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## Students Celebrate Make A Difference Day



COURTESY OF PHYLLIS GAERTE

About seventy students, including JET and the Houghton baseball team participated in Make A Difference Day 2016

ALYSSA ROGAN

Houghton College, Alfred State College, and Alfred University served the residents of Allegany County by participating in the fifth annual

Make a Difference Day (MADD).

On the nationwide day of service, which happened on October 22, students and faculty from all three schools came together and assisted those in the community with

tasks such as making goodie bags, organizing donations, visiting nursing homes, and cleaning.

Among the three schools, Houghton College as has historically had the highest turn-out rate, according

to statistics on the Houghton College website. Of the two thousand students that have participated in MADD over the last four years, one thousand of them have been Houghton students. This year, about seventy Houghton students signed up. While some sign up as individuals, other groups, such as the Houghton baseball team and the Jet Group signed up collectively.

Melissa Maclean '17, Student Government Association's (SGA) Executive Officer of Spiritual Life, sees the day "as an opportunity for Houghton to employ what we stand for and give back to the community." Maclean, along with SGA cabinet member Sergio Mata, '19, were responsible for coordinating with Phyllis Gaerte in encouraging students to sign up, delegating tasks, and organizing finances.

While the SGA is concerned with serving locals, they also place an emphasis creating connections with people and businesses in Al-

See **MADD** page 3

## College Expands To Utica

JORDAN TRAUTWEIN

Houghton College will expand to Utica, New York, beginning next year. Dean Connell believes the new program, which he says will mirror the off campus program already established in Buffalo, will allow Houghton to reach the heavy immigrant population in Utica. The program is expected to begin in the fall of 2017.

Students of the Utica program will have the opportunity to graduate with an Associates of the Arts degree under the leadership of Mark Caruana as Dean of Houghton College Utica. Dean of the college, Jack Connell, is confident the program will distinguish itself "through the curriculum that is high quality and profoundly

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## Olympic Athlete To Host Clinic

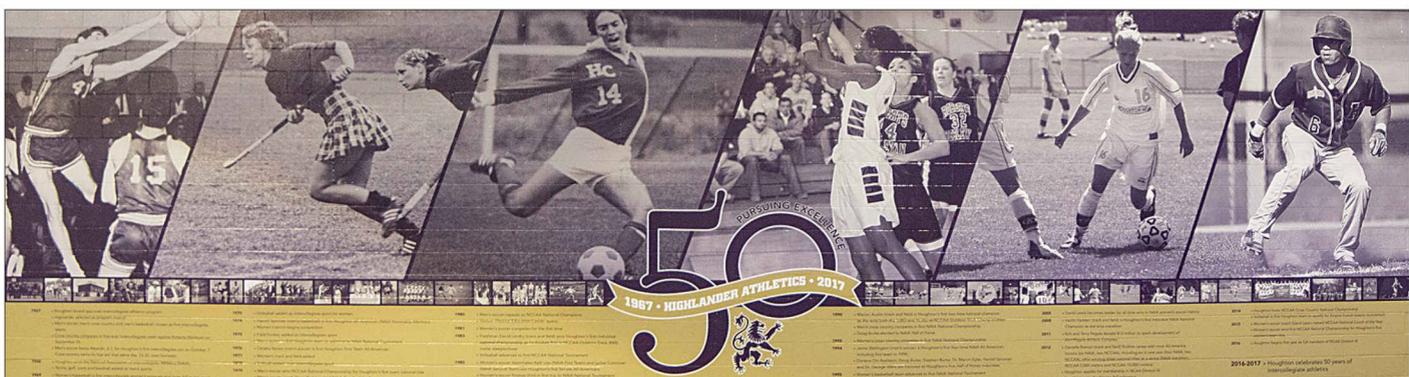
MICAH CRONIN

Elite basketball player and four-time Olympic gold medalist Tamika Catchings will be leading a basketball clinic this Saturday in the Kerr-Pegula Field House (KPFH). According to a Houghton College press release, Catchings will also speak at a luncheon following the clinic.

The clinic is open to girls ages 8-18. According to Head Women's Basketball Coach Alicia Mucher, the women's basketball team will participate in the clinic. "They will help lead drills, work through skills with different college coaches, high school coaches and Tami-

See **CLINIC** page 2

## Commemorative Mural Unveiled in Kerr-Pegula Field House



NATE MOORE

The mural, displayed near the indoor track, features definitive events in Houghton College's fifty-year intercollegiate athletic history.

