

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF HOUGHTON COLLEGE

# THE HOUGHTON STAR

Volume CVII Issue IX • Houghton, NY • November 12, 2010 • WWW.HOUGHTONSTAR.COM

In light of faith-based

## Students Hold Prayer Vigil to "Rededicate Campus to Christ"

BY CHRIS HARTLINE

On a normal fall evening at Houghton, the sight of someone sitting on the steps of Wesley Chapel, playing a guitar and singing would not be considered unique. But when that person, Dan Austin in this case, is surrounded by 197 students holding candles and singing along, you know it goes beyond a simple form of entertainment to something more important.

Wednesday night, a student-led group organized a candlelight vigil to take place on the steps of Wesley Chapel. The goal, according to junior Megan Toombs, who was involved in the planning, was to "give students a chance to have their voices heard about the change to 'faith-based' [and to] give students a chance to rededicate their lives to Christ."

While there were no explicit references to the "faith-based" issue, it was clear from the start that this event was in response to Tuesday's SGA forum in which President Mullen and Sharon Myers, Director of Public Relations, addressed the student body.

While many in the student body have responded negatively to the College's position, because they were not informed in advance or because they feel it alters the

*Prayer vigil cont'd on page 2*



PHOTO BY JORDAN GREEN

Students assemble on the Chapel steps for a chance to have their voices heard and rededicate their lives to Christ.

"Not to change the character of Houghton"

## Mullen, Myers Remark on College Concerns at Forum on PR Changes

*Continuing "faith-based" discussion*

BY COURTNEY COIRO

Anticipation filled Houghton's air as students and some faculty members began trickling into the atrium of the Center for the Arts Tuesday. The night's special order of business was the President's Forum on PR changes, coordinated with SGA, during which President Mullen and Sharon Myers, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, explained the decision to use "faith-based" language and responded to student questions on the matter.

The evening held some tense moments, as a few particularly pointed questions garnered applause from the audience, but all present communicated with a spirit of respect. Mullen made it clear that the forum's goal was not to convince or defend but to simply hear one another out.

In the presentation portion of the forum, President Mullen first sought to clarify the intent of using "faith-based" language. A handout outlining the main points of the President's presentation stressed that it was "NOT to change the character of Houghton," to redefine the school, or to replace the word



PHOTO BY DANIEL PEIXOTO

*Freshman Luke Crawford addresses Sharon Myers and President Mullen during forum.*

"Christian." The approach is to describe the kind of place Houghton is before naming it as Christian.

President Mullen continued by sharing background factors that informed the decision. In the past couple of decades, there has been a broadening of the evangelical world. According to Mullen, evangelical Christians are no longer unified by certain symbols of Christianity as in the 1940s. Related concern that

Houghton has lost some visibility in the last 30 years caused the marketing team to question how Houghton can best reach families within "the full breadth of the evangelical world."

According to Mullen, research done by the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) supported this consideration. Low

*Forum cont'd on page 3*

## PR Tries New Marketing Strategy for Prospectives

BY EMILY RINEHART

A recent drop in enrollment following the nationwide economic crisis has prompted Houghton to seek out new marketing techniques, as well as to increase some of its current techniques.

According to Sharon Myers, Executive Director of Marketing and Communications, the new marketing strategy seeks to express the four central aspects of Houghton: faith, academics, experience, and impact. According to Myers, although these words are not unique in themselves, "it's how they work together at Houghton and how we offer them that makes Houghton distinct."

From here, the marketing campaign sought to develop strategies focusing on these four themes. New mailing items were created, accompanied by

newly formatted letters and e-mails. New colors, a new "H" logo, and other aesthetic changes to the Houghton website were meant to connect prospective students and their parents with the materials they receive in the mail and show that "they are at the same place." Myers pointed out that these materials are only one part of the new marketing strategy.

Vice President for Enrollment Management Wayne MacBeth detailed the strategy further. He reported that 70% of Houghton's applicants choose to apply online. The figures reveal that several hundred students begin but do not finish their online applications. In an attempt to decrease that percentage, the online application was recently altered. Questions were "streamlined" and pre-population incorporated. By "pre-population" MacBeth indicated that a prospective student could receive an application listing the information

Houghton already has, like the student's name and address, in hopes that giving a prospective less information to fill out would increase the chances of him completing the online application. MacBeth also mentioned that the essay portion of the application, which includes questions about a student's personal faith, have not been removed.

The College has also recreated visit days. Rather than simply taking prospective students on a campus tour and allowing them to hear a lecture in a class of their anticipated major, Houghton is seeking to stand out, according to MacBeth. In an effort to catch and also hold the attention of prospective students, MacBeth said there has been an increased partnership between the Visit Office and faculty members. As an

*Marketing cont'd on page 3*



## Engaging the World

## Why Wait?: Taking a Stand for the Oppressed



PHOTO BY JORDAN GREEN

BY GORDON BROWN

Over the past week, tensions between Israel and the Palestinians have escalated sharply. On October 30, a historic church in the old city of Jerusalem was attacked and set on fire by Israeli settlers, injuring 10 visitors. On Nov. 7, an illegally built mosque in the southern city of Rahat was demolished by the Israeli Lands Authority, police firing upon protestors with tear-gas and rubber bullets. Ironically, on the following day, Israel announced plans to

build 1300 new settler homes in East Jerusalem—settlements illegal under international law. The U.S. has remained generally silent about all of these issues.

This is something surprising to our culture; after all, America cannot seem to resist an underdog story of this nature. We have portrayed the Native Americans as peaceful, nature-loving tribes who heroically attempt to stave off greedy pioneers (see *"Pocahontas"* or *"Dances With Wolves"*). We have depicted the victims of the Nazis as often bravely resisting against overwhelming odds (see *"The Counterfeiters"* or *"Defiance"*). We have shown countless other similar stories about people in the same plight, ranging from *"Schindler's List"* to *"Hotel Rwanda"* to *"Rambo IV"* (illustrating the oppression of the Karen peoples by the Burmese junta)—all with the message of "never forget."

So why is there this tolerance toward the vicious oppression of the Palestinians? Why did American audiences shake their heads sadly when the Na'vi hometree is bombarded, but remain oddly silent when, on Oct. 13, Israel razed the Bedouin village of Al Araqib for the

sixth time? Why do we look on in shock as Jews are forced into ghettos in a WWII documentary, but ignore the 436 mile wall being constructed around the West Bank?

Perhaps we are getting the wrong message.

Now there is nothing wrong with reminding ourselves of past atrocities such as the destruction of the Native Americans, the Holocaust, or genocides elsewhere, but if our only reaction is to decry these events through film or literature *after* they have already taken place, then there is something drastically wrong with us. Now I have not been carted off to a concentration camp or been forced to watch my village burn to the ground, but I think I can speak for those who have when I say that I would much rather have help *while* I am being persecuted, oppressed, or killed than wait a decade or so for someone to make an award-winning film about it. The real message we need to take away from these horrific acts is not "never forget." It is "never let it happen again." We need to take a stand for Palestinians, and all oppressed groups, *now*.

