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## LGBTQ Conversation

College aims to improve discussion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning students.



SYLVIA MORROW

Faculty and staff at Houghton College work to improve the campus climate surrounding same sex attraction through a new study, community voice document, and discussion group.

Michael Lastoria, director of counseling services, emailed a survey to Houghton students on Tuesday, Nov. 4, as part of an ongoing study to understand the experiences of Christian students who experience same sex attraction and study at Christian colleges. Lastoria said this new survey is "undergirded" by previous research but is "more com-

prehensive." The study will survey Christian colleges nationwide, and Lastoria said ideally it will follow up with students multiple times over the course of ten years, "but we're shooting for five years at this point."

Lastoria said past results have indicated that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) students "feel kind of alienated" on Christian college campuses while they attempt to "make sense of their sexual attractions as believers."

A component of the survey will evaluate emotional health to explore whether LGB students experience "some stress because of...

the climate that they find themselves in." Lastoria said he hopes this new survey will yield a more comprehensive picture of the areas in which students relate feeling unsupported whether that be spiritual, social, or administrative. Previous studies have indicated that "mostly it appears that these young men and women feel that alienation not so much from administrators or faculty or staff, but they feel it from peers." It appears that LGB students feel more supported by the gay community than the church, and Lastoria said, "we just felt that there's something wrong there. This is not quite right." Lastoria said he anticipates first wave

results emerging from this initial survey with second wave and comparative results to follow.

Lastoria also – along with four other staff members – offered his input to a Houghton College document titled, "Same-Sex Attraction: Our Community Voice." According to Lastoria, President Shirley Mullen tasked Robert Pool, vice president for student life, "to formulate a statement for the college." The committee consisted of Lastoria, Pool, Michael Jordan, dean of the chapel, Richard Eckley, professor of theology, and Dennis Stack, dean of students. They felt

See **LGBTQ** page 3

## New Off Campus Mayterms

ALEX FISHER

New York City and Arizona are just two of the locations students can study off campus this coming Mayterm. The Art and Business Mayterm that will be held in New York City, has created a lot of buzz within these two departments. Kenneth Bates, professor of Business, and Ryann Cooley, professor of Art and Communications, said this Mayterm opportunity allows both of these majors to bring different perspectives to the trip and overlap both the art and business worlds. "New York City is the epicenter of both the business and art worlds. There is no place like it," said Cooley.

While in New York City, students will be studying about the history of the city, visiting museums, the Federal Reserve, and the stock exchange in addition to having a shadowing experience based on the interest of students. "In February when we figure out who is going, we are going to send out an email to the students to see what their interests are," said Cooley. "From there, we'll put them in a two day long shadowing experience so they can see what it is like to work in the art business"

This trip is different from past art Mayterms that have been focused on art history, photography, or drawing and does not meet Integrative Studies requirements; it is a business, art, or communications elective. Senior art and English major, Amanda Irwin is interested in the opportunities that will come with this Mayterm experience and said, "I want to see people in the field that I want to go into. I've heard a lot of people talk about it from the art side, and it's really exciting."

Sign-ups for the art and business Mayterm have already begun for business, art, and communication seniors. Sign-ups for juniors will open on Tuesday, Nov. 18th and Cooley suspects the course will fill fast. "We want to blend the two majors. There are 18 spots open; nine for business

## Discovering a Symphony in Silence

HOPE MCKEEVER

Imagine a room where light speaks, shadows whisper, and introspection reigns supreme. For artist Charles Ritchie, this atmosphere creates an inspirational context for his life and for his artwork. Ritchie arrived on campus last Friday to present his show in the Ortlip gallery. The characteristically colorful room filled with large pieces of art was stripped down to its core displaying small, detailed prints, drawings, and journals. They primarily depict scenes from inside and around his home in Silver Springs, Maryland. Senior Amanda Irwin, a gallery assistant, commented, "There is something very personal about the work that I find to be intimate in size and subject matter." Ritchie invites the



Artist, Charles Ritchie, displayed and discussed his art with students and faculty in the Ortlip Gallery, Friday November 7.

