

**HOMECOMING**  
News, p. #1-2

**MURPHY**  
News, p. #1-2

**Ryann Cooley**  
Feature, p. #2

**RING BY SPRING**  
Opinions, p. #3

**TWISTER**  
Columns, p. #4

## HOMECOMING IS UPON US!

ABIGAIL HOOVER ('27)

It's that time of the year again Highlanders! This weekend is Homecoming, when students can look forward to a plethora of activities on campus.

One of these events is the annual Collage Concert, in which five music ensembles from the Greatbatch School of Music—Houghton Choir, Houghton Wind Ensemble, Houghton Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Choir and the Highlander Chorus (previously known as the Men's and Women's Choir)—will be performing, along with Lyric Theatre. The performance will also include three of Houghton's professors: saxophone professor Anne Kunkle and voice instructor Luke Ogden will be accompanied by Dr. Sharon Johnson on the piano.

The Collage Concert is "...an opportunity for our current campus community and our alumni to get a



Homecoming 2023

COURTESY OF MARCOMM

sense of the variety of music making opportunities that we have, and hopefully an enticement to come to the rest of our concerts," said Dean David Clem, the Dean of the Greatbatch School of Music and Associate Professor of Music History.

"Music at Houghton is such a special experience for all of us and it becomes

like a family. This is an opportunity to make new connections through something that we have shared, even though many have done so decades ago," remarked Dr. Kevin Dibble, the Associate Director for the Greatbatch School of Music. Dr. Dibble also leads the choral ensembles of Chamber Choir and the Highlander Chorus.

"As musicians, what we do in our preparation is joyous because we love it, but it is also a difficult process," he said.

Dr. Dibble described their limited time as the most difficult aspect in preparing for this concert, particularly because they have another concert the week after with an entirely different repertoire.

"The most enjoyable part of this concert preparation has been getting to know the new ensembles," he said, and added that "it is always a fun process of getting to know the new students within the context of a pre-existing ensemble. I love the newness and thinking about the possibilities."

Hannah Dunmire ('26) is a junior in the Chamber Choir and explained that each ensemble would have prepared for about five weeks for the concert.

"The Chamber Choir only practices twice a week whereas for comparison Houghton Choir practices daily, which makes this quick turnaround challenging. However," she added, "it is so fun to watch the Choir unite since the Chamber Choir is a smaller select group - we tend to move through pieces faster."

While the students have  
See **HOMECOMING** page #2

## Ted Murphy Legacy

EVAN BABBITT ('25)

The Ortlip Gallery will host a reception for the Ted Murphy Legacy exhibition on Saturday at 7 p.m.

The show is composed of 77 alumni artists and includes over 80 pieces—ranging from landscapes to abstracts, and watercolors to fabrics. It celebrates Professor Ted Murphy's 38 years of teaching art and art history at Houghton University.

"It means a great deal to me," Prof. Murphy said. "It is visual evidence of not only my influence on past students but our entire department's."

According to the Gallery Director, Linda Knapp, about 80% of the alumni represented in the

show are full time artists. Murphy also notes that 12 of the alumni shown are now professors as well.

"Many are professional artists," he said. "Some just manage to continue to work despite their complicated lives with family and their other work. It is gratifying to see such outstanding work from these wonderful people."

One of the alumni presenting work in the show, Jeff Babbitt (Class of '96), recalled: "It was during Painting I class with Murph when I decided I wanted to major in art. Murph was the perfect combination of hilarious and brilliant. He was a true connoisseur of the liberal arts, seamlessly blending literature, history, and culture into classroom discussions and everyday conversation."

Knapp noted that a flood of people wanted to be in the show when

asked, which stands as a testament to Prof. Murphy's presence in the classroom.

"[Murphy] is really adept artistically and has created a safe space for generations of students to find their calling as artists," Knapp commented. "He has influenced people by his works, but more greatly by who he is—not flashy, but by his daily interactions and listening ear."

People are flying in from the Netherlands and California to come to this show, Knapp added.

"Houghton has [had] a rich art tradition here long before I arrived," Prof. Murphy said. "The artist that preceded me fought the good fight to make Art matter."

Prof. Murphy finished his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1980 at Mt. Vermin Nazarene College, and then received his Master



See **MURPHY** page #2

Ted Murphy

COURTESY OF KAITLYN AVERY

## Feature: Ryann Cooley

AIVERY SHUCK ('26)

Ryann Cooley has been serving the Houghton community as a professor for 11 years now, but has spent the majority of his life doing photography work. He provides his knowledge and energy in the art department, teaching digital media and photography.

