

the Houghton Star

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the nuclear power move

by *brenda h brown*

Nuclear power is not a new issue—nor is the issue of its waste. Arguments and debates about radioactive waste are often raised across our country and have frequently touched Allegany county—the county in which Houghton is located. Allegany is one of ten areas in New York state that are being considered for a low-level radioactive waste site. Within the county there are five possible locations for the plant: Allen, West Almond, Granger, Alfred, and Eastern Caneadea—all within 25 miles of Houghton.

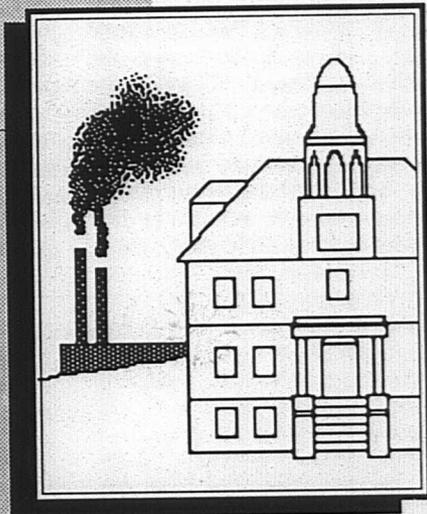
A broad definition of "low-level radioactive waste" includes materials such as contaminated paper trash, glassware, protective clothing, tools, and filter wastes produced by certain industries,

electric utilities, hospitals and universities. The waste must be in solid form. No liquid nuclear waste is lawful to dump.

The New York State Agency of Energy Research and Development Authority will operate the waste plant, and at this point two companies, Chem-Nuclear Systems Inc. of Columbia, SC and U.S. Ecology Appalachia Inc. of Newport Beach, CA have submitted proposals to build the actual plant. Locally, the governor will appoint several people from the county that hosts the site to an advisory committee to help oversee the construction and management of the waste plant.

The state set a deadline to open the plant and accept waste by the beginning of 1993. There is a tentative timetable preceding that date with a step-by-step process. The siting commission started with "site screening" and "method evaluation," both of which have been completed. Right now the commission is holding public meetings in all ten of the areas being considered. The meeting for Allegany County will be on Thursday, January 26 at 6:30 pm in Belfast Central School. By

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April, the commission will select eight potential sites from the ten. Also at this time it will announce conceptual designs for the method of disposal. This July, the choice will be narrowed to four to six communities, with the final decision on one site expected by July of 1990. The final design and acquisition of the land are due around the first eight months of 1991, and construc-

tion is scheduled to begin in the fall of 1992.

Ever since the potential nuclear dump sites were announced December 20, 1988, response has been mostly strong opposition. The following are a few statements taken from the Allegany County Concerned Citizens fact sheet which have been used as arguments against having the waste site here in Allegany County:

* Orange County (near New York City) produces 68% of the radioactivity in the state. If radioactive

waste were distributed proportionately, according to production, then Allegany County would receive none.

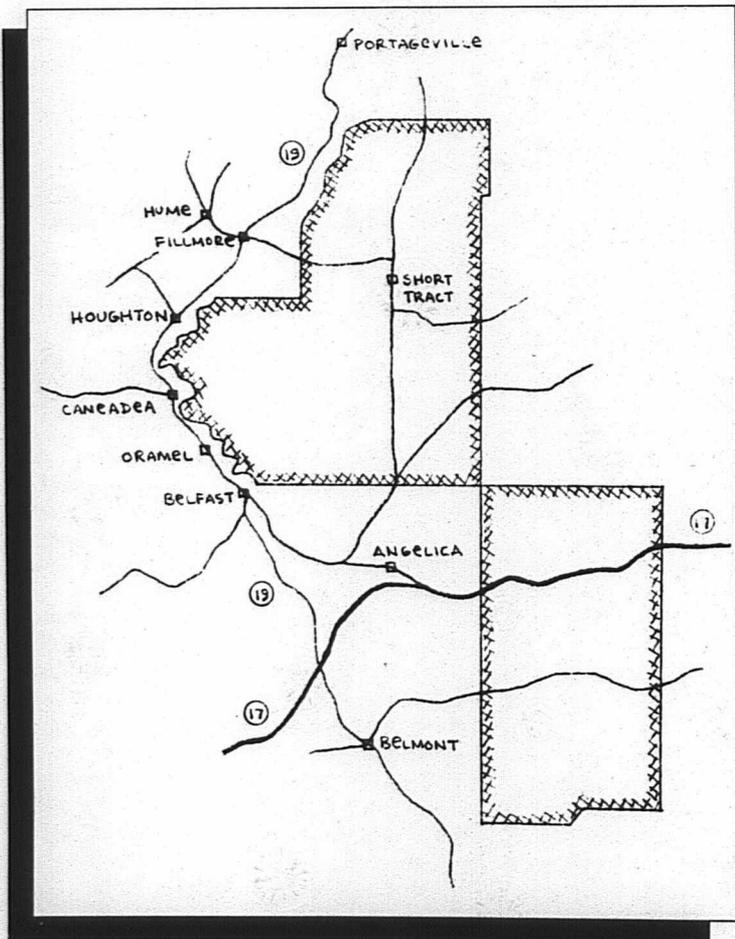
* Allegany County's distance from the producer sites greatly increases the risk of accidents in the communities it is transported through. Each week, four semi-trucks bearing up to forty tons of low-level radioactive waste will be dumped and can exceed two million cubic feet for the 30-year life of the processing plant.