LUKE LAUER

See **RICHIE** page 5

See **MAYTERM** page 2



# WORLD // Russian Hackers Compromising U.S. Security



ANTHONY BURDO

MARY CRONIN

A breach of security in vital U.S. infrastructure, which has been active since 2011, has put hundreds of thousands of Americans at risk. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), industrial control systems software, which controls oil and gas

pipelines, power transmission grids, water distribution and filtration systems, and wind turbines have been hacked and infected with malware. Malware, short for malicious software, is any software used to disrupt computer operation, gather sensitive information, or gain access to a private computer. It was originally reported that some nuclear plants were threatened as well, but the Nuclear Energy Institute stated it has “recently received classified briefing by DHS on this Russian malware campaign,” which assured that “U.S. nuclear plants are isolated from external networks.”

According to ABC News, National Security sources have alerted that the presence of the malware is not a random attack by a rogue cyber-terror group. Rather, national security authorities believe the existence of the malware in essential U.S. industrial systems to be under the support of the Russian government. The malware could

be used to “damage, modify, or otherwise disrupt” industrial controls.

This malware is quite advanced. According to Tech Times, it gives hackers the capability to control industrial operations with a smartphone, tablet, or a laptop. It also has the capacity for “collaborative control” and information sharing.

Rising tensions between Russia and the West amid the crisis in the Ukraine and other ongoing issues make this revelation all the more alarming. According to ABC, the DHS believes the Russians have “torn a page from the old, Cold War playbook, and have placed the malware in key U.S. systems as a threat”. DHS spokespersons also speculated Russia may be using the malware as a deterrent against possible future confrontation by the United States, harkening the old strategy of mutually assured destruction.

The malware used in this cyber-invasion has been called

“BlackEnergy,” and according to the Washington Times it is the same malware used by the Russian espionage group “Sandworm.” This group is believed to be responsible for its ongoing hacking and spying on North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 2009, which was only discovered this past October. Tech Times commented that besides NATO, “Hackers [of the Sandworm group] have been taking advantage of a vulnerability that existed in the Windows OS to conduct cyber espionage on Ukraine...and several other countries since 2009.” Microsoft claims it has since addressed the weaknesses which were exploited by Sandworm, according to the Washington Times. For some, it is becoming evident cyber attacks and cyber espionage is becoming a favorite tool of the Russian government.

This marks the third major allegedly Russian-sponsored cyber attack this year. The

Washington Times stated JP Morgan Chase & Co. was hacked and the names and personal information of over 83 million people were compromised. The company was not able to shut out the hackers for weeks.

It seems possible to some to refer to these acts as terrorism by the Russian government. The Washington Times previously quoted a security analyst as describing the JP Morgan attack as scaring “the pants off people.” This latest incident involving critical industrial systems that American citizens depend on likely was in part purposed to evoke fear at home.

It is unclear what the response of the United States will be. It is also vague as to why and how this malware went undetected for three years. ★

Mary is a sophomore political science and theology major.

## MAYTERM from page 1

and nine for art,” said Cooley. Since there are only nine spots for art majors, Irwin said, “I’m kind of concerned that I won’t get in. I’m a visual studies concentration and I feel like we don’t have as many opportunities that studio majors have. I’m worried about it.” However, Cooley said, “We plan on having two or three Mayterms, and then hopefully making the course into a semester long program.”

Along with the new Art and

Business Mayterm is the Ornithology Mayterm, the study of birds, heading to Arizona. Eli Knapp, professor of biology and intercultural studies, started Ornithology Mayterms in 2010 and has since then taken students to the Ozark Mountains, Ecuador, Maine, and all over Western New York. Unlike the art and business Mayterm, the Ornithology course satisfies an Integrative Studies requirement for non-biology majors.

Knapp came up with the idea of traveling off campus to explore the field of ornithology after numerous camping trips

during the early years that this program was forming. “People loved the overnight trip. Everyone’s realness came out,” said Knapp. As a result, past years’ ornithology trips involve students spending two weeks on campus studying birds in Western, New York and then going into certain regions around the United States and the world to explore different birds in depth.

Senior biology major, Alan Vlieg, a 2012 veteran of the ornithology trip that traveled to Ecuador said the trip was exciting. “The trip is focusing on experiential learning and is

more classification heavy,” said Vlieg. Additionally, Knapp said that is why he thinks this course is so popular. “It is heavily field based. It’s May. The flowers are out. The birds are mating. It’s a time for the white lab coats to be left hanging inside,” said Knapp.

