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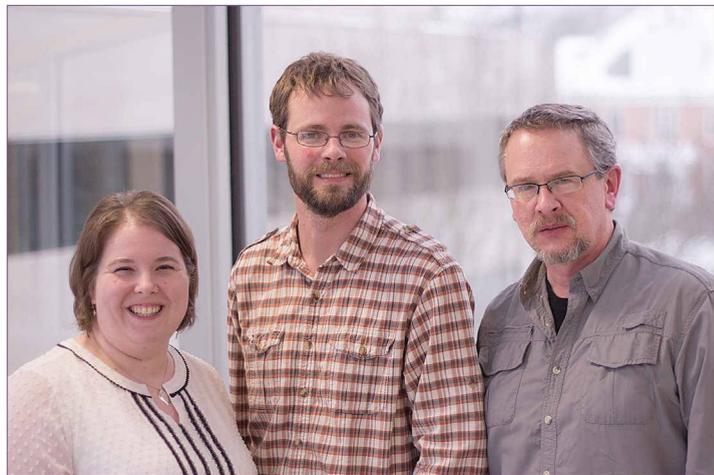
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New Honors Program for Transfers and Second Years



ANTHONY BURDO

Professors Sarah Derck, Benjamin Lipscomb, and Jonathan Case structured the transfer and second year honors program around the history of statements of faith and scriptural interpretation.

SARAH SLATER

This fall Houghton College will introduce a new Honors Program specifically targeted at second year and transfer students. Called Scholastica, the program is aimed at transfer and second year students. The rigorous program will combine the Bible and

Theology requirements to form one intensive course that aims to challenge students. Scholastica is intended to provide the "same sort of challenge and radical development that is the purpose of our first year honors programs," said Benjamin Lipscomb, director of honors.

The committee in charge of designing Scholastica chose Bible and Theology

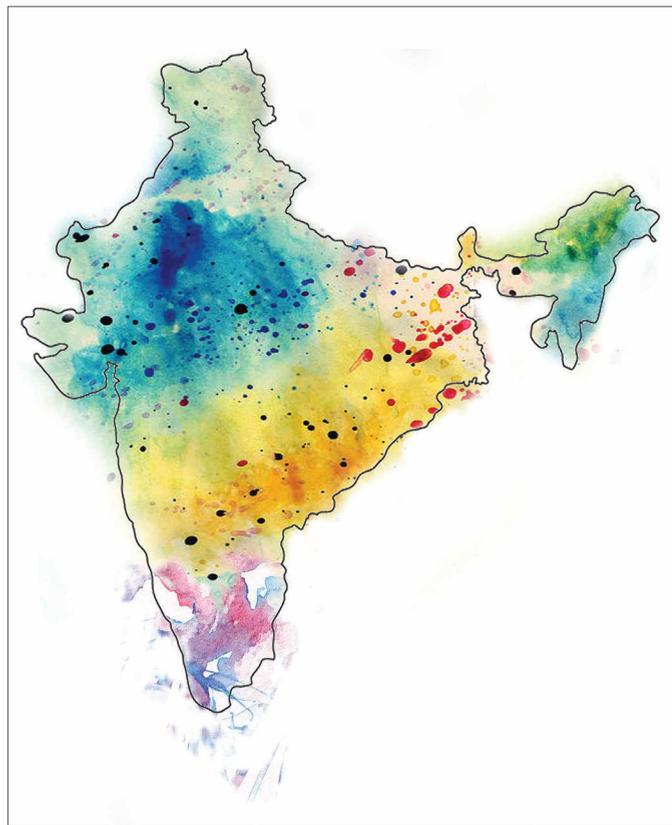
as the disciplines to pair together because they are disciplines that "community college students, even those that come in with an A.A., haven't satisfied when they got here" according to Lipscomb. According to Jonathan Case, professor of theology, this specific pair of disciplines is also a natural fit because the lessons learned about interpretation "has application value far beyond the boundaries of this course".

Taught by Case and Sarah Derck, professor of old testament, the program will take the form of a six credit class, which will meet five days a week. The class will proceed chronologically through Biblical and Christian history. The program is structured around the history of statements of faith and scriptural interpretation, both in Jewish history and Christian history, Lipscomb said.

The goal of the class is to allow students to "go

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Enrollment Team Builds Relationships in India to Grow Student Diversity



DESIGNED BY JON ECKENDORF

Eric Currie, Vice President for Enrollment Management, visited India last October in hopes of building relationships with possible future students.

HATTIE BURGHER

With recruiting connections to India in development, Houghton will try and continue its strong global history and diverse student body.

Alumnus, Carmen Mckell, who is currently working on the Data Science Program process at Houghton with BaseMetrics, approached Enrollment Management about venturing into an opportunity to recruit students from India. BaseMetrics specializes in predictive analytics and visualization and has worked on over 300 projects in four countries, including India.

Eric Currie, Vice President for Enrollment Management, believes this connection to India will be beneficial because of Houghton's popularity status. "We are small, we aren't as well known, so it is difficult to break into new markets when people have no idea who we are," said Currie.

Last October, Currie went to India to visit both

public and private schools, to connect with several universities for potential partnerships, and establish relationships with potential students. As a result of the visit, three applications were submitted which was encouraging, but also surprising to Currie. "I didn't expect that to be honest, the first time you go you are trying to engage and develop relationships," said Currie. Two of the three applicants have already been admitted.

A decline in demographic in Alleghany County is one of the main incentives for pursuing the recruiting opportunity in India. Houghton has always had a strong global history and it is part of its "DNA" according to Currie. He would like to continue the tradition of the college's diverse student body, and thinks the opportunity in India is worth the effort. "India has a significant population that hungers higher education so we feel that this is an option that we need to pursue," said Currie.