## Prayer vigil cont'd from page 1

perception of the College, junior Dan Sendker emphasized that "if we're going to be fighting this thing, we need to remember it's all about Jesus." That is what the vigil attempted to accomplish.

Senior Josiah Armstrong noted that "it is important for people to gather and show a physical expression of belief." He also emphasized that a vigil of this sort is an "innately Christian act" and the goal of the night was not to be "in your face to anyone." This notion was substantiated by the presence of President Mullen and multiple faculty and community members who attended to support the principle of the vigil.

The vigil consisted of the singing of hymns and praise songs, Bible readings, small group prayer, and finally the lighting of the candles. Toombs commented that the "faith-based" issue has "brought a reawakening of students to the realization that we do claim to be Christians, and that we should not allow ourselves to become apathetic."

If people doubted the vigil's emphasis on Christ and not on controversy, their doubts were abated as all the students raised their candles during the second to last verse of the hymn "In Christ Alone." "And as He stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on me," the end of the verse reads. "For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ." ★

## The World OUT There

BY DEREK SCHWABE

## Attacks Target Christians in Baghdad

A series of bomb and mortar attacks has killed at least five people in Baghdad this week. More than 30 were left injured. The attacks struck six traditionally Christian communities. They came days after a seizure of a Catholic cathedral in which Islamist militants killed more than 40 people. Discussion among city officials has thus far failed to quell political and religious tensions. Prime Minister Nouri Maliki linked causal factors back to Iraq's poor governance, noting the need for reform: "the beginning of forming not just the government, but forming the Iraqi state." Iraq's political leaders have been negotiating the formation of a new government since inconclusive elections in March. A leading Iraqi cleric in London warned Iraqi Christians of the high degree of danger and said "If we stay, they will kill us." Many have been urged to flee the country.

## Whitehouse Commission Proposes Cuts for Health and Defense

A commission set up by president Obama to reduce the U.S. budget deficit has introduced a number of difficult cuts, including elimination of social security rises and a raise in retirement age to 69. A panel issued a report with suggestions for making \$200 billion in potential cuts for lowering the \$1.3 trillion deficit. Other suggestions included slashes in public health and defense spending, all of which were poorly received. The report's drafters were among the first to acknowledge their plan's unpopularity, but analysts say the proposal illustrates the hard choices ahead if the U.S. intends to balance the budget. One drafter, White House advisor Erskine Bowles said "We're not asking anybody to vote for this plan. This is a starting point."

## Stocks Bounce Back

U.S. stocks made a comeback Wednesday afternoon to finish higher, as the dollar turned lower after an earlier rise. The moderate improvement came as investors remained jittery ahead of the G-20 meeting to be held November 11 and 12 in Seoul, South Korea. The G-20 is an international summit aimed at bringing together systemically important industrialized and developing nations to discuss key issues in the global economy. All three major indexes had fallen sharply earlier in the session, with the Dow dropping 92 points, as the dollar strength weakened considerably. Stocks are predicted to remain unstable as investors continue to grapple with the Federal Reserve's latest effort to stimulate the economy while lowering national debt. Still, the number of applicants for initial unemployment benefits plunged to 435,000 last week, according to the Department of Labor, the lowest in four months. The federal and private sector continue to show like signs of life.



photos courtesy of [www.washingtontimes.com](http://www.washingtontimes.com), [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), [www.cperformance.com](http://www.cperformance.com)

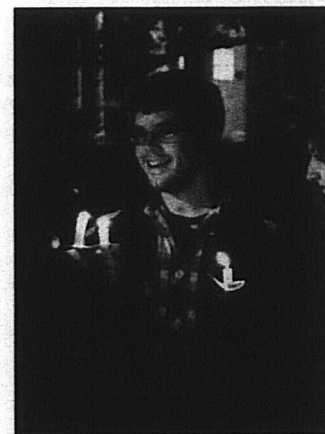


PHOTO BY JORDAN GREEN



PHOTO BY JORDAN GREEN

Houghton students raised candles while singing the end of the hymn "In Christ Alone."



## Two Professors Honored with Fulbright Scholarship

BY KRISTEN PALMER

The Fulbright scholarship, according to the Council for International Exchange of Scholars website, is "the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to 'increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries.'"

Only awarded to teachers and students with "academic merit and leadership potential," the scholarship has provided abroad experiences for close to 300,000 people since 1946. This year, that happens to include two of Houghton's own, Professor Blaine Benedict, political science, and Professor James Zoller, writing and literature.

According to Benedict, on top of completing several forms, each applicant must write a five-page proposal about who he is, his qualifications, and what he would like to teach or research in the country of his choice.

"It's quite the involved process," said Benedict, "because it's very difficult to explain in five pages."

The lengthy process proves to be worth it, though, as those awarded are presented with worthwhile experiences. A two-time recipient of the scholarship, Benedict spent five months in Armenia,

in 2004, where he taught American foreign policy toward the Middle East, both to undergraduates at the Brusov Institute and to graduates at Yerevan State University.

Fulbright scholars are also presented with travel opportunities.

In 2004, "Fulbright arranged a regional speaking tour of the Caucasus

State University in Georgia."

This year brings Houghton's Fulbright scholars new prospects. Benedict is headed to China in January to teach American Foreign Policy to undergraduate students and International Relations Theory to graduate students at Nanjing University. Benedict, who served in China as a diplomat in the

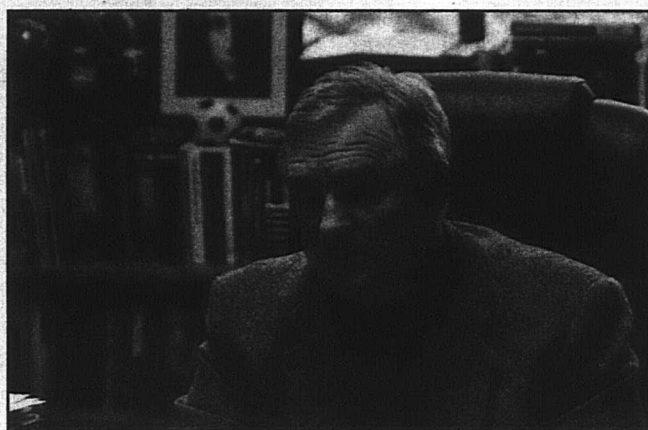


PHOTO BY DANIEL PEIXOTO

*Professor Benedict will be spending a little over five months teaching in China.*

where I spoke to university, government, and civic groups throughout Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan," said Benedict. "The highlight of the tour was serving as the keynote speaker for the American Studies Conference at Tbilisi

1980s, is excited to return and begin researching the present political and economic situation and comparing the major changes that have taken place within the last 30 years.

"They are also arranging a Fulbright

Regional Program Speaking Tour of China for me to lecture at a number of prominent universities throughout the country," said Benedict.