Both Cooley and Knapp said these courses will be learning experiences for both students and faculty. “This course is still a work in progress. We’re still developing exactly what is going to happen on the trip,” said Cooley. In addition to Cooley and Bates experiencing a new

course in New York City, Knapp is also looking forward to exploring the American southwest with students. Knapp said, “It’s the blind leading the blind, a co-learning experience really.”

Knapp also said one of his favorite parts of any off campus trip is when, “The class switches from being a class to being a little family. You grow and share experiences with people that you travel off campus with and no one else besides those in your group have the same memories that you do.” ★

# WORD ON THE STREET



“Some of the things I’m involved in on campus are res life stuff, so I’m an RA on second main. I love helping people, I love being there for people, so that’s why I’m an RA. I’m also involved a little bit in CAB entourage, so I help them set up and tear down with events. I was on CAB last year as an executive staff member, I just want to help out when I can. I’m also a little involved in gospel choir. I love music, so I love to sing and it’s one of my passions.”

-Brittany Hark, Junior



“Right now I’m involved in the SGA. I’m involved in it because I really appreciate being able to have an opinion on campus and then do something about it. I’m the one running the turkey drive this year and I do all the blood drives, so I work a lot with organizations, students, and other clubs.”

-Jared Cram, Senior



“I am involved in SGA. I am the president because I am interested in politics and government and helping other people and having a voice for people who don’t otherwise have a say in what goes on. I’m also in the Runnymede Pre-Law Society, so I do a lot of law activities, prepare us for law school, mock trials, things to relate to that or lectures. I’m also on the woman’s soccer team, so I’ve played soccer here at Houghton for the past four years.”

-Katharine LaBrecque, Senoir



“I’m involved with soccer, and I play because I love the team and being a part of the team. I love worshipping God through playing soccer. I’m also a transitions leader, and I love spending time with the freshmen and helping them get used to college life and it’s fun spending time with them.”

-Kayleigh Gurney, Sophomore

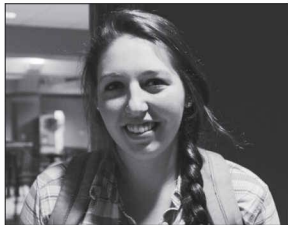
“I’m involved in three singing groups because I love to sing. I’m also involved in paddle sports because I’m friends with a lot of people in the group and I went on the Highlander Adventure. I’m also mildly involved in both CAB and SGA and hope to get even more involved in the future.”

-Michael Carpenter, Sophomore



“I’m part of CAB because I really like to get involved with the student body, creating events, planning events, getting to meet new people through it, just the fun of getting to host something and have people really excited about it.”

-Sarah Duttweiler, Sophomore



“I’m a part of gospel choir because I like to sing, and I’m part of CAB entourage because it’s interesting and activities on campus are fun.”

-Michael Sievers, First Year



“I’m a part of our equestrian society, I have a huge passion for horses and this allows me to combine my passion for horses with my academics.”

-Zach Butler, Sophomore





LGBTQ from page 1

unqualified to offer a “theological statement,” said Lastoria and instead proposed a community voice discussing “how we ought to be with one another.”

The President’s Advisory Board, faculty, the Board of Trustees, the Parent’s Council, and a few LGBTQ+ Houghton students have all examined the most current draft which the President’s staff recently approved for distribution. Lastoria said he believes that when it comes to talking about LGBTQ+ topics and interacting with and supporting LGBTQ+ students the college has not been “the best that we can be” which motivated the document’s creation. The community voice communicates a desire to rectify the “discomfort and awkward-

ness” around discussion of sexual identity, to put aside the “crippling polarization that popular media presents,” and to acknowledge support for the Wesleyan church’s statement on same sex attraction while realizing that Houghton is a college and, therefore, has “students, not members.” Lastoria said the community voice “is there for our community to be in conversation about” and, for example, he could imagine staff using it to spark discourse in the future “when we train RAs and train residence life staff.” Jordan said, “I think it’s vitally important for Houghton going forward to realize the value of responding relationally” and that matters of sexual identity “don’t exist in a vacuum outside of people’s lived experience.”

With this goal in mind, Jordan came up with the idea

of starting an LGBT discussion group which he has been co-leading with Lastoria this semester. Every other Tuesday night (the next meeting is Nov. 20) from 7-8:30 p.m. a mix of Houghton students and staff meet in the basement of Gillette to discuss LGBTQ+ topics.

