our religious freedoms, our security in numbers, or our own misperceptions that everyone thinks like our Christian friends. Whatever the cause, our laziness encourages complacency. For being a group that talks so much about making a difference and being proactive, it looks like we're doing a pretty sad job overall, and gosh, others are noticing.

So, is this really a fundamental problem of perception? Could it be that we're sending out, sadly, accurate messages and "outsiders" are receiving them just as we communicate them? The distinction is subtle but it makes all the difference. Do we more often, in fact, choose to judge rather than to love? We serve a God of love and grace, yet we rarely reflect His nature. Sometimes Christians only befriend unbelievers so they can "win" them to Christ. The relationship is built upon judgment and conveys that we only care about "scoring points for Jesus." We demonstrate love

when it's convenient, when we're on missions trips, working at VBS, and at church, but do we love when we're tired, and frustrated, and angry, and despairing, and hurt—and when we neglect to scribble God time into our schedule? Be honest—the answer often is no.

Kinnaman and Lyons conclude their book laying out steps to change the current external perception of Christians, "To reverse the problem of unChristian faith, we have to see people, addressing their needs and their criticism, just as Jesus did. We have to be defined by our service and sacrifice, by lives that exude humility and grace. If young outsiders say they can't see Jesus in our lives, we have to solve our 'hidden Jesus' problem" (206). Although Kinnaman and Lyons address it as a "perception" problem, the core of the issue is in the messages we send. Their solution is not a simple 1-2-3 step process; it demands a desire to change our own motivations and includes a call to the following: "respond with the right perspective," "connect with people," "live a lifestyle of compassion," and many more. Be Christ-like. Let the book be a wake up call "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." That is what the Lord requires. ★



# Philosophy Dep't Attends Notre Dame Conference

By Benjamin Stanford

This past Thursday, philosophy department professors Carlton Fisher, Ben Lipscomb and Chris Stewart, along with fifteen philosophically-minded students traveled to the University of Notre Dame in Indiana for "My Ways Are Not Your Ways: The Character of the God of the Hebrew Bible," a conference in the philosophy of religion. The philosophy department had entered a dream-world of superstar philosophers and theologians, complete with a twelve-hour long day of paper presentations and high-powered conversations following each paper. Asked if he knew where he was, senior Christopher Berman replied in a monotone that bespoke of either a mystic vision or extreme weariness, "Heaven. Pretty sure."

The three-day conference featured the charge—and response to the charge—that the Abrahamic tradition in the Bible should be rejected because it portrays God as immoral and vicious. The discussion centered on how one should explain passages in the Bible in which God commands the death and incineration of all the living creatures (including children) of a particular town (say Jericho). Participants also took aim at passages in which God commanded other moral wrongs, such as Abraham being commanded to kill his son, King David's son being killed for David's sin, or God allowing Job to be inflicted with suffering, as though part of some



*The Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio*

game. Professor Louise Anthony of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst even argued that God exhibits the characteristics of a narcissistic and abusive father who does not love us.

The defenders of the God of the Hebrew Bible—including philosophers and theologians such as Alvin Plantinga, John Hare, Eleonore Stump, Richard Swinburne and Nicholas Wolterstorff argued in three main veins. Wolterstorff, Professor Emeritus of Yale Divinity School, contended that we often miss the literary character of the Hebrew Bible. Phrases like, "And they put to the sword all who were in it, utterly destroying them; there was no one left who breathed, and he burned Hazor with fire" (Joshua 11:11) should not

be interpreted literally, but as saying, "They won a decisive victory" in the same manner that we would say after a victorious Highlander match, "Boy we sure killed them." Furthermore, this explanation of the phrase could help unify contradicting passages, such as in Judges 1:10-11 which describes several tribes attacking Hebron and Debir, cities which Joshua was said to have exterminated back in Joshua 10:36-39.