Zoller is headed to South Korea in February, where he will teach at Pusan National University.

"I developed two courses specifically for this Fulbright Award: the American Literature of Rebellion, which deals with literature in the post-WWII period characterized by its unhappiness," said Zoller, "and literature of the Asian Immigrant Experience (post-WWII), which will deal with novels and memoirs by Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese writers living in America or coming to America after the War."

Zoller and his wife, who have hosted international students, many of them Asian, for almost 25 years, are fulfilling a dream by spending several months in Asia.

"We have been wanting to see and better understand where these students come from," said Zoller, who said he anticipates learning as much, maybe more, from his Korean students as they learn from him.

Professor Thomas Kettelkamp, recreation and physical education, was also awarded a Fulbright scholarship, but was unable to take a sabbatical this year. He hopes to re-apply for the scholarship for the spring 2012 semester. ★

### Marketing cont'd from page 1

example, he described the Intercultural Studies department's involvement during an October visit in which alumni working overseas were called via Skype to discuss their opportunities following graduation with prospective students. Another example given was DNA kits sent to prospective students interested in science so that they might, if interested, take a swab to send back to Houghton for analysis. Upon visiting the campus, they are able to see the results.

Another new aspect to this year's marketing strategy is a target on seniors and increasing the mailings sent to them in September. Thus far, 20 seniors have applied or shown interest. MacBeth also mentioned Houghton's hope to build and maintain strong relationships between the College and students who may transfer in later; these are primarily students who have opted to attend community college, but also indicated that they may be interested in Houghton later on. Several students are already planning to transfer in come January.

MacBeth expressed a collective goal to increase applications by 200 and was encouraged by the current numbers; applications already number 100 more than this time last year. He also mentioned a stronger push in sending out financial aid information and bus trips.

Houghton senior Lauren Hewell, a tour guide in the Visit Office, agreed that this year's bus visits and encounter days have been a success, and said they have been "consistently breaking records."

According to MacBeth, this weekend's bus trip is expected to be the largest visit of the year. ★

### Forum cont'd from page 1

percentages of today's Christian families are sending their teenagers to Christian colleges. Strong academics was found to be the primary concern in the first stages of the college search process, and many families deemed a "Christian college" as indicating lower academic quality. Mullen said that Houghton would like to "reclaim 'Christianity' for intellectual rigor."

An additional factor was alumni input over the past several years expressing concern "about Houghton being well-understood in the admission marketplace." Myers said that this process began a few years ago, and Houghton's message was being reevaluated prior to current anxiety over low enrollment.

After these introductory statements, floor was then opened for questions.

Senator Brian Lustig questioned why students were notified well after the new strategy was in place, especially when Houghton is so "set on open dialogue." President Mullen said it has not been traditional practice to talk about admissions campaigns with students, but that given the current discussion, maybe that needs to change.

According to President Mullen and Myers, input from many sources was collected throughout this whole process. Certain students, faculty, and staff were included in Ologie's focus groups conducted last spring. Ologie, a branding agency that was hired to improve Houghton's branding. According

to their website, the group tries to "help clients discover their authentic story and find their true voice...[and] make them clear, compelling, and consistent so they're better known, better understood, and truly unique."

This research shaped the current marketing strategy from the focus groups, which then received feedback from the Academic Dean, Admissions and Advancement offices, and the Student Alumni Association. There was a lot of discussion on the risks of using the term "faith-based," and the decision-makers have said that both terms have potential risks.

President Mullen also answered concern about the wrong kind of students getting into Houghton. The admissions process has not changed, so it is highly unlikely that students, who do not understand or who are opposed to a Christian learning environment, will end up at Houghton, she said, but the idea that faith-based language may repel a certain kind of student that Houghton would benefit from was not fully addressed.

Professor of Molecular Genetics Matthew Pelletier asked if there is any chance of change in this language. President Mullen responded that this is "not something we can't move away from" and is an ongoing process that will continue to receive feedback. After the forum, Myers mentioned a meeting with the Admissions staff in a few weeks and also mentioned a "research mechanism" in place for the spring to measure the effectiveness of this language.

President Mullen stressed that she is and will be taking concerns

and input very seriously. During the forum, Senator Benjamin Hardy, freshman, stated that he would not have come to Houghton based on the current admission materials, and junior Mark Lauer said that some current students feel their opinion does not matter because the College "already has [their] money."

She responded that if this is the case, "there's nothing that could grieve [her] more." She also said that, it is not about the money, but about Houghton being able to serve the Church to its fullest capacity.

One of President Mullen's initial comments framed the forum's discussion in a wider perspective. Referencing Shane Claiborne's message just prior to the forum, she reflected that if each member of Houghton over the past 127 years had been working hard to embody the love of Jesus, there would be no need for this conversation.

Houghton should be "a place where the love of Christ is manifest so deeply that people can't get away from it," she said.

Staci Hinderliter, senior, who was present at the forum, said that she appreciated the explanation of the process and why the College was informed of the change so far after the fact, "but I still don't feel confident in the switch. I'm not ready to give up the term 'Christian' because I believe in the word 'redeemable.' We can redefine Christian by the way we live and conduct ourselves," she said.

Myers and Mullen both said that this should not be called a "switch" from "Christian" to "faith-based." ★



# One-on-One with an Ordinary Radical

The Houghton Star gets a personal interview with the social activist, Shane Claiborne, who is part of the new monastic movement and is the author of *Irresistible Revolution* and *Economy of Love*, among others.

BY ERIN CARR

*How was your visit the last time you came to Houghton?*

The first one – oh I loved it. It was a really great thing to be here because I remember feeling a real desire to integrate our faith and the world that we live in. It's something I would always tell folks – there's a good thing happening at Houghton up there, you know.

*How do you respond to those who tend to get defensive when they hear your message, who feel that your message requires their response to take the shape of your lifestyle?*

Well I think that part of what the song I'm singing is, like I said this morning, that nonconformity doesn't mean uniformity. You know, I'm certainly not trying to tell everybody what to do; I'm working hard enough on the log in own eye. But our stories kind of stir each other on, and I think I'm not just telling my story – I'm telling Mark Weaver's story, a million other stories and I think part of that is we kind of ignite our imaginative juices a little bit, to think about, What does it mean for me to follow Jesus?, and ultimately, pulling one another towards Jesus.