* This is an area that relies heavily on dollars from recreation and hunting concerns. A radioactive waste site would damage these economic pluses.

The siting commission is expected to present possible positive views and effects in Thursday's meeting.

Residents of Allegany County (including Houghton students) may receive information from the New York Low-Level Radioactive Waste Siting Commission by calling toll-free, 800-441-2401. This number is made available for those with questions about the process of site selecting or about meetings, names, addresses, etc.

[This report is a compilation of key ideas from articles of the Olean Times Herald and various pamphlets.]



Within the shaded area of this map is the land which the siting commission is considering for the nuclear waste site.

One inch equals 5 miles



Beyond the gates of Houghton College a wide world speaks to us. It speaks of human-made dilemmas. Presently, New

York residents are caught in a particularly painful one. Cancer patients gratefully accept the healing benefits of radiation treatments. Millions blithely use electricity produced by nuclear power plants. Radiation treatments, however, have by-products: contaminated gloves, tissue paper, shoe coverings, coats, and various medical paraphernalia. Nuclear power plants produce similar incidentals. All of this is low-level nuclear waste, with varying lengths of life: from 100 to 500 years.

What consequence does this have for students at Houghton College? Since these by-products cannot be incinerated, the waste must be stored in shielding facilities. Previously, New York's waste has been shipped to South Carolina. But the federal government has requested that each state pursue one of two options: Each state must build a storage facility for its own waste, or it must cooperate with other states and construct a common site for disposal. (Disposal, in this case, is equivalent to storage, for nuclear waste cannot simply be destroyed. It must be stored until it is no longer contaminated.) New York had considered sharing a site with Pennsylvania but declined for fear that New York would bear the nuclear burden of both states. Therefore, in 1987, Governor Cuomo appointed five people to a commission for establishing the location for a waste disposal site. Since then, the commission has examined hundreds of square miles of land, narrowing the possible sites to ten multi-square mile areas. From one of these areas a single square-

mile area will be chosen upon which to build the facility.

This poses a dilemma not only beyond the gate of Houghton, but also within the gate, for one of those areas is less than five miles away in eastern Caneadea. Why does this concern us?

Probably not because of danger from radiation, said Dr. Fred Trexler, physics professor. In the Olean Times Herald he claimed that the waste stored in steel drums would not emit "more than occupational dosage rates."

Every community in New York State has reasons for the waste site being located anywhere but in their locale.

On the other hand, Richard Alderman, Director of Public Relations, asserted that the "only possible effect [of locating a waste site here] could be a lowering of the value of the area to people." That means that both faculty and student attraction and retention could be jeopardized. The administration at Alfred University, in a press release, confirmed the sentiment, stating, "Parents will be reluctant to send their children to a college that borders on a 'nuclear dump' . . . If it is inappropriate to locate nuclear waste in areas of major population, it is equally inappropriate to locate it where there are thousands of college students."

So it is obvious that such a facility should not be located here—correct? Not necessarily. Every community in New York State has rea-

sons for the waste site being located anywhere but in their locale (known as the "not-in-my-backyard" syndrome). At this level, the problem clearly becomes an ethical one. The decision-making process pits community against community in a seeming battle of numbers and volume of voices protesting the proposal. Jess J. Present, chairman of the Senate Committee on Ethics, claimed in a phone conversation that the problem is not a moral one, but rather "democracy in action"—and this, he claimed, is what people want.

Somebody must have this waste site in their "backyard," so perhaps the socially responsible response to this dilemma is to accept the site in our community. There are benefits as well: government monies (aptly called "incentives"), training and employment opportunities (something Allegany County is starving for), and the gratitude of other communities.

Gary Ostrower, Alfred Village's trustee, does not agree. The minute we begin thinking that way, he said, we can be guaranteed that "the dump will end up here. American politics are the politics of organized selfishness." Ostrower strongly opposes locating the dump in Allegany County. For what reasons? Selfishness, it seems. But then, that's what everyone else is doing. There isn't a community being considered that *wants* the waste site. All are being selfish.

