



## Subway Closes as Planning for Replacement Continues

ALEX DEARMORE  
Regular Contributor

Early last week, the Subway restaurant in Houghton closed up for good. Dale Wright, Houghton College's Vice President for Finance, said that his best understanding is that Susan and Randy Searls, the owners of the Subway, are "phasing into retirement." Wright also mentioned that the Searls owned a total of three Subways in the area, one of which they have already "divested themselves of." He is unsure of the plans for the other Subway, which is located in Cuba NY.

According to Dale Wright, the relationship started when Houghton Ventures LLC, which was formed about "seventeen or eighteen years ago because it was not appropriate for the college, as a non-profit, to be involved with buying and leasing buildings," leased the building that Subway was located in to Mrs. and Mr. Searls. Wright said of the deal that "it has been, and still is, a constant desire to have businesses on Route 19 in Houghton, and we try to facilitate that as much as possible...



COURTESY OF CALEB FESMIRE

Subway stood near the Houghton campus on Route 19 for seventeen years.

Establishing successful businesses in the northern end of Allegany County is difficult. When a business is willing to locate in Houghton, we do everything we can to try to make it successful."

Leasing the building was the only part that Houghton Ventures played in regard to

the Subway, Wright stated that, "Neither the college nor Houghton Ventures were in any way involved in the day to day running of the business, and neither received any 'royalties' or 'profit' other than rent," which, according to Wright, was "more than fair." Although no part of the College played

an active role in the day-to-day running of the Subway, some members of the organization, according to Wright, "thought [the Searls] had opportunities to better utilize the building and encouraged them to do so (have music once in a while, etc.) since it's such a nice building compared to most Subways."

He went on to add that "nothing came to fruition," because "that is outside of the norm of how a Subway normally operates." However, this did nothing to lessen the satisfaction between Houghton and the owners of the restaurant.

Houghton's relationship with the business was congenial; according to Wright, "They are not leaving due to any dissatisfaction with us, and we were pleased to have them in town for seventeen years."

According to Phyllis Gaerte, Houghton's Alumni and Community Engagement Director, "The decision for Subway to close earlier than anticipated has meant scrambling to make something happen sooner rather than later," but she is "optimistic" that the community will be pleased with the change. Currently, there are no more specific details about what will replace the Subway, but according to Gaerte, "as soon as [they] become available," they will be shared with the Houghton Community. ★

## Student Services Relocation Appears Successful

ANNA WRAY  
Regular Contributor

The Center for Student Success (CSS), which was launched at the beginning of this semester, brings together 4 offices, which were previously scattered around campus: The Counseling Center, Academic Support & Accessibility Services, the Office of Vocation and Calling, and the Writing Center. These services are now centrally located on the office side of the first floor of the Chamberlain Center.

Overall, many people agree that the move has been positive. Dr. Bill Burrichter, Executive Director of the CSS, stated that each of the offices has been seeing more students than in previous years. Furthermore, "Counseling is seeing slightly more students (4 higher) over our 5 year average with fewer clinical hours available than in past years," Dr. Burrichter reported. This means that although the Counseling Center technically has fewer hours available for appointments this year, they are operating slightly above capacity to help as many students as they can. In the past, all available counseling slots were filled

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## Women's Cross-Country Team Takes Houghton's First E8 Championship Win



COURTESY OF HOUGHTON CROSS COUNTRY/TRACK & FIELD INSTAGRAM

Houghton's Women's Cross Country team at the 2019 E8 Championship in Pittsford, NY.

RODNEY SHEPHARD  
Sports Writer

In the seven years that the Houghton College Highlanders have competed in the NCAA, there has never been a team that has won the coveted Empire 8 Conference Championship. This is an award that is given to recognize the best team in the conference that year. With the 16 collegiate sports teams at Houghton that compete in the E8, no team could look back on their season and call themselves conference champions. That all changed on November 2nd,

2019 when the Women's Cross-Country team won the college's first ever Empire 8 Championship.

This victory has meant a lot to senior runners Emily Blosdale ('20) and Shelby Langlois ('20). Over the past four years, they have seen a steady improvement in the program. They were freshman on a team that finished in 6th place, and now seniors who have just won it all. When asked about winning E8, Blosdale said, "Winning E8 is the result of a lot of miles put in by this incredible team throughout the last four

years. If you track our results we've just been steadily progressing, with girls bringing in personal records every race, so bringing home a win is incredibly rewarding." One of Blosdale's achievements from her four years of hard work would be finishing 4th in the Empire 8 Cross-Country Championships and earning 1st Team All-Conference Honors.

Finishing 1st in the E8 was a fellow senior, Shelby Langlois ('20), who also won the individual conference title. Shelby commented on the race by say-

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## Houghton Singer to Compete in 2020 NATS

ERIN MAGGIO  
Regular Contributor

Houghton's own Daniel Bussey ('20) has recently been named one of 24 national semifinalists in the 2020 NATS National Musical Theatre Competition; Bussey will thus compete in the semifinal and final rounds in New York City in January.

NATS, the National Association of Teachers of Singing, hosts the National Musical Theatre Competition every two years. In October the preliminary round was held, those auditioning could go to NYC for an in-person audition or submit a video audition. Bussey did the latter, sending in a video. To complete this audition, he sent in an application and recorded three contrasting musical theater pieces, accompanied by Alyssa Pyne. Due to the competition being for those aged 21 to 28, this was the first year that he was eligible for competition.