*Do you think it is possible for people to function effectively within a corrupt political system and still follow Christ?*

I know that compassion doesn't have a political camp, you know. Part of what we have to do is realize, as I was saying last night, that there's not a silver bullet. Some people are going to work for public schools, some people are going to start charter schools, some people are going to home school, and I think what we all gotta be moving towards is trying to make sure that every kid has a quality education, and every person has adequate health care. And the government has a role to play and so does every one of us. I think what we're too quick to do is to pin off on politicians the work that's all of our responsibilities. I mean there are some elephants in the room when you talk about these things too. For instance, the military budget and



PHOTO BY JORDAN GREEN

Social rights activist Shane Claiborne spoke both Tuesday and Wednesday about issues of a radical response to God's call in a suffering world.

the fact that nearly \$530 million a year is going towards military spending – so that's a bleeding wound, I think, when it comes to national politics. Dr. King said, a nation that continues to spend more money on military defense than on social uplift is approaching spiritual death. Every time a bomb goes off in Iraq – well, he said Vietnam – but every time a bomb goes off overseas, we can feel the second impact here as our schools deteriorate and our health care system goes up in flames. There are responsibilities that we can talk about in the political sphere, and there are roles that anyone can play. So what we're careful to say is that, we don't just vote every four years or every two years, but every day for justice and for God's kingdom, and so,

what does that look like? That's what I'm most interested in. Because I think also that when our conversation about what it means to live in the world is framed in national politics, there's no one that really captures the gospel like Jesus, you know. I mentioned last night a consistent ethic of life, but there's not really a political party that has a consistent ethic of life that is consistently trying to interrupt whatever is destroying people's dignity in life, whether it's abortion, the death penalty, war, poverty – so those are things that I care about.

*How does the response to your message differ depending on your venue, be it Christian vs. Secular, North vs. South, etc.?*

There's so many different places, and so many different contexts. [...] But what I find is that there are some common questions. There's a real sense, especially when you're on campuses (and I'm not only on campuses) ...that younger folks are aware that the world that we live in is really fragile, and whether they share my faith or not there's a sense that we should live deliberately and care about creation. There's a real sense of fatigue of militarism and violence and intolerance, and there is a sense that, maybe a suspicion of materialism and that happiness can be purchased.

*Do you get frustrated with older generations who perhaps think what you have to say is impractical?*

I probably feel some of that frustration with some of the older or more institutional stuff, but what I find myself surprised by more is the openness of an older generation to some of these questions that we're raising. Some of it may come from desperation that the older institutions are hemorrhaging. Young people are leaving the Church at an astronomical rate. Some of it might be out of, you know, "Wow, we need some young people here!" But well, if you really want some young people, then it's going to mean rethinking some old wineskins. But we're also surrounded by really good elders, and I think that's part of what young people need is we need not to just be frustrated with people with gray hair, but we need some heroes, like John Perkins and Sister Margaret, who's an 80 year old nun in Philly that's been living out these things for decades. So we need some of those people to root us and to continue to show us that this is not just a phase, it doesn't have to be just a phase, this is something you can give your whole life to. ★

## Two Great Getaways for Coffee-Lovers

BY BRADLEY MEYERS

With two locations (and I very hesitantly say this) 'in the area,' Muddy Waters is another great option for café-philes of Houghton College. Found on South Goodman Street in Rochester and Main Street, Geneseo, Muddy Waters offers a tantalizing variety of organic, fair trade coffees as well as locally produced baked goods to its customers.

Despite sharing a name and this commitment to local, more environmentally friendly products, the two locations are excitingly different in ambiance, variety, and selection. The Rochester café offers limited seating area with three divisions: a small chair and couch nook, a couple tables and bar on a raised platform, and a third corner

of a few tables and another overstuffed, well-used armchair. Although this setup has its disadvantages in deciding for the customer whether their coffee will be "for here or to-go," those who can find a seat, which is by no means a rare occurrence, are invited into an intimate, comfortable, more private area to catch up with friends or merely drink a hot cup of coffee in relative solitude. The quantity of baked goods is narrow but hardly disappointing in quality.

Muddy Waters of Geneseo is intentionally designed to accommodate the large student population surrounding it and can thrive as a more substantial café in the small college town atmosphere. With ample seating in tables, couches, chairs, and bar stools, and local artists' work covering the walls, the busyness of student life is reflected as much in décor as the frequent customer base. With a much more

extensive variety of bakery items, small brunch style entrees, and all possible coffee drinks, Muddy Waters is the perfect spot within a forty-five minute drive to grab lunch, find some free Wifi, relax with a scone and coffee, or just escape our rural confines for a moment.

Because of the considerable distance between our campus and really any significant destination, it is always crucial to know that a trip will be worthwhile in the end. If you happen to be passing through Geneseo or Rochester, be sure to seek out the unassuming oasis of Muddy Waters. But even if one of these two locations does not fit conveniently into your next trip itinerary, the quality of the drinks and of the ambiance found at these cafes is certainly high enough to warrant an excursion.



# Musical Theatre Brings "Good News"

BY ERIKA BREMER

The Houghton Musical Theatre Players (HMTP) on Nov. 5 and 6 presented to Houghton College the musical "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown!" This was a delightful performance of familiar and well-loved humor, and the Players enjoyed an impressive turnout at both showings. For anyone who appreciates Charles Schultz's "Peanuts," this was an energetic, thoughtful and whimsical performance, and even if one did not especially appreciate the plot, the actors' enthusiasm was hard to resist.

The play depicts various typical moments from the average life of Charlie Brown, played by Josiah Armstrong, highlighting the people that are central in his life, especially Lucy (Bethany Abrahams), Snoopy (Robert Martin), and Linus (Evan Yeong). We hope Charlie's disappointment and dejection will be forgotten as he attempts to fly a kite, woo a girl, write a book report, score the winning home run and somehow just go on living. He never does seem to be able to overcome his own bad luck, however, often reminded of how un-extraordinary he is by his little sister Sally (Amber Payne), his crabby "friend" Lucy, her thumb-sucking intellectual brother Linus, and his own food-loving dog Snoopy.

The scenes run from an opening song of begrudging praise for Charlie Brown, to Lucy's attempt to force the affections of her crush, the musical prodigy Schroeder (Jonathan Duttweiler), to Snoopy

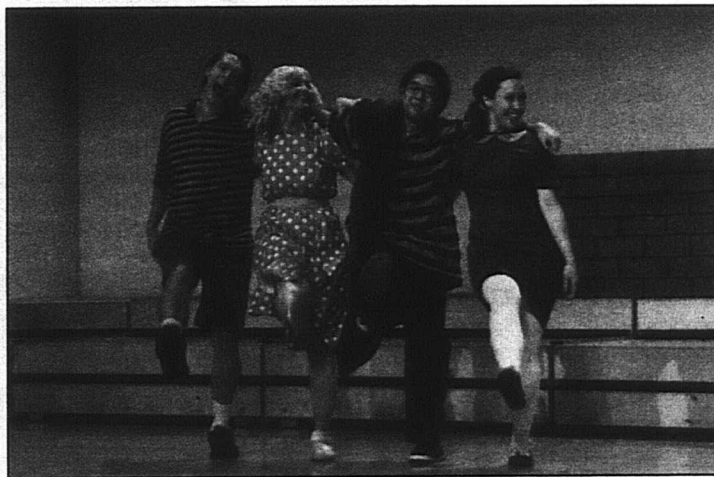


PHOTO BY JORDAN GREEN

Jonathan Duttweiler, Amber Payne, Evan Yeong and Bethany Abrahams entertain in the musical based off of the Charles Schultz classic.

daydreaming about being something other than a lazy dog. We see Linus' weakness for his blanket, Lucy's less than loving but earnest attempts to make Charlie Brown accept who he is, and Schroeder's obsession for his hero Beethoven. We look in on Sally's philosophizing, an unsuccessful baseball championship, the Peanuts in choir, distracted as usual, and Snoopy's dramatic excitement over his supper. The whole production ends on a note of happiness and a song of the same in which everyone reflects on the joys of life and stargazing—including Charlie Brown.

