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Emergent Church Advocate Welcomes Marginalized

By Josiah Nunziato

Tony Jones, prominent author and advocate for the Emergent Church Movement, arrived on campus Tuesday night, sans luggage (which had been lost somewhere in transit) but eager to converse with the 40 students and faculty members who gathered in the South end of the cafeteria.

Jones, who was on campus for Houghton's Emerging Church Conference, looked the part of the contemporary practical theologian with clean attire, stubble face, and glasses suggestive of Rob Bell. He first explained his personal history, confessing that he had found his early undergraduate studies in history at Dartmouth College to be drudgery until one of his professors instilled in him a love for the classics, and he transitioned into being a classics major. His work with the classics reinforced his love for theology and philosophy, which encouraged him to pursue graduate work at Fuller Seminary. He applied to four different Ph. D. programs after receiving his Masters in Divinity at Fuller, but he was not accepted to any of the programs, causing him to radically reassess his career

predictions.

Until that unexpected development, Jones had been expecting to make significant contributions to the academic theological conversation. Instead of being a high-profile theologian, Jones found himself driving a bus for a day-care service. These unsettling career developments caused Jones to begin to write accessible works of theology that would be approachable by the masses. Due to these developments, he encouraged students who attended the discussion session on Tuesday night not

to stress the importance of finding a discrete place in the academy. He contended that immense contributions could be made simply following one's passions and telling the world what it so desperately needs to be told. Jones recognized



Tony Jones talks on the Emergent Church Movement

the need for much more involvement in popularizing philosophy and theology, and he urged the students in attendance to seriously consider direct involvement in guiding the Church.

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Business Students Excel in National Assessment

By Jordan Donald Zaner

Houghton College business majors have again displayed the strength of Houghton's business department through both their recent results on a national business test and their work with an international microfinance non-governmental organization. The test was taken by senior business students at Houghton College and showed them ranking favorably in comparison to their peers—in fact, within the top five percentile. The microfinance work consisted of recommendations on organization and strategy for non-profit Hope Micro. Thus Houghton students have displayed their aptitude both in academic testing as well as with hands-on involvement.

The senior students participated in what is known as The Business Major Field Test. This exam involved over 83,000 students at 564 schools nationally. It covers all areas of the business field and includes subjects that would be studied throughout

all four years of college. Houghton students not only out-performed most of the similar comparison schools in the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, but also those in the nationwide survey overall. The results were not unusual for Houghton College, which has been consistently within the top five-to-ten percentile nationally since the school began administering the test in 2003.

In addition, Houghton College has a long-standing connection with the African nation of Sierra Leone, and benefited from this link with the recent opportunity to be involved with microfinance in that country. Professor and Business Department Chair Ken Bates was among a number of Houghton faculty and staff who visited Sierra Leone last year. While there Bates became more deeply acquainted with the Hope Micro organization. The Hope Micro group is part of the faith-based development and aid organization World Hope International. They

were founded in 2003 for the purpose of administering microfinance loans. Microfinance lending is the process of granting very small sum loans to aspiring businesspeople in developing countries for the purpose of helping them to establish their own small businesses. This is meant to encourage economic growth and development on a grassroots level in these nations, and has thus far proven to be remarkably successful. Bates brought back information about this organization and presented it to his students, a number of which expressed interest in finding a way to become involved.

Five Houghton students worked with Bates to form an independent study project on ways to assist Hope Micro. Over the course of the project, these students were able to meet with the Executive Director of Hope Micro as they discussed strategies to refine the organizations lending process. Senior Business major Chris Cruikshank says of their

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New Drama Troupe Performs

"Box and Knox"

By Micah Warf

While some of the latest Houghton gossip is centering around the lack of a theatre department, a few students are taking matters into their own, quite capable hands. The drama troupe Encore, headed up by Megan Little and Katrina Koehler, is a newly founded campus organization that seeks to promote and facilitate different types of theatrical arts. According to Katrina, in the absence of a theatre department, there is "all the more incentive to form a group that can fill that gap." Encore functions as a group which will bring students together as actors and directors in discussion and collaboration on multiple dramatic productions each semester, as well as a forum in which ideas can be refined, and the art of theatre can be developed and explored.

The group's premiere performance, which opened this week, is a British farce written in, and satirizing the Victorian era. Entitled *Box and Knox*, the little-known but brilliantly comedic story follows two middle class bachelors who are shocked to discover that they share the same flat. Starring brothers Kyle and Alex Vitale, and Elisa Shearer, a senior, sophomore, and freshman respectively, the play is receiving rave reviews already from those who were in attendance at the first performance on Tuesday night of this week.

The laughter in the recital hall of Houghton's Center for the Fine Arts was almost unceasing as the trio of actors presented animated and humorous dialogue, well-timed slapstick comedy, and brilliant facial expressions that added many enjoyable layers to the story.

The production itself, while a challenge to refine, has been a great experience for actors and directors alike. The Vitales have put much thought into their own character development, which has proved vitally important for this particular show. "It's a visually comedic show, one which is not necessarily about the line, but about the delivery of the line," Alex explains.