Out of the entire pool of applicants, which consisted of those from all across the country, just 24 were selected to compete in the semifinal rounds. They will be conducted in NYC at the Roosevelt Hotel in conjunction with the NATS Winter

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# Houghton Women’s Volleyball Finishes Extraordinary Season

CALEB PHILIPS  
Sports Writer

Houghton’s Women’s Volleyball finished a remarkable season this past weekend, after being defeated in the opening round of the Empire 8 Volleyball Tournament. The loss ended a year which saw the team finish with a record of 20-5 overall and 6-1 in conference play. This season gave the women their highest winning percentage since 1992, when the team finished 26-6. This was also the first 20-win season for a Highlanders team since 2015, when they finished 20-11. The women saw many individual milestones, capped off with three players being named to the Empire 8 Women’s Volleyball All-Conference Team.

Brooke Lewandowski’s (’20) superb season secured her a spot on the Empire 8 First Team, after leading Houghton in several offensive and defensive statistics. Along with her impressive

team rankings, Lewandowski finished second in the Empire 8 with a hitting percentage of 30%, third in blocks at 0.69 per set, sixth in kills at 2.64 per set, and sixth in points at 3.12 per set. Lewandowski also nabbed Empire 8 volleyball player of the week during the first week of October. Lewandowski had great support from her teammates all year. “[My teammates] kept giving me more and more confidence throughout the season,” Lewandowski said, “Their confidence in me resulted in confidence in myself and with my play.”

Amy Huddell (’20) and Haley Unverdorben (’22) both earned spots on the Empire 8 Second Team due to their stellar performances this year. Huddell was also named to the Empire 8 Volleyball All-Tournament Team, for her performance in the Empire 8 tournament. Huddell finished sixth in the Empire 8 in with a hitting percentage of 24% and eighth in kills at 2.38 per set.

Unverdorben led the Empire 8 in service aces at 0.67 per set and completed the season second in assists at 8.85 per set. Unverdorben also surpassed 1,000 career assists, becoming the eighth Highlander in the past 20 years to do so. She was also named the Empire 8 Player of the Week twice, once in the last week of September and then a month later, during the last week of October.

One of the many reasons the team found so much success this year was due to the experience of the players. Out of the 14 women on the roster, five were seniors. Haley Unverdorben, currently a sophomore, said the seniors were great leaders for the team, “Each [senior] truly cared about being at practice and it helped the attitude of the team,” Unverdorben said, “There wasn’t a hierarchy, as everyone was treated equally. They made our practices so fun to be at and they made being a part of the Houghton Volleyball team such a joy.”

Ally Bitteringer, a senior captain, talked about her role as a captain filling her with energy and joy. “I’ve been blessed to play alongside a force of very determined athletes who encourage each other every single day,” Bitteringer stated, “I’ve never been more proud of a group of girls in my entire life, and I couldn’t imagine a better way to finish out my volleyball career with the people I love most.”

The accomplishments of the team can also be attributed to their new coach, Josh Tompkins. The team did not know what to expect when coming into training camp, but Coach Tompkins turned out to be a huge part of the team’s success. “Coach Tompkins is a blessing to this program,” Bitteringer said, “He jumped right in and pushed us to work hard from day one. He earned our trust and respect very quickly, and we were determined to make him proud in return.”

When asked about the

highlight of their season, both Bitteringer and Lewandowski talked about their impressive showing at the La Roche tournament on September 6th and 7th. They won all four of their matchups, beating Clarks Summit, Chatham, Franciscan, and La Roche, winning all 12 of the sets that they played. “That weekend helped us see how talented we really were, and in that moment we truly started to believe in ourselves,” Bitteringer said. The dominance displayed that weekend continued throughout the season, which saw the girls rise to as high as second in the NCCAA Division I Women’s Volleyball rankings, where they finished third. Accolades like these are what are what made this an extraordinary season for the Women’s Volleyball Team, one that will set the standard for the rest of Houghton Athletics. ★



COURTESY OF JOHANNA FLOREZ

New curtains will obscure writing center tutors’ view of the counseling center waiting area.

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by week six, but this year, they were filled by week three, which means students entered into counseling more quickly than in previous years.

Another benefit has been collaboration between the services, both for referrals and programming. Sharon Mulligan, Associate Director of Academic Support and Accessibility Services, commented that the new layout of the CSS enables a “quicker connection” between different services that are available to support students. In the past, she sometimes suggested that a student she was working with should visit the Office of Vocation and Calling or the Counseling Center, but some students were hesitant about following through. Now that the services are centrally located, it is easier for Mulligan and others to help students make appointments across offices, and most students follow through when they are referred to another office. Mulligan also shared that because of the layout, the offices are finding new ways to collaborate, as well. For example,

Academic Support and Accessibility Services was involved with the Anxiety Workshop the Counseling Center hosted earlier in the semester.

When the layout of the CSS was first introduced, some people expressed concerns about how it would impact the privacy of students using the services, particularly those going to counseling. Writing Center consultant Kayla Simmons (’20) thought it would be good for the Writing Center to have some curtains because of the way it looks into the Counseling Center’s waiting area. (Since her feedback, curtains have been installed which allow daylight to enter the waiting area without enabling Writing Center tutors to see people waiting for counseling.) She “want[s] to respect people’s privacy” and emphasizes that there is nothing wrong with getting counseling. She also says that she appreciates the view of the quad that the Writing Center now has.

The CSS also conducted an anonymous survey to find out how students felt. 63 surveys were collected, and the results were positive. On a scale of 1

to 5, the statement, “I experienced an appropriate level of confidentiality or privacy” received an average rating of 4.8, while the statement, “The office space is conducive to meeting my needs” received an average rating of 4.7.