Another incentive for

See **INDIA** page 2

Self Defense Classes Offered in KPFH



ANTHONY BURDO

Fillmore Dojo of Tatsu Do teaches Tatsu Do martial arts self-defense class on Wednesday evenings from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

SOPHIA ROSS

In November of 2014, the Houghton College Athletics Department partnered with the

Fillmore Dojo of Tatsu Do to offer free Tatsu Do martial arts classes with an emphasis on self-defense to the Houghton community. The classes take place in the Kerr-Pegula Field House (KPFH) Monday and

Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the open area by the exercise equipment. Together, instructors Brad Mosiman,

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INTERNATIONAL // Ebola Cases Decline in Africa



ANTHONY BURDO

MELISSA MACLEAN

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ebola virus disease, formally known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, has taken approximately 9,700 lives since the first outbreak in 2014. Due to the high mortality rate, it is now

classified as a “Risk Group Four Pathogen,” in accordance with the WHO pathogenicity standards.

In regard to geography, the majority of cases are confined to countries in West Africa—namely Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea—with exceptions of a few minor cross-cultural outbreaks.

However, in recent news, reports are showing a drastic decline in case numbers. Last week, WHO reported only five new cases in Liberia. This improvement has led the government to reopen schools for the first time in months, according to CNN news.

But not all Liberians are keen this immediate step towards “recovery,” and instead deem it as merely fostering a “relapse.”

To get a better understanding of this discrepancy, a personal interview was held last week

with Liberia-stationed worker, Armando Costabile, to get a first-hand insight on the problem.

Costabile stated how he fears that the reopening of schools may have some adverse effects on the country. Moreover, he believes safety and caution should come first.

“While the thought of reopening schools appears as a positive landmark, I am weary of the backfire it could have, being this soon.”

Costabile continued his statement by referring to the “cycle of disease” he has witnessed over the years, “Ebola is not new to the Liberians. Outbreaks have occurred in cycles for over a decade.”

He further described the framework of this ‘disease cycle’ in his next statement, “A disease hits, people go into panic, help comes, the hype dwindles down, and people go

right back to unsafe contact as if it did not happen.”

While Costabile claimed there are multiple factors playing into this problem, he subsequently highlighted the issue of culture, “I think one of the problems lies with cultural mindsets. This is a culture that lives the moment. While this has great aspects to it, it can often lead to forgetting everything of the past a little too quickly...”

Costabile also described the issue with quarantines, and how there are “always one or two tribesmen who were missed and retreat to the bush.” Thus, the cultivation for a relapse begins. In other words, the disease “hides for a few years in the Bush, slowly leaks back into the city, and eventually outbreaks once again.” He states that it is the “nature of a virus.”

On a brighter note, in comparison to past outbreaks,

Costabile is a little more hopeful this time with the new enactment of U.S. screenings. According to Costabile, this is the “most orderly and effective screening” he has ever witnessed.

Additionally, on February 8, 2015, WHO released another statement with news of a projected mass vaccination to counteract the crisis. Though the program is currently undergoing clinical trials, it is said that it will be fully decided on in August of this year.

Costabile is set to return to Liberia within the next month. Follow up interviews will be conducted to chart the progress, and/or demise. Only time will tell if the Ebola virus is truly concluding its existence. ★

Melissa is a sophomore communication major.

INDIA from page 1

Currie and the enrollment management team to materialize the connection is the prospect of making international students discovering

Houghton less random.

In first year student Amy Abraham’s case, finding Houghton happened “by chance.” Abraham, who is from Kerala, India, was searching colleges on-

line when she came across Houghton. She had never heard of it before, but that didn’t stop her from wanting to know more.

Although there have already been a few applicants,

Currie is not getting ahead of himself. “We are still very much so in the beginning stages, but it is evolving,” said Currie.

When informed about the potential of prospective Indi-

an students coming, Abraham was anxious to know more. “I’m so excited for the prospect,” says Abraham “I would love to have people at Houghton from my home.” ★

WORD ON THE STREET



“I think as long as there’s respect for both sides and the topic is kind of handled with care just let people state their opinions.”

-Barbara Spaulding, *Sophomore*

“On controversial issues I think the Star should offer two sides to the equation and not just the typical Christian side of things. They need more perspectives than just the one.”

-Julianna Evans, *Junior*



“I think that the Star does a good job now of letting students have a voice for the whole campus to hear, but in the letter to the editor or however they’re talking in the Star I think it should be toned down so it’s not too offensive to anyone.”

-Chandler Jones, *Sophomore*

“I think the Star should put controversial topics in their writing because it allows students to talk about the controversial topics amongst themselves throughout campus.”

-Nathan Moore, *First Year*



“I feel like it’s important for them to get both sides of the viewpoints because a lot of times I feel like they just go with the more popular view point.”

-Ian Daniels, *Senior*

How do you think the STAR should handle controversial topics?

“The newspaper is the voice of the students and should be able to say whatever controversial things it needs to in order to get the point across”

-Sarah Makosy, *Junior*



“I think you should have two sides that can have a dialogue about both positions and that way you get a balanced view.”

-Jonan Pilet, *Sophomore*

“I guess it’s important to have both sides of an issue weigh in so you’re not being led towards one specific bias that way the voice is heard for both sides of the issue and everyone can have an opinion. I also think it’s important that controversial topics aren’t treated lightly or avoided because would they be discussed if not in media and through public eye, so it’s important to tackle those points directly.”