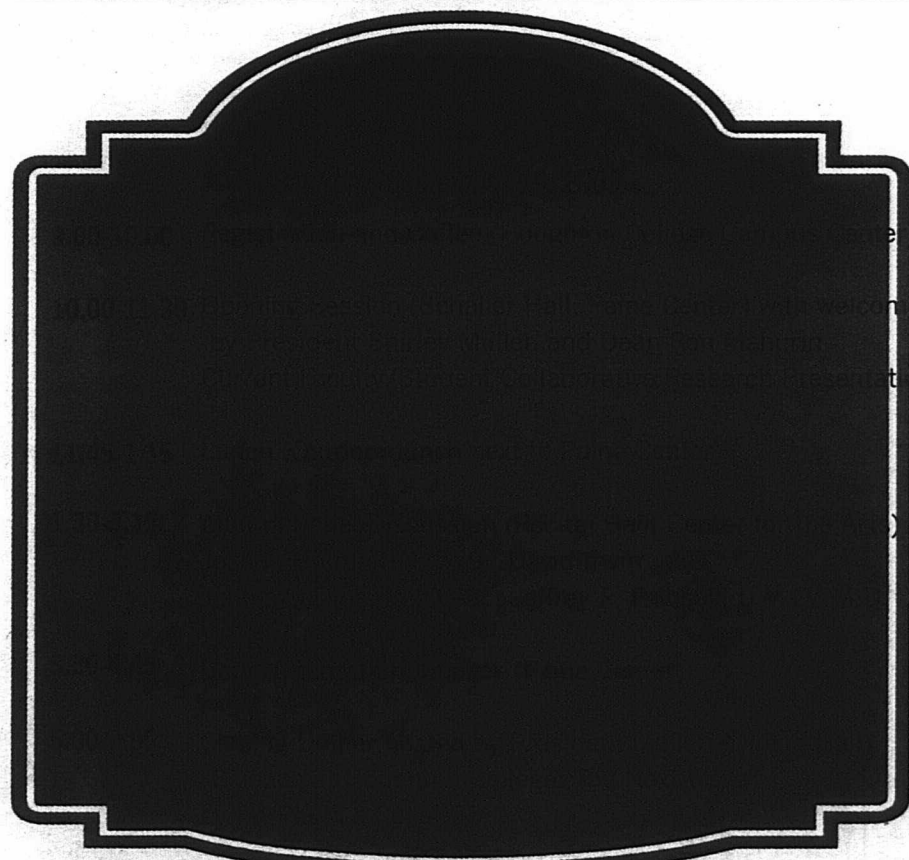
Richard Swinburne, professor emeritus of Oxford University, argued that because God created life and said He'd eventually take it away through death, it didn't matter whether He let you live a full life or took you early through vengeful genocide. He did not think, as many of his critics did, that because God creates humans in His image, they have a set of rights

of existence commensurate to God's own. Indeed, many critics implicitly argued that unless God treats us as equals, He is not a good God.

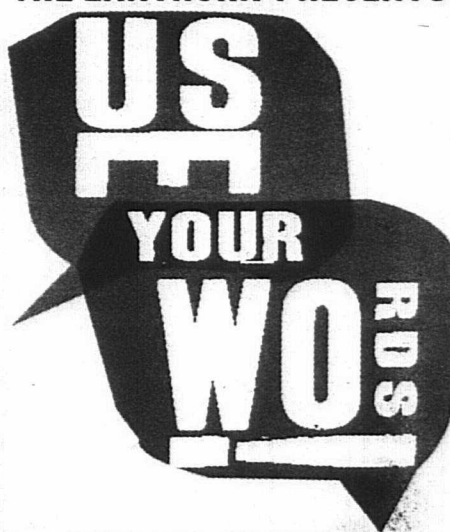
Finally, Eleonore Stump, professor of philosophy at St. Louis University, asserted that God's primary aim in the Hebrew Bible was to form the Hebrews into union with Himself. The story of God commanding the Hebrews to enact judgment on the Amalekites by exterminating them, as related in 1 Samuel 15:1-23, is explained by looking at it in the context of this larger narrative. The point of the story isn't how effective the Hebrews were in bringing justice to the world. Rather, the point is the effect it had on the agents of the action, the Hebrews, in making them more like God.

While it is likely that neither the staunch critics of the Hebrew Bible, nor the stalwart defenders thereof, were swayed much in their views of God's character, the conference did serve to address the criticisms leveled against the Hebrew Bible regarding the character of God, which have been too often ignored by His most ardent supporters.