The CSS Administrative Assistant, Hannah Bailey (’17), can help students who have further questions or are unsure which office they should go to for the help they need. All of the services offered by the CSS are free to students. ★

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ing, “I have been 5th at E8 the past two years, so it was really special to finally win this year. I really owe the win to Coach Hager and the girls, since the beginning of the season coach has been encouraging me to win this race. The girls on the team were pushing me as well, they have a way of giving me confidence and making me brave.”

The Women’s Cross-Country team pushed themselves through a rigorous preseason, all in hopes that they would eventu-

ally find themselves where they are today, conference champions. Amanda Burrichter (’23), when asked what the preparation was like going into the season said, “From the start of preseason to crossing the finish line at E8, it has been like a sisterhood. The preparation we did obviously would include lots of miles and rigorous workouts, but the key behind the success was our coach Patrick Hager and the amazing girls on the team. The workouts we did were hard, but what got me through it was my teammates cheering me on and encouraging me every day. The success came from the love we have for one another and for running.”

Going into the season, the Highlanders knew it wasn’t going to be an easy task, the Empire 8 Conference is one of the most well-respected conferences in the country. Head Coach Patrick Hager commented on his expectations going into the season by saying, “Our goal was to win, but we certainly expected to be top three. We expected to have at least two girls in the top 10 at E8, which we surpassed. We had a very solid group of returners and a couple of freshmen who would make an immediate impact. I knew we’d be a threat.”

The Highlanders were indeed a threat, but every champion has gone through some sort of adversity. Hager reflected on some of the struggles the team endured by saying, “We were having trouble getting all five of our scoring girls to race well on the same day. This is hard to do, but I knew if we could, we’d be dangerous. We ended up giving one of our top girls a couple of days off to recoup, get healthy, and destress. This is tough, as a coach, because everything is about volume, consistency, keeping your body in a rhythm, etc. This ended up paying off and she had a very good race, both Pre-Regionals and at E8. Another adjustment was nar-

rowing the gap in our #4-9 pack. We’d been having #4-6 train together, and #7-9 just a little bit back in a pack of their own. We started to lump them together a bit, and it ended up that two girls in our #7-9 pack raced top 6 for us at E8. I can’t help but think this adjustment gave them confidence.”

Unfortunately, all good things often come to an end. As Shelby Langlois’ collegiate career winds down, she reflects on her time as a Houghton Highlander by saying, “In my time at Houghton, the females on this team have brought me a lot of joy and I’m grateful to Coach Hager for the team he has created here. I remember my first E8 as a freshman. We were 6th out of 8 teams. We’ve come really far since my first year and we have worked at this for a long time. It’s the perfect ending to my time here—to finally have a team title.”

The Women’s Cross-Country team will return next season with 12 of this year’s runners, whose experience will be useful as they look to defend their title in the competitive Empire 8 Conference next season. ★

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Workshop Conference, which is held from January 10th to the 12th. The competition itself will be held on Saturday, January 11, 2020, with the finals being held on the same day.

Dan and the other 23 competitors will compete in the semifinals, where each will have a list of seven songs to sing from, the first of which they can choose followed by the judges then picking whatever else they would like to hear. Up to 6 of the semifinalists will then be chosen to sing in the finals. The finals include each singer performing a 15-minute recital of their musical theatre repertoire.

For both the semifinals and finals, judges are musical theatre industry professionals—in-



# Humans of Houghton

## Ray Parlett

ALLY STEVICK

Ray Parlett is the director of Safety and Security on campus, having worked for Safety and Security full time since 1981. Ray tells me that he got into Safety and Security when he was doing his undergraduate studies at Houghton. “I came here as a student because I grew about fifteen or twenty miles [from] here and commuted... And after about two and a half or three years I ran out of money. Plain and simple.” Ray had worked doing some farm work and other odd jobs for a while, and then when a night position opened up with Safety and Security he took that. “I took the night position and finished up classes as a part time student and full time security officer. So it took me eight years to graduate from Houghton, but I did it.” He chuckles when he tells me this. “And financially it was a stretch, but I don’t know if I would have been able to pull it off if I didn’t start working full time here.” Later he tells me, somewhat as an afterthought, that he was a first generation college student.

I ask Ray to tell me a bit about what Safety and Security does on a daily basis. “Some of it is the obvious,” he says. “You meet the night guys in particular, and I did that for a while, and I still do that some because our staffing is such that everybody has to do everything at some point or another... So obviously we do lock the buildings, we unlock the buildings, we do rounds, we check to make sure that people who don’t belong here aren’t here, those kinds of things. Some of the other things that our office does, particularly myself and Mr. Cronk here in the office, we respond to emergencies and we’re responsible for all the college keys one way or another. Student Life directly issues the keys for the residence hall rooms, but we provide those keys to the Student Life office. We change locks whenever a student loses their keys, which is pretty frequently.” He laughs good na-

turedly at that. “Also parking control which, a lot of people are pretty aware of that, some not so much, but there are certain people who are keenly aware of it,” he laughs again. “The fire inspection is another thing that we’re pretty deeply involved in, that is very time consuming, and so we’re pretty heavily involved with that... We also are one of the few campuses that allow students to bring a firearm, if they want to use a firearm for recreational or hunting purposes, but they have to be stored here. We store bows and firearms for students because they’re not allowed to have them in the residence hall.”