So we have a dilemma. How do we respond: in social responsibility or in social selfishness? A world clothed in prison-issue gray speaks to us of a "rock in a hard place" dilemma. Which do you choose? The rock? or the hard place?



altered organisms

joelle kettering



If you're like most people, the idea of locating a "radioactive waste disposal site" near Houghton scares you. In this nuclear age, we are bombarded with stories of radiation-caused health problems. However, while it has been demonstrated that high levels of radiation cause serious health problems, there is more to the issue than that. The greatest danger occurs when a waste site leaks. Our concern is: what would

the health hazards be if it leaked?

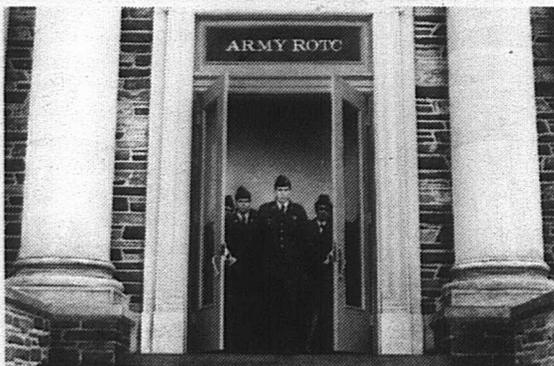
The possible health hazards depend on the type of waste. According to a fact sheet published by the New York State Low-Level Radioactive Waste Siting Commission, the proposed Allegany County site would receive only "low-level" radioactive waste. This includes waste which requires isolation from human contact for a minimum of 500 years.

Low-level radioactive waste comes from four main sources: nu-

clear power plants, university and research institution laboratories, medical facilities, and manufacturing processes. Dr. Irma Howard, biochemistry professor, is most concerned about the waste generated by research labs and medical facilities. Although medical waste gives off only 0.4% of New York's total radioactivity, it makes up 24% of the volume. The waste produced by these facilities includes what she calls nuclear "medwaste" and radio-biologicals, which are radioactive compounds specifically designed to be absorbed and react inside biological systems (i.e. humans and animals). Because of this design, these radio-biologicals could easily be incorporated into living systems (by latching onto the basic DNA structure, for example), causing more specific damage and having serious long-term effects. In the event of a leak, she feels that this waste could pose a greater hazard than radiation from "non-biologicals," despite the fact that the medwaste would be in smaller dosages. She pointed out that unless sterilized before transportation and storage, medwaste and radio-biologicals could also pose an "infection hazard" during a leak. Unless it has been sterilized, said Dr. Howard, medwaste "may still contain the infectious organisms which made the patients sick in the first place," in which case this waste is not only radioactive, but infectious as well.

Another product of the university laboratories may be altered organisms, the products of genetic engineering. If they contain low-level radiation, they will be disposed of in the proposed site. Altered organisms have the same potential of being assimilated into living organisms as the medwaste and radiobiol-

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and genetic invaders

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ogicals. Their threat to humans and the environment depends on how they have been altered.

In addition, the Siting Commission's fact sheet also describes a category they call "mixed waste," which consists of both radioactive and "hazardous chemical waste" (e.g., cancer-causing materials). If spilled, this waste could pose another double health threat.

Rita Aldrich, Chief of the Radioactive Materials Division of the New York State Department of Health, said that current regulations require deactivation of all hazardous biological waste and altered organisms prior to disposal. This policy is "true across the board," she said, whether the waste is radioactive or not. However, she does not know the specific regulations or processes for the proposed site, and suggested questioning the Siting Commission or the Department of Environmental Conservation.

When completed, the site will be approximately one square mile, including a buffer zone which will be used for "monitoring and remediation." Last year, 84,811 cubic feet of low-level radioactive waste was disposed of by New York State. This is one-third the amount of five years ago, and Ms. Aldrich expects the decline to continue. According to her, the regulations for the proposed site are based on research of failed waste sites and corrections of their policies. Both the licensee and the State Health Department (an independent organization) will constantly be monitoring all "pathways" out of the facility (air, water, soil, etc.), making it "one of the most monitored sites that we've ever had in the state."

Dr. Howard feels that the proposed site may be a civil rights issue,

a matter of eminent domain. This refers to the practice of taking over areas where residents are too few or simply unable to defend themselves in order to provide for a greater population. The issue to Dr. Howard, however, is not the site's possible nearness to Houghton, but the "difficulty" of concentrating all these different types of waste at a single site. "This is a tremendous mixture proposed for one place," she said, "for any place." Instead, she favors exploring alternative technologies. She believes that the waste should be disposed of at sites near the producers, limiting both the transportation (a high-risk operation) and the amount and concentration of waste. Also, the companies that produce radioactive or mixed waste should pay for its disposal, instead of the taxpayers.