-Tyler Reese, *Senior*



Track and Field Goes to Nationals

JOANNA FRIESEN

Josiah Evans placed tenth and 15th in the 55 meter hurdles, and Enrico Sukhedo placed 13th in the 55 meter dash. The women's 4 by 200 placed 12th with the team of Nikki Garns, Savannah Doviak, Kate Taggart, and Fiona Daloia. The men's 4 by 200 meter relay team also placed 12th with Jordan Cady, Enrico Sukhedo, Terry Krangar, and Dan Becker.

On the distance side of the team Cara Davenport (17th place) and Austin Groff (20th place) competed in the 5K. Both the men's and women's teams ran a distance medley relay (DMR). A DMR is comprised of a 1200 meter, 400 meter, 800 meter, and 1600 meter leg. The DMR placed 14th, and the women's DMR placed fourth with the team members of Rebekah White, Savannah Doviak, Nikki Garns, and Joanna Friesen. Rebekah White described the

relay as "the highlight of my weekend. The opportunity to compete with such great athletes was amazing. I am so proud of how we did, and even happier I can share that with three of my teammates."

On Saturday, the highlight of the day was Andrea Melhorn in the weight throw, placing fourth with a throw of 15.11 meters. Jordan Cady also placed tenth in the triple jump with 12.59 meters. Nikki Garns placed 13th in the 400 meter dash, and the women's and men's 4 by 400 meter relay teams ran as well, placing 11th and 14th.

Savannah Doviak commented on the meet in general, "Whether they were running, throwing, or on a relay, everyone performed the best they could. I wouldn't have wanted to end my last indoor season any differently."

Although Cedarville



COURTESY OF JOANNA FRIESEN

The indoor track and field team travelled to Cedarville, Ohio to compete in the NCCAA indoor track nationals.

didn't offer much of a change in pace from "Houghton weather" the gracious hosts did give a pint of ice cream to every athlete at the closing ceremony. The team traveled late into the night back to Houghton, and dispersed to

relax and train over February break. This week marks the beginning of a new season of competition and training, culminating in the NCCAA outdoor nationals hosted by Shorter University in Rome, Georgia.★

HONORS from page 1

Israel... to the primitive Christian movement." Case will be the primary instructor from the primitive Christian movement until the present. However, Case stated, there will hopefully be "a lot of interaction in the classroom" between the two professors.

Scholastica has been designed to be a "very intense program," Case said. Current students interested in applying to join the program should be interested in taking "the opportunity to go deep, and to go through this together" with a group of other students interested in

the same topics.

The idea for the program was the realization that transfer students are an increasing proportion of students entering Houghton. Lipscomb, saw a need for a program targeting these students as well as second year students who "maintained a 3.5 [GPA] or above their first semester at Houghton; people who came and showed that they can do really excellently".

The application and selection process will be as rigorous as the rest of the class. Recruitment for the

program has already begun. For this introductory year, students waitlisted from last year's honors program will be given the opportunity to join the program. According to Cindy Austin, Admission Counselor in charge of transfer students, they hope to interview about 50 students, and hope to have "the first cohort be 20-25 students".

One of the major sources for students in Scholastica is expected to be community colleges, like Monroe Community College (MCC), that already have a strong

relationship with Houghton College's Admission Office. MCC in particular has a "really thriving honors program for their students," who hopefully will be interested in continuing that challenging academic curriculum at Houghton.

Scholastica is expected to be a program that will allow transfer students entering Houghton as well as high-achieving current students to have a "rigorous and communal experience" that will make their Houghton career "as good as it can be," Lipscomb said.★

Sudoku of the Week

	1		9					
					6			3
	3			7		6	4	
						7	9	
	8	9		3				4
		1	6	8				
	6	8		9	2			
3	9				7		8	
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Glamour and Humility Reign At the Oscars

Acceptance speeches highlight political issues amidst the sparkle of Hollywood

SALLY MURPHY

Every year as the cold of winter settles into my creaking bones and no sign of sun rises on the horizon there is one night that manages to lift my spirits and give me a reason to cheer, argue, wonder about and remind me why I fell in love with film in the first place- The Oscars.

Yes- I understand the Academy is corrupt, I understand that what is decided that night is not the most objective determination of what the best things happening in the industry are, and I understand you have to take it with a grain of salt- but when you see the glamour, the discussion, the bright lights and big performances- you can't help but be swept away in it all.

This year Oscars were hosted by none other than Neil Patrick Harris. Harris kept this year's style light and quippy with a few pointed jabs here and there that ultimately won over audiences both at the event and at home. However the witty host also made the first challenging comment of the night saying in his opening speech, "Tonight we honor today's best and whitest- I mean brightest." The joke opened what was to be a theme that night- using the Academy Awards as an opportunity to question the status quo.

Historically the awards have been just that- a night set aside to rain accolades and pat backs. The winners would give quick thank-you speeches and the night was, although glamorous, quite brief. Over the years there have been exceptions- speeches that surprised us or moved us. Who could forget Halle Berry's acceptance speech when she was



Director Alejandro González Iñárritu, surrounded by his cast and crew, accepts the Oscar for Best Picture for his film "Birdman".

the first black woman to win an Oscar for Best Actress? But in recent years the Oscars have become increasingly more political, more profound and more thought-provoking. Speeches have begun to stand for something and this year is the best example to date.