Junior music major Kaylee Argenna, who was requested to be the director of a musical for the HMTP, chose this particular production because she wanted something smaller that would be simple for a new theater group.

"It's also a lot of fun, up beat," she said. Also, for her first time directing, it's a smaller-scale undertaking. Only ten characters in all, the cast was able to form a tight connection while they prepared for the production.

As Payne said, "The cast is small, so there was an early sense of camaraderie, even during the auditions. We had instant

chemistry."

It blended both music majors and non-music majors, resulting in a desired balance in which the actors were able to learn and improve as they grew into their characters.

While the musical may have enabled audience members to take a couple hours off from their hectic lives, it did even more than that for all involved with the production. Armstrong voiced that the whole experience was "incredibly energetic and life-affirming." Despite hard schedules and personal struggles, the cast members were able to be a part of something uplifting that "points out the joy of being a child." Martin described his opportunity to be part of "Charlie Brown" as "fantastic" and that "you can't not have fun being a dog."

As an ironic twist on Charlie Brown's signature act, Armstrong, while trying to kick a football, fell backward and hit his head on the stage, getting a minor concussion.

The cast and crew were pleased with the way the production went overall.

"I couldn't have imagined the performances going any better than they did," said Payne.

The audiences were "fantastic" both nights, and "it was clear that people felt connected...Regardless of the struggles we all face, or how many times the football is yanked out from underneath us, God provides us bits of happiness through the little things in life," according to Payne. ★

## XC Sends Highlanders to Nationals

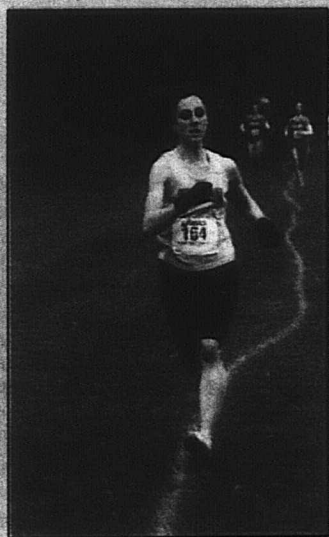


PHOTO BY MARY DOUGHERTY

Junior Danielle Brenon places first in the women's 3K.

BY VERONICA CALDWELL

The chilly conditions on Saturday morning, Nov. 6, did not stop the Houghton Highlanders cross country team and the other teams in the American Midwest Conference (AMC) from competing in the AMC Cross Country Championships at the Field of Dreams. With temperatures

in the 30s and bouts of sleet, workers and spectators were bundled in winter gear, but strength and stamina was shown by the cross country runners, many of whom raced only in their uniforms, of shorts and a tank jersey.

Junior Danielle Brenon led the women's team in the women's 3K. Brenon was in the top two for the majority of the race and pulled ahead to first place within the last mile with a time of 17:40.52. Senior Heather Sayre followed close behind taking 11<sup>th</sup> place with a time of 18:36.40. The women's team performed well, with the top five all finishing under 20 min. and the rest of the runners finishing under 25 min. The women took third place out of the ten teams competing.

The men's cross country team also did very well. The men's team was led by Junior Stevie Hines who finished 7<sup>th</sup> place in the men's 5K with a time of 25:38.15. Hines was followed closely by Junior David Richard, who finished 13<sup>th</sup> with a time of 25:56.71. The men's team placed 4<sup>th</sup> just behind Walsh's team who out placed them by two points.

The AMC Championships are often the end of the season for the runners, but for four Houghton runners there is still one meet to go. Danielle Brenon, Heather Sayre, David Richards, and Stevie Hines all automatically qualified for the NAIA National Cross Country Championships as the result of their efforts this past

Saturday.

Coach Matthew Dougherty said that the team "ran amazing" and that the meet "could not have gone better." Dougherty said that it was the best championship performance he has seen since coaching here. According to Dougherty, all but one man had a personal record as well as four women, and that seven were within 2 seconds of theirs.

Heather Sayre said that she is happy with the way the season turned out. Sayre's goal for the season was to get a personal best time, and she succeeded. She is especially excited to be going to nationals this year since this is her last year at Houghton.

When interviewed, Stevie Hines mentioned that Justin Moser had a "huge" personal record and that Steve Roes, who, due to injury, spent the season training on a bike, "had a tough last meet but couldn't have been a better teammate." Hines pointed out that often people are intimidated to run at the college level but that people like Moser, Roes, and Anthony Cappello, sophomore, make the "team a family" and that they are indispensable.

Hines said that for the cross country runners, a meet is their mission field. His goal for nationals is to "make a connection with one person to minister Christ to them." This season the cross country runners have even been handing out water to other runners after they

finish.

"The effect of a person crossing the finish line exhausted and caring more about the comfort of people they don't even know spoke volumes to those we served," said Hines.

The cross country teams of the other schools in the conference were no slouches this weekend either. On the women's side, Malone University's top seven runners all finished in the top 15, earning them first place in the meet and a ticket to Nationals. Malone's men also took first place, with their top runner taking first place and their top seven runners finishing in the top 12, also carrying them to Nationals. Cedarville University men's and women's teams also earned their way to nationals through at-large bids.

The championships this past Saturday were the final race for a number of Houghton cross country runners. The Houghton Highlanders will be losing a total of eight seniors this year: Ashlie Wilson, Audrey Gillette, Heather Sayre, Tyler Welsh, and Jesse McConnell have been on the team since their freshman year. Steven Roes and Jonathan Spear both ran for two years with the Highlanders and Darby Emerson joined this year.



# Holy Humor: Harmonizing Laughter with Christianity



BY DANIEL SENDKER

If I could ask God one question, it would be this: "Why doesn't Jesus ever laugh in the New Testament?" I love to laugh and make others laugh, and the fact that we never see Jesus laughing in the Bible has always deeply bothered me. Jesus is supposed to be the highest example that we, as Christians, follow. We are supposed to live how he did, loving what he loves and hating what he hates. But Jesus is never shown as laughing or talking about laughing, so how can we know how he felt about humor? If the Bible is divinely inspired, then God is ultimately responsible for every chapter and verse, and almost none of them talk about humor. So, what is God saying about humor by not saying anything about humor?