As for its effect on the Houghton philosophy students? While senior Micah Warf is devastated that the conference ended after only three days, he looks forward with joyous hope to the day in 2010 when Oxford University Press publishes the papers, comments, and replies of the conference in a volume tentatively titled, "Divine Evil? The Moral Character of the God of Abraham." ★



THE LANTHORN PRESENTS



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# Time Well Spent: Taking CLEW Outside Wesley Chapel

by Nathan Forschler

Last week was CLEW. It is my fourth year here at Houghton, and I have always been puzzled by CLEW: Christian Life Emphasis Week. I wonder why we call it that. The only way that it is different from any other week is that there are a whole lot more chapels during the first half of the week that you can go to if you want. I am not sure what extra chapels have to do with the Christian life. You would think that there were more important things to emphasize about the Christian life than attending services.

Don't get me wrong- church services can be a valuable component of our lives, and I feel out of place if I don't go to church on a Sunday. I went to two of the five chapels. The speaker was fairly good. Yet it really doesn't matter who was speaking,

because there aren't many people around that I would feel like listening to speak twice a day for a few days in a row. CLEW speakers are set up for disappointment when they are asked to deliver so many messages in such a short amount of time. In her final message Wednesday morning, Dr. Joy Moore stated: "I mean really, who has time for evening CLEW services when you have to finish your homework and you don't want to miss Babylonian Idol." I have heard past CLEW speakers make similar comments expressing disappointment that all of their chapels were not well attended.

I don't know exactly what I was doing during her evening talks. I might have been sitting outside reading. I know one of the nights I

The most important things about the Christian life involve what goes on after the service.

went bridge jumping. Even though everyone knows it doesn't work this way, I think we sometimes end up trying to accumulate points by going to church or Koinonia. It is notable that, as Jesus said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." Sunday only comes once a week. We commonly hear messages about people violating the Sabbath by doing work upon it. It might be worthwhile to think about the opposite

problem: people filling the rest of the week with church services instead of living the life God has set out for them. There is a balance to be had.

I am reminded of an excerpt from *The Catcher in the Rye* by J. D. Salinger: "I said old Jesus probably would've puked if He could see it-all

those fancy costumes and all...The thing Jesus *really* would've liked would be the guy that plays the kettle drums in the orchestra...He's the best drummer I ever saw...he never looks bored when he isn't doing it. Then when he does bang them he does it so nice and sweet with this nervous expression upon his face."

The most important things about the Christian life involve moving and living and what goes on after the service. I understand that the chapel talks are supposed to be about how we live as Christians, and we can learn things from that, but shouldn't every chapel be like that? Not just the ones during CLEW week? If the school wants to stick with the current format, they should call it Chapel Marathon Week instead of CLEW.

Nathan is a senior Intercultural Studies major

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editors,

As I was reading Monica Sandreczki's article "Student Life Cracks Down on Chapel," I noticed myself saying, "Yeah! We've never had consequences before, why start now?" Even as someone who has met the requirement for all of the six semesters that I've been here, I felt insulted as I read the consequences that would be enforced on those who neglect to attend chapel the required twenty-something times. I know the two-thirds rule has been in existence since I've been here (and before - I got the community responsibilities in the mail prior to my arrival on campus) and I've always thought it odd that some people have received multiple letters stating their deficient attendance and that was the end of the repercussions. My first instinct was to get upset at the "big guys" who decided to "abuse their power," but really, they're just finally doing their jobs.

This is the third week of the semester and the third week the students have been aware of the enforced policy. During this time, I've been observing students around me during chapel. Last week, a boy was on his laptop surfing Facebook for the entirety of the sermon. Monday, there was a girl sitting next to me with her textbook and notebook filling in worksheets during the prayer. This is in addition to every other person texting throughout the service. I think the real issue with chapel is not how many times a student goes but what he or she does with the opportunity to connect with God and

how much he or she opens up to the message. I understand that some students had no choice but to come here, but even if chapel isn't your "thing," respecting the speaker, those around you, and the idea of worship in general is necessary. We can get mad at the administration all we want but it's time to get our priorities straight. I wish that when students discussed chapel, it would be about thoughts on the message rather than why our lives are so hard (as if we weren't aware of the requirements from the beginning).