Based on the type of waste that will be put into the site, Dr. Howard outlined five questions she feels must be answered by the Siting Commission before such a site can be considered anywhere:

- 1) What assurance do we have that altered organisms will be destroyed before disposal?
- 2) What provision has been

made for sterilization of infectious nuclear waste before disposal?

3) How will bacterial decay be prevented? Or, how will the radioactive gases released by the various decay processes be handled? (Will they be contained, which may produce an explosive gas buildup, or will they be vented regularly into the atmosphere?)

4) How will corrosion of containers be prevented?

5) Regarding the future, one Siting Commission fact sheet boasts "500-year safety." How can this safety be guaranteed?

We cannot estimate the chances of a leak or spill, or how great an area would be affected; neither can we predict the precise effects on our health. These depend on too many variables. However, by looking at the type of waste the proposed disposal site will contain, we know that a leak or spill has the potential to cause physical and environmental damage.



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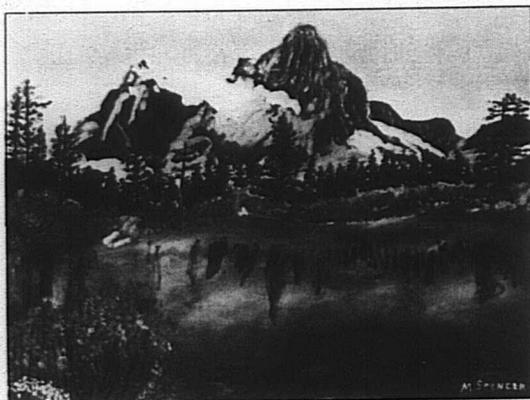
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Mountain--State of Washington
by Marion Spencer

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saving the earth

jack leax



I own four and one-half acres of woods on the west side of the Genesee River in the town of Caneadea. I call them Remnant Acres because I intend them to be standing when I am gone. I intend them to be standing when all other woods around them are lost to development. I intend this because I believe that the earth is the Lord's and that I am responsible for preserving and caring for the small portion I have been given to husband. I know this intention is symbolic. I haven't the power to preserve the woods from the encroachment of development. But it is also practical and real. A symbolic action can be seen and understood.

My woods aren't pristine. The front north corner has been clearcut. Though I have spent many hours over the last two years cutting back the impenetrable barrier of briars that has grown up, the new growth trees—poplars, cherries, and red maples—are just beginning to come on. The main woods, a stand of climax hemlock, beech, and hard maple, was logged many years ago and is packed with half-hollow

stumps large enough to sit in. And near the back boundary a power line runs diagonally from Tucker Hill Road to the college farm. Last summer a Davie Tree crew cleared the line, dropping every tree that might threaten the uninterrupted flow of power that 20th-century life requires.

The line is strung above a spring-dotted hillside too wet to work most of the year, so I have waited until now, midwinter, to begin firewooding the slash for next year's burning. The overcast sky, the cold, and the frozen ground made today ideal for work, and I enjoyed myself. I worked quietly; the sharp whack of my ax, the occasional burst of breath as I heaved a log onto my shoulder, and the brisk crunch of my boot breaking the hard crust of snow as I hauled it to the woodpile were the only noises. As I walked up and down beneath the power line I thought about the shadow I labored under.

Last night, before sleeping, I read a chapter from Nick Lyons' *Bright Rivers: Celebrations of Rivers and Fly-fishing*. Lyons, reflecting on life in a Catskill cabin, wrote, "Here I can choose as much of the modern world as I want to partake in my life

and exclude the rest. There is no fallacy in taking some, the electric light does me no harm; it enables." This afternoon, gathering the waste of the power company's right-of-way, I wished I could be as easy about the light as Lyons. But this is 1989. I know, as Lyons could not, that that light can do me great harm, for the power surging over my head, the power lighting the horsebarn up the hill and my home six miles away, is generated by a nuclear reactor.

A month ago, except to note their location if I dropped a tree, I wouldn't have given much thought to the lines. A week before Christmas, however, New York State designated the part of Caneadea on the east side of the Genesee River along with the entire towns of Granger, Allen, West Almond, and Ward as a candidate site for the state low-level nuclear waste dump. (The Siting Commission, of course, calls it a "repository." But "revolution is redefining words." Call it a dump.) For the last two weeks I have been attending meetings—meetings of county legislature committees, town meetings, and combined town meet-

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(continued)

saving the earth

ings. At nearly every meeting some responsible speaker has raised the "Not in My Back Yard" issue. I raised it myself. If we all benefit from advances in nuclear technology, how can we refuse to bear the costs of those benefits? After much thought, I am convinced that in asking this question we are falling into a trap, for it is founded on the false assumption that nuclear technology benefits all members of a society equally. Nuclear technology, if it benefits us, benefits us in many different ways. Consequently, our cost-bearing burdens differ.