Jordan said he felt discussion about sexual identity had been “kind of consigned to silence in our community” which he saw himself as having “the position and the personality temperament to help break.” Jordan went through “significant conflict in [his] previous church” which made the conversation something he “care[s] a lot about.” He said at Houghton people wanted to talk about sexual identity but were “really scared”, but Jordan felt confident starting this discussion because he went “through one big conflict” and “came

out on the other side.”

So far the group has discussed sexual identity development among college students and theological perspectives on same sex attraction. Jordan said the group has no “prepackaged agenda,” rather Jordan and Lastoria wish to “model good discussion and then encourage good discussion among the group.” Sophomore Michael Carpenter who has attended the discussion group said, “I was pleasantly surprised by how comfortable I feel talking about things that would be hard in most other settings.”

Jordan said he recognizes that students with traditional beliefs on sexuality may find alternative views “horribly inconvenient” or even a “very threatening thing” for which he hopes he can act as a “pastoral role model in saying: Yeah, look this is

how I understand things too, but you don’t have to operate out of a place of fear.” In an effort to keep discourse civil, Jordan began with “heavy ground rules” with the goal of helping people “learn how to talk about this without hurting each other.”

Lastoria said, “We have this idea out there of how we’d like to see the climate in our community change. We can’t mandate it. We can’t make a rule and say, ‘OK, everyone’s going to be nice from here on out.’ You know, good luck with that. But we can begin to talk about how we think we ought to be. And we ought to talk more about how we think we ought to be. And we ought to try to do how we think we ought to be.”★

Michael Carpenter and friends perform in the Java coffeehouse Tuesday night.

Michael Carpenter, Annie Hassen, and Hunter Gregory perform a mock cover of Snow Patrol’s *Chasing Cars* while holding ukuleles. Each song Carpenter played featured one or more of his friends.




ANTHONY BURDO

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# The Misunderstood Experience of Hunting



Senior Austin Groff bow-hunting in the woods. COURTESY OF AUSTIN GROFF

**HANNAH ZGRABLICH**

For some people, hunting for “sport” implies frivolity—it’s killing for fun—but for participating students at Houghton College, it is a sacred experience that is widely misunderstood.

Hunters are perpetually accused of recklessly chasing adrenaline and intentionally using weaponry that brings animals cruel deaths. However, listening to some who participate in the sport reveals that it can be perceived as an art—an expression or application of human creative skill and imagination.

Beginning their day before light, hunters spend an extended period of time observing their prey’s behaviors, habits, and tracks. Sporting garb that blends them with their tree-stands, hunters sit in oneness with the woods to assure the animals that their habitat is safe and secure. Though it may take hours, applying this tact and developing strategy to outwit their game is half the enjoyment for hunters.

Additionally hunting is an investment—hobbyists pay to participate in this pastime. Each year, hunters must purchase hunting licenses and sometimes pay to hunt on the specific land they’d like to explore.

“There is much more to hunting than killing animals,” said senior Austin Groff, “Not only is it beneficial for wildlife management, but it provides good food.” After hunting for almost 10 years, Groff described a feeling of satisfaction that came each time he worked to hunt and harvest an animal.

For Groff and others, hunting has also served as a way to experience the beauty of God’s creation. Sophomore Aaron Eisenhardt reminisced, “Bow hunting in the fall is awesome...sitting in the tree stand with the trees resembling the colors of fall all around me.”

Situated on the site of a former Canaëda Indian Reservation amidst 1,300 acres, Houghton College has delivered an ideal environment for hunting hobbyists. Having grown up close by in Fillmore, first year Jordan Mullen was eager to stay close to the land in which he grew up hunting. “Hunting is the way I take myself out of the busy world and experience nature in its true form,” he said. For Groff, “sitting in the woods in itself, for hours, is enjoyable.”

Mullen has been enjoying hunting with his dad since the age of seven. “I have shared some of the greatest bonds with my friends and family in the woods,” he said, “the perception is that it’s a savage and brutal time, but that’s false.” For Eisenhardt and senior Jordan Sloat, hunting was also shared as a father-son activity beginning at a very young age. “I grew up around it, my whole family hunts, I was born into it,” said Sloat.

“For someone who has never hunted before,” Eisenhardt explained, “It is hard to describe the reason why I enjoy it.” He encourages his peers to find an opportunity to get out and try it for themselves. ★

# Online Classes

## Personal Connection Lost, Responsibility Gained

**HATTIE BURGHER**

Houghton has always emphasized making personal connections between its faculty and students. It isn’t unusual to see a professor sitting with a student at lunch or praying with a student in between classes. So does a student taking a class online through Houghton lose that personal relationship?