This year we saw two exceptionally well-deserved Oscars go to performances portraying lives wrought with severe illness- Julianne Moore playing a professor fading from early onset Alzheimer's (*Still Alice*- heartbreaking, beautiful, powerful) and Eddie Redmayne as none other than Stephen Hawking as he deteriorates from ALS (*The Theory of Everything*- classic, methodical, elegant). Both winners dedicated their awards to those suffering with the illnesses and Moore spoke eloquently on the red carpet speaking to the misconceptions of Alzheimer's in general.

But Moore was not the only woman to give an interesting interview on the red carpet. Much attention was given to the launch

of the campaign "AskHerMore" which encouraged interviewers to ask the actresses on the red carpet more than just about her outfit. Fittingly this was followed later in the night by Best Supporting Actress Patricia Arquette's acceptance speech in which she called for equal pay and treatment of women in the workplace. The speech, though somewhat controversial, caused an outcry of support- even bringing the one and only Meryl Streep to her feet in excitement.

Arquette won her award for the innovative film *Boyhood* by Richard Linklater which follows the lives of a single mother and her two children for twelve years, the same amount of time he used to film it. As the viewer watches the film unfold he or she are also watching the actors grow along with it. The film is new and interesting and beautifully made. It also ultimately calls into question issues of abuse and women's rights and is therefore so fitting to be a voice for Arquette's call to arms.

Not-so-subtle Arquette was

followed by a similarly longstanding issue of social justice which still needs some work- the civil rights movement. The film *Selma*, though not a front-runner, is a beautiful look at Dr. Martin Luther King's march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. This year the film took home the award from best original song which left barely a dry eye in the house. Upon accepting their speech writers John Legend and Common used the opportunity to discuss current discrimination in the US saying, "We know that the Voting Rights Act that they fought for 50 years ago is being compromised right now in this country today. We know that right now, the struggle for freedom and justice is real. We live in the most incarcerated country in the world. There are more black men under correctional control today than were under slavery in 1850. We are with you, we see you, we love you and march on."

And lastly, this year's best picture and best director awards

were given to the incredible film, *Birdman* and even it was sure to make sure it made a political point. *Birdman* is a dark comedy which follows the dying career of an ex-superhero film star. We see him struggling to hold himself together with a last-ditch effort at re-boosting his career through a self-directed Broadway play. The film is surreal and beautiful and shot as one continuous tracking shot almost to the very end. Michael Keaton, Emma Stone, and the whole cast deliver performances that are edgy, surprising, and heart-wrenching. Director Alejandro González Iñárritu makes each scene singular with innovative crossing narratives and beautiful ways of playing with time. The film is truly a masterpiece and the director a treasure. As he moved to accept his second Oscar of the night he closed with a brief silence, a look of humility and said he dedicated his award to "My fellow Mexicans. The ones who live in Mexico, I pray that we can find and build a government that we deserve and for the ones who live in America I hope you are treated with the same dignity and respect as those who came before them and helped build this country."

It seems fitting that such a night full of glamour and opulence should end on such a note of humility. Film has always been about other worlds- other ways of seeing. But it is refreshing to see it challenged as art should be. For that reason this year's Oscars should be one to be remembered- not only for the fine films and deserved awards, for Lady Gaga's awesome performance and John Travolta's second hilarious bumble- but also for the ideas that were challenged and hope that films and those making them can aid in changing our world for the better. ★

DEFENSE from page 1

5th Dan Tatsu Do, Pam Duttweiler, a 1st degree black belt, Thom Thompson, a 4th degree black belt, and Peter Torraca, also a 1st degree black belt, lead a group of Houghton students and community members with varying levels of experience.

The classes are typically divided into three, half-hour sections. During the first half hour, the group warms up with exercises focusing on muscle tone, cardio, and stretching. Participants who are mainly interested in a good workout are welcome to stay just for this section. For the second half hour, class members practice simple blocks, kicks, and punches, which Duttweiler described as the quintes-

sential Karate Kid "wax on, wax off" techniques. The last half hour is dedicated to self-defense, when instructors show their students practical uses for the techniques they have learned in class.

"We follow a lot of the Japanese culture, and a lot of their protocol, but at the same time we focus on modern-day self-defense," Duttweiler said. "We learn to defend against a knife, a chain, a gun. We learn common sense ways of dealing with dangerous situations."

Duttweiler also emphasized that no experience is necessary in order to participate in the class.

"We have some people attending that have martial arts experience," she said, "but we also have a lot of people coming who have never done anything like this before in their

lives, and they're definitely welcome."

She also noted that there is no commitment required for students to attend every class; rather, they are welcome to drop in when they can. Participants are asked to wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing, although shoes are not required. In fact, most students go barefoot. Instructors do request that students remove any jewelry, since even an earring could accidentally hurt another participant. According to Mosiman, "the most important thing [students can bring], really, is a positive attitude. Everyone is a beginner, so there isn't a person there who can look down on another."

Students and community members alike have found the classes rewarding; not only through learning how to de-

fend themselves, but also for a workout in a supportive setting. College student Marissa Hollinger recommends the class because it is fun and is offered in a relaxed environment. She adds that it serves as "...a great break from homework and studying." Bretta Hixson, adjunct instructor of Biology, agreed that the environment is relaxed, noting that the class is also a marvellous stress reliever. The athletic component, she said, has helped improve her physical health. "I like that I'm getting stronger and more flexible, and I am very happy to see positive trends in my endurance and coordination," she said. She credits her progress to the friendly and supportive help she receives from her instructors.

"They are very patient and not stingy with individual-

ized instruction," she said. "They'll help you drill a technique or combination until it becomes second nature, and then move you on to the next thing. You won't be a black belt overnight, but you may be surprised by how fast you learn."