- Shannon Marriam, class of 2010

Dear Editors,

I was grieved and annoyed after reading last issue's article on the "chapel crackdown". Now entering my third year on the Committee on Spiritual Life, I have participated in many discussions on the purpose of chapel and its convocation, academic, and spiritual components. Last year, sentiment in the CSL did not reflect a desire to see a stricter policy, but rather to see stricter enforcement; we sympathized with poor students who had received no warning after two semesters of delinquent chapel attendance but were slapped with probation after the third.

According to Vice-President for Student Life Sharra Hynes, the letter in our CPO

boxes informed us of a "change in implementation" and not in "official policy". But going from warning letter to disciplinary probation IS a change in policy, and it should have been approved through some body of judgment or at least shown to the Committee on Spiritual Life.

This crackdown decimates attempts at positive discussions about chapel and only serves to frustrate students. When she said that students who don't attend chapel "are unable to be part of the community," Vice-President Hynes not only assumed that chapel is solely convocation, but also that it defines who's in and who's out. Such an attitude is unhealthy and unhelpful.

This represents a breakdown of communication between Spiritual Life and Student Life that must be rectified. A true concern for community, especially for the Houghton community, will reflect a quest for grace and understanding, not a quest for power.

- Clara Sanders, class of 2010

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](mailto: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...

## On the Eighth Day, God Wiped Out the Amalekites...and It Was Very Good

by Micah Warf

Do we serve a good god? It is an exceptional question, and one that, in my experience of the Christian community, is rarely, if ever, honestly asked. It is a necessary premise, something we take for granted. For many people, to ask whether God is good is as productive as asking whether food is edible – it is an analytic truth, contained in the very definition of the word. We don't ask whether God is good. We ask how our good God allows evil, certainly. We ask what God's goodness looks like in our broken world, and even how to find it when it seems to be invisible. But to honestly question whether God is good is a question that, at least in my experience of the church, would raise eyebrows in many a gathering of believers.

I found myself encountering this question at a conference at Notre Dame University this past weekend (see PHILOSOPHY CONFERENCE, page 5). This particular conference was a gathering of philosophers of all stripes who were meeting to grapple with the God that is found in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament, to the more dispensationally minded). After all, for those who have grown up with Bibles, working their way up from the Children's Illustrated

to the Teen Challenge Edition, and finally graduating to the NIV Study with Extended Commentary (once they were old enough to understand what words like "concubine" and "Tamar" meant), the ancient stories about war, slaughter, pillaging, capital punishment, and rape are met with the kind of matter-of-fact numbness that comes from complacent familiarity. But to people who are encountering these passages for the first time, it isn't so easy to

dismiss such horrific crimes and skip to the good parts, where Jesus wins and all of our sins are forgiven. I must admit that I was unprepared for the shocking condemnations of Jehovah that reverberated throughout Notre Dame's McKenna Hall during the weekend. I heard myself and those who share my beliefs roundly criticized for serving a God who ordered the slaughter of entire people groups, who sanctioned the brutalization of virgins just barely in the bloom of youth, who allowed the cruel slaying of children and infants, showing no mercy to anyone. I was earnestly questioned why I would serve a God that instantly killed his devoted followers for so much as a steady hand on the Ark of the

Covenant, the tap of a rock in the desert, or the almost uncontrollable backwards glance at one's hometown, engulfed in burning sulfur.

God is abusive, I was told, he is malicious, he acts on whims, he shows no genuine mercy, he serves his own

ends exclusively, he is proud, he is jealous, and he is anything but good. I suppose such accusations would be easier to take if they were from ill-informed, or simply ignorant people. But these imprecations

upon Yahweh were coming from some of the brightest and most earnest philosophical minds of our time. These were analytical thinkers, brilliant writers, and even scholars of the Scriptures – people who were honest and open, and didn't hesitate to say that they had tried to accept the Christian god, but couldn't bring themselves to do so.

Certainly there were other speakers at the conference, such as Alvin Plantinga, Richard Swineburne, Eleonore Stump, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, who are renowned for their work in rationalizing, explaining, and arguing for Jehovah. These scholars were ready to make a case for Christianity, and did an admirable job of defending the

Christian religion against the attacks made by the other speakers. But a thought that repeatedly went through my mind during the impassioned discussions was: "are we trying too hard?" There are only so many times I am willing to say that there's a bigger picture, or that "His ways are higher than ours".