When I ask Ray to tell me something that he particularly enjoys about the job, he answers in one word. “Students,” he says. “I’ve said for decades that security was never on my radar,” he tells me, “There are probably any number of occupations that I might enjoy doing more, but as I look and I think about some of the places I have worked, I don’t think there’s any place I would rather do it. I look at that balance that, while there are things I might enjoy doing more than safety and security, I think there would be a level of disappointment or dissatisfaction in going to other places. Houghton’s just been really good to us, and again, working with the students, there’s a few exceptions to that along the way for sure, but by and large the students here give me hope for the future, frankly. When I look around at the world and the way things are going sometimes it’s easy to get kind of discouraged, but then I interact with students here at the college and I have a renewed sense of hope for where this world will go.”

Ray and his wife Lisa have three sons, all of whom are now grown and have graduated college. All three of them were homeschooled all the way up until they went to college. “When we started homeschooling I envisioned doing it through grade

credible honor, and I could not be more thrilled and proud that Dan has been selected. He is a wonderfully gifted, hard-working, kind, and God-honoring young man, and I know that he will take the grace and peace of Christ with him as he sings and interacts with other participants, judges, and audience members.”

Bussey was very surprised when he saw his name on the list of semifinalists, though he said he is “really grateful for the opportunity.” He looks forward to the competition, as he said, “It’ll be a good experience and I’m excited to go. I’m going to do my best and have fun with it all. Obviously, the fact that I’m in the competition at all is the result of my professors, my friends, my family, and God. Without them, I wouldn’t be going anywhere. So, I’m feeling really thankful, grateful, and excited about it all.” ★

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cluding casting directors and agents. According to Amanda Cox (’01), Director of Houghton Lyric Theatre and an Assistant Professor of Voice, “Even being able to sing for [these professionals] is a wonderful opportunity.”

Per the NATS, “The first prize winner is awarded more than \$5,000 in prizes in addition to a concert at the 56th NATS National Conference in Knoxville, Tennessee from June 26th to 30th, 2020.” The second prize winner wins \$2,500 and a \$500 gift certificate from the Hal Leonard Corporation. There are also prizes for the third and fourth place contestants, including the \$1,000 for the Louise Lerch Prize and \$750 for the Bill Hayes Prize.

Cox said of Bussey’s selection: “This is an absolutely in-

# Local Attractions

## East Aurora

JULIA WILMOT

Fancy a short trip to a historic and exciting little town? East Aurora is less than an hour from Houghton and is home to many cute shops, cafes, and bakeries, as well as being packed full of history. This charming town was also the film sight for multiple Christmas movies, including A Prince for Christmas and Hope for Christmas.

As you make your way down Main Street in East Aurora, the way is paved with brick, a unique feature that aids in the vintage feel of the town. On either side of the street is a collection of small-town staples. In the middle of town is a quaint old fashioned movie theatre that has a single screen and shows one movie at a time.

On the opposite side of the street is the iconic and grand shoppe, Vidler’s. Anyone who makes a stop in East Aurora must pop into the immense store, even to browse for a moment. Vidler’s is a two-story shop with multiple departments that have items including everything from soap and candles to candy and toys to kitchen supplies and Christmas decorations.

Along the strip of Main Street are various small businesses and cafes. Some notable eateries include The Globe, Pasquale’s, and Charlie’s Diner, along with cafes like Taste and Main Street Bakery. The diverse small-town cafes are a pleasant foil to the more common, but still popular, attractions such as Subway and CVS.

Beyond Main Street are other significant landmarks for East Aurora. The Roycroft Campus is home to an Inn and the Elbert Hubbard Roycroft Museum. Elbert Hubbard was

a writer, philosopher, and publisher who started the Arts and Crafts movement right there in East Aurora. The museum itself is open June through October, but the Inn is open year-round and offers a restaurant, both of which feature Arts and Crafts design.

Just around the corner from the hot spots in town is the headquarters for Fisher-Price. The business was founded in East Aurora during the great depression. Since its start in this small town, the business has expanded to 145 countries and produces toys in 37 languages.

One of the older and most remarkable landmarks in this town is the home of the 13th president of the United States, Millard Fillmore. Before Fillmore became president he built his own home in the town of Aurora. The house originally stood near the theatre building, but Mrs. Irving Price, of Fisher-Price, was enamored with the run-down little house and its history so she had it moved to its current location and made it into her studio. In the 1970s the house was bought and converted back into a historical treasure. The house is open June through October for public and private tours which explore the various parts of the estate, including the living rooms, library, carriage barn, and the gardens.

East Aurora is a quiet and exciting small town. This is not a place you would want to drive by without a second thought. Drop by for a coffee, or stop and spend hours browsing and shopping in Vidler’s. Take a day trip to explore the town and immerse yourself in its fascinating history. ★

six, maybe,” he says, “Lisa and I both had pretty lousy experiences in the public schools... and I just couldn’t see putting my kids on a bus, having seen what I saw kids go through on the bus growing up... So we decided to homeschool at least until fifth or sixth grade when the would be more equipped.” However, they ended up homeschooling all the way through after all. “This question which is subtly different,” Ray says, “is, ‘why do you still homeschool?’ And that’s a vastly different answer, and it’s all about the benefits of homeschooling—what we loved about it, which is developing a relationship with our kids, being part of their education, being there for that ‘aha’ moment when they understand the quadratic equation or something like that. It’s just so exciting to see the kids get something and be part of that process.”