NAOMI PRENTICE

The Kerr-Pegula Field House now features a new mural which was unveiled during Purple and Gold week. The mural is commemorative of the first 50 years of Houghton College intercollegiate athletics, a focal point of this year's Homecoming festivities. According to Jason Mucher, Associate Athletic Director for Commu-

nication & Compliance, the project began in the spring of 2016 when Karl Sisson, Vice President for Advancement, brought up the idea of a mural.

Throughout the summer, Mucher worked on creating a list of memorable events in Houghton athletics history beginning in 1967, and with the help of alumni, 100 moments were collected. From there, the list was trimmed

to 50 moments to match the 50 year timeline of intercollegiate athletics. After narrowing down those events and inspiration from another institution's postcard design, Mucher moved his focus to the college archives in the library and the files in the athletics office. Mucher searched for images to fit these events and eventually chose photos to go on the mural.

After accumulating all the images and ideas for a design, Amy Tetta, Social Media Coordinator and Graphic Designer for the college, went to work on sorting through the photos Mucher had sent. Tetta said she "wanted to capture the energy and action she was looking for in the

See **MURAL** page 2



**PROGRAMS** *from page 1*

our mission in a way that's beautifully consistent with our historic desire to educate students from a variety of backgrounds, including those whose resource limitations create barriers to enrolling."

The college has also updated its online education offerings, now promoting three full degree programs entirely online. Potential students can now obtain degrees in psychology, business, and communication studies through the online education program. Paul Young, chair of the psychology department, recognizes the needs of individuals who choose to study online. He stated, "Not everybody can take the time out of their life to go to college. Not

everybody can afford to go to a residential college." Still, people who cannot go away for college still show interest in a Christian education according to Marlene Collins-Blair, Associate Dean of Distance Education. She remarked, "Because most of our students are working adults, I have often wondered 'Do they really care that it's Christian?' And they actually do." She recalled a specific case in which an online student spoke on how "the way that Houghton has allowed her to see the same things that she's been taught at work has been huge for her".

Young explains that since students from the online program will not benefit from

most on-campus opportunities and because Houghton needs to be competitive with other, similar offers of an online education, the tuition rates for the online programs will be significantly lower. However, Young pointed out "They're not using classroom space. They're not using recreational facilities. They don't get to play Frisbee on the quad. You know, all the things that increase expense to make the on campus experience the Houghton College experience."

However, the faculty designing the online programs were intentional about bringing the spirit of Houghton into the online programs. Young explained the psychol-

ogy program makes frequent use of online forums and video chats to maintain interactions between students, even as they are in their separate homes. The class sizes will also be kept small, never going over twenty students, and will require discussion through online forums. Young remarked "I suspect there are classes at Houghton where at the end of the class you don't even know everybody's name and that's not likely to happen in these."

Additionally, Collins-Blair spoke on how the new online programs will continue the reputation of Houghton education, stating "It's still high touch, it's still high quality." ★

Christian, the faith commitment of the faculty and staff, the nurturing Christian community that is formed around the students, and by the spiritual formation opportunities (such as chapel) that will be provided." Connell said the school as a whole "benefits because we are extending

# WORD ON THE STREET



"I haven't been here for very long, and there hasn't been any serious racial issues- but one cool thing I've seen already is that there have been really cool discussions, like the one on Black Lives Matter. It's pretty cool that the Dean of the Chapel and the President of the college were at the discussion. That was pretty lit."

**-Kaleb Waterman '20**

"I think there's been active dialogue, and there's also been bumps in the road. It depends on what time you look at, what departments and individuals you look at to know whether it's been going well or poorly."

**-Dan Bellerose '17**



"Just personally, I haven't felt any racism directed towards me. But I know some people feel Houghton isn't culturally sensitive, especially toward worship styles and communication styles."

**-Naomi Canaviri '18**

## How well does Houghton College handle racial tension?

"I think that we definitely have room to grow in these types of dialogues. I really believe that it is important to engage all voices in these conversations, since ultimately we are trying to figure out how to love and care for one another."

**-Kayla Brophy '17**



"There have been quite a few instances in which racist comments have been made towards me, but they are often unintentional and without malicious intent and I feel like generally, people are willing to listen and hear out other points of view."