Do I believe that I serve a good god? Honestly, I don't know. I have faith in God, and I don't believe that He will let me fall away, even in my doubtful brooding. But let's be candid – while we shouldn't ditch our beliefs based on an argument to the contrary, I also don't think we should dismiss or ignore people who can't bring themselves to serve a god that has such a controversial history.

At worst, we will belittle those who can't just get past the little details of rape and genocide and accept salvation. At best, we'll realize that our religion is not nearly as clear-cut as we may have been brought up to think. Maybe we'll even develop compassion and understanding for those who find the Bible unsettling. And wouldn't we all do well to take a closer look at the Rock on which Houghton is so unapologetically founded?

Micah is a senior Philosophy and Music major and is the Associate Editor

## 100 Years: Ruth Percy Sabeau

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 Ruth Percy Sabeau, class of 1962.

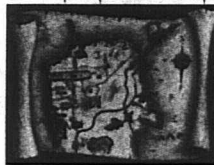
While deciding to run for the position of editor of *The Houghton Star*, I recall thinking about two aspects of the *Star* to change. Both involved increased coverage in depth and breadth. The first step was to expand the paper from four pages to six. A 50% growth presented significant challenges for the staff, but we were anxious to increase coverage to have potential impact on more aspects of campus life.

Not only did we wish to increase the diversity of coverage of Houghton news, but we also wanted to place a new emphasis on covering events that had previously received little or no attention. On the one hand, we developed a policy of inviting guest contributors in order to provide a breadth of informed perspectives, and on the other featured stories of everyday campus life to broaden the

sense of community participation.

Our second task was to increase the attention given to the world outside of Houghton. While the College provided a welcome refuge from many of the issues that had plagued us as high school students, it was clear how easy it was to fall into a too tightly constrained round of what we read, pondered and discussed. What had started as a welcome shared world-view became a very limiting framework. With each passing year, we stood to lose as much as we gained. We wanted to introduce editorials and columns to bring a broader range of topics, ideas, and opinions to students. And although one particular editorial was targeted at this issue, I would wish today to replace it with a much more outspoken articulation of the need to read broadly and discuss divergent points of view during this important time in the development of our intellectual lives. Censorship abounded and tough questions were unacceptable. The 1961-1962 *Star* could have shown stronger leadership in challenging a mode of inquiry that was not designed to stimulate a broader understanding of the world.

## Rothenbuhler Treasure Hunt × Nov. 6th



Initially you may not know.  
Nothing can be as of yet.  
To some, this may be enough.

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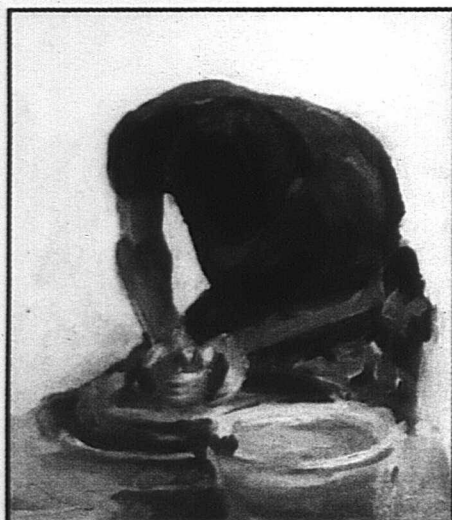
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# artist OF THE WEEK



## megan SCRAFFORD

"The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection."

-Michelangelo

Art is a reflection of God's creativity in the divine image that he placed in us. It necessarily involves and embodies the physical and spiritual; matter and emotion. Still in the infant stages of my own art, I am experimenting with the process and goals of painting. I enjoy the challenge of exploring the human figure- the colossal attempt to represent God's masterpiece in a new and beautiful way.

Art continues to shape the way I understand and interact with the world and with God. It can be frustrating and invigorating to come to the end of a disastrous painting with something new learned and something different to try next time, but it's always well worth the process.