Before Prof. Cooley came to Houghton, he began his journey as a military and business man who dreamed of traveling the world taking photos. To pursue this dream, Prof. Cooley went to college in Santa Barbara, Calif. and then started his career in New York City.

Soon after, Cooley was given an amazing opportunity to follow a missions program to Mexico—escaping the cold of New York—where he photographically documented the missionaries' work. This experience opened up more opportunities for Prof. Cooley to take photos in a multitude of other countries, and he was able to pursue his dream of traveling the world for many years. Although traveling was thrilling, Prof. Cooley decided to settle back in New York City with his family. There, his

advertising career took off as he began photographing for many different companies and magazines. After finding advertising less fulfilling than his past photography work, Prof. Cooley turned to teaching, and ended up at Houghton.

While deciding on which college to teach at, Prof. Cooley said that Houghton was the only school with students who “grilled him with questions for the full hour and a half.” He followed this by saying that Houghton was also the only school that got him thinking, “Holy cow... this is a lot of fun!”

Current art major Rachael Smith ('26) said, “Professor Cooley’s classes are consistently enjoyable and full of energy. His witty humor and interactive approach makes every class fun. He takes time to involve everyone in discussions, and his thoughtful feedback inspires personal growth and development.”

Prof. Cooley fosters meaningful and close relationships with his students, and his students appreciate all of the hard work he does connecting with them on a personal level.

Alumna Rachel Smith (Class of '22) said that Cooley “supported us outside and inside the classroom as a friend and a

professor... we always felt so seen and so valued as one of his art majors.”

His classes are open to people who have experience taking photos, as well beginners. Chesnie Waddingham ('26), who is taking Prof. Cooley’s intro to digital photography class, stated that “even before I knew him, I met him, just because his reputation precedes him of being an amazing professor and amazing person. ... He finds a good balance of encouraging us and reminding us that there is grace in trial and error when perfecting your craft.”

Prof. Cooley has had an adventurous career thus far, but it’s far from over. One of the greatest adventures in life is being a teacher, and having the gifts to cultivate knowledge in students. Prof. Cooley is excited to continue building up the art program at Houghton.

For the first time this spring, Prof. Cooley will be offering a class that prepares students for a photography May Term to Puerto Rico. If you love photography and traveling, join Prof. Cooley on this 10 day adventure! There are limited spots, so start planning soon! ★

grand finale will be a MUST WATCH event with plenty of surprises...be prepared for it to become more than a comedy show!” Foster said. And McCutcheon hinted that “There’ll be many surprises coming in SPOT that no one will see coming.” ★

art seriously and have many mediums to work with. Prof. Murphy feels blessed to have students who he loves and appreciates.

“In the twilight of a career,” he said, “every person is aware of the question Henry James said we should all ask. “Was it worth it”? I believe it has all been worth it. It has been a very privileged life here in Houghton. Nancy and I raised our children here and by their reports they each also love this place. God has blessed us beyond measure.”

Prior to the beginning of the show’s reception will be an open panel discussion hosted by alumni artists at 4 p.m. in the CFA Recital Hall. ★

### MURPHY from page #1

of Fine Arts in 1983 at Ohio State University. Before coming to HU he was an assistant professor at the University of Maine in Orono, Maine.

“[T]o be a teacher you must have students. But nowhere is it required that we like them,” Prof. Murphy noted. “Just teach them.”

Many who came into the art program were glad to be able to study

## Question of the Week

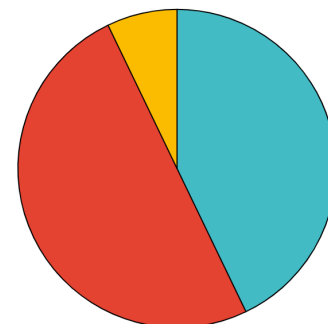
### Were humans vegans before the Fall?



Also on the STAR website

Weekly questions open to anyone affiliated with Houghton University.

Question: Are there more doors or wheels in the world?



Respondents: Current students (14); Former students (0); Faculty/staff (0)

### HOME COMING from page #1

been preparing for this concert since day one of the fall semester, “Dr. McGarvey and our other ensemble directors have been involved in music selection and working out details since this past June,” Dr. Clem said. Students and faculty have been working tirelessly to ensure they provide audiences with a night full of “variety, worship, and fun,” Dr. Dibble commented.