**-Lily Brunner '17**

"I think the administration is trying to listen and incorporate students of color in discussion on racial issues, perhaps not quickly enough, but their hiring and recruiting policies do have language that reflects a desire for change. I would rather have you ask a student of color than my suburbanite self though."

**-Cayleigh Pracht '17**



"Houghton tries really hard to make sure there's no tension. I guess Houghton doesn't blend as well as it could. They try really hard, but it doesn't always work well."

**-Eliza Burdick-Risser '18**

"The other races are from larger cities, mostly, so the cultural aspect is super different. I don't think people purposely don't recognize racial issues, they just don't notice these issues because they weren't raised to notice them."

**-Shawniece Turmage '19**



**MADD** *from page 1*

humble ourselves and serve you,' way." Mata agreed, "I think Make a Difference Day is another way Houghton reaches out to the county. Small businesses are really appreciative of us coming out and getting done the tasks they need."

Laura Cunningham, resident director of Gillette Hall and assistant director of service opportunities, also had a significant role in coordinating the day. While Cunningham has participated in

MADD personally, her role these past couple years have been more logistical, including working with SGA, putting people into service crews, taking pictures, and generally managing.

However, Cunningham has confronted "unique challenges" in organizing and promoting MADD amidst the tumultuous time of the year that the day falls on. With midterms, events such as Homecoming Weekend, Purple and Gold Week, and

October break, it has proved a challenge to generate interest and enthusiasm while students may "not be thinking ahead." In previous years, MADD has been required of Transitions 101 students, affecting success and turn-out of the event.

"Overall, people find that Make a Difference Day is a positive experience," Cunningham says. "People experience having a one-time, low-commitment way of helping in the community,

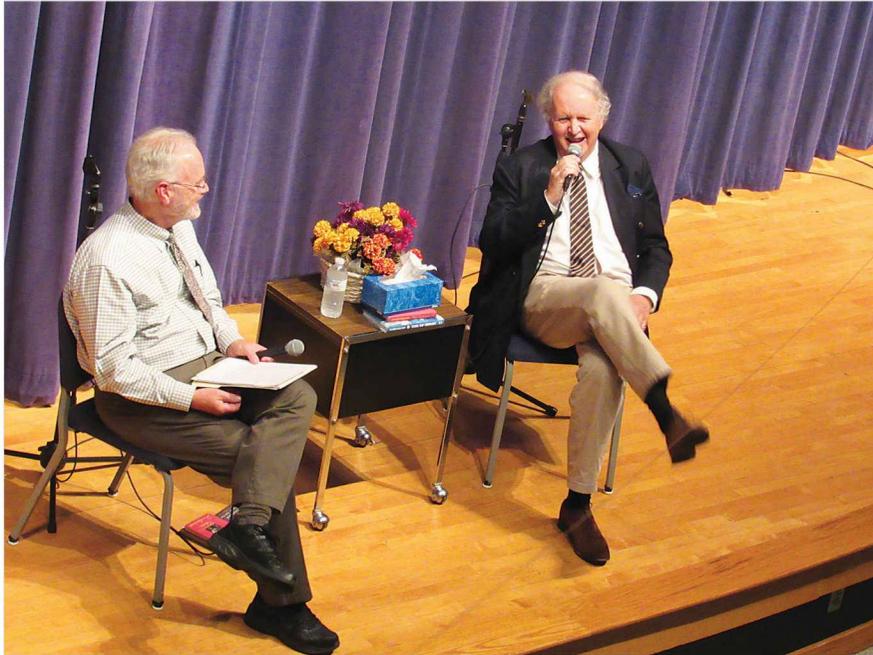
and visiting places in the community they don't normally get to go to." Despite midterm exams and projects, a few hours of service proves very valuable to both Allegany locals as well as to those who participate. With the variety of ways to serve, Cunningham cites several students who grew and learned from their MADD experience. She said she hopes students realize that serving in small ways is very helpful, impactful, and fulfilling. ★

legany county, especially those who have not heard of Houghton College. What is important, Maclean said, is "making ourselves known but not in the tyrannical, 'let us show you how great we are' way, but in a, 'let us

# Internationally Bestselling Author Visits Houghton

Houghton Hosts Alexander McCall Smith for Q & A Session and Luncheon

SOPHIA ROSS



COURTESY OF JONATHAN WEST

Professor James Zoller (left) moderated a Q & A session with bestselling author Alexander McCall Smith (right) in the CFA Recital Hall on Thursday, October 20th.