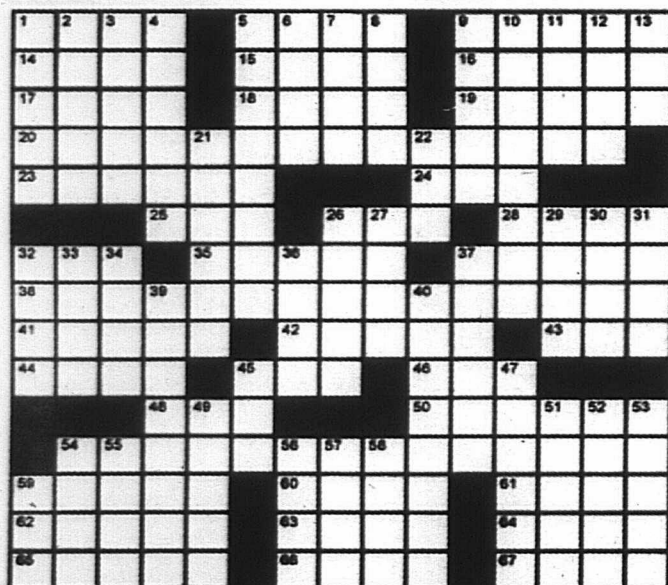
Megan is a senior Art and Spanish double major.

## CROSSWORD CHALLENGE

Hint: This puzzle is a pangram, meaning every letter of the alphabet appears at least once in the correct solution.

### Across

- 1 Carefree adventure
- 5 "At Last" blues singer \_\_\_\_\_ James
- 9 Defeats convincingly
- 14 "The way I see it," in online shorthand
- 15 Witty remark
- 16 Capital where Ho Chi Minh is buried
- 17 Competes (for)
- 18 Surfing destinations?
- 19 Constellation near Canis Major
- 20 Post-fiasco
- 23 "I can't wait to hear more!"
- 24 Farmyard female
- 25 Sacrifice fly result: abbr.
- 26 Patient-care grp.



- 28 Sydney salutation
- 32 Nine-digit ID
- 35 White Sox manager Guillen
- 37 They're treated with aloe
- 38 Boxing, according to an old nickname
- 41 They outrank viscounts
- 42 "\_\_\_\_ and the Night Visitors"
- 43 "\_\_\_\_ the ramparts we watched..."
- 44 Command to a nag?
- 45 Pub order
- 46 Top face card, in France
- 48 "No \_\_\_\_": menu pledge
- 50 Soup ingredient, at times
- 54 Didn't succeed as a couple, maybe
- 59 "The Taming of the Shrew" city
- 60 Sets of graph points
- 61 Chapters in history
- 62 Certain Scrabble tile
- 63 Diamond Head's island
- 64 "Panic Room" actor Jared
- 65 Dried meat treat
- 66 Tuxedo rental event
- 67 Perceive

### Down

- 1 Hopping mad
- 2 \_\_\_\_ acids
- 3 "Gone With the Wind" hero
- 4 Like some delis
- 5 Make balanced
- 6 Territory
- 7 Start to fall
- 8 Cathedral section
- 9 Response to a "Pssst!"
- 10 Deliver a heated speech
- 11 Centimeter, e.g.
- 12 Friend of Eeyore
- 13 Romans 3:23 topic
- 21 Some macaroni shapes
- 22 Greek letter used in physics
- 26 Blackjack request
- 27 Badlands skyline sight
- 29 First James Bond film
- 30 Suffix with clear
- 31 Belgian river to the North Sea
- 32 Worry obsessively
- 33 Onetime Iran ruler
- 34 Great-grandson of Marc Antony
- 36 Fervor
- 37 Mississippi Gulf Coast city
- 39 Dramatic court finish?
- 40 Element with the atomic number 24
- 45 Many moons \_\_\_\_
- 47 What "ipso" in "ipso facto" means
- 49 Featuring twists and turns
- 51 "\_\_\_\_ Grows in Brooklyn"
- 52 Synonym for 1-Down
- 53 Disinfectant brand name
- 54 Nathan of American Revolution fame
- 55 Jewish month containing Purim
- 56 Hoofbeat sound
- 57 Layer of frost
- 58 Reverberate
- 59 Lunchbox fave, for short

Bring your finished crossword to the Star office for a free Leroy Townes and the Lone Stars CD!

Puzzle constructor Brad Wilber ('91) is a member of the library faculty. His crosswords appear regularly in the New York Times and Los Angeles Times.