We are physically designed by God to laugh. When we laugh, it strengthens our immune systems, relaxes our muscles, increases blood flow and releases endorphins. Because laughter does good things to our bodies, and because God made our bodies the way they are, God must want us to laugh. But the fact that laughter feels good cannot be the only justification that God wants us to laugh. God also designed our bodies to have sex. But there is a legiti-

mate way to have sex and an illegitimate way to have sex, and both feel good. If you have sex with a prostitute, it feels just as good as if you have sex with your spouse, but one is right and one is wrong (prostitution is the one that is wrong, in case you needed some help with that). And just like there is a right and a wrong context for sex, there is a right and a wrong context for humor. If you laugh at an inappropriate or offensive joke, it feels just as good as when you laugh at an appropriate joke but it is wrong. And most of us know what kinds of humor are wrong (If you wouldn't tell a certain joke to your pastor, your grandmother, or a five year-old, it is probably not the best kind of joke out there). But what kinds of humor are right? What kinds of humor does God find funny? Though I sometimes pretend otherwise, I am not an expert on comedy (for that, I would eagerly refer you to Chuck

Jones, Harpo Marx, Charlie Chaplin or Robin Williams) but here are some forms of humor that I think God might laugh at:

1. *Absurdity*: God created the platypus and the axolotl. Therefore, God is probably ok with ridiculousness.
2. *Hyperbole*: "And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own?" This famous verse, Matthew 7:3, is actually pretty funny when you visualize it. It might be the closest Jesus came to making a joke, though he was obviously making an important point. I can imagine Jesus telling this to the crowd and

then pausing before continuing, with a little smile on his face while they laughed at it.

3. *Farts*: Eight year-old boys everywhere got it right. Farts would not sound and smell like they do if God did not want us to laugh at them. That, and my friend Joyce tells me that farts "ruin little girls' lives," which is always a plus.

4. *Evil*: Not to say that evil itself is funny. Of course it is not. But the suggestion that evil will overcome good and win in the end can and should be laughed at

because it is absolutely stupid. Psalm 37:13 and Psalm 59:8 both tell of God laughing at those who plan evil. If that is his response, surely it can be ours too. If you have ever read *The Screwtape Letters*, you know the two quotes by Martin Luther and Thomas More: "The best way to drive out the devil, if he will not yield to texts of Scripture, is to jeer and flout him, for he cannot bear scorn"

and "the devil...the [proud] spirit...cannot endure to be mocked."

5. *Puns*: Puns are generally considered the lowest form of wordplay. As such, it lends itself to a sort of comedic humility that God would probably appreciate. That, and it is pure creativity to manipulate words and sentences and make puns out of them. For the best and silliest puns on campus, I refer you to Steve Corell, the Kingpin of Houghton.

6. *Ourselves!*: It is easy to laugh at your friends, or the TV, or Wile E. Coyote. But some of the best laughs ever come

from laughing at yourself and realizing all the silly things you do, say and think. And God probably laughs at all of us. He made us and knows us completely and we are endearing to him. I cannot wait for the day when I get to heaven and God tells me all the ways I have made him laugh.

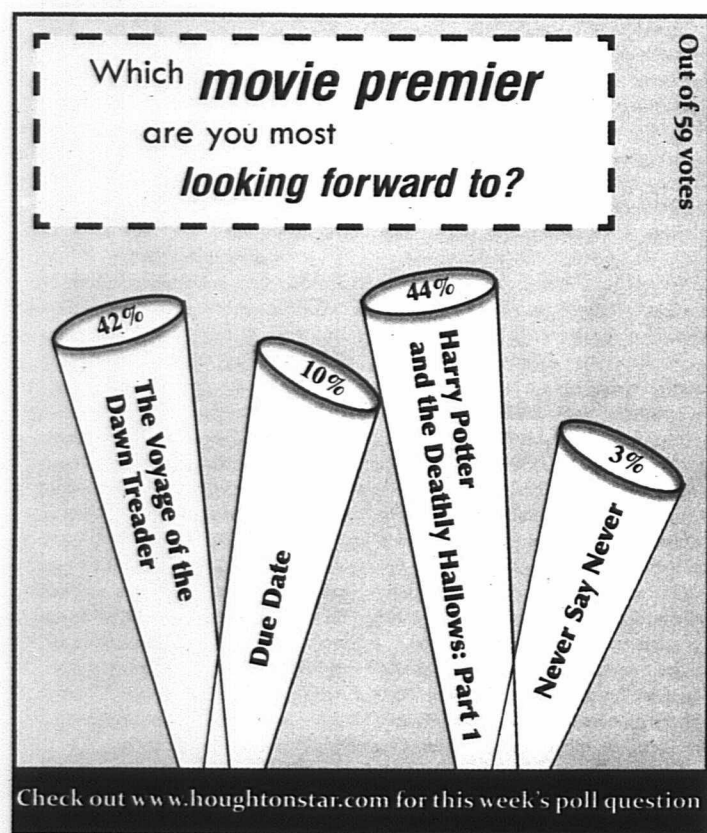
In his essay "The Humor of Jesus of Nazareth," Donald Wayne Viney writes, "When one surveys the general testimony of the Gospels, it is difficult to understand how one could conclude that Jesus was not a man 'complete with both tear ducts and funny bone.' How could one who was popular with children and who encouraged his followers to become as little children not be cheerful? How could one accused of indulging his palate not laugh? How could one who told his followers that they were at a wedding party while they were in his presence not be jovial?" I feel like this is a very good point. Jesus offended the Pharisees time and time again simply by enjoying life. It seems next to impossible to separate enjoyment of life from laughter. I simply cannot picture a Jesus that never laughs, even though he is never explicitly shown laughing in the Bible.

One of the only positive descriptions of laughter in the Bible: "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." (Luke 6:21)

"Laugh and fear not, creatures. Now that you are no longer dumb and witless, you need not always be grave. For jokes as well as justice come in with speech."

-Aslan (The Magician's Nephew)

-Daniel Sendker, Class of 2012



## Letters to the Editor

Send to

[houghtonstar@gmail.com](mailto:houghtonstar@gmail.com)

Dear Editor,

It is becoming more and more difficult for me to believe that when Houghton says "liberal arts," it means it, in lieu of the recent decision to drop the Western Civilization Integrative Studies requirement. Though I understand Houghton's desire to make meeting the IS requirements more flexible as we continue to transition into the 4-credit system, (which, I contend, does not work well for a number of majors) I have several rather serious objections to this proposal and its implementation. I am concerned that not making Western Civ. a required course betrays what it means to be a well-rounded student with a broad and informed context for understanding the development of ideas within and the events of Western Civilization. These ideas and events are very relevant to us, and help us to situate

ourselves within Western culture, and the ways in which Christianity has shaped Western culture. I say this not to preclude the possibility of "more openness to global perspectives and connections"; however, of the alternative courses proposed, only one or two, perhaps could be situated outside of Western culture—African History, primarily. This overview is foundational for any further study, whether in the particular discipline of history, or in the context of any liberal arts college major, even if it were in the sciences, for instance. I am also very much concerned that this decision will weaken the overall quality of the upper-level courses offered in place of Western Civilization. First-year students who find Western Civ. challenging will not find much relief in upper-level history courses, if the quality and demands of these courses are not slackened. In the past, no one has been excluded from the requirement of Western Civilization; in fact, for most honors students, this expectation is heightened and deepened—it is simply that important. I confess that I find little real merit in this potential switch as it seems to belie a central strand of a basic liberal arts education, and, I fear, that this desire to specialize and make flexible the IS History requirement is pandering to our 'Western' consumeristic impulses



## From the Editor's Desk

## Student Press Rights and the Problem of Censorship



BY MONICA SANDRECZKI

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances"

We've heard this one. It's the First Amendment to the Constitution and guarantees that anyone should have the right to say whatever he wants to, short of yelling "Fire!" in a crowded theater, without risk of punishment. It also guarantees freedom of the press, which has a voice all its own.