The directors chose this particular play because it was a "full-blown comedy", and they felt

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WOL out there

By Monica Sandreczki

Falling Prices in Zimbabwe

According to the Central Statistical Office (CSO), prices of goods in Zimbabwe have fallen by about 3% in the past two months. This comes after years of increasing inflation. These are the first official figures since Zimbabwe adopted the US dollar as its official currency in January, with the formation of the unity government between President Robert Mugabe, Zanu-PF, and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, MDC. Finance Minister Tendai Biti has projected that, by the end of the year, inflation will fall to 10% in the nation. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) still refuses to give aid to Zimbabwe until their debt has been cleared and a tradition of sound policy has been in place. IMF stopped sending funds to the country when President Mugabe began to fall behind in his payments in 2003.

Israel Supporting Palestine

Israel's soon to be Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, claims that he will work towards peace with Palestine. Correspondents have said that he is just trying to soften his image by saying that he will negotiate with the Palestinian Authority. He is under international pressure to form a two state resolution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine, but has given no indication as to whether or not he promotes this dual-state solution. Palestinian leaders say that the only way Netanyahu can be considered a partner is if he supports the idea of a separate Palestinian state. Because President Obama and other, more moderate Israeli leaders have backed a dual-state solution, Palestinian negotiators have been urging Netanyahu to support it as well. Obama says that peace efforts would not get "easier" with a Netanyahu government, but were "just as necessary."

Czech Government Loses No-Confidence Vote

The Czech Republic's center right government lost a no confidence vote in parliament on Tuesday. The Czech Republic is currently holding the presidency of the European Union (EU), but they say that this dissolution of the Czech government will not affect that presidency. After the opposition,

the Social Democrats, along with several Communists and four rebel members of parliament voted against the current government in Prague, 101 to 99, Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek decided to step down. Now, Czech President Vaclav Klaus must choose who will form the new administration, but if three efforts fail, general elections must be held.

Farmers Strike in Argentina

Argentine farmers are on strike against an export tax on soya beans, Argentina's main crop, whose revenues will be used for infrastructure projects in cities. President Cristina Fernandez has refused to lower the tax. The farmers, who argue that money has been spent on city projects at the expense of the rural areas, have set up checkpoints along dozens of roads stopping truckers carrying livestock and grain and forcing some of them to empty their cargo. The number of cattle, for example, at local markets has dropped drastically. Farmers have been some of the hardest hit by the global financial crisis and severe drought throughout the country has added to their distress. Recently, Argentine Congress stopped a debate about the lowering of tax rates, but questions have been raised about President Fernandez's ability to save the Argentine economy, which has drastically slowed after six years of growth. A bill discussing premature legislative elections has been raised and even passed through Congress. It's expected to pass through the Senate too.

Thai Troops Enter Cambodia

Thai troops have, reportedly, crossed into Cambodia in an area surrounding a temple, to which both sides lay claim, after Cambodian government officials arrested three Thai protesters there. A Cambodian government spokesperson has said that about 100 Thai troops have crossed the border, but a Thai border commander has said that there has been absolutely no troop movement. There have been several talks made in regard to the temple, but there has been no conclusion. Since July 2008, Thai and Cambodian troops have been stationed in the area. In 1962, an international court awarded the temple to Cambodia, but the surrounding land still remains in question.

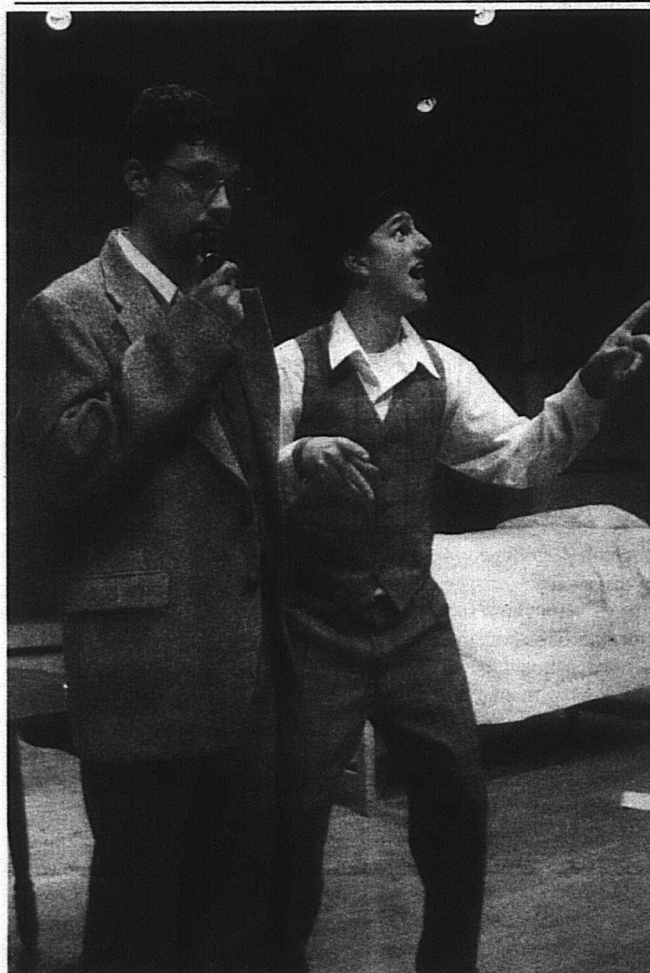
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After telling his own story, Jones entertained questions which mostly regarded the character of the Emergent Church Movement. Jones admitted that the Emergent Movement (EM) is primarily constituted by youthful, highly-educated, suburban folks. The EM is not specifically interested in growth; instead, it simply desires to continue conversation about being faithful Christians in a contemporary cultural setting. He further characterized the EM as attending significantly to the theological "other," in a way that may have significance for encouraging unity in the Church.