Mosiman believes that practicing martial arts and self-defense is a valuable skill for members of the Houghton community, whether or not they're predisposed to athleticism.

"Softball and baseball careers will generally end after college," he said. "This is something [students] can take, practice, and use for the rest of their lives. For the combined years of experience of myself and my colleagues, you can't really beat the price." ★

From Houghton to the Bahamas

Philosophy professor takes a leave of absence to head up a distinguished grant organization in his field

HOLLY CHAISSON

Houghton's philosophy department is rather small in proportion to some other departments, a fact which is not unusual considering the Houghton's size. However, the philosophy department is currently missing one of its key members: Professor Christopher Stewart. Stewart has been in Nassau, Bahamas on a leave of absence from Houghton since Fall 2013 in order to work for the Templeton Religion Trust as its Vice President of Grant Programs.

The Templeton Religion Trust, located in Nassau, Bahamas, is one of three organizations founded by Sir John Templeton. In addition to the Trust, there is the Templeton World Charity Foundation, also located in the Caribbean, and the John Templeton Foundation, based in Philadelphia, PA. According to Stewart, the three have identical missions, but separate funding, a strategy used by Templeton who believed that this "three-way approach would strengthen [the three foundation's] ability to realize his vision over the long-run." The mission of the John Templeton Foundation found of their website stated that it "serves as a philanthropic catalyst for discoveries relating to the Big Questions of human purpose and ultimate reality."

Stewart's opportunity to work with this noteworthy organization grew out of his previous conversations with the John Templeton Foundation, and was eventually offered a job to assist with

establishing the grantmaking platform for the Templeton Religion Trust. At the time, the trust had just recently been setting up infrastructure and an office following the release of its endowment from the Templeton's estate following his death in 2008. The decision to take this opportunity "was and remains complicated," according to Stewart, who has ties to Houghton that span over two decades. However, on a professional level, Stewart described the opportunity as a way to "continue [his] engagement with issues and topics that [he has] been involved with for a long time, but in a new way." Moreover, this was a chance "to help build up an organization with a compelling mission," Stewart resonated with, and to do so with the benefit of "significant resources to help make things happen all over the world."

The biggest part of Stewart's job as the grantmaker is to scout out projects to fund. Developing relationships by attending conferences, "visiting campuses, and tapping your existing networks," are ways outreach happens, according to Stewart. Unlike the John Templeton Foundation, the Trust does not have an open admissions process, instead it is Stewart's task to extend invitations by "developing near-term strategies and program themes consistent with [the Trust's] broader long-term mandates and serve as the gatekeeper for formal inquiries and proposals."

The Templeton Religion Trust funds a wide array of projects with 70% of the an-

nual payout going toward projects pertaining to what Templeton called "Humility-in-Theology" which Stewart described as meaning three things: (1) the nature of divine or ultimate reality, (2) the nature of persons and personal flourishing, and (3) fundamental structures which include not only the fundamental physical structures of the world like infinity, space and time, and quantum reality, but also "prayer, purpose, altruism, creativity, and thanksgiving, which [Templeton] sometimes refers to as 'spiritual realities.'" In essence, Templeton's wish was to "encourage humility about how little we know about such realities," and to increase the level of "openness to and enthusiasm for blending the resources of theology, philosophy, and the sciences in that pursuit."

The remaining 30% of the payout is given to a collection of other interests, with the primary two targets being "Individual Freedom and Free Markets" and "Character Virtue Development." Respectively, the two studies are aimed toward "research and advocacy to enhance individual liberty and advance free markets," and "programs that develop character strengths in people," said Stewart.

The mix of projects Stewart has been involved with thus far is interesting to say the least, "all with lots of potential to impact our understanding of life, the universe, and everything, as they say on *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*," said Stewart. Included among his projects is a project on religious freedom called



COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER STEWART

Professor Christopher Stewart is taking a leave of absence from Houghton to work with the Templeton Religion Trust, which is based in the Bahamas.

"Under Caesar's Sword," which is lead by a scholar at Notre Dame and a leader of the Religious Freedom Project at Georgetown. "This is a three-year, \$1.1 million project that will support around a dozen field studies all over the world looking at the ways particular religious communities are responding to the efforts of other groups or even governments to restrict their religious expression or activities, why they adopt these strategies, and how effective they are." Another project Stewart has worked on is "The World Well-Being Project" based at the University of Pennsylvania and overseen by Martin Seligman. According to Stewart, "this three-year, \$3.8 million project is developing tools to measure well-being of communities as small as a classroom or as large as a nation-state using "big data" mined from sources like Twitter and Facebook. This is a field development project that will provide social scientists with powerful new tools to measure well-being and, hopefully, help find ways to improve the quality of people's lives."

On the science side of things, Stewart has worked on such projects as that run by a mathematician at Harvard is called "Concerning the Mathematical Nature of the Universe," "which is exploring whether or not the universe

admits of a consistent description, or more generally, whether our universe be described by mathematics?" As well as a \$1.6 million grant to BioLogos for them to develop their website, a major way they seek to achieve their mission of inviting "the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith."

Fellow philosophy professor Carlton Fisher expressed that the philosophy department has suffered a loss with Stewart's absence, "We miss him as a friend, a colleague, and we miss the contribution that he made, both in the philosophy classroom and in the leadership roles that he was performing." Nonetheless, the department as a whole has a "sense of pride" regarding Stewart's significant and impressive role with the Trust. According to Fisher, "it is a pretty big deal that a Houghton College faculty member has taken on this particular role."