Houghton Online offers an increasing amount of on-line classes during the summer. Among the options are Literary Voices, Math in the Liberal Arts, Introduction to Psychology, and Biblical Literature. The majority of the classes offered are Integrative Study (IS) requirements, so instead of being crammed into a student’s semester schedule, the IS credits can be fulfilled during the less academically strenuous summer months.

Taking an online course through Houghton is an ideal option if a student is behind on credits, can’t attend Mayterm, or simply can’t balance certain classes with their schedule during the fall and spring semester.

Sophomore Raisa Dibble said she missed the chance to learn from a professor and that it was a “big minus” of taking an online course. “I just think professors make it a little more personal and give moral support to learning,” said Dibble of traditional classroom learning. She continued to say she missed the “wall of support” that she usually gets on campus. “At Houghton, if I’m struggling with my beliefs, I have professors I can ask and talk to and classmates to bounce ideas off of. At home, I just have Google,” said Dibble.

Despite learning less from the professor, Dibble said, “I like online learning because I learn more about the subject.” Because online learning is generally self-taught, Dibble spent a lot of time reading. “When you take a class online, you have so much more time to devote to actual work rather than having to go to class,” she said as a benefit of taking Literary Voices and Biblical Literature through Houghton. “You definitely learn the material better.” She appreciated that online courses allowed her to go more indepth into the subject material because she had more time.

Online learning differs from the traditional classroom setting because it requires much more responsibility and not as much interaction. “I enjoy listening to lectures and reinforcing the information on my own, so teaching myself and being responsible for my own learning was a different experience,” said junior Casey Mauger, who took Medical Terminology this past summer. Mauger said although it was easier to focus all of her academic attention on one class, “if something was unclear it was harder to get clarity on the subject because you were basically teaching yourself.”

Junior Maisie Pipher also agreed that taking an online course demands more responsibility. “Online learning is entirely dependent on the individual,” she said, “You are in charge of learning for yourself.”

To most students, summer means warm weather, sun, and no classes. But for students who want to get ahead on credits or need the credits, summer means something a little different. Pipher relied on self-discipline to get her through Literary Voices and Medical Terminology. “Assignments crept up on me more easily during the summer when I was working and relaxing,” said Pipher. She wished the professors were more empathetic to the fact that it was summer and that she had other work to do besides academics. “There were days where I would have a long shift at work and have to come home late and finish an assignment because it was only available for 24 hours,” said Pipher, “It was like [the professors] forgot it was summer.” Mauger too thought it was difficult to balance “the business of the summer with a class.”

Dibble also contributed to the notion that it takes a lot of discipline to get through a summer course. “It’s hard to make yourself wake up and get to work,” she said, “You have to make sure to set aside time from the day to do the class.”

Writing Professor Laurie Dashnau said the challenge of online teaching comes “in terms of gauging where students are at in terms of start or middle of instructional units.” Finding the best resources to cover instructional material is also another challenge of Dashnau’s. Still, she finds online teaching to be rewarding. “One does not take conversations of face-to-face time for granted,” said Dashnau. Professors, not just students, value in-person interaction.

Although the student may miss out on an interactive relationship with their professor, they acquire skills such as self-discipline and responsibility along the way. Meeting deadlines and overcoming the distractions of summer challenge students to become more focused and more disciplined. ★

### Thanksgiving Word Search

M	A	C	P	I	L	G	R	I	M	S	P	A	R	A	D	E
S	M	A	Y	S	W	E	E	T	P	O	T	A	T	O	Y	N
G	N	I	R	E	H	T	A	G	S	H	T	H	G	A	O	S
D	N	P	L	L	A	B	T	O	O	F	F	R	N	I	C	E
O	S	U	C	K	S	N	S	L	G	E	A	O	N	R	L	O
O	T	M	I	E	R	E	I	V	S	V	I	U	A	A	D	T
F	U	P	I	O	L	D	V	T	Y	T	E	N	U	N	G	A
R	F	K	C	N	A	E	I	I	R	B	N	E	N	A	T	
I	F	I	Y	Y	O	V	B	D	T	E	N	K	G	H	O	O
E	I	N	D	A	A	V	A	R	R	A	E	A	Y	T	N	P
N	N	P	N	L	D	R	E	R	A	E	L	T	P	U	A	D
D	G	I	A	M	T	S	Y	M	W	T	R	E	F	O	P	E
S	Y	E	K	R	U	T	R	G	B	A	I	E	R	M	M	H
H	A	R	V	E	S	T	N	U	V	E	A	O	E	Y	A	S
H	S	A	U	Q	S	O	U	E	H	S	R	A	N	L	W	A
R	F	A	M	I	L	Y	L	A	T	T	L	A	D	P	E	M