I ask Ray if there’s any advice he would give to students, and he shares with me an idea he doesn’t think students hear very often. “In terms of advice,” he says, “it was years ago I had mentioned to

somebody that there’s this variety of callings from the Lord. There are some people who at four years old know that they’re going to be a missionary doctor in Uganda at this facility and that is just awesome... And then the opposite end of the spectrum is somebody who in their fifties is still thinking ‘I’m not sure what I’m going to do when I grow up.’ But there’s a certain amount of availability to do whatever the Lord calls you to when you don’t have this, ‘okay, here’s where I’m going to be in ten years.’ I’ve found when I talk to students about that it’s really interesting for how many students it seems to be such a bright spot for them to realize, ‘okay, I’m a senior and I don’t know what I’m going to do next year, but that’s actually maybe okay.’ Because most people... are expecting you to have all these really defined plans when you’re a senior. And again, that’s not a bad thing, but there’s also something to be said for being more available to the Lord’s change in direction for you.” ★



# Houghton Ministry Students Attend Wesleyan Conference

JACOB BAILEY

On Thursday, November 7th a van full of upper-class theology students traveled to Indiana for a College Day, hosted by the Wesleyan Church Headquarters. After a nine-hour car ride, dinner at Chick-Fil-A, and a stay at a hotel, the Houghton crew arrived at the HQ building. For many of the students, the building’s architecture was not how they imagined it would be. Adam Funch (’20) recalls, “It’s not at all what I expected. I didn’t think it would be antiquated, but I didn’t think it would be as modern as it was. It was a very flowing setup with an ongoing series of hallways.” The HQ guide explained that the building had been designed in a simple manner for easy access to different departments. It was made very clear that, to the HQ, more attention, time, and money should be spent on actual ministries, rather than their own building.

The conference began at 9am, with both registration and a rundown of what to expect out of the day. All five Wesleyan colleges in the United States were invited to attend, in order to promote connection and unity across the greater Church. Funch’s highlight of the trip was actually the connection he made with two Kingswood University students. He states, “The goals



COURTESY OF SAXONY-INDIANA.COM

The Wesleyan Church Headquarters in Indiana.

and aspirations each had for ministry, such as the traveling evangelism and church planting, as well as their ongoing ministry of regularly visiting a jail to minister to inmates, was inspiring and made us all think about the bright future of ministry ahead of us.” Olivia Flint (’20) was also very impressed with the fruit of this conference. She comments, “I thoroughly enjoyed networking with various pastors and leaders in the Wesleyan denomination. It was quite inspiring to hear of the grand work they are doing and inviting us to join! I was reminded here of the true reasoning behind why we do ministry. I was reminded of Christ’s deep

love for us, and how simply this wonderful love flows out of us into others when we trust the Holy Spirit.” There was a variety of speakers leading this event, and many of the topics spoken on dealt with things such as: what to expect in full time ministry, potential hazards that may come up, the solutions to avoid those hazards, and how to be unified in the body. One topic that stood out to Marc Alfonce (’20) was the S.H.E.D. acronym. Alfonce recalls, “SHED stands for Sleep, Hobby, Exercise, and Diet. I feel like I do these things well, but the speaker challenged me to grow even healthier in these areas.” Students were reminded

that anyone going into occupational ministry is still human; that, their bodies, emotions, and lives are impacted by the daily care fueling them. Times of Sabbath rest should not be recognized with feelings of guilt, or even with the mentality that work will be better quality with rest (though that may be true). Rather, God created moments of stopping in order to “allow the paint to dry,” so to speak. It is not selfish to take good care of your body.

JL Miller was Houghton’s faculty representative on this trip. It was Miller’s first time attending this event, and he was initially curious what the day would hold. Reflecting on his

time, he says, “It was just a good day for anyone heading into ministry. Most of the sessions poured into the students and they received a couple of free books. I hope what students get from this time was not necessarily that they need to be a part of the Wesleyan church, but they get a better sense of what the Wesleyan denomination is and where it is headed.”

The hope was for students to walk away with a greater understanding of leadership and have an optimistic view of the future. There was an overall appreciation by the students for the opportunity to attend this event. ★

# MANNRS Returns From Annual Career Fair

RYAN OZZELLO

The Houghton College MANRRS Chapter, which stands for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences, recently attended the MANNRS Annual Career Fair and Training Conference for the fourth year in a row. This year, seven student members and college faculty advisor Dr. Rebecca Williams were present, travelling all the way to Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, VA. “MANRRS is great....for Houghton students to participate in a large-scale conference with...other universities in an urban setting,” remarks Dr. Williams; “the focus of the organization is to educate young professionals on diversity issues in the workplace and promote inclusion, while providing ample opportunity for professional development.”

During the conference, the MANNRS team had many great opportunities, from hearing tips on how to interview well, connecting and networking with potential companies to work for, and also participating in workshops. One of these workshops was a Land O’Lakes case study presentation, which focused on making wise business decisions within an agriculture company.

On top of this, the conference also hosted a public speaking competition, which MANNRS members Colten Phillips



COURTESY OF MANNRS STAFF

Houghton MANNRS students at the Regional Conference.

(’22) and Rachael Rogan (’21) participated in. The challenge was to give an ‘elevator speech,’ where partakers had 60 seconds to sell MANRRS to someone who has never heard of the organization before. “It was a pleasure to attend the MANRRS Regional Conference,” reflects Rachel Rogan (’21), who went for the first time; “the Elevator Speech contest... pushed me out of my comfort zone and gave me practice writing and presenting in my own words.”

Freshman member Mary Vandenbosch (’23) also partook in an impromptu speech competition, where competitors didn’t know what topic they were speaking on until ten minutes prior. This was a way to practice what professionals are often required to do at unplanned meetings or ceremonies. Vandenbosch ended up winning 2nd place, knocking everyone’s socks off with a personal and relevant speech about how her experience growing up on a

dairy farm shaped the way she sees dirt-- something that, according to her, “most people just see [as] dirt, but farmers see [as] potential.” Vandenbosch further comments that the competition “was an amazing experience and the topic was very close to home. I cannot wait to attend the National Conference.”