Jones expressed similar attention to those who are "other" in his message for Wednesday's chapel. He explained that his aim was to attend to the ways in which the gospel had entered the world in a significant sense, even before Christ's crucifixion or resurrection.

Instead, he directed attention to the miracles of Christ as being instances of this gospel coming into the world. Because Jewish religious life was centered upon communal worship at the temple, those that were debarred from participating in the religious life of the temple were alienated in a significant way. Jones explained that he saw Christ's miracles not primarily as a testament to God's divine power in the world but as Christ's direct way of extending restoration to those on the margins of society. By incorporating those who had been estranged into the center of religious activity, Christ was directly allowing the marginalized to rejoin participation in God's life.

Jones concluded his message with a summons for individuals to find ways of directly imitating Christ's redemptive work by pushing those who have been ostracized back into the center of God's divine life in the world.



Kyle and Alex Vitale star in Encore's first production, Box and Knox.

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that it "showcased the talents of the Vitale brothers wonderfully." Alex and Kyle have thoroughly enjoyed working on and presenting the work, and sharing the stage for the first time, even though both have had years of theatre experience prior to this. "I'm really loving acting with Alex," says Kyle, and Alex echoes this sentiment.

Katrina's favorite part about this project has been "getting to laugh at the actors' antics," and that was certainly the best part of the show for the audience. Josiah

Nunziato, a junior, was brimming with excitement after the play, describing it as "fabulous" and "absolutely spectacular." Amy Labzantis, a senior, was emphatic in her description of the evening as "phenomenally hysterical".

The show will be playing again this Friday night, the 27th, at 7 PM in the recital hall. Tickets, at \$2 each, are available in the campus center, by the cafeteria steps, during lunch and dinner hours. Sign-up sheets, for those interested in joining Encore, will be available at the performance.



"The Go Ed Experience:" An Update from Houghton Students in Africa

By Sandy Stark

For the past ten weeks, Houghton students have been studying with Food for the Hungry's Go Ed Africa program. After meeting at Food for the Hungry's headquarters in Phoenix in January, we jetted off to Kampala, Uganda. We spent five weeks there studying African Traditional Culture and Religion as well as Post-Colonial African Literature, taught by two African professors. After these five weeks, we split up across East Africa for a month-long practicum with Food for the Hungry, working on projects such as economic development, water sanitation and hygiene, child development, teaching, and agricultural development. We have all since met back together in Kigali, Rwanda where we will spend the final six weeks of the semester studying Peacebuilding and Reconciliation in a post-genocide Rwanda as well as Development Economics or Community Development.

During our second weekend in Kampala we had the amazing opportunity to go whitewater rafting down the Nile. According to Junior Wes Dean, "It was phenomenal rafting down a river that I had read about since childhood. In between rapids we would just float down the Nile passing Ugandans washing their clothes on the banks and try to chat with them in the little Luganda (the local language) that we know." Following a day spent in the rapids some of us decided that we needed a bit more excitement. Enter: bungee jumping. Again Wes pronounced that his experience was "an absolute splash." Many of us were excited to learn that this was the first and last group of Go-ED students to bungee jump. "After discovering what we did, Food for the Hungry decided

that future students will not be allowed to bungee jump due to insurance issues," Ryan Musser explains. "That's pretty freakin' sweet."

We also had a chance to spend a weekend in a rural Ugandan village. Four groups of students each went to a different village. "After a five hour drive in a matatu (an African version of an 18-passenger van) we arrived in Rakai and were

greeted by about twenty people," explains Sophie Huber. "We were then led into a small hut and fed massive quantities of matooke (a dish made of mashed, cooked bananas). The next day we were dressed up in traditional party garb, lead a village discussion on savings and hygiene, slaughtered a goat, visited an ostrich farm and walked

across the Tanzanian border under the cover of darkness. It was awesome. But in all seriousness," she adds, "getting the chance to live with and interact with my home-stay family taught me a lesson about genuine hospitality and love. They treated us like family despite the fact that we didn't even speak the same language."

When not demonstrating our courage rafting down level five rapids or visiting Ugandans in rural village settings we spent time getting to know the hectic city life of Kampala. Free time consisted of pickup soccer games with street children, visits to a baby orphanage




Houghton students have five weeks left in the semester-long Food for the Hungry's Go-ED program.

home, comedy night at the national theatre, African jazz clubs, spending time with kids in the slums, watching Obama's inauguration on a big screen in a Kampala parking lot, cheering at a Uganda vs. Kenya football match, eating matooke, weekend camping trips, grappling with questions of poverty and development and learning to appreciate a new culture.