The Center for the Arts (CFA) Recital Hall was silent for a moment after James Zoller, professor of writing and literature, asked the audience if they had any questions for visiting author Alexander McCall Smith. The pause continued for a few seconds before McCall Smith chimed in, “Well, if people are concerned with asking the first question, we could always start with the second.” The audience laughed, and several questions for the internationally-known author followed.

On Thursday, October 22, Houghton College hosted McCall Smith for an hour-long Question and Answer session in the CFA, followed by a luncheon with seven English and writing students in the Lennox Dining Hall. McCall Smith is best known for his book series *The No. 1 Ladies’ Detective Agency*, which follows the adventures of the fictional Precious Ramotswe, Botswana’s only female detective. Though he is of Scottish descent and lives in the United Kingdom country now, McCall Smith was born in the country that is now Zimbabwe, and often writes about Africa. According to his official website, he has written and contributed to over 100 books, and many of his series have become worldwide bestsellers.

This visit was made possible through the same means as last year’s Q & A session with Joyce Carol Oates. Like with Oates’ visit, Nicolas Gunning ‘05, the library director for the David A. Howe Public Library Director in Wellsville, New York, approached the English and writing depart-

ment at Houghton to see if they would be willing to help pay for the author’s visit. With this arrangement, McCall Smith would speak at Houghton in addition to the Wellsville library on the same day. Last year, Linda Mills Woolsey, professor of English and former academic dean of the college, agreed to these terms, and used funds from the Dean’s office to sponsor the event. This year, those funds were not available, but the department was able to use funds from the Van Gordon Endowment, a grant that supplies money for projects in the English, writing, and communication departments. Aside from finances, many Houghton faculty and staff worked together to make the event possible, including Jane Miner, the academic departments coordinator for English, education, writing and communication, who set up a gift basket for McCall Smith and worked with Gunning to arrange the details of the visit. Mills Woolsey arranged transportation for McCall Smith, Zoller volunteered to moderate

the Q & A session, and Susan Bruxvoort Lipscomb, associate professor of English and chair for the department, hosted the student luncheon.

In the Q & A session, Zoller asked the Scottish author several questions about McCall Smith’s transition from a professor of medical law to fiction writer, how he approaches the writing process, and his experiences with the publishing industry. Jordan Trautwein ‘19, who attended both the Q & A and the luncheon, said she thought McCall Smith was especially engaged in the conversation with Zoller, and even though it occasionally felt unfocused, she liked that he mostly answered the questions through stories.

“It was very appropriate for a storyteller,” she said. “It seemed like his life is just a series of stories. He got so excited about telling us stories from his life, other people’s lives, and what he’s observed.”

The stories McCall Smith told in the Q & A included the story of his first lunch with his

New York publishers (“I thought lunch was illegal in New York since everyone is so busy”), his African upbringing (“Africa has a spiritual feel to it that has remained with me despite spending the rest of my life in Scotland”), and his driver from Philadelphia to Houghton the previous day (“He told me that he and his brother go to tattoo conventions, what an interesting thing to do”). He also discussed his influences, including poet W. H. Auden, who is the subject of McCall Smith’s 2013 nonfiction book *What W. H. Auden Can Do For You*.

“I heard him recite his work once,” McCall Smith said. “He was a shambolic figure, came in wearing carpet slippers and a grey suit. We could all see that his zip was undone, but the great man rose above that.”

After answering a few questions from students, McCall Smith joined Lipscomb, Gunning, and seven English and writing majors, including Trautwein and Emma Carpenter ‘18, for lunch in the Lennox Dining Hall.

“He seemed very warm,” said Carpenter of McCall Smith. “I really enjoyed talking with him, and even just listening to him. [The conversation] felt very natural, and his sense of humor really impressed me. I want to read his books now, because that absurdist sense of humor is something I’d like to see in my own writing.”

“It’s such a cool opportunity,” added Trautwein, when asked why she attended both sessions. “This is why I came to Houghton, because I could do things like this.”

Lipscomb, who attended the lunch with the students, affirmed the benefit for students, especially in the English and writing department, to attend events like this.