In addition to these professional growth opportunities, another tangible benefit for MANNRS members networking at this conference is that many

are offered internships from prominent companies. And oftentimes, these internships lead to full time job offers. For example, former MANNRS members John Khalaf (’18) and Jacob Annis (’18), are now working at Land O’Lakes full time, in the IT TAP (Talent Acceleration Program) program. Michael Cha (’18), another MANNRS alum is working full time at John Deere as a data scientist, and current MANNRS senior Erik Sorensen (’20) will be joining him full time upon graduation. Reflecting on his past experience with MANNRS, John Khalaf (’18) remarks, “MANRRS was full of energy! Being able to meet students from other schools who were very passionate about agriculture made me discover that passion too. I knew I wanted to use my skills in a way that makes the world a little better. MANRRS helped me understand exactly how I might do that.”

With another successful attendance at the Regional MANRRS Conference, students that are a part of MANNRS continue to develop into professionals that are ready to take on the workplace. As they still reflect on the excellent growth opportunities coming out of this conference, they are already gearing up for nationals next semester in Minneapolis, Minnesota from April 1st to 4th. ★



# How Do Music Majors Manage Their Time?

ANNA JUDD

Houghton’s music program is one of the things for which the school is best known and most acclaimed. On campus, though, jokes abound about whether the music students exist at all—they’re so rarely seen, after all. Studying music at Houghton is a demanding endeavor, and presents time management challenges for the students who choose to take it on.

The Greatbatch School of Music offers a number of different majors. Students may get a BS in Music Industry, a general BA in Music, or they can also choose from several BMus programs, including: Composition, Music Education, and Performance of voice or various instruments. BMus students follow different, less demanding general education requirements than BS or BA students, including fewer math, science and writing courses, among other differences; but they need more total credit hours to graduate—128, compared to 124 for a BS or BA - and the demands of their studies create challenges for both course scheduling and day-to-day time management.

Ryan Nickelsen (‘21), a computer science major who recently exchanged a second major in piano performance for two minors in the music department, explains that some of the course requirements for music students are unusually rigid. “Music theory and musi-



Houghton's Center for the Arts, home of the Greatbatch School of Music.

COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA.ORG

cianship classes, those are core music classes that... all majors need to take,” he says. “There’s four of each one, and each progress in difficulty and material covered, and they build on top of each other, so you can’t [take classes out of order]... With other classes, it’s nice to take them sequentially, but it’s not always necessary.” This has implications for a music student’s four-year plan, and may make it more difficult to incorporate other studies: “If I didn’t

do honors, I would be done with music theory and musicianship now... but because I did East Meets West... I’m still currently, in my junior year, taking music theory and musicianship classes, when the rest of my year are already done,” says Nickelsen. Ethan Carr (21), a double BMus student in Music Education and Music Composition, seconds the sentiment. “My overall schedule is pretty well set in stone,” he says. “I have little flexibility with when I take

courses.” While he appreciates knowing that every class counts for something, he does add that “it would be nice to take something fun, for a change.”

On top of scheduling difficulties, studying music demands a significant time commitment to practicing, no matter the specific major. “When I was officially a music student, practicing took up a lot of time even though I was industry and not performance,” says Liv De Smidt (‘19). “I was spending

hours a day practicing voice and piano.” Nickelsen says he usually spends his free time between classes practicing, and does homework for other classes in the evenings, when he doesn’t feel like going back to the music building. “On average...I’m currently practicing upwards of sixteen hours a week,” he says.

As one might imagine, this schedule can be challenging for students. Carr explains that his days are hectic: “Many days I spend approximately 8 hours in class alone. I rarely accomplish all the practice time I am supposed to do. I often have to eat lunch in class. My daily schedule is constantly changing, with unexpected requirements and recitals [or] performances.” He does, however, have ways of handling the work, including—perhaps counterintuitively—taking a break on Sunday and deliberately finding time for rest when possible during the week. “When it comes down to time management, you really have to decide which things are the most important, live day to day, and trust God. You also can’t neglect your personal health... because if you don’t take a break from work, your brain gets overworked, you get exhausted, and you actually accomplish less.”

This all points to an impressive dedication to study and improvement. So this week, why not hug a music major? Provided, of course, that you can find one. ★

## PHOTO OF THE WEEK

A festive autumn tree. Courtesy (once again) of the Houghton College Biology Department's Facebook page.



**We want student photos!**  
Submit your holiday-related shots—whether of Thanksgiving celebrations, your favorite decorations, or winter views around campus—for inclusion in this semester’s final issue of the STAR. Email your images to [editor@houghtonstar.com](mailto:editor@houghtonstar.com) by December 8th!



# Worth and Love in the Houghton Queer Community



COURTESY OF CALEB FESMIRE

MARY CHICHESTER

With this being the opinions section I should have an opinion to write about, and as a queer student on campus, I sure do have a lot of opinions. One of my many opinions is that Christmas starts November 1st with a brief intermission for Thanksgiving. Sadly I don't think I could defend that opinion in between 600-800 words. So, instead of using this space to talk about official holiday

start times, or about all of the hardship facing our queer family on campus, I would rather address the queer community itself.