ANNUAL  
AUTUMN  
CELEBRATION

CORN  
CRANBERRY  
FAMILY

FEAST  
FESTIVAL  
FOOD

FOOTBALL  
FRIENDS  
GATHERING  
GRAVY  
HARVEST  
HOLIDAY  
LONG WEEKEND  
MASHED POTATOES  
MEAL  
NOVEMBER  
PARADE  
PILGRIMS  
PLYMOUTH  
PUMPKIN PIE  
RELATIVES  
REUNION  
SQUASH  
STUFFING  
SWEET POTATO  
THURSDAY  
TRADITION  
TRAVEL  
TURKEY  
WAMPANOAG  
YAMS

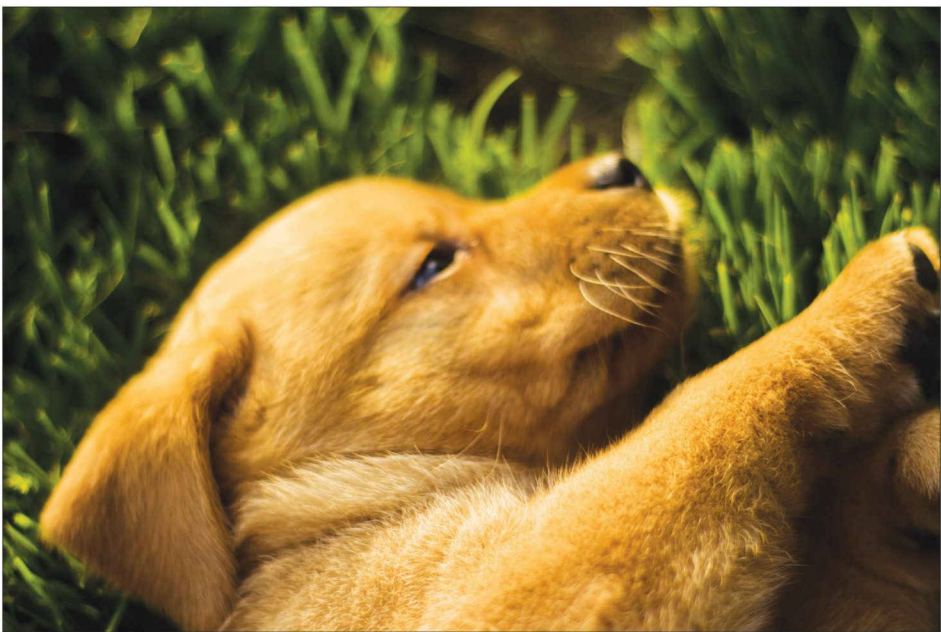


# Photo of the Week

WINNER //

Jonathan Eckendorf '16

Falconer, NY



Bingo the puppy is enjoying a nice day in the sun!

Ritchie from page 1

viewer to step into his world through visual art. Professor of art, John Rhett commented, “The respect for the individual response is paramount in a show like this. It’s quiet, and it rewards meditative, introspective thinking.”

In his artist’s statement, Ritchie describes his small-scale presentation “as an invitation to the viewer to crawl into an intimate yet immense universe.” The set up of the gallery challenges the viewer to experience the same intense introspection that Ritchie finds important in the process of creating his work. The white walls are neatly adorned with frames that invite the viewer to step in closer. He challenges the viewer to detach him or herself from the corporate world and prompts an invitation into his own simple, yet profound existence. In response to Ritchie’s invitational objective, Rhett said, “Important artists give us visual vocabularies. We learn to see through their eyes.”