“Specifically for English and writing students, it’s a good chance to ask questions about the world of publishing, how they do their writerly craft, how to make time for that, and how they got started in writing,” said Lipscomb. “Our students are just starting out, and it’s good for them to be able to see what the end point looks like and what the steps are to getting there. In terms of the campus community, people who are fans get to see the person who created this thing that they love.”

Adding Allegany County to McCall Smith’s North American tour was no easy feat, but the collaboration between Houghton College and the Wellsville Library allowed for a once in a lifetime experience for many Houghton residents and students. In the future, the college and the Wellsville library would like to offer another such experience.

In the meantime, students and professors will have plenty to discuss after McCall Smith’s visit as they continue to follow in this particular great man’s footsteps and tell stories of their own.★



Photo  
of the  
Week

Shannon Derby ‘17

# The Wizarding World Comes to Ithaca For A Magical Weekend

RACHEL BELLEROSE

Last year, businesses in Ithaca, New York banded together to create a magical, Harry Potter themed event called the “Wizarding Weekend.” Business owners reimagined their shops, cafes, and restaurants into locations straight out of J.K. Rowling’s bestselling series. According to online news website *The Ithaca Voice*, event planners initially thought they would draw a crowd of about 200. However, by the end of the weekend over 8,000 people had attended.

Planners this year are better prepared for the onslaught of Potter fans. Increasing the schedule from one day to a four day celebration, Downtown Ithaca will be transformed into a haven of wizardly goods from October 27 through October 30. Several streets will be turned into iconic streets from the Harry Potter series, including Diagon Alley, Godric’s Hollow, and Knockturn Alley. Life’s So Sweet Chocolates on West Green Street will be creating confections inspired



FACEBOOK.COM/WIZARDINGWEEKEND

Ithaca residents and visitors get in the Harry Potter spirit by dressing up in costumes, frequenting businesses with a Harry Potter theme, and attending the event’s “Festival Day,” this year on Saturday, October 29th.

by Honeydukes, Tompkins Trust Company will become the wizard bank of Gringotts, and businesses throughout the town will be embracing the Harry Potter theme.

Melissa MacLean ‘17, who attended the event last year,

that the best part of the weekend for her was “the feeling of being in an environment where everyone is geeking out at the same thing.” She described it as an atmosphere which fostered conversation and shared space between people who may other-

wise walk very different paths in life. MacLean also commented on the food trucks and the “legendary butterbeer” which she assured is “community covenant approved.” When asked if she would attend the Wizarding Weekend again, she replied that

she would, saying, “I wouldn’t want to let my Ravenclaws down!”

Although events are scheduled for each day of the Wizarding Weekend, the greatest number of activities will be available on October 29, the event’s “Festival Day.” According to the official website, some activities include a Horcrux Hunt, a “Dark Arts Coffee Crawl” through local coffee shops, several Quidditch matches, costume contests, live music, and a Tri-Wizard Ball. A number of local artisans will be selling their wares, including everything from jewelry to quills to hand-crafted wands. Additionally, acceptance letters to Hogwarts will be handed out by characters from the series.

Some events require tickets or reservations, but many are free and open to the public. As of October 25th, the “Ithaca’s Wizarding Weekend” Facebook page reports over 3,500 people will be attending and some 11,000 are interested. For any of the ticketed activities, it is recommended that tickets be purchased soon as there are a limited number available for most events. ★

## FROM HOUGHTON TO HOUGHTON: Recent Alumni Start Building Careers at Houghton

KATHRYN MOORE

Houghton College is dedicated to preparing their students for the workplace, and sometimes that workplace is the college itself. Recent graduates can apply for employment at the school after earning their degree to make an impressive addition to their resume. Zachary Palmer ‘16, Connor Vogan ‘15, and Jesse Carter ‘16 are three recent graduates who are now a part of the Houghton community in a different way, as an employee.

Vogan, a fourth generation Houghton alumni, originally came to Houghton because he was recruited for soccer. He always felt welcomed when he visited campus, and felt valued as a student. This was part of the reason he returned a year after graduating. Vogan graduated with a business degree, and decided to pursue his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) at the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Vogan worked a few different jobs,

such as a startup company run by a friend, in addition to working in a coffee shop for a year to save money to continue his academic pursuit. Shortly before leaving for Rochester to start his schooling, Vogan received a message from Kim Pool asking if he would like a job at Houghton College. Pool thought the tasks of this particular title would be perfect for Vogan. Now the Enrollment Marketing Coordinator, Vogan is doing the work he always wanted, and is currently pursuing a MBA for.. According to Vogan, working at Houghton in the mornings has been ideal. He said, “I get what I want with a brand that I love and am invested in.” He feels poured into, spiritually, as an employee at Houghton.