When looking to write this opinion piece I was stuck on what to say, as I have so many things I want to tell you. I wanted to point to the queer community on campus as your saving grace to pull you out of the negativity, but I can't, because the queer community can't save you. We aren't perfect enough for that and we aren't trained for that. The queer community can't define you either. So, I settled on this: Your worth is defined only by you and God.

of their parent's love, their friend's attention, or even the love of God we are told is so abounding. But God's love is shown by the way that we love others, as said in 1 John 4:7-8: "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." So now we ask ourselves if we have loved others, and how. The love you have for your friends, your family, your community, yourself, and for God is what matters and is something that can help you write your own definition for

lives that we can't feel the way our mind makes us feel; that we can't have those thoughts. I'm sure some of us have even been told that God condemns those thoughts or that we're going to hell for those feelings. These sentiments might have been directed at us, or perhaps at that cool new friend you made in high school who was openly bisexual and whom your mother promised you was going to hell. However, God is an infinite and all-knowing being, and last time I checked it would be impossible to know his mind.

When people tell you that you have to define your worth or find your meaning in the man-made rules they push onto you and how well you stay within the lines they paint, remember that they don't speak for God. These are strings being attached by a society of people who choose to overlook the love you choose to give; a love that reflects God's sacrifice. Our Lord gave his Son to die for us so that we can be free to love in the way God loves us.

God's love is not contrac-

tual. God does not look at you, see all of the things people say make you wrong or broken, and turn his back on you. God sees someone who is capable of so much love. If you struggle to find one thing you can use to define your worth or who you are, use that knowledge.

Look past the love in your own heart (if you can see past that beautiful skyscraper) and see the love of others. See the love that Dean Jordan has for all of his students, even the ones people say are too far gone to love. Look at the love our counseling center has for those who feel so broken that they struggle to love themselves. This love can show you that you are not alone. Your love is just as valid as any other kind of love simply because it is yours to give, and you do just that. ★

Mary is a sophomore majoring in education and english.

“Our Lord gave his Son to die for us so that we can be free to love in the way God loves us.”

Many queer people in our community have felt like they are unworthy of a lot of things. Some feel they are unworthy

who you are.

Only you and God can define who you are. I'm sure most of us have been told our whole

# How a Curse Can Turn Into an Incredible Gift



COURTESY OF CALEB FESMIRE

ZACHARY PARIS

If you know anything about Bruce Banner, who is The Incredible Hulk, you know how much he can struggle with living with the big green guy. Ever since Bruce's accident with radiation making him The Hulk, he has been looking for a cure. He does not want to control the Hulk, he wants to get rid of it. He hates how the Hulk makes him exposed, vulnerable, and very, very angry. What Bruce always thinks about is how the Hulk has brought about his inability to have a normal life. He cannot have a relationship with his longtime love interest Betty Ross, and on top of that

her father General "Thunderbolt" Ross's lifelong pursuit is to capture Bruce so that he can collect data and use the Hulk as a weapon. Along with this, Bruce cannot hold a job because he is always on the run from the government. Because of this it leads him to go down a path of depression and loneliness. Bruce has even attempted suicide in some instances because he feels that he cannot go on with the curse of being the Hulk. When he tried, the Hulk spit the bullet out.

The story of Bruce Banner is nothing short of tragic. At the same time though, Bruce is a brilliant scientist who has helped and saved thousands of people, both as Bruce and the Hulk. In the beginning, Bruce didn't look at the Hulk as a gift, but the Hulk started to bring a lot of good into not only his life but others all around him. First off, Bruce is an Avenger because of the Hulk. He is literally one of "Earth's Mightiest Heroes." By saving a teenager who was on a testing field and getting blasted with amounts of radiation that should have killed him, Bruce became a hero that day. Since day one of having the Hulk with him, Bruce has been a hero, but it took him a bit of convincing sometimes

“God made us who we are for a reason, but sometimes we have to do a bit of digging to figure out exactly who we really are and what we are talented or gifted in.”

that the Hulk is not a curse, but actually a gift.

Like many of us, we struggle with who we are sometimes. We hate that we are not the smartest, the most athletic, or even the best looking person around. We can hate who we are. Everyone struggles with the fact that God made us who we are and that he gave others gifts we wish we had. What we fail to acknowledge is that God made us who we are for a reason, but sometimes we have to do a bit of digging to figure out exactly who we really are and what we are talented or gifted in.

It took Bruce some time to figure out that the Hulk is a gift that he was given to help those around him. It can take us some time, too. We think that if we can't hit a home run

or get straight A's that we don't have any talent or that we aren't gifted at all. We feel that we are cursed with who we are. Sometimes we wonder why we were given certain traits and not others, but if we look deep down we can find what gifts we were given.

Bruce only saw the Hulk as the ugly side of him and just wanted it to go away. He was a brainless nuisance to him that got in the way with his practice as a scientist which he worked so hard for. Some traits that we have seem as though they are holding us back, traits like being nervous in a crowd or being too awkward in general. What we fail to acknowledge sometimes is just because that is not who we are, we have these traits as a part of what makes us great and what we are gifted in.

At the same time, others around us can bring out in us what we never thought we had. Do you think that Bruce Banner thought that the Hulk could ever play well with a team? The Hulk is a part of the original Defenders. Others not just around the Hulk, but Bruce himself brought something out in the both of them that never seemed possible. At the end of it all, Bruce took what he had once considered a curse and used it in the best way possible. On top of that, he surrounded himself with people that brought the best out in the both of them.

If we get the most and do the most with what God has given us, our opportunities are endless. Bruce had no idea what was in store for him once the Hulk came into his life. At the same time, we have no idea what God has in store for us either. If we accept that God made us in His image and use what we believe is a curse as a gift, like Bruce, we can be something incredible. ★

Zach is a senior majoring in communications.