In the growing age of blogging and subjectivity about the news, we have lost track of what the purpose of a newspaper is, and for Houghton, a student newspaper in particular. Even more so, I think that the understanding of the function of the newspaper has disappeared too.

In addition to being a documentation of campus life and a community forum to debate issues of common concern, student "journalism has an unusual capacity to serve as watchdog over those whose power and position most affect citizens." This is the fifth principle of journalism in *Elements of Journalism* and also is the role that usually sends

a chill up the spine which makes the hair on the back of the neck stand up on end. Newspaper reporters are the ones who investigate rumors to find out the truth and this watchdog aspect involves a serious level of accountability and making sure that people in power, which for Houghton might be the Office of the President, the SGA, the Office of Student Life, or what have you, are being held to promises they have made and policies that have been passed on how the campus is intended to function. There is always the view that the student newspaper just stirs up trouble by adding a dash of controversy, but the fact of the matter is, that, if the student newspaper did not exist, the method for accountability would be significantly diminished.

Perhaps some of this is new information, but I think it is necessary to reiterate it and to add another layer to this to say that underlying each of these roles is the ethics of the newspaper. It is always the prerogative of the editor to decide what is included in the paper and to what extremity he or she is willing to let the opinions expressed be pulled. John C. Merrill of the University of Missouri underlines this point in his piece *Ethics and Journalism*, "ethics...helps journalists determine what is right to do in their journalism; it is very much a normative science of conduct, with conduct considered primarily as self-determined, voluntary conduct. Ethics has to do with 'self-legislation' and 'self-enforcement.'" Self-legislation. This point is key when it comes to issues concerning the reporter's "c-word": censorship.

According to the Student Press Law Center, censorship from school officials, which includes student government officials, comes in all shapes and sizes from confiscating newspapers and withholding student fee money, to demanding prior approval of content and disciplining editorial staff or making any

other attempt to control content. To my knowledge, Houghton has never censored the newspaper, but as a private school, the question of censorship, whether real or imagined, often hovers in the air because, unlike a public school, private institutions are not bound to uphold the same free speech protections.

According to Butch Oxendine, an American Student Government Association consultant, while, ideally, all student newspapers would be independent, most are not able to be completely self-sufficient and must, thereby use student fee money to fund them, making them subject to censorship. However, there is always a financial and an editorial side to any newspaper and it is vital, according to a professor of journalism at one of our sister schools, that they remain separate in order to steer clear of possible traps of censorship or bribery.

Also, in light of the strong emphasis on the ethics behind journalism, censorship can have many implications. Besides indicating a certain amount of fear in what is published, the need to censor also indicates distrust in the editorial board that is making the ethical call. For the Star, in addition to discussing ethics as a staff and with the writer of a given article, ethical decisions are discussed with an adviser and input is sought from third parties. Even more importantly, there is a system of self-censoring in place.

When visiting journalism conferences or universities and seeing newspapers there, these publications often don't even hesitate to publish articles like "Obsessed with Sex," that discusses regularly feeding one's sexual appetite or "Sensual Steel," about extreme body piercings with a front page photo of a woman's breast. Articles like this are by no means rare, but these are articles that would scarcely be considered for the Star, because of the awareness of the

intended readership. For example, last year, when there was profane graffiti spray-painted onto the Neilson Center, the Star censored the language, when that is not mandatory practice among student journalists.

Though censorship is not tolerated at public institutions, it should especially be condemned at private schools that are affiliated with different religions, i.e. Houghton. Just as the Star would appeal to the right to free speech as outlined in the first amendment, Houghton, as a Christian school is guaranteed under the freedom of religion, should support the newspaper in solidarity under protection under the first amendment. In this sense, censorship is also very un-American and if Houghton is maintaining its goal of producing informed scholar citizens through the liberal arts, an uncensored newspaper is vital.

Also, it is imperative to point out that having a thriving, uncensored newspaper is a rich selling point for Houghton, or any other school. Student newspapers have existed in colleges for years and to follow in that path indicates that Houghton is a school that cares about the development of journalists and that recognizes the responsibility that journalists have to their profession to uphold the principles of the trade.

A reporter from the Buffalo News, when speaking to a group of students, said that censorship is not helpful to students who want to become journalists because it does nothing to teach students what journalism truly is; it only serves to teach them how to write under a sort of authoritarian control, which I would hope, no administrator would ever condone.

Monica is a junior French and Intercultural Studies major

and weakening the History major and its value in its quest for 'practical' knowledge.

-Olivia Butz, Class of 2011

Dear Editor,

Remember that New Testament story about Stephen? What a time to proclaim the name! While the word 'martyr' isn't generally used today, Luke's account in Acts gives some important foreshadowing. If we lose the Sanhedrin, a modern-day Stephen might fit well as the punch-line of a joke. "A guy walks into a bar and starts talking about...Jesus?"

While Christians today aren't usually faced with the prospect of being stoned, we are often the victims of awkward stares, hushed insults, and hurtful stereotypes. Being a Christian today is like being that girl nobody wants to ask to the prom. It's a liability.

There is a place, though, that thinks Christianity is all right, and has done so for 127 years. It's a unique college campus where the kids who would normally be discussing Lady Gaga's latest hit are instead analyzing the theology of the day's chapel speaker. It's where professors focus less on their research and more on

how producing a Christian doctor, or lawyer, or teacher will spread the love and mercy of Jesus Christ to the entire world.

What makes Houghton unique isn't that it's Christian. It's that, for over a century, it's embraced the role of that unpopular girl nobody wants to date. It's clung to the notion that being labeled a Christian is a pretty cool thing, and that "fixing up this world" remains a worthwhile endeavor. While my four years were only a snapshot of Houghton's storied past, they were based on a truly Christian experience that dared to be different.

Houghton has some unique blemishes, but the omission of its Christian purpose has never been one of them. Now, it seems, this countercultural place is at an important juncture. It's got a first-time offer for the prom, and he's only asking for one little compromise.

If she asked me, I'd tell her what I told my friends at graduation: Houghton College, don't go changin' on me. That unpopular girl's the one I like the most.