My wife and I probably owe her life to advances in nuclear medicine. Having directly benefitted, we have a responsibility we cannot evade. Yet wastes from nuclear medicine make up less than one percent of the wastes that would come to Allegany County should a dump be located here. Our responsibility is small, and we will bear it willingly.

The bulk of the wastes that would come to us, however, do not come from medical sources; they are generated by nuclear power plants. Here the issue becomes more complex, but not as complex as the nuclear industry would have us think. The facts are simple. Nuclear waste is not merely dangerous, it is deadly. The industry has been promising from its infancy in the 1950s to find a safe way to deal with it. They have not. Meanwhile the waste has been accumulating. In 1983 commercially generated materials being held in temporary storage facilities in the United States contained over 11 billion curies of radioactivity. That is enough to kill every inhabitant of the country. By the end of the century, the total is expected to reach 42 billion curies—enough to kill every inhabitant of the earth. I am, of course, not silly enough to be suggesting that this material is suddenly going

to be released into the atmosphere and kill us all. The point is that it will be dangerous for generations, and we continue to make it knowing that no one has a permanent solution for its disposal. All the industry knows is to isolate it. Unfortunately, as the accumulation mounts, the space needed to store it grows. Current New York State plans call for a square mile dump site surrounded by a 12 square mile buffer zone. That is a lot of earth to make uninhabitable for the sake of hairdryers, stereos, and power screwdrivers. In thirty years another site will have to be chosen. Given these facts, I am convinced that I am dealing not with a technical issue but with a moral issue. Consequently I must challenge the legitimacy of an industry that daily proves itself irresponsible. I must challenge it not by talk but by action.

I took my first action ten years ago when I began to heat largely with wood. I followed it by reducing my demands for power and maintaining a monthly usage of electricity below the regional average. Never-

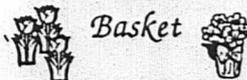
theless I have not done enough. I am not weaned from the electric teat. Probably I never will be. But if my demands cannot be satisfied without generating a threat to the earth's well-being, they should not be satisfied. Nor should anyone else's.

Though these actions are private and small, they give me the right to ask others to at least match them. A tiny yielding of selfishness is all it will take to shut down the industry. Just say no.

On January 26, the commission responsible for choosing the final dump site will hold an "informational" meeting in Belfast. The public is invited to come hear what a boon it will be to be chosen. But we will not be invited to ask questions. It does not matter; I will be there, and I will have a large sign. It will say, "The earth is the Lord's. Stewards are held accountable."

Maybe someone will ask me what it means. If they do, I'll tell them about Remnant Acres and how the whole creation cries for the day of the Lord.

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losing a prophet

"What good is it," asked one student concerned with Dr. David Meade's denial of tenure, "if we surround ourselves with prophets who say only what we want them to say?" During last Friday's lunch, this student and at least 150 others gathered for a forum concerning this issue.

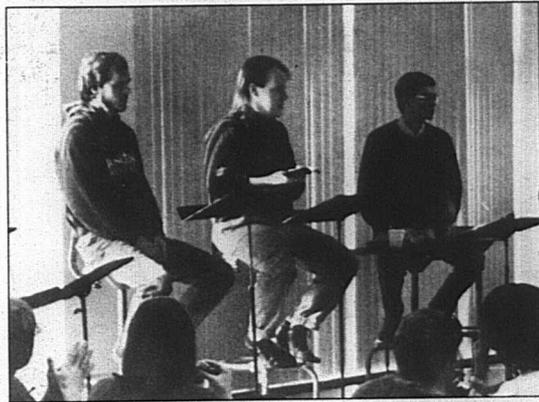
Mark Shiner, a junior religion major and the organizer of the forum, began by encouraging all who attended to share humbly and wisely and to avoid "trustee-bashing." After introducing Rick Phillips, the forum's moderator, and Eric Buck, who prayed before the discussion began, Shiner read Psalm 139, emphasizing the following:

Search me, O God, and know my heart. . . See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Shiner then read a statement which described what he knew of the issue based on his talks with a number of professors, to provide a basis for further discussion. The conversation progressed with students speaking one at a time, both asking questions of Shiner and offering their own opinions.

The tone of the meeting was one of support for Meade's scholarship and faith, and for the desire not "to save Dr. Meade," but "to call the board of trustees to accountability," according to Shiner's statement.

Not all voices were exclusively pro-Meade. Students who had spoken to administrators or trustees about Meade offered evidence that the trustees had deliberated at length over the Meade issue, and had taken the wishes of students seriously. It is not clear what "seriously" means, or how many trustees voted in favor of granting Meade ten-



Rick Phillips, Mark Shiner, and Eric Buck on stage at the forum.

ure. One certainty is that a majority of trustees voted against.