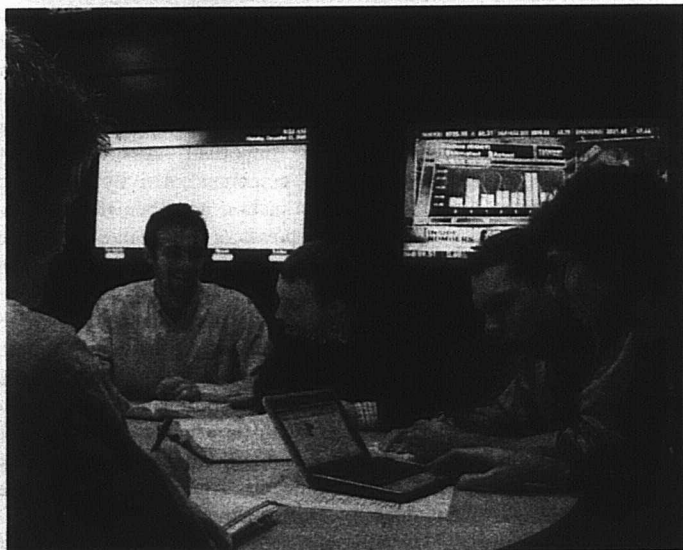
After our time spent studying in Uganda, we separated into small groups and spread across three countries for a month-long internship in different Food for the Hungry field offices. A number of us went to Ethiopia while others went to Rwanda and some spread out to other parts of Uganda. Houghton Junior Suzy Derksen shared that getting "our hands dirty with real field work" has been "the highlight of my Go Ed experience so far." Peter Savage explains that "Between cleaning the perpetual dust out of my Houghton laptop, training teachers about child rights, and avoiding catching Hepatitis E from dirty latrines, northern Uganda has taught me more about human needs than I've ever known before. It taught me what development is

actually like on the field."

We have all now gathered back together in Kigali, Rwanda for the final six weeks of the program. Already we are realizing that our time here will be intense: yesterday we visited a genocide memorial and were hit face first with the full magnitude of the horror of what happened here. Junior Ben Tilson expressed his surprise at what he's encountered in Rwanda thus far. "There are people here, our age, who are passionately committed to developing future generations. Peacebuilding and development are at the forefront of their minds. It is amazing to see how far they have come since the genocide."

Dean sums up the group's experience well: "I've realized that there is a huge gap between what we read in books and see on TV and what really exists in Uganda and Rwanda. It's been amazing to have the chance to live in these countries and personally interact with the people. I've learned so much about poverty and development throughout my time here and I'm look forward to the final five weeks." 

"...my home-stay family taught me a lesson about genuine hospitality."



The microfinance group including Wes Dean, Josh Gottron, Ryan Musser, Chris Cruikshank, and Paul Christensen.

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project with Hope Micro, "It was a beneficial experience; an interesting and unique opportunity." Ultimately, the team produced a number of suggestions for the lending group and is maintaining ongoing discussions about ways in which these policy proposals can be enacted and how they can continue to contribute. The students benefited


from this unique opportunity to become involved in actual work with an international development organization, and gain valuable practical experience in the process.

These students have proven the benefits of the integrative

liberal arts education offered a Houghton College through their test performances and practical work. Houghton business majors

Houghton students out-performed fellow CCCU schools as well as those in the nationwide survey.

remain in the top of undergraduate business program based on a nationwide examination. Through the combination of their own initiative and the resources and faculty assistance available to them, they were able to make a

tangible difference in international development work with Hope Micro. Through Houghton's continued academic rigor and global outlook the business department look forward to similar accomplishment in the future. 

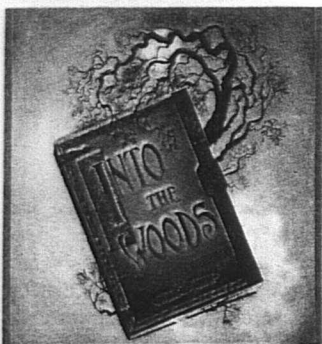


Greatbatch School of Music to Present *Into the Woods*

By Chelsea Keane

Following last year's performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*, Houghton students are preparing for this year's "magical" musical, *Into the Woods*.

Senior Nathanael Dickinson (Cinderella's Prince) has been eager to participate in this show for years. "We can enjoy our favorite fairy tales in one quirky collection," he explains. *Into the Woods* provides a unique experience for its cast. Instead of a chorus, each character has a role of varying size. Ned



notes that not one character is more important than another. Each character delivers at least one line during the show, and each line is invaluable to the production.

Into the Woods has proved to be a massive undertaking for all those involved. Nicole Tascarella, who plays The Witch admits that this production has been time consuming, but she has been motivated by the chemistry between the actors and the casts. She and fellow members of the set crew—led by Jeremiah Tyler—have dedicated countless hours to the production and are still hard at work. Nicole explained that the set involves a series of ramps and platforms which are surrounded by trees, stumps, and logs. Each character has his or her own storybook which doubles as a house, and Rapunzel lives high atop a tower. The crew has teamed up with Steve Libeck and members of the art department to design fanciful storybook covers and other striking artwork to bring the stories to life.

These classic fairy tales are given a modern twist through the lyrics of Sondheim. Orchestra director Christopher Aitken explains that Sondheim presents us with a, "2-hour microcosm of humanity." During the first act, the cast has the opportunity to entertain the audience by the comical antics of the main characters pursuing their wishes. In the second act, however, things take a turn for the worse, and hard realities emerge in the characters and plot. Director Eric Thomas points out that, "Lapine does an admirable job of spotlighting real human foibles using fantastical characters and situations. The further into the show we go, the more we see the reality of both human dignity and sin come through." The story contains strong examples of transgression, forgiveness, and redemption.