-Marc Williams, Class of 2010

Dear Editor,

In the midst of all of the hemming

and hawing that's been happening since Houghton's PR honchos decided that their marketing cant needed a facelift, I've been secretly hoping that they were in earnest about the reasons behind their decision. You see, I'd love for Houghton to be known as a faith-based institution.

Now before you candlelight vigilantes out there rush at me with smoldering wicks of righteousness, allow me to explain myself. I'd love for Houghton to be known as a faith-based institution if that's what we were. Unfortunately, it's not. I came to Houghton as a borderline Christian, and spent several years here as a very uncomfortable and marginalized agnostic - my spirituality was definitely faith-based, but I hadn't yet realized wherein that faith lay. Had I waited one more year before coming to Houghton, I wouldn't have even enrolled - I would have shied strongly away from anything that was so blatantly "Christian."

But if I was allowed to do things over again, and was just now that struggling teen who didn't want anything shoved in his face, I would have had quite a yen for a place that I knew was "Christian" in a creedal sense, but fostered, encouraged, and was proud of their "faith-based" community. I would want to be in a place

where questions could be asked, where I wouldn't be a novelty or a dissection specimen for not embracing Christianity, where Buddhists and Hindus who were dissatisfied with their faiths could come to learn more about Christianity, while still feeling accepted as faith-based members of a faith-based community.

That'd be awesome. The way I see it, that'd be (ironically) about as "Christian" as Houghton could get. But this isn't the way things are. Not even close. I've tried to find a way to fit into Houghton as anything other than an evangelical Christian, and I just can't. And as the disappointing handout from Tuesday's senate meeting disclosed, this isn't a move to bring in people from outside the church. In fact, it's not even a move to bring in Orthodox, Catholic or Coptic Christians. It's just another boring day in the world of advertising, where the latest Gallups are showing what's hip in the evangelical slice of the world, and somewhere in Fancher a new brochure is born.

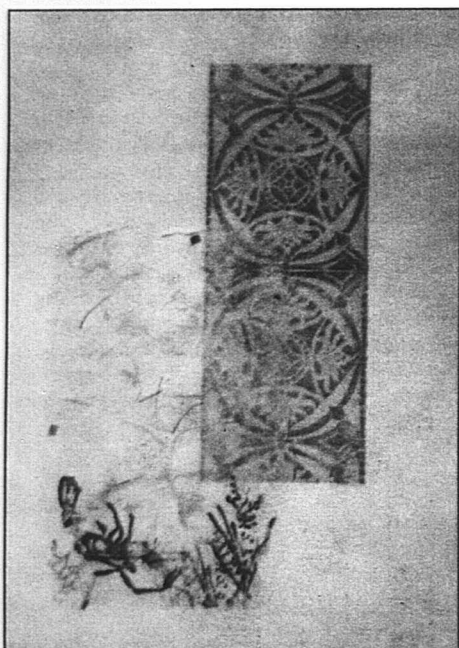
It's nothing to be excited about, folks. We're just keeping up with the Joneses over at CCCU.

-Micah Warf, Class of 2010



# ARTIST of the WEEK

## Sally Murphy



Ordinary, print with handmade paper

### A note from the artist:

To be honest, like most college students, I am simply unsure of what my art is. I know I hope to invoke emotional reactions through the books I make. And I know that somehow they are becoming a self portrait. I am forever fascinated with basic human attraction. Why one becomes a friend to another, why one loves the things he or she does. I guess I try to figure those connections out by voicing them through the art of the book. Last Spring I used a quote from the movie All About Eve to try and explain myself. I am surprised it still holds so true.

Margo Channing: So many people know me. I wish I did. I wish someone would tell me about me.

Karen Richards: You're Margo, just Margo.

I guess I am just Sally.



Brown, book



If it Were Yellow  
print with handmade paper

## CROSSWORD: Who Am I?

### ACROSS

1. Capital of Ghana
6. Julia Roberts' movie "\_\_\_ Pray Love"
9. Cheap showy jewelry

13. Ralph in Paris
14. Winter pasttime
15. Foundation to help needy scholars
16. African antelope

17. "I sang 'Love is a battlefield'"
18. E.T., e.g.
19. "\_\_\_ of activity"
21. "I became the 67th Secretary of State"
23. Edible chart?
24. Diamonds and rubies, e.g.
25. "Like Water \_\_\_ Chocolate"
28. Guys who finish last?
30. \_\_\_ a pig or turkey before slaughter
35. Captain Morgan is \_\_\_
37. Breath after a punch in stomach
39. New Zealand minority
40. "Shakespearean historical drama 'Henry \_\_\_'"
41. Used as fertilizer and explosive
43. Sweet-talk into something
44. "Turkish March," a.k.a. "Turkish \_\_\_"
46. To heat in a microwave
47. "I am Bart Simpson's school bus driver"
48. A commissioner in U.S. Navy
50. Interpret writing
52. Charlie Sheen to Martin Sheen
53. Fail to win
55. Tube in old TV
57. "Jon Stewart's Republican protege"
61. Potato derivative
64. Radio show host: "Hello, you're \_\_\_ the \_\_\_"
65. Wednesday before Easter
67. Wealthy Russian peasant
69. Half moon shapes
70. "I work on an April 15th deadline"
71. "I penned 'Nana'"
72. Ivan the Terrible, e.g.
73. Mary \_\_\_ cosmetics
74. Typically found on right side of table setting

4. The approach during which an athlete gains speed
5. "Last name of Buzz Lightyear's real-life namesake"
6. ESPN trophy
7. William F. Cody, \_\_\_ Buffalo Bill
8. Tax of one tenth
9. Fool or hoax
10. An elaborate song for solo voice
11. Drug abuser
12. Refuse
15. Type of fir
20. Like a queen's rule
22. International Monetary Fund
24. A thank you note is a nice one of these, e.g.
25. "Will I or won't I retire after this season?"
26. "I'm a celestial-belted hunter"
27. Parthenon in 2010, e.g.
29. "Abel's brother"
31. Mexican cuisine staple
32. One who "\_\_\_ his own horn"
33. "Greek muse of love poetry"
34. "I am not a crook"
36. Between mini and maxi
38. Short for Pekingese
42. Act against
45. Lewd onlookers
49. Neither here \_\_\_ there
51. Male ducks
54. Orderly pile of books
56. "Once again, I'm seeking an apprenticeship"
57. Peyton Manning, e.g.
58. Burden
59. "I starred in 'The Postman Always Rings Twice'"
60. Casket stand
61. One-horse carriage
62. "Greek muse of history"
63. Mark of a saint
66. Romantic destination
68. "I am Barbie's boyfriend"

**Prize: Leroy Townes and the Lonestars album!**

Last week's winner of the Crossword Puzzle was Ben Layman! Please come by the STAR office to claim your prize.

Bring your finished crossword puzzle to the STAR office clearly marked with FULL NAME.

### DOWN

1. I is to am as we is to \_\_\_
2. Baby whale
3. Miner's bounty