Carter, a humanities major who graduated in May, originally came to Houghton as a student wanting to attend an academic-achieving Christian school. He had previously attended community college, transferring to Houghton in the Fall of 2014. Because Carter had less time at Houghton than most students, he wanted to stay for a longer period of time. He is now an admissions counselor for the upstate New York area. His favorite thing about the job is being able to go

on high school visits and see the faces of students he speaks with over the phone. According to Carter, the most bizarre aspect of his new role is being able to call the professors he learned from just months ago by their first names.

Another Houghton graduate now employed at the school is Palmer. During his time at Houghton, Palmer was most appreciative of the professors would take time out of their day to “sit down for an hour and talk with you about life.” Palmer studied psychology while a student, and loved it. He and his wife are still looking for graduate schools, but have found that working at Houghton during their gap year was “the best choice since we have so many ties to the community.” Palmer enjoys working at Houghton, and said his college experience has prepared him to work diligently and have grace on himself.

To the current students looking towards graduation, Carter said, “Don’t worry as much as you are probably worrying now. There are people at this school who will help you. Don’t be afraid to take chances because you don’t know what opportunities will happen from the risks



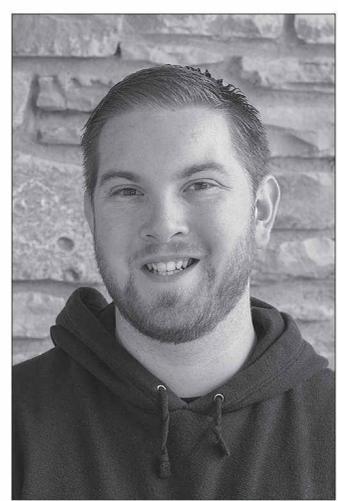
NATE MOORE

Zachary Palmer ‘16 is taking a gap year to work as the Course Materials Manager & Buyer at the Campus Store.

you take. Enjoy every moment with your senior class. This will be the last time you see all of your

friends in this kind of setting, and that should not be taken for granted.”★

# Rob Bell, My Neighbor, and a Wall



NATE MOORE

MATT YOUNG

Last month, I had the privilege of attending a one-day workshop event with former megachurch pastor, Rob Bell. He is known for his fresh take on ancient ideas, and brings clarity to opaque concepts within the Judeo-Christian tradition. “Scholar,” “mystic,” and “spiritual communicator,” are apt descriptions of the man who saw his church grow to over 10,000 members by teaching through the book of Leviticus in a year. All that being said, I was very happy to

get an invitation to spend a day interacting with him in person. But this piece is less about Rob Bell, and more about something specific he said, something I think everyone in our community would benefit from reading; albeit second-hand, and with an element of my own experience thrown in.

“You know how we can often develop a preconceived notion of people, especially the negative kinds of ideas?” He said. Everyone in the audience nodded. “You know, we hear about those people, who come from that place, and they have that color of skin, and dress that way. And we are told that they are dangerous, scary, and don’t have anything in common with us. You all know what I’m talking about, right?” Again, head-nods of recognition and agreement from the crowd. “But then, one of those people actually moves in next door. And guess what? They turn out to be the best neighbor you have ever had! They turn out to be the exact opposite of what we have been told to expect.” For a third time, we all nodded and smiled in agreement. Rob’s face changed from a glowing, wide smile, to a somber and painful grimace. “Aaaaaand now, there is this thing that wants to

build a wall.” An audible groan could be heard from the crowd. We too stopped smiling as the weight of one of our Presidential nominee’s aspirations hit us, Donald Trump wants to put up a wall, a wall that would keep out people like the neighbors we have come to love.

As I processed Rob’s words, I thought of my neighbor in

and he is a great neighbor. I’m so glad that he is a small part of my life.