Ritchie works from a chair in his home, slowly creating a layered representation of the metaphysical world using watercolor, graphite, pen, and ink as his tools. He attributes his unique style of creating to rebellion. Rebellion against the way he was brought up. He moved a lot as a child, and he finds the stability of his home liberating. However, he does not settle for stagnancy. He described how he enjoys “getting to know the world in a profound way through limited experience.” He compared this process to the life of a musician. A musician practices scales every day and listens to the rhythms and musicality of the notes. Ritchie described how he wants to be a receptor of the beautiful art that proceeds from his study of the observable world.

He sees his methods as a

skill that takes time and patience to acquire. “Training the eye and hand has helped me isolate what is important,” he mentioned. His impeccable knowledge of color value is one of the important tools that he uses to create this isolation. Because he primarily works in black and white, Ritchie described how he must use the full range of color that these two colors offer. In a value class that Rhett taught, he used Ritchie’s work as an example of exceptional use of value. Rhett encourages his students to observe contrast between colors in their work instead of framing every section of color with lines.

Along with contrast in value, Ritchie studies time as a crucial element in his work. He finds immense importance in the stillness of time and

the movement of time. Without the movement of time, he would not be able to capture the changing shadows on the wall, yet without the stability of time, he would not be able to document the reverently still environment. Both are crucial elements in his work and his observance of the world. He strives for moments that become “iconic rather than fleeting.” For example, Ritchie explained that he is currently working on a project that will take many years. He is observing the growth of an oak tree as it slowly adds layers to its core across a wide span of time, mastering the art of transitions.

Humility translates through his work because he realizes that he may not be alive to finish some of his projects as he believes, “no

decision is final.” His work constantly evolves, creating an accurate representation of how his “inner voice” evolves with his work. Laurissa Widrick, a senior art major, observed this evolutionary aspect of his work and marveled at how, “his process is a lifelong commitment.”

Because his personal life connects so closely to his work, Ritchie’s own voice is the primary one that translates into his work. His inner voice, “the dream voice” as he calls it, captures the “train of consciousness” that goes through his mind during his early morning meditation times. These dedicated early morning reflection times are essential to the consistent patience that he exercises in his work, Rhett remarked. Ritchie finds solitude extremely important

in the spiritual act of studying the inner voice and the psychology of self. He concluded that, “I think in a way, one’s spiritual world depends on those things.” This spiritual element permeates through his work turning small-scale pieces into scenes portraying vast universes that are easy to miss in a quick glance.

Even if you missed the gallery opening last Friday, the gallery is open during the day and welcomes students, faculty, staff, and community members. The invitational quality of Ritchie’s work, according to professor Rhett, can be attributed to the “non sequential” form of the work. Because of the open-ended nature of the show, viewers can continue coming back multiple times to glean new reflections about the work and about the self. ★

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# Don't Fear the Unknown



ANTHONY BURDO

RACHEL WOODWORTH

If you know where your head and your heart are going, you don't have to worry about your feet.

I have never been much of a details person. I prefer the unplanned: the wide-open opportunity of possibility, the space for surprise, and the room for wonder. I value uncertainty. Is this the self-defensive anthem—a desperate, blind comfort—of a senior approaching graduation? Maybe—but maybe it is more than that. This could perhaps be considered as less of an expression of passivity, an aversion to commitment,

and more of an active and intentional posturing. Its focus is on personhood, not plans. I'm packing light: my Nalgene is tucked and buckled into the side of my backpack, and my passport and some cash are hidden in an inner pocket. The necessities are accounted for and the burden is light. I'm anticipating—I'm ready—to pick up and go, to nod a smiling "yes", when God, when opportunity, says "Let's go."

When I arrived at Houghton, my smile was so wide that it was silly. I was buzzing, brimming, with curiosity. I came with questions and expected to find answers. I said "yes" to opportunity after strange-and-sometimes-serendipitous opportunity—"yes" to Journey's End Tutoring, to Gospel Choir (though that was soon followed by a "no" when I realized my voice would be heard rather than smoothly and quietly

Questions and uncertainty, though, have this inherent vulnerability.

blended with the others), and to a One Missions Society missions retreat with a van full of strangers. Another "yes" took me to an Interfaith Conference in Kentucky where I was overwhelmed with diversity and strange, staggering, uncertainty. I spent an October break in the Adirondack Mountains and felt fantastically small, quiet, and happy: a feeling that would return in Tanzania through dwelling in the glory of the unfamiliar and the challenge of the context of close community. I marched through the streets of New York, calling for climate justice. My schedule and person have been

full, to the brim and beyond, of new ideas, interactions, and questions—always questions.