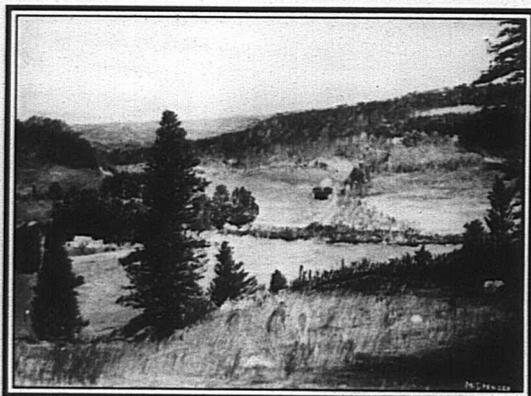
Several religion majors expressed concern that losing Meade will give the department less credibility in the eyes of their future employers, and that talented religion professors may hesitate to teach at Houghton in the future as a result of these events. The concern that now professors will be less likely to publish provoking books or articles was also mentioned.

The meeting concluded with the formation of two committees. One, headed by Shiner, has composed a

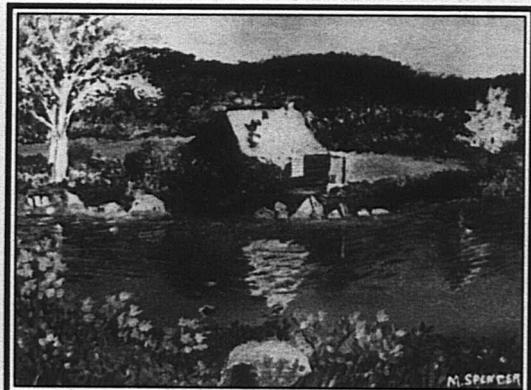
letter, along the lines of his statement, which will be sent to each trustee. The other will discuss alternative methods by which the students can attract the attention of the board of trustees.

A petition, written and read at the forum by Eric Buck, has been circulated among students, and has gathered 200 signatures. The petition asks the board of trustees to "release information concerning the decision and, further, to reconsider the decision." The signed petitions will be sent to the chairman of the board of trustees.





Untitled



Cottage and Lake

a natural artist

patty carole

When I asked people how to get to Marion Spencer's house, I was advised to look for the cute little green house across the street from the Houghton Academy. As soon as I stepped inside, however, I discovered that his pet dog and bird were even cuter. In addition, every vacant space of a table or a shelf was occupied by their statu- esque dog and bird friends as well as by an occasional horse or cat. Later I was to discover how important nature was in his life.

When Mr. Spencer was 21, he decided that he wanted to see what lay beyond his hometown of Rushford. His hitchhiking tour encompassed Canada and eighteen states. With a tent on his back, he was never without shelter, and he never went hungry, insisting that he "wasn't ever afraid of work." Unloading a few bales of hay might allow him food and lodging for a while. And if his travels took him to a deserted prairie land, with his tent and bit of army training, he could always brave the wild. One day he woke up to the smiling face of a grizzly bear. Another day he came upon a few moose. Of course, cool, collected Marion thought nothing of them and calmly walked away. Yet danger in his life wasn't confined to the forest. Occasionally, instead of hitchhiking, Mr. Spencer would take the train—specifically, the roof of the train. He even slept there until one day he woke up and found himself nearly slipping off.



After two years of being the "rambling man" he decided to settle

down with a "good woman." After marrying Nyna, the two went to Arizona where he took a variety of manual jobs. His intense love of nature never allowed him to be very far from it, and he often stopped to look at a bluebird or a tree in autumn foliage instead of hurrying by for a job appointment. After marrying he did not travel as much, but he did so vicariously with National Geographic—a 58-year subscription which he still receives today.

When Mr. Spencer had to get a pacemaker at the age of sixty, he stopped trapping, fishing, and gardening, as these activities proved too strenuous. After that, Mr. Spencer's encounters with nature consisted in painting it. He began painting by numbers. With the paint he had left over from his paint-by-numbers set, he decided to paint a favorite scene of his—that of a little boy fishing. He was happy with that work and has been painting ever since.

His education in art has been from only one book that has given him some tips about brush strokes. His training has been outside of the classroom. His method is by "observing." In this way Mr. Spencer can boast of a training that has encompassed eighty-three years. I believe that his paintings have accurately depicted his life-long vision of nature—simple, reflective, and pure.



Marion Spencer



I was first introduced to jazz on a night that could have made me fall in love with just about anything. It was summer and I was in a small park in Washington D.C., sitting on the grass with people I really liked. I don't remember how old I was, but I was at the age when falling in love was easy. Since that night, jazz has been especially appealing to me (whether that's because I've passed the age when falling out of love was easier too, I don't know), and the lack of opportunities to hear jazz performances at Houghton has not gone unnoticed.