“We trust everyone who comes will be inspired and blessed by what they hear,” Dr. Timothy McGarvey, Wind Ensemble Conductor and Producer of the College Concert, said. “We aim to make music to God and to touch the lives of each person who hears us.”

The concert will occur tonight at 7:30 in the Wesley Chapel.

Coming up this weekend is also the much anticipated SPOT! The event takes place tomorrow night in the Wesley Chapel, from 9 to 11.

“[SPOT is] a big show

where all of campus gets a chance to entertain their peers, where everyone gets a chance to celebrate campus culture and take [a] break from their busy lives as students,” Michael McCutcheon ('26), one of SPOT’s hosts this year, described.

Matthew Foster ('25) is the event’s other host, however both emphasized that they are not co-hosts.

“The theme of SPOT this year is ‘spotmania’. (A play on wrestlemania),” McCutcheon explained, “...we are competing hosts, constantly trying to get the spotlight and become the one and only host.”

10 acts participating in SPOT this year will “make you cry with laughter,” McCutcheon said. He also explained that there will be a SPOT band, “playing ‘fight’ themed songs” and a final “grand finale of purple vs. gold,” as Foster described it.

SPOT has been in the making for quite a long time now, with the hosts and acts working hard to

bring the whole show together.

“I believe it was November of last year when Matthew approached me with the idea,” McCutcheon explained, “from then we slowly started brainstorming, thinking up ideas for our ‘spotmania’ theme, even doing things like watching 8 hours of wrestlemania while writing down notes in a google doc.”

Foster said that the most difficult part of SPOT was scheduling acts and the SPOT band for practices. He explained that it was hard to find a time that worked best for all the performers while not impeding upon academic and extracurricular activities. Besides scheduling, preparing for the show has been very enjoyable.

“Working with Michael McCutcheon to plan events has been a pleasure because we complement each other well,” Foster said.

To conclude, the hosts wanted you to know that “Purple and Gold is personal this year and the

# In Defense of Ring by Spring



CALEB CHOATE

will marry shortly after commencement. It is a phenomenon familiar to Houghton: many of you will experience this first hand.

A quick Google search of the term "Ring by Spring" reveals that the tradition is polarizing. Articles (published by college presses at other Christian universities) with titles such as "Rejecting Ring by Spring," and "Beyond the 'Ring by Spring' Culture" rise to the top.

I don't get the hate.

Heading into our third anniversary, we can happily say that getting married young and starting a family right away is the best thing we have ever done. We feel this way because we recognize marriage isn't merely a social choice, a "next step" in a relationship, or a contract. Marriage is a vocation.

By "vocation," I don't

*"I mean it in the religious sense: vocations are lifelong paths to holiness that God calls us to, and these vocations are most perfectly lived out in humble service to others"*

ble service to others. Vocations, in this sense, have the power to shape our entire perspective: they define who we are, and they inform how we engage with the world around us. Vocations become among the truest ontological realities known to us. They become central to our concept of what it is "to be."

This is why I think marriage is good for young peo-

ple service to others. Vocations, in this sense, have the power to shape our entire perspective: they define who we are, and they inform how we engage with the world around us. Vocations become among the truest ontological realities known to us. They become central to our concept of what it is "to be."

When you get married young and start a family (and yes, I do assume that the call to marriage and the call to raise children according to God's timeline are divinely inseparable), you quickly realize just how insubstantial other pursuits are. When you become a spouse and a parent, the concern you once had for your well-being shifts, and you find yourself driven to provide for the other. There is sanctifying grace in saying no to myself and yes to my spouse. There is sanctifying grace in the 2:00 A.M. shift of trying (and often failing) to console a wailing newborn.

Thomas Merton has a beautiful quote that captures this reality. He says, "Love seeks one thing only: the good of the one loved. It leaves all the other secondary effects to take care of themselves. Love, therefore, is its own reward."

If I am a husband and a father, and if what I say about vocation is true, then imagine how I might live my life if at the center of my self-concept is the conviction that I ought to live as a gift for my wife and my son. Imagine how small the sideline desires in one's life

might become when striving to love your family well becomes both the hard-fought struggle and daily reward.

Imagine learning selflessness in your early twenties.

I believe raising Christ-centered families is the antidote to our generation's self-infatuation. That is why I am a proponent of "Ring by Spring." Now, here's what I am not saying. I'm not saying that everyone ought to get married and marry young. For some, God truly is calling them to singleness. And that, too, is a vocation. As a single person, you are more free and available to be the hands and feet of Christ than I am as a married man. That is a beautiful and powerful thing. For others, the desire to marry young is there, but things just don't play out that way. Others yet do get married young with the intent to raise children but suffer infertility. God is present and working in the midst of all of these scenarios.