I tell you about Pan because he can be seen as a stand-in for millions of other neighbors, coworkers, and acquaintances. He is here, sharing our little community, because he wants to build the best life he can for his family. And while he is

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**“Not only do I like my neighbor, but I recognize that “our” wholeness is dependent on building a shared community with whoever “they” are.”**

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Houghton. Pan is an Indian-Canadian citizen, and is the proud, hard-working owner of the Hanson Farms in Fillmore. His customer-service is exceptional, but more than that, he really cares about the people that come into his store, including me. Over the year I’ve known him, he has taken time to inquire about my work and school schedule and made sure to send his visiting sons to play with mine. On more than one occasion he has offered to let me borrow his minivan. Pan is a brown-skinned immigrant,

doing that, he makes our lives better too. But that thing Rob mentioned, that fascist running to be the leader of our country, wants to put up a wall to keep people like Pan out of our communities. He is hell-bent on dividing our world into “us” vs.. “them,” where “us” always means anyone just like me, and “them” refers to anyone I perceive to be different. And “we” are supposed to keep “them” as far away as possible.

To hell with that! Not only do I like my neighbor, but I recognize that “our” wholeness

is dependent on building a shared community with whoever “they” are. And if you claim to follow in the path of a rabbi from Nazareth, even if you haven’t had the positive experience I’ve had with the “other,” I hope you will at least remember a story he told one time, a story about how one of “them” helped out an injured Jew. One can only wonder, what did the injured Jew think of Samaritans after he woke up in the inn, only to find that his rescue had come from the person he had been told to fear and hate his entire life. Do you think the Jew from that parable would support building a wall? ★

*Matt is a junior philosophy major.*

# The Importance of the Desert



NATE MOORE

RACHEL BELLEROSE

I often feel like I am stumbling through my faith. I’m a pilgrim who doesn’t know her path, a disciple without a prophet. This feeling comes to every person of faith at some point if we are willing to grapple with our questions. Some call it “the dark night of the soul” or “our desert time.” But these characterizations seem, to me, incomplete. They suggest that wandering is a bad thing, something to get through as quickly as possible. However, it is in these times of

ambiguity that the veil seems at its thinnest. I stop blindly going through the motions of my faith, and I take time to re-examine the foundation. Christ is lifted from stained-glass panes, and comes to me asking, “Who do you say I am?”

Right now, I don’t know the answer to that. I flounder, asking how I can profess a God of love if He seems to hide himself and then punishes those who don’t believe in Him. The problem with the way I see God right

now is that He is ambiguous. He has the power to make himself known to an individual in an unquestionable way, yet He seldom does so. St. Anselm, an eleventh century monk and theologian, wrote, “It is thou that hast made me, and hast made me anew, and hast bestowed upon me all the blessings I enjoy; and not yet do I know thee. Finally, I was created to see thee and not yet have I done that for which I was made.” If a person of great faith like St. Anselm remained uncertain about the nature of God, how can a wandering pilgrim such as myself ever hope to understand Him?

This is the reason so many people of faith try to rush through their seasons of disbelief. They are uncomfortable with the questions. But if we leave our search at this seemingly hopeless point, it is so easy to make the inference that because God cannot be seen and understood, He does not exist. This is not an irrational reaction, but it can be driven by frustration. Emotionalism is just as unacceptable a reason to leave a faith as it is to stay in one.

So what are we left with, in

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**“We can fall into the trap of believing that we are only truly living at the end of the day, in our moments of freedom.”**

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searching for a God who seems so untouchable? Some would say that asking why we cannot completely understand Him is like asking why we can’t drink the ocean. Seventeenth century philosopher Blaise Pascal commented on God’s ambiguity, saying, “If there were no obscurity man would not feel his corruption: if there were no light man could not hope for a cure. Thus it is not only right but useful for us that God should be partly

concealed and partly revealed, since it is equally dangerous for man to know God without knowing his own wretchedness as to know his own wretchedness without knowing God.” That, to me, is one of the most irritating and unsatisfying answers in the history of theology. Because at the root of my question, one more has always remained hidden.

I realize I can’t understand all there is to know about God, but couldn’t He, at the very least, let me see Him? If I could even catch a glimpse, it would be enough to sustain me for the rest of my life. I would, like Peter, step out of the boat and begin my first timid steps toward my Father. So why doesn’t He just show up?

For me, it all boils down to this. I must ask myself the question: am I really looking for God and am I looking in the right places? Through all my wandering in the desert, crying out for the answers to why I can’t see Him, have I even had my eyes open? Am I like the Jews in the wilderness, so blind to their own issues that they place the blame on God? I believe I’ve been

searching because I feel angst about God, but having angst and actively searching are not the same thing.