I brought the subject up at lunch one day with some faculty sitting at my table. Initially, I had been talking to Ted Murphy, art professor, but as our conversation got more involved, he pulled in a few of his friends until we had a small pocket of jazz enthusiasts. Some expressed the conviction that an introduction to the jazz/blues genre would deepen students' appreciation for music and broaden their awareness of an important part of American culture. "Jazz is harmonically sophisticated and intensely creative since it is primarily improvisational," said Dr. Siemens, professor of Spanish. Ted Murphy agreed. "The broad exposure of students to music that is ethnically charged, with its roots in the heart and soul of the Black community, would facilitate the preservation of a culture." He expressed a strong desire in seeing an introduction of jazz into formally scheduled cultural events such as Artist Series or CAB productions. "Artist Series has been limited to the presentation of classical music. I enjoy Schumann and Ravel but I think that can be esoteric, and I believe that the Houghton Community could really benefit from

a wider variety of concerts," said Murphy.

By this time I had formulated enough questions as to why the Artist Series program not only did not include a wider variety of music but also did not present anything except music to warrant talking to Dr. Bruce Brown, music department faculty member and head of the Artist Series Programming Committee. During a short interview, I asked him why Artist Series included only classical music, which some believed was fairly esoteric. "Tradition," Brown responded. "The genesis of the Artist Series was in classical music. It was intended to be a vehicle of live concerts by major performers, not an

Classical music is in jeopardy. . . Jazz and blues aren't dying.

introduction to a popular style. You charged that our focus is esoteric, but there is no greater variety or longer history of music than classical."

"But jazz/blues is a major musical movement," I said. "Don't you think you could reach a greater variety of listeners if Artist Series offered different types of music?" "We don't want to patronize the popular artforms," he answered. "Classical music is in jeopardy of dying unless there is a continually renewing population of listeners that will spend money to hear and see it performed. I think the role of a liberal arts college is to create a knowledgeable music-loving public. Jazz and blues are not dying. They don't depend as heavily on the knowledgeable public."

I was still interested in finding ways to get jazz to Houghton, even if

it was a "popular artform," and the faculty I had talked to over lunch had agreed. Dr. Siemens had suggested bringing in local musicians from Toronto or Buffalo. "There are a lot of relatively unknown, very talented musicians in these towns. It would be great to hear a couple of them here." When John Jost asked, "What's the student interest?" Murphy got excited. "Somebody fund a concert! Let's see! If it's successful, maybe our programming committee will get the message."

The last question I asked Dr. Brown was whether or not our Artist Series program is so strictly defined because of a lack of representation on the committee. "Quite the contrary. We have a variety of people on the committee, namely Prof. Leax, Prof. Conklin, Mrs. Saufley, two community members and two students, only one of whom is a music major. If you want to hear jazz and blues, you should work through an organization like CAB. If they would plan ahead they could get some really good people, some really big names. I would work with them if they needed help and were organized. I would like to see more jazz at Houghton; several of my latest CD purchases have been jazz. Yes—bring it to Houghton, but not through the Artist Series."

I guess there is a possibility of my reliving that summer night in Washington D.C. Conceivably, I could share my love of jazz or blues with someone who has not been introduced to the thrill of hearing it live, and watch them fall in love. It might not be quite as magic as it was for me sitting on a summer lawn, but I'd settle for a less ideal setting. The floor of the campus center isn't too uncomfortable.

letter

Last semester, a letter appeared in the *Star* that many of us disagreed with. This letter, written by Mark Horne, dealt with environmental stewardship. The focus of our op-

posing view is that stewardship is a command. Through the gift of the land, man enters into covenant with God, because the land is a gift to a fallen people. Wendell Berry, in his

article "The Gift of Good Land" (*Sierra Magazine*), states, "[The land] is a gift because the people who are to possess it did not create it. . . It is not a free or deserved gift but a gift given only upon certain rigorous conditions."

These conditions focus on proper maintenance of the land. Since we did not create the land, we have no right to destroy it. We need to think of ourselves as tenants responsible for taking care of something that is only temporarily ours. God put stipulations on the use of land (Lev. 25:18-46), which included a command to allow the land to lie fallow every seven years even though the land was given for agricultural use. This indicates that we are only tenants, and that ultimately the land is God's.

There are a number of interpretations of Genesis 1:28, and both sides of this argument have used this verse as support. Therefore, we think it is dangerous for Christians to rely solely on this one verse as the basis of their position. The central theme of the Bible concerns a covenant between God and man, and part of that covenant is our responsibility to God's gift of the land.

In conclusion, Wendy Berry summarizes our view with the statement, "We must take care, among other things, of the land, which is never a possession but an inheritance to the living, borrowed from the unborn."