Although his leave was extended through the 2015-16 academic year, Stewart is still unsure of whether he will continue on full-time with the Trust or return full-time to academe, a transition that could very well bring him back to Houghton. ★



The gorgeous view from Stewart's office in Nassau, Bahamas.

COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER STEWART

Meta-Opinions from the Fishbowl



ANTHONY BURDO

CARLTON FISHER

Everyone has opinions. I've got a lot. Sometimes, being generous, I like to share mine. Sharing apples leaves one with fewer apples; sharing opinions is cost-free. Come by; I'll share.

It's nice when you and I have the same opinion. I don't have to explain myself. Indeed, I don't have to think at all. We can be at ease, even if wrong!

But sometimes your opinion differs from mine. This can cause difficulties. Not always; some things just don't matter. And when both of us agree that it doesn't matter, we are good.

Let's go to lunch.

We sometimes disagree about things that do matter. Or I think they do. Sometimes I choose to keep my opinion to myself (It's true!). Disagreements about things that matter can fray relationships. And sometimes the relationship matters more than the differing opinions do. Let's just not talk about it, ok? We'll go to lunch, but talk about something else.

There are times when I want to know what your opinion is. I'll ask. Maybe just hearing your opinion is enough. You said so and you should know.

But sometimes I need more. I need to know more, to understand more fully. I need to understand why you hold that opinion, what reasons there might be for thinking that what you believe to be the case actually is the case. Maybe I have no opinion myself. Maybe I have a contrary opinion. Maybe I even share yours. Nonetheless, I'm seeking reasons. What do you have to say

in favor of your opinion? And if all you can say in favor of your opinion is that it is yours, put it in your autobiography. In the chapter on trivia.

Giving reasons can be hard, sometimes nearly impossible. But when I ask, please don't do a power play with me. "Because I said so" is the redoubt of last resort for the insecure (and the route to sanity for parents of toddlers). If that's all you've got, I'll seek wisdom elsewhere.

I do have a point. There is an ethic of opinion giving—and opinion seeking—grounded in the basic ethical concept of respect.

But first consider three types of relationships, varying in authority and responsibility. There are relationships of equality, those between friends, teammates, spouses or colleagues. There are relationships of significant difference, those between parent and child, coach and team member, professor and student, doctor and patient, plumber and

client, or Creator and creature. And there are relationships of contingent difference in which the difference in authority is not grounded in inherent differences between the parties. Consider an R.A. and a student resident. Yes, one has responsibilities the other lacks. And with those come a certain kind of authority. Yet the two roles could easily be reversed. The same holds between committee members and committee chairs, department chairs and department members, team captains and team members, and, often, between employment managers and their subordinates. Even between presidents and senators.

Those on this third list each involve shared tasks, and shared tasks require structure, including some division of labor. Leadership is one—only one—necessary role. Countries, committees, and colleges all require leaders. But these are only roles, contingently held.

You're the R.A. because

you were selected from among other qualified applicants. You happen to be the department chair, but not because you are smarter or know more than your colleagues. You were chosen to be captain because you are liked and respected, but other team members could do the job just as well.

Now, my two ethical points about opinions:

First, opinions about things that matter should come with reasons. Not always. Less often in relations of essential difference. Usually in relations of equality. And they are very important, but too frequently avoided, in relations of contingent difference. Give an opinion, often in the form of a chosen course of action, from a position of contingent authority? Be prepared to give reasons. Respect for others involved in the shared task requires it.

And second, those who contingently occupy positions of heightened responsibility should seek the opinions—and accompanying reasons—of others who share the task. Respect—and good decision making—requires it. ★

Carlton is a Professor of Philosophy.

There is an ethic of opinion giving—and opinion seeking—grounded in the basic ethical concept of respect.

Inequality Blues in the Ivory Tower



ANTHONY BURDO

HOLLY CHAISSON

The original impetus to write this article stemmed from a frustrating discussion on Marx and the plight of the proletariat in one of my philosophy courses, however things took off after I saw one of VOCA's inserts on a table in the cafeteria. In advertising their resumé workshops, VOCA juxtaposed the outcomes of both a good and bad resumé. On the top half of one of the ads, VOCA slapped the bolded phrase "GOOD RESUME" over a white male dressed in business casual, sitting with his laptop in a high-rise office building; an image that screams moderate-to-high paying corporate job. The bottom half featured the phrase "NOT SO GOOD RESUME" superimposed

over a grocery store worker pushing carts in from the snowy parking lot, dressed plainly in khakis, work boots, and a fluorescent vest; the typical effigy of the working class.

VOCA's message to Houghton students is anything but subtle: get your resumé together or else you will end up like the poor sap working the dead-end job pushing carts, instead of sitting on a leather couch in a suit and tie. This is perhaps the most explicit shaming of the blue-collar worker and blue-collar jobs in general that I have seen thus far at Houghton. Last year's "Theology +" advertisements to "find your calling" hinted at a similar message: a "calling" or a vocation is more than "just a job," which is what I would guess most people here on campus would characterize blue-collar work as. This glorification of vocation over a simple job imposes an unavoidable value-judgment on those with a vocation versus those with "just a job."

Whether it is intentional or not, this trend of shaming blue-collar workers and devaluing their jobs is disturbing.

Whether it is intentional or not, this trend of shaming blue-collar workers and devaluing their jobs is disturbing. I am well aware that those of us attending a private liberal arts college intend to find jobs in a more white-collar environment, and I want to clarify that I'm not attacking anyone's desire or preference to do so. Regardless of the fact that Houghton plays a crucial role for those of us seeking these types of jobs, it does not give the institution or its members the right to devalue jobs. After all, there are plenty of blue-collar workers here at Houghton. How offensive is it for VOCA to put out these public advertisements that devalue their jobs, their livelihood, and their vocations?