# All I Want for Christmas Is a Safe Roth Bridge



COURTESY OF JULIA WILMOT

BRYCE PRESTON

I have a problem. It would be pretty embarrassing to talk about this problem publicly in the STAR, except that I know for a fact that over half of the male students at Houghton have dealt with this problem at some point during their college careers. I haven't heard a lot of people talking about it, so I decided I'd be the first to call out this issue and name it for what it is: the Roth 3rd Floor Bridge is a hazard. I've slipped and had to catch myself on the railing three times in the last three days. Like I said, that'd be hard to admit, except I know I'm not alone. In fact, I heard that David Bowers, one of the higher-ups at the Houghton STAR, recently sustained a shoulder sprain on the icy bridge, confirmed by Dr. Brubaker. Clearly, this is a

problem which needs to be addressed. According to the CDC, the average American woman can expect to live about five years longer than the average American man. I'm not saying they contribute, but the dormitory bridges of Houghton College certainly do not make me question this stat. The lovely ladies of Irma Lambein Hall enter their building by walking across a sturdy concrete bridge, covered in the winter by a heated – I repeat – HEATED floor mat that has a sort of Moses/Red Sea effect and parts the snow so they have dry ground to walk on. According to Lambein R.D. Beth

“We love Roth, and those thrill-seekers among us may even love the bridge, but we don't love fearing for our lives just to reach the rest of civilization.”

the dragon's castle is a pretty accurate depiction of what the residents of Roth go through several times a day. And that's in the summer... don't even get me started on the seven months of the year the bridge is covered in ice. I'm pretty sure every guy from Roth has prayed

“If you've ever seen Shrek, the scene where Donkey and Shrek cross the bridge to the dragon's castle is a pretty accurate depiction of what the residents of Roth go through several times a day.”

Phifer, the bridge to the fourth floor of her building used to be a severe hazard and caused substantial concern for her residents – until the mats were put in place. Men of Roth – it's a bit different for us. If you've ever seen Shrek, the scene where Donkey and Shrek cross the bridge to

a desperate prayer to suddenly have the skills of Apolo Ohno while slipping and sliding down the slanted – yes, SLANTED – bridge at least once. Basically, if you've ever woken up your entire dorm building just by loudly stepping on the wrong metal plate, had to imitate a penguin's waddle just to get out

of your dorm without breaking a hip, or thought “SHREK, I'M LOOKIN' DOWN!” as you catch a glimpse of the abyss through the cracks in the bridge, you've probably lived in Roth. Since Roth is the newest dorm on campus (built in the 1980s), I feel like my experiences on the Roth bridge could be sung about in an 80s song. There are already so many songs from the 80s that accurately describe the experience of crossing Roth bridge. A few that come to mind are, “Footloose,” “Living on a Prayer,” “Danger Zone,” “I'm Still Standing,” and, if it ever finally gives out, “It's Raining Men.” There is an upside I see to this problem. Men of Roth have a different, more grateful outlook on life. We never take a single day for granted, probably because we know that any day the Roth bridge could give out and collapse beneath our feet. We are stronger, more caring people because of this shared experience, but we still believe we deserve better. There are few feasible solutions to the problem of the Roth

bridge. One solution would be for all us Roth guys to simply move to Shen, where there is no bridge. But we should not have to go to such drastic measures as this! Would we all transfer to Roberts just to avoid the Houghton Plague? Of course not! The other solution would be for everyone to use the first floor entrance to the building, but that requires going up and down the hill, and for those of us who live on the fourth floor, we'd be traveling to school the same way our grandparents did: uphill both ways. Men of Roth – it's time we stood up and made our voices heard. We love Roth, and those thrill-seekers among us may even love the bridge, but we don't love fearing for our lives just to reach the rest of civilization. We want change. And we're not even asking for much. Nothing extensive. We're not asking for conveyor belts or magical portals or anything futuristic like that. We just want something stable. Some dry ground to walk on. It would be a huge step just to get some heated mats like the ones on Lambein's bridge. Wouldn't that be a Christmas miracle? Together, we can make it happen. Will you join me in this movement for a safer Roth? ★

*Bryce is a sophomore majoring in communications and psychology.*

## SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less

SUBMIT TO editor@houghtonstar.com



The mission of the Houghton Star is to preserve and promote the values of dialogue, transparency and integrity that have characterized Houghton College since its inception. This will be done by serving as a medium for the expression of student thought and as a quality publication of significant campus news, Houghton area news, and events.

HOUGHTONSTAR.COM | EDITOR@HOUGHTONSTAR.COM | HOUGHTONSTAR@GMAIL.COM | TWITTER.COM/HOUGHTONSTAR | INSTAGRAM @HOUGHTONSTAR

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# Artist of the Week

**Lauren Couturier** // Senior Psychology & Art Major



Art is something that has always been a passion of mine for as long as I can remember. From finger painting until now, art has provided a safe space for me to explore my thoughts and feelings. As a painter, I'd like to think I see the world a little differently from others. The colors, shapes, textures, etc. provide so much beauty and joy in life. Understanding these fundamentals have allowed me to enjoy God's creation more than I think I would without art in my life. It has helped me to seek out the beauty in my surroundings and in doing so allowed me to capture just a glimpse of that brilliance in my paintings. Painting is my passion that allows me to escape the mundanities of everyday life. A passion that allows me to do what I love with no questions asked. It has become a part of life that I will forever be grateful for.