Not everyone is called to marriage. But to those who are, ignore what the world would say about starting a family young. Living your life for your spouse and children is the best thing you could do for yourself. And remember the ending of the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi: "For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." ★

*Caleb Choate is the Director of Alumni Engagement at Houghton University. He's a husband, a father, a reader, and a writer. He plays guitar and banjo. He believes soup is never an entrée.*

Tonight, I cut my son's hair for the first time. At twenty-five, I have never cut anyone's hair save my own. As I fumble with a pair of dull sheers, slowly hacking away at thin whisps of sun-bleached toddler-mullet, Juliana scrapes bacon fat from a pan into a jar. Lawson watches an old rerun of Little Bear, practicing simple sentences like, "Father Bear is fishing," and "Duck is really loud." Next month, Juliana and I will celebrate our third wedding anniversary. Last month, we celebrated Lawson's second birthday.

Our small, young family grows out of a phenomenon found in Christian Liberal Arts institutions known as "Ring by Spring." It's a tradition true to its name: before graduating, many students will get engaged and

*"Society would make you believe that you're failing to live up to your potential if you aren't chasing a lucrative career, enrolling in graduate school, or traveling abroad."*

mean marriage is simply a job (though it requires work). I mean it in the religious sense: vocations are lifelong paths to holiness that God calls us to, and these vocations are most perfectly lived out in hum-

ple: it sets our priorities straight.

Our culture tells young people to live for themselves. The buzzword of our generation is "self-care." Society would make you believe that you're failing to live up to your potential if

Have an opinion you want to share?

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## SPEAK OUT!

Letters to the editor should be less than 600 words

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

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# The Houghton STAR

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Review

Twisters (2024)

Written By: Jared Baesen ('28)

*Twisters* tells the story of Kate, a former teenage storm chaser who ceased chasing due to most of her friends dying in an unexpected EF5 tornado. She now holds a job at the (I believe it's called) National Weather Station in NYC rather than in the open Oklahoma plains. She gets back into the game when another tornado survivor and her friend, Javi, encourages her to come back to the business to help him test out a military machine. If successful, the machine will produce a 3D rendering of a tornado, capturing how it works. It would be a giant step forward in scientific research about the "deadly monster." They go on a wild journey with near-misses, hesitation, and bumping into a social media influencer team that "wrangles" tornadoes (or gets in one and stays in them until it passes). The movie is a loose sequel to the 1996 film, *Twister*.

*Twisters* makes an identity for itself by introducing new characters and upping the ante in suspense. The only thing that allows *Twisters* to be called a sequel to *Twister* (other than sharing a main idea) is the first 10 minutes when the teenage group uses "Dorothy," the scientific data collector from the first film. After the opening scene, it might as well be its own independent film. This deviation from the original film helped the sequel create new conflict and resolutions, which other sequels struggled with because they retold plot points from their predecessors.

As for scientific accuracy, although it's a fictional story with a

fictional device and scenario, the information provided by the movie about tornadoes was accurate. The EF Scale is explained well in the beginning, the basic physics of a tornado is demonstrated through a homemade lab recreation, and the unpredictability of tornadoes are shown at full strength during the action shots, one of them even being a twin tornado.

Viewing this was an experience. I viewed this in the theater on the big screen and with booming surround sound. The sound design forces you to experience what it's like being near a tornado, and the writing is good enough to keep you engaged with the characters as you go through their stories and see how they react to each other and to nature. Without giving any spoilers, the story is both engaging and thrilling.

Overall, it was a great film. It encouraged me to pull up several docu-series to learn more about tornadoes, and how it impacts people living in the U.S. where tornadoes are common. I was close to experiencing one this summer when it was reported that the remnants of Hurricane Beryl introduced tornado-optimal conditions in Western and Central New York. Luckily, the tornado didn't touch my house. If you are curious about tornadoes, *Twisters* is a good fictional story to demonstrate what they are like. On a 10-point rating, I would rate this film a 7 out of 10. I saw other films released over the summer that were better than *Twisters*, but this film won't be a disappointment to watch. ★



Artist of the Week

Elyse Howard ('25)



Hi! My name is Elyse! I'm a senior, majoring in art and minoring in Education. I love to paint using watercolor and oils. I find my inspiration in nature and in the cultures I've lived in. Creating brings me great joy and allows me to experience the fullness of God's goodness.