The show has many surprises to come, but for now, take special note that Dean of the Chapel John Brittain and librarian Brad Wilber are sharing the role of the Narrator.



Photo by Chelsea Keane

Several casts will perform *Into the Woods* next week.

Additionally, President Mullen will make a special "appearance" each evening...

The Houghton College Opera Theatre will proudly present *Into the Woods* to the college and its surrounding community next week from Thursday to Saturday, April 2-4.

Meilander and Lipscomb on Baseball: Narrative of a Shared Pastime

By Joel VanderWeele

With only eight days until opening day, baseball is back in the headlines. Joel VanderWeele, president of Houghton's baseball club, sat down with Professor of Philosophy Benjamin Lipscomb and Professor of Political Science Peter Meilaender, two loyal baseball fans, to talk about America's favorite pastime.

STAR: How did both of you become fans of baseball? Did you play little league?

Peter Meilaender: I got it mostly from my dad, who was a baseball fan. Growing up, we played catch all the time. He followed baseball, so I did too. I did play little league all through my younger years, and he helped coach my team a number of years. I really wanted to play college ball, and actually picked a college in part because I thought I could play there. I would have been good enough to play D-3 ball, but when it turned out to be a full-time fall sport as well as a full-time spring sport, I realized this was not why I was at college.

Benjamin Lipscomb: For me it was my mom's dad. We connected over baseball. He was a hog buyer for Hormel and we didn't have a lot to talk about, especially as I became this peculiar kid who was interested in philosophy. One of my first memories is from the lake we used to vacation at in Northern Minnesota, sitting by the radio with Grandpa, listening to the Twins broadcast. I don't know if this is true for other kids, too, but I

actually got interested in uniforms before anything else. The Red Sox logo, you know, looked particularly sharp, so I started following them. Then what really hooked me was the Red Sox 1986 breakout season.

I played a little bit of ball in High School, but it doesn't sound like I was as good as Peter. I hit .286 on the J.V. team, but mostly I remember playing backyard games with friends. The back wall of the garage became the "Beige Monster" and my friend Kevin and I played with tennis balls (my parents insisted), trying to launch one over the wall. And then my local team, the Twins, won the World Series. I was able to go to all four home games. I think my Grandpa, who chaperoned me, thought I was crazy, this kid yelling his head off as he sat there with ear plugs. The [Metro]dome was famous for causing hearing problems. My enthusiasm for the game never really topped what it was that year, but I've followed it ever since.

PM: It sounds as though I had more in common with my grandfather than you did, but there was also a "grandpaternal" interest in baseball in my family. My mother's father was a high school educator and coach. He had an offer to pitch in the St. Louis Browns' minor league system, but didn't do it because at the time my grandma was pregnant with my mom. My Dad's father grew up near Cleveland and was an Indians fan. When I was 7, my family moved to Oberlin, which is about



30 miles west of Cleveland, so I became an Indians fan too. That always gave me something to talk with my grandfather about—he used to reminisce about seeing Bob Feller pitch at the old Cleveland stadium.

BL: My Grandpa, the one I was talking about, pitched for a good traveling team for a while but walked away from a professional contract because the team had games on Sundays. He played for a while, but under a pseudonym, and got to feeling guilty about it.

Star: What would you say is the importance of baseball for the American identity?

PM: Did you know that I use this in my class?

Star: No

PM: Well one of the things I ask about when I teach my immigration and citizenship course is, "What is National Identity? What does it mean to be an American?" I usually get responses like "Rights," "the Declaration of Independence,"

and this sort of thing. I give the example of when I was ten or twelve, lying in bed listening to an Indians game on the radio. And for some reason I remember this Chevy commercial: "Chevy cars are as American as baseball, hot dogs, and apple pie." So I try to get my students to think about how culture affects identity as well. It really is a national pastime. It's an important American story of communal activity that held the nation together through the Depression. It makes empirical sense to call it a "national pastime."

BL: That does make sense. It's a game that arose from European antecedents in an era of national growth. Baseball expanded—first in the chaotic manner of the American frontier—at the same time as American culture was being defined.

Star: Of all the sports in the

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Students and Village People Converge for CAB Open Skate

By Dan White

The happy vibes were still radiating from my sore body as I thought about this opening paragraph. My joints needed some Icy-Hot therapy and I experienced this strange sensation that I was still doing an interpretive dance to Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart." You may now be wondering what could have caused such odd sensations in my otherwise sedentary and under-exerted body. Well, I'm glad you asked! None other than Houghton's first ever "Spring Open Skate." Yes, last Saturday night those in attendance were singing and skating along to Skynard, Sly and the Family Stone, and The Village People in the Nielsen PE Center under the shimmering glow of a disco ball straight out of Linda Blair's 1979 "Roller Boogie."

If you missed last Saturday night's roller-skating main event, I want to take this opportunity to console you. I dare say nothing you were doing could have come close to the high energy of this 70's and 80's themed party on wheels. Alright, if you went midnight-skydiving with Dr. Brittain in a glow-in-the-dark polyester jumpsuit and a monkey strapped to your back, then maybe you had a more thrilling time, but you get the idea. Junior Landry Jarvis even went as far as to brand Saturday's festivities "the best CAB event of the year ... I felt as though I was at a 3rd grade birthday party, but with all my college friends!" And a party it was. Free food, free

drinks, and free skates converged upon the gym to transform it from a place usually smelling of pool, perspiration, and athleticism to one overrun with funk, style, and smiles.