Senior Seminar on Environmental Issues - Fall Semester 1988

(Doris Nielsen, Deb Marett, Carol Smith, Mark Kailbourn, Jim Harmon, Cindy Brannon, Becca Meighan, Robin McGrath, Jens Beck, Karen Crafts)

the Minefield mick williams

God and Mammon at Houghton

After the chapel on January 13 ended, I felt angry. I mentioned to many people that Friday's "Capital Campaign for Houghton" chapel asked for God's continued blessings in the form of financial help, yet neglected to ask for his assistance in fighting the entrenched spiritual evil here at Houghton. I do not deny Houghton's need to renovate (Ecclesiastes 3:3,5); what I oppose is the imbalance in spiritual concerns.

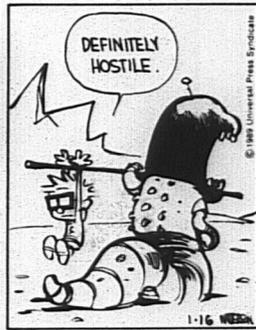
This is not a new concern with me. I have sensed, since I arrived here in January 1986, a silent "gentrification" of Houghton. Houghton may be progressively more beautiful to look at, but the "dark underbelly" of this process is that tuition has been increasing substantially faster than the rate of inflation.

We must put these new buildings in perspective: Just as Jesus told the disciples that the gorgeous temple in Jerusalem would cease to exist, so too will these buildings, like Woolsey and Gao before them, be "thrown down" (Luke 21:5-6). Would those in authority have gratefully praised God if they had received

far, far less than the 14-plus million they ultimately received? Or were they, by setting deadlines and goals, and by depending on spiritually energized contributions, violating Jesus' decree, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" (Matthew 4:7)?

It sometimes appears that in the rush for an ever more beautiful campus, we have forgotten to pray and work at solving the entrenched evil at Houghton: the rampant drinking, the fornication (and resultant abortions), the drug use, and the idea that our being a liberal arts institution excuses the heterodoxy and even heresy found among students and faculty alike. It does indeed seem at times that Houghton has gone from being founded on the Rock (Jesus Christ), to being yet another supplicant before the shrine of the almighty dollar. As Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and Money" (Matthew 6:24).





The *Star* is a weekly student publication; its attention is turned inward upon Houghton College. Letters to the *Star* should be signed and sent before 12 noon on Tuesday, and should be no longer than one page double spaced. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions.

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Simply & kindly

editorial - dave perkins

My question concerning the issue of the nuclear dump site is this: Should we simply fight against having the site just across the Genesee river, or should we fight against having the site at any of the communities being evaluated by the state? And I think this: if you argue against the site being here, you should argue against the site being anywhere. If it's okay with you if the radioactive waste is put near people in Orange County, but not okay if it is put near you, then you must believe that you are more worthy of being protected—an inconsistent position for one who treats others with kindness.

Some radioactive waste is worth the risk of storing it. Radioactive medical waste, for example, is in part a result of research to develop better medicines and treatments. If it is safest to contain this medical waste

across the Genesee, then it is unkind to demand that the waste be kept in someone else's backyard.

Other radioactive waste, however, is generated by companies which provide us with electricity and fuel. As a rule, Americans consume more energy than they need in order to live satisfactorily. TVs show their pictures to empty lounges; people drive cars from their dorm to the post office; showers last over ten minutes. These actions often mean greater demand for nuclear power, which of course generates more waste. It has to be put somewhere. If we lived more simply, we would be acting in kindness toward both the earth and our neighbors.



letter

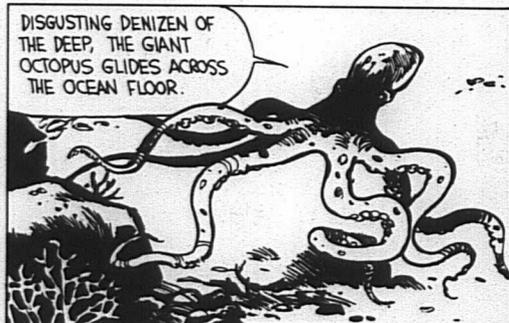
ray horst

"The Minefield" in the December 16 Star makes a valid point about the constructive use of the term "discrimination." In support of that point, the column presents several thought-provoking statements about homosexuality: It implies that homosexuals should not teach children, and that homosexuality is (always?) due to personal choices.

Does this mean that we now have conclusive evidence that homosexual perversion always results from personal choices and never from genetics? At the time of our Current-Issues Day on homosexuality, several years ago, the experts seemed to agree that the cause of this perversion was unclear. Further, if we assume that homosexuals should not teach children, is it because they are more dangerous (behaviorally and/or ideologically) to children than are heterosexuals? That is, are homosexuals more likely to victimize students of the same sex than are heterosexuals to victimize students of the opposite sex? Data on these points, if such data exist, would serve to strengthen the argument.

Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson



AT THE SIGHT OF AN ENEMY, HE RELEASES A CLOUD OF INK AND MAKES HIS GETAWAY!