It should be no surprise to anyone here that people have an overwhelming tendency to equate a person with their job.

Let me elaborate. People in suits, men and women who have their names on office doors

and degrees hanging on their walls, are accorded respect and a sense of status by the vast majority. People who work at McDonald's or wear fluorescent vests at work are rarely given the same level of respect, let alone thought of as having power or status in society. Thus, we equate the value of the work with the value of the person: those doing work that is valued higher socially (white-collar) are personally accorded more value and respect, while those working lesser valued jobs are, more often than not, seen as lesser in status, and thus given less respect and subsequently value. This value-driven attitude, however subconsciously it may arise, is reinforced practically everywhere--including Houghton--and inevitably, it creates a culture of white-collar superiority, so to speak.

In emphasizing the importance of a vocation--and of a good resumé to get there--the message that comes across emphasizes this attitude of inequality. It tells students: Do this or you'll regret it. What I am proposing as the alternative is not some "how-to" on "grinning and bearing it" through some sort of blue-collar purgatory, rather a change in perspective on the value of "just a job". Perhaps it is as simple as this: the value often awarded to white-collar jobs is based on some

cost-benefit analysis related to various factors, happiness being a popular one.

For some, money buys happiness, for others respect, power, and status do, ergo we flock to white-collar jobs. However, a recent survey done in 2012 by City & Guilds on "Career Happiness Index" shows that those with more blue-collar jobs (e.g. florists, hairdressers, and plumbers) have the highest happiness indexes that range from 76%-87%, while white-collar jobs follow closely with the highest index ratings ranging from 69%-75%. Interestingly enough, bankers and IT workers wind up in dead last, with happiness index ratings ranging from 44%-48%. I bring up this study to demonstrate that, at least in terms of happiness, working a blue-collar job is not a death sentence; there is value to be had.

What I'm recommending is not that everyone work a blue-collar job, or that white-collar workers are inherently crummy people; I'm asking primarily for there to be a shift in attitude on this issue towards equality. Whether you end up as a doctor researching a cure for cancer, a successful lawyer, an electrician, or a retail employee, you--and your job--deserve an equal amount of respect and value. ★

Holly is a Philosophy major.

From the Editors' Desk

As outlined in our mission statement, the Houghton STAR is committed to the value of transparency and dialogue. Certain issues and discussions are, of course, more controversial than others. Recently, there has been some disapproval and caution directed towards published pieces, specifically Letters to the Editor. Though we may not necessarily agree with all opinions expressed, we do support free speech and encourage readers to respectfully share viewpoints in a safe and open environment, thereby furthering our commitment to campus dialogue. However, we encourage letter writers to take responsibility for their words and opinions. If you disagree with something, please let us know; Letters to the Editor and online conversations provides an accessible opportunity for dialogue among peers and community. The STAR is grateful to those who have contributed thus far and we highly appreciate reader involvement. ★

Thank you,
The Houghton STAR Editorial Staff



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

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,
You may have noticed the posters which have recently been put up around campus advertising for the VOCA office. Two pictures on each poster show the contrast between two employment situations, and the captions read: "Good résumé, bad résumé." The "good résumé"

photo shows a well-dressed, smiling white-collar worker, while the "bad résumé" photo is of an obviously dissatisfied laborer performing a menial task.

While this is a clever and eye-catching way to advertise for the VOCA office and its services, I believe that the message it sends is far from

the intentions a Christian is supposed to have in regards to employment. The message conveyed by the posters is this: if you develop a good résumé, you will then be able to secure a successful job, whereas if your résumé stinks, you'll be stuck serving fast food at McDonalds.

To suggest that there

is something wrong with doing work which comes with a high salary is certainly not my intention. However, there is also nothing wrong with spending a lifetime joyfully being a witness for Christ at a McDonalds cash register. I applaud the VOCA office's mission of connecting students with "opportunities to serve" and preparing

them to "participate in the work [God] is doing on earth." That being said, perhaps we should consider the way that Jesus would serve people fast food: probably with a smile.

Ellenore Tarr
Class '18

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www.houghtonstar.com
from the Pre-Break
Online Exclusive



Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less

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ANTHONY BURDO

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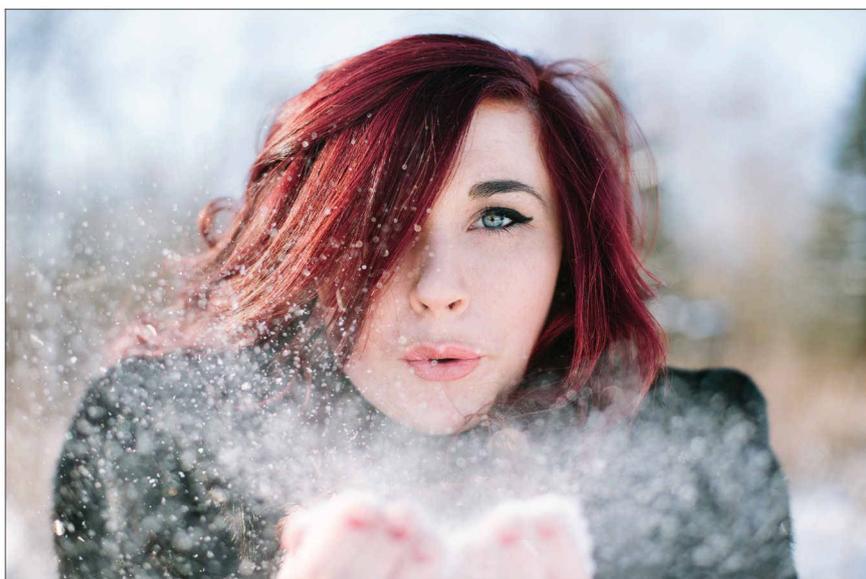
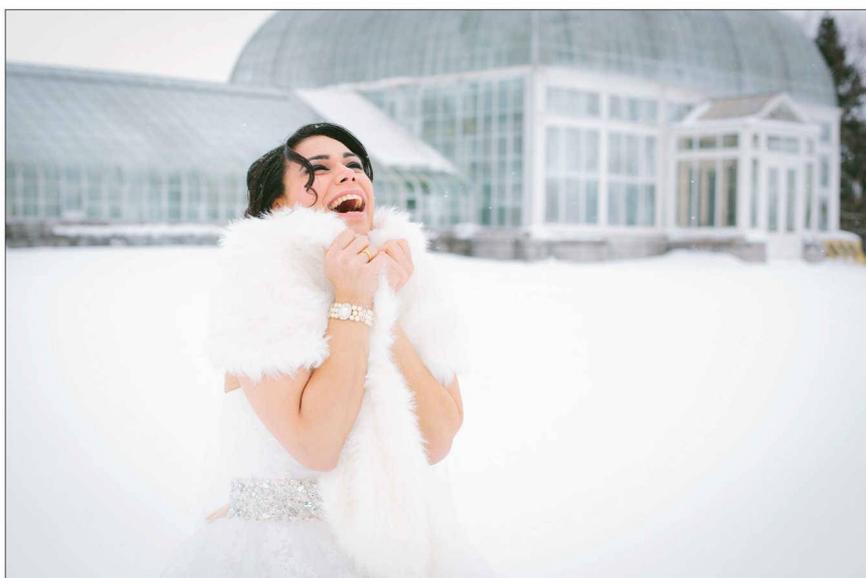
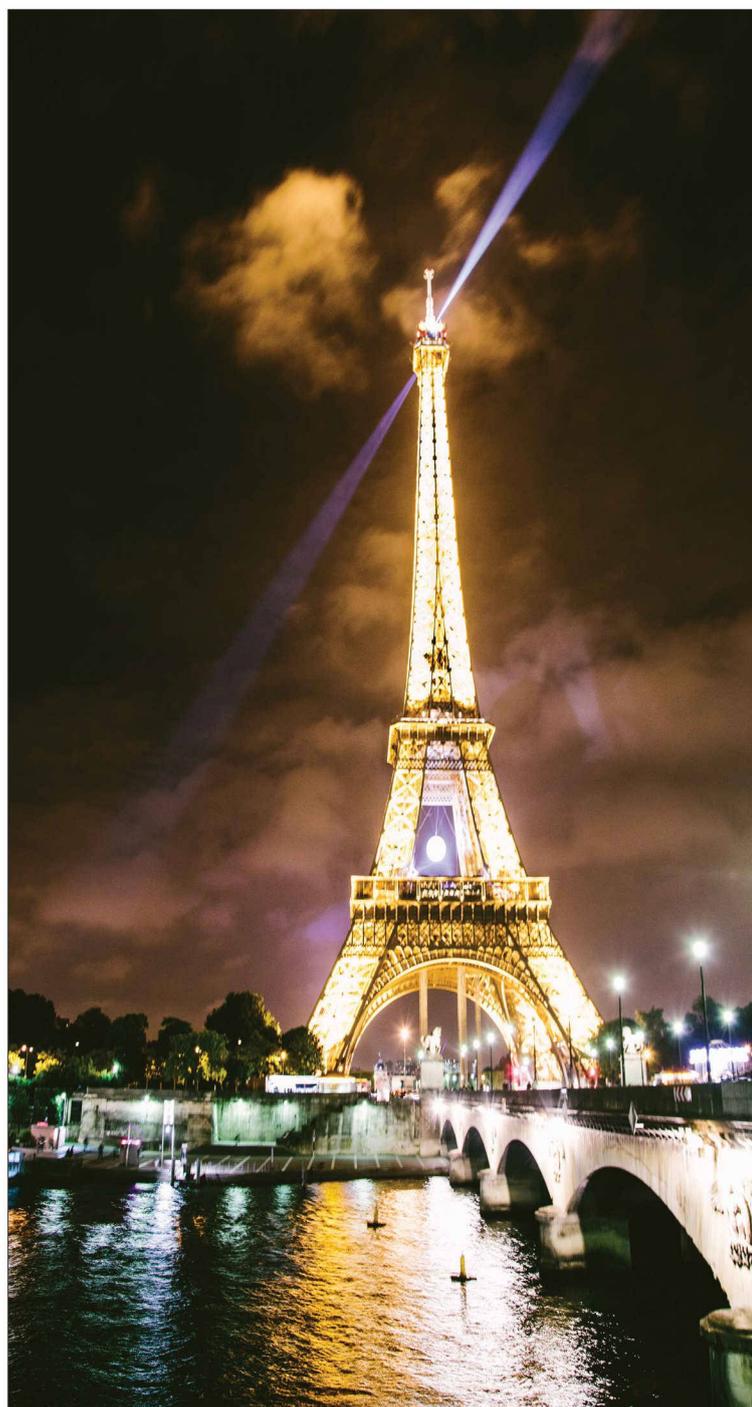
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“ Beauty can be seen in all things, seeing and composing the beauty is what separates the snapshot from the photograph. ” -Matt Hardy