This innovative new take on how our school has fun was put together by our forward thinking friends on the Campus Activities Board. When asked how "Open Skate" originated, Senior and member of CAB Alaina Williams pointed to the inspiration that the roller-rink High Rollers in the town of Pike provided; "Going to High Rollers reminded us all of the good old fashioned fun of roller skating. It was there that several of us caught the passion of the skate." It only made sense to CAB members then to bring that passion of the skate to the Houghton community.

If a crowded gym floor and the number of people apparently having a good time are any indication of CAB's ability to put on a great campus event, then we only can look forward to more excellent goings-on in the near future. Even though there's just over 1 month left in the semester you can still mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual Film Festival on Saturday, April 4, as well as the first ever Houghtonpalooza (#) Music Festival described by Peter Carpenter and Luke Sanford (the creative geniuses behind the festival) as a 8 hour event complete with "great music, cook-outs, lawn games, and movie following 7 hours of music."

To be sure, it's a good time to be a Houghton student. Even as



Photo by Leah Gauthier

Shawn Livingston, Emily Tullar and Angela Hoover enjoy the 70's and 80's themed event that allowed students to rollerskate in the Nielsen gym.

budgets are cut and we remain a small Rt. 19 dot on the Western NY map, no one can say things aren't happening on campus this spring. If you missed last Saturday

night, there's still hope for you. Don't miss the next few weekends as the sun finally starts to warm us up and everyone starts to come out of hibernation.

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world, what makes baseball unique?

BL: I don't know that there is anything altogether unique about it. People use a lot of quasi-spiritual language about this and it gets pretty hokey. But part of what makes baseball great is that it's democratic. All you need is a flat space, a ball, and an adequately sized stick. This is why basketball and soccer are big, too, around the world. Baseball was also in the right place at the right time.

PM: I think it's not irrelevant that baseball works well on the radio. That has a lot to do with it. Baseball's popularity expanded when the radio became more common. It works less well on television, and that may partly explain why it has declined a bit in popularity. And the spectator experience is almost iconic: outside in the summer with the green field. People enjoy it even without enjoying the game.

BL: It's a summer game. And in an agrarian culture, people need some time off after an unbearably

hot day at work.

PM: But also in urban places, the baseball field is this sort of oasis where you can relax and enjoy yourself.

BL: I like the media argument. I hadn't thought of that before. Baseball reduces itself to language quite well.

PM: It's the whole idea of summer and relaxation. Here we go with some of the hokey language we were talking about, but it's generations of fathers and sons playing catch.

BL: It's also easy to re-create in miniature. Backyard "games" can be reduced to the pitcher-batter confrontation, and you imagine the rest of the action.

Star: A lot of the press baseball is getting recently is due to the negative things, like A-Rod's steroid scandal. What are your thoughts on the steroid issue?

BL: Well, I'm not sure that a lot of careful thought has been given to which substances are acceptable and which ones are not. We're accustomed to seeing players spitting chewing tobacco.

It is interesting to ask, what it is, exactly, that we care about? What are we reacting to? Something about the purity of competition, it seems. So we have to ask, what is competition?

PM: It also raises questions about what is fair. Statistics play a huge part in baseball's legacy, and now there is this conflict about how we measure greatness. The argument about whether Barry Bonds is better than Babe Ruth has become a sort of classic American argument. Barry Bonds is a great ball-player with or without steroids, but how good? Where do we set the line marking the really good off from the all-time great?

BL: At both the high end and the low end of people looking at statistics, there is a rage against uninterpretability. If we can no longer make these comparisons, the world stops making sense, we don't know how to tell the narrative any more. We want to inhabit a narrative in which the record is there to be broken and the Cubs are going win the World Series.

PM: Careful--that's a sensitive

subject for VanderWeele.

BL: We care about the numbers, not for their own sake, but precisely because they have the power of language, telling us about achievement, progress. And now that story becomes nonsense to us.

PM: Which helps to explain why people actually care so much about this steroid issue.

BL: Even though, in the end, I'm not sure taking steroids makes too much of a difference in how well you play. It doesn't give you the hand-eye coordination that's needed for a solid hit.

PM: Well, if you're late on your swing, the added strength could get you 10-15 more feet. That could be the difference between a fly-out and a homerun.

BL: Yes, I guess you're right. But it gets more attention in baseball than it does in the NFL, where they probably have as much steroid use, and where it actually makes more of a difference. In football, being huge is a requirement for a Defensive Tackle. There's nothing quite like that in baseball.



Reconsidering the Abortion Discussion: Some Final Thoughts

by Meic Pearse

Kat Kieffer's points ("Can 'Pro-Choice' Preserve the Life of the Church?", *Star*, March 20) are, mostly, well made. And her argument is consistent, as long as she's actually serious about leaving care of the poor to voluntary giving. Consistency is not anyone's long suit in the abortion debate, though.

Josh Nolen, for example ("Letters", same edition), affects humble lack of qualification as a mere "affluent, educated, white male" (so: the kind of person who is presumptively guilty of oppressing everyone to whom all those adjectives do not apply) to pronounce on this moral topic. Though listen a little longer and I suspect — and so do you — that he'll pronounce on quite a few. On the one hand, abortion is "always a woman's choice", yet he opines that "We can all agree that it would be a good thing if the number of abortions in the US decreased." My question is simple: Why?