Perhaps, as a professor of mine once said, God is like a fox that lives in the woods behind our house. We know people who have seen it, they assure us it’s there. But we have never caught sight of it ourselves, and so we disgruntledly begin to question its existence. But seeing the fox is a two sided thing; it’s not all about the seeker. The fox has a say in whether or not it will be seen, and where it will show up. What we really have to question is whether we know enough about the fox’s character to guess where it might come next.

God walks silently. We must listen for His footfall. In my wandering, I will be still and wait quietly. Maybe then I will be aware enough to see Him when He steps wordlessly from the underbrush.★

*Rachel is a senior writing major.*

# Stop Glorifying International Travel



NATE MOORE

MARINA CULL

It's been a little over five months now since I tiredly shuffled off a plane that had taken me away from Rwanda, a tiny African country where I studied abroad last spring, and plopped me back down in the good 'ole U.S.A. I've spent these five months reflecting on my time in Rwanda, but no matter how long I mull it over, I still don't have a good answer for the inevitable question that is asked of me when the topic of my semester abroad comes up: "How did it transform you?" Ultimately, I think my inability to craft a nice and neat response is because the four months I spent in Rwanda didn't transform me, at least, not in

the way people expect it to have done so.

Sure, I can think of countless experiences that have shaped me and left me wrestling with the weight of injustice and global poverty. I am easily reminded of the incredible friendships I made while abroad, both with the rest of my cohort and with the many Rwandans who became like family to me. And I'm often still filled with a mixture of joy and sorrow when I think back on the many wonderful memories that I made last spring, knowing that they're only memories at this point and that my experience there is over.

Despite all of this, I still don't know how to answer the grand "Question of Transformation" and often become frustrated when it surfaces. Why? Because it implies that transformation could have only occurred overseas.

So often, well-meaning

"...transformation can occur as authentically amidst the mundane occurrences of our daily lives as it can in our "once in a lifetime" experiences."

friends and family avoid simpler questions such as "How was it?" or "What was your semester like?" in an attempt to be sensitive to the fact that I had a set of experiences that is largely unfamiliar to them and cannot possibly be summed up in a measly sentence or two. This is of course true. I have had a set of experiences that is largely unfamiliar to them and cannot possibly be summed up in a measly sentence or two. But what I've never understood is why they don't recognize that, whether or not they were in a foreign country, so did they.

All of us have been exposed to and changed by things that

the other will never entirely understand because we have all had experiences for which the other was not present, whether they happened at home or abroad. For some reason, though, we talk about international experiences in such awed and reverent tones, expecting the person to have come back entirely transformed, while we almost entirely dismiss the possibility that someone could have been equally or even more transformed as they went about a typical four months of their life.

An argument could be made that spending a couple of months overseas puts you in the way of many more unfamiliar and therefore potentially transformative encounters, and there might be some truth to this. At the same time, though, I question whether our heightened feelings of transformation while abroad stem more from the fact that we do not approach our time at home with the same expectancy to see God use our experiences

to change us. For that matter, I think that if we really wanted, we could fairly easily put ourselves in the way of equally unfamiliar experiences without venturing too far from home; Buffalo's refugee population isn't that far away after all.

At the end of the day, I think the opportunity to go abroad is wonderful. But I'm wary of glorifying it to the point that we begin to think that true transformation can only occur when we're overseas, so we must somehow get over there, anywhere but here, to finally see the world and our place in it clearly. When we do this, we simultaneously cheapen the value of our experiences at home and place unrealistic expectations on our international travel to produce such a radical change in us, unlike anything we've experienced before. In reality, though, transformation can occur as authentically amidst the mundane occurrences of our daily lives as it can in our "once in a lifetime" experiences.★

*Marina is a senior majoring in communication and international development.*

"...we almost entirely dismiss the possibility that someone could have been equally or even more transformed as they went about a typical four months of their life."



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# Artist of the Week

## Sissi Lu

//junior music performance and fine arts double major



NATE MOORE



## Titles & Media

*clockwise descending*

A Kid in Church, *digital photography*

Jewelry Box, *woodworking*

Dragon Teapot, *ceramics*

Untitled, *ceramics*

A Librarian in NYC, *digital photography*

Beijing Opera in a Restaurant, *digital photography*

Airport, *digital photography*