If most of us (because we are male, say, or affluent, or otherwise morally contaminated)

can have no opinion except that each mother must choose whether or not to remain a mother, why should I desire to see the number of abortions decreased? It can only be because I know that the fetus is a baby, and so a person. If the fetus is not a person, then aborting it does not matter at all, so — abort away! But if it is a person, then I cannot — my inbuilt moral inferiority notwithstanding — be indifferent about the killing of it.

And there is no halfway house in this discussion. A few of my current East-Meets-West-ers aside, I have never actually met a sort-of-person, or a nearly-person, or a would-have-been-a-person-if-they-could-just-hang-on-a-few-months. And neither have you.

Now, I agree with Josh and Kat that the incessant comparison with the Nazis and the Holocaust is often tiresome and distasteful. The mindless resort to parallels with

Hitler to characterize any politician we dislike, and to the Nazis to protest against the least encroachment upon our preferences, is mindless and strongly indicative of our intellectual and moral poverty, as well as our historical ignorance. That said, the knee-jerk reach for this comparison is not totally out of court on the particular topic of abortion. Here's why:

Babies are declared non-human because their impending birth threatens the kind of inconvenience...that nothing but a child could bring with it.

The chief purpose in denying the humanity of certain people is to justify the deniers in treating them as mere objects that can be used or disposed of at will. This has been understood by Nazis designating those they wished to destroy as

subhuman; by supporters of slavery in contemplating races they wished to enslave; and by supporters of abortion in respect of unborn babies.

And always the lie is given to their arguments by the very considerations that give rise to

them in the first place. It was the very human-ness of their victims that caused the Nazis to wish to destroy them, in order to obtain the things (property, territory etc.) or to remove the threats and obstacles that only human beings — rather than, say, giraffes — could ever have placed in their way. Africans and others were enslaved precisely because they could provide the kind of labor (or sexual exploitation) for their captors that only human beings could possibly provide. And babies are declared non-human because their impending birth threatens the kind of inconvenience (or expense, or disgrace) that nothing but a child could bring with it. In each case, the lines of 'humanity' are redrawn to suit the one doing the redrawing. And in each case, the lie to their argument is given within the very argument itself.

Holocaust comparisons? Tiresome and offensive. But on this issue, perhaps not so very wide of the mark.

Meic is a professor of History at Houghton College.

**Disgusted?
Delighted?
Just confused?**

We want you to be part of the conversation.

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

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

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I would like to thank you for including Mark Satta's editorial on Matthew Sleeth in last week's edition. He spoke for many students with that editorial and I hope that others who read it will realize it was not merely an opinion of Mark's but largely representative of the student body, at least those who have had contact with Dr. Sleeth.

Like Mark, I was also an FYI leader and was extremely impressed by the lively discussion of Dr. Sleeth's book in my FYI group as well as the tough questions the freshmen gave Dr. Sleeth when he came to speak to the entire class during a large group FYI session. I was not impressed with Dr. Sleeth's responses which usually contained lots of words but failed to answer the question.

Since my FYI group was supposed to read Dr. Sleeth's book, I read it along with them and was skeptical to say the least of some of his theology (if you have the book, check out page 132 and his interpretation of Exodus 23:5). Perhaps the only good thing about him being a part of the Houghton community this year was that it sparked Creation Care initiatives of which he had little actual involvement and it had a significant number of students talking about important issues. Both of these

things however reflect little on what Dr. Sleeth the person has actually brought to this campus and perhaps the next time Houghton is in an economic crisis, it won't feel the need to bring in someone who has largely been a turn-off to the student body in his very limited interactions with them.

-Ben Wendell Class of 2009

Dear Editors,

After reading Mark Satta's article, "Sleeth's Disconnect: A Serious Look at Creation Care at Houghton," I was pleased to find that Mark called the Houghton College community's attention to the legitimate and fairly widespread student discontent with Matthew Sleeth's role on campus.

I, like Mark, served as an FYI leader this fall and read Sleeth's book, *Serve God, Save the Planet*, with my first-year students. I was pleased with the interesting and critical discussion my group offered. They did not merely accept the ideas presented in the book but engaged in a dialogue with them, questioning Sleeth's claims and the arguments he used to back up those claims. Consequently, I was excited to hear how Sleeth would respond to their questions in his scheduled Q&A with the class of 2012. The first-year students, as predicted, asked questions demonstrating their ability to think critically about Sleeth's ideas. However, in talking to my FYI group after the Q&A, I found that many of them were dissatisfied with Sleeth's answers.

They felt as if he was unprepared and was not listening to and addressing the questions they were asking.

Outside of my experience with Sleeth's interactions with the class of 2012 this fall, I have also heard other students express discontent regarding what Sleeth's role on campus is turning out to be. We have recycling receptacles around campus, we sell energy-efficient light bulbs at the Campus Store and Resident Life has spear-headed the Simplicity Initiative, implicitly echoing some of Sleeth's ideas about the positive effect simpler living can have on the environment. Even with the changes Houghton has made, students still wonder, "What role has Sleeth played in these changes?" and "Could we be making more out of our time with Sleeth?"

I am writing, therefore, to affirm what Mark Satta had to say in last week's *Star*. The opinions he expresses are widespread among the student body, and I hope that the rest of the Houghton community realizes that Mark's article is more than a rant, but is a timely article that calls to our attention concerns prevalent in the student body.

-Kelsey Bickford, Class of 2010

Dear Editors,

Wow! It seems Joe Cool has been quite the source of controversy in the past few weeks. I recently came down to Houghton for a visit and people kept asking me "Did

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From the Editors' Desk...

Arnold's Culture and Anarchy At Houghton College

Examining the contrasts between following rules with earnestness and intensity and allowing ourselves the freedom to see the world as it is.

by Joel VanderWeele

"Hebraism and Hellenism - between these two points of influence moves the world," claimed Matthew Arnold in his 1869 book "Culture and Anarchy." "The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience... The governing idea of Hellenism is spontaneity of consciousness, that of Hebraism is strictness of conscience."

Although Arnold was writing about British culture in the 19th century, he uses universal terms which are easily applied to any time and place. Arnold says, "At one time [the world] feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them." So it's worth asking ourselves: Is Arnold right? And if he is, where does Houghton stand?

At the bottom of both Hebraism and Hellenism, says Arnold, is the desire for reason and the

will of God, a noble goal to be certain, especially if you belong to a Christian institution of Higher Education as we do.

But what do we at Houghton put more emphasis on? Like

Hebraism, do we seize upon rules of the universal order, and rivet ourselves with earnestness and intensity on the study and observance of them? Or, more in line with Hellenism, do we follow, with flexible activity, the whole play of the universal

order, to be apprehensive of missing any part of it or of sacrificing one part to another?

The institution clearly puts some sort of premium on abiding by rules decided upon by the school, as indicated by the signing of the community covenant and things like chapel scanning. There is also

an obsession with "taskforces" to ensure that the rules we abide by are in line with the mission of the college, which, I believe, was also recently re-examined by one such taskforce. These are all signs of

Hebraism, trying to "rivet ourselves with earnestness and intensity" on the study and observance of rules.

But some of our Hebraism can also lead to the spontaneity and balance of Hellenism. This is particularly evident in our intentionally diverse chapel program. Although

it has been carefully planned, this variety leads to flexibility and openness to the "whole play of the universal order." By officially taking a position of diverse worship styles, we can ensure that, at least when it comes to chapel, people will view worship in an unrestricted and holistic way, rather than getting

bogged down following the rules of one particular way of worshipping.

More generally, if following the rules is all we care about, the rules themselves become burdensome and restrictive, but if we can somehow balance our respect for the rules with an open spirit and a flexible mind, rules can actually add balance and freedom to our lives. As Arnold says, "Hebraism and Hellenism are, neither of them, the law of human development; they are, each of them, contributors to human development."

It's easy to get caught up in legislating our values and earnestly obeying rules, and that is an important part of a life in Christ, but if that is our only focus and we do not allow room for Hellenic spontaneity and free-spiritedness, we will lose sight of the necessary balance between obedience and spontaneity, authority and reason, loyalty and healthy doubt.

Joel is a junior Math and Philosophy major and serves as Associate Editor.

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you hear about SPOT?" When I said no, people preceded to tell me about the "Joe-Awesome" video that was shown and the reaction it got. A friend of mine even showed it to me. I must admit, it was very accurate in how I did my videos for SPOT in the past. Some parts DID made me feel uncomfortable, but it made me laugh too.

Someone even showed me the angry letters that were written to the Star in response to this. Allow me to say that I truly feel blessed to have such great friends who are willing to stand up for me like that. To those of you, let me say thank you. It really means a lot to me.

On another note, allow me to say this: being mocked like that, I feel

up there with many great names that have been mocked on Saturday Night Live! What an honor to be on the same level as Sarah Palin, George Bush, Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, that blind governor...the list goes on! (In the words of Joe Cool....now THAT is cool!)

To Nate Austin and the other SPOT host, I say well done on creating a parody of my videos. To my friends who stood up for me, I say thank you once again. But another letter to the Star brings up a valiant point: If I can't learn to laugh at myself, then I shouldn't put myself out there like that.

Keep it cool everyone!!

-Joseph Freeman AKA Joe Cool, class of 2008

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artist: OF THE WEEK:

SALLY MURPHY

*Assorted handmade books**Lake Erie Boardwalk, print on handmade paper*

Notes from the artist:

Although I am still dabbling in different media I find myself most comfortable and content when I work with printmaking, papermaking and bookmaking. As far as printmaking goes, my favorite processes are metal etching because it allows for intricate detail which is harder to achieve in woodblock or other techniques and also linoleum block which is nice because of its simplicity. When I make paper I am discovering I tend to enjoy the challenge of making it as delicate as I can. My paper tends to have a rice paper feel to it and contains pieces of ribbon or fiber. I try to mimic that delicate feel in my books, decorating them with laces and even the paper itself. Often I will also incorporate my prints.

Generally my pieces are made with a person or memory in mind. I love the eccentricities and oddities of people and I hate for things to be perfect. For that reason my books are a jumble of assorted paper and prints and pictures, all the things you would find in a basement. Rarely do I have something I am trying to say, it is more a feeling I want people to have. Some of the books and prints I hope will give a feeling of intrigue, such as the pieces that include photographs but many times I hope simply that someone will like the feel of one of my little books or get a sense of calm or security at one of my images.

Sally is a sophomore Art and English major.