My worldview, ambitions, and purpose have not compacted or narrowed focus in my four years at Houghton. No, they have been stretched, and sometimes felt torn, into something much larger than I ever anticipated. The curious, but order-seeking, first year version of myself has faded and grown into something, someone, quite different. My more black-and-white world has become gray, in the most beautiful sense. There is magic and mystery in the gray—in that misty blanket of fog. In this space, I've had to dismiss the comfort, safety, and satisfaction of the familiar. The gray settles over the similar, disguises the readily recognizable: I've learned to lean into the unknown, straining my eyes to see beyond the immediate and obvious. I am in the here and not-quite-yet. Still gray, still fluid, is the Kingdom of God.

There is value in transience. This, maybe, is glorified indecisiveness. I've romanticized the "not knowing" and masked it as some grand adventure. Questions and uncertainty,

though, have this inherent vulnerability. They are not secure. The territory they occupy is sometimes frightening, often in marked contrast to a security-seeking and fast-paced society. I take comfort in this: my tiny story is nested in a much larger narrative. There's a bigger picture, a mosaic, divinely ordered. I see the scattered, lopsided pieces. I feel their wonky edges. I choose to remain faithful to the process, the working together of a divine vision, not panicked by the disorder.

Uncertainty is a spiritual exercise of sorts: it's a practice of detachment by the conscious loosening of one's grip on security and the promise of neat-and-tidy answers.

My options are open and my plans are incomplete. They may go awry—they already have. I think of miscalculated travel and an overnight in McDonalds. I think of an early morning in Tanzania, blundering through brush and darkness, losing and finding the path again, racing the rising of the sun. I remember hurrying to the top of the hill, struggling to catch my breath, and clambering on to a rock just as the sun was rising. There was God, peeking over the mountains, smiling, spilling light across the valley. We made it—we'll make it. ★

*Rachel is a senior intercultural studies major.*

The gray settles over the similar, disguises the readily recognizable: I've learned to lean into the unknown, straining my eyes to see beyond the immediate and obvious.

# The Physicality of Beauty



ANTHONY BURDO

JIWAN DHALIWAL

In the last few years there has been a strong resistance against women portrayed in the media. People rightfully complain that women are sexualized and oppressed with an unrealistic standard of beauty and activists have aimed to instill realistic views of beauty and a higher self-esteem in young women. I fully affirm their intentions and it is important for people to have a healthy view of themselves and others, but the typical model used by such individuals may not be as

helpful as they think.

When faced with mainstream views of beauty people often claim, "that these standards are unrealistic" (rightly so) and "that everybody is beautiful in their own way." Fair enough—I completely agree. What I do not agree with is how these two ideas are then implemented in culture. The next step from individuals who are anti-media (as far as views of beauty in the strictly physical sense are concerned) is to affirm beautiful qualities in other people. These movements come in the form of "imperfectly perfect" tags or "#flawless," where people affirm their "imperfections" and proclaim that they are valuable and beautiful in spite (and in some cases, because) of them.

These movements are not problematic because they motivate people to appreciate themselves, rather they are problematic because they affirm the concept that in some form or another, one's physical appearance and how one feels about their physical appearance affects one's value. A person in these forums may say something along the lines of, "I have scars on my knees #flawless." What they really mean is that

the physical scars on one's knees may seem like a flaw, but really they are an asset to my perceived perfection or "flawless-ness." This perfection does not refer to one's physicality necessarily, but to one's very being, their immateriality (personality) included. And may I say that although this is very romantic in nature, we cannot hold physical appearance so close to our value (even positively), because it is just not realistic. Sometimes we are ugly and that needs to be okay.

Ah. Ugly, it is such an "ugly" word. You probably cringed when I said it and if I called myself ugly you would run to my rescue affirming that it were not true. The question

though is why? Probably because you are afraid that if I call myself "ugly," then I will think of myself "less than" or "not equal to" others; and this is the notion that we need to kill if we want individuals with a strong self-concept. It is absolutely okay to not be beautiful, in the physical sense of the word. We need to have the self-confidence to admit that sometimes we are ugly (also in the physical sense of the word). When you're playing sports, sleeping, crying, eating with your mouth open, wearing those plum pants, you might be ugly. That is fine. It is okay. Human beings are sometimes beautiful and sometimes gross, and there is nothing surreal about that fact.

If we want to raise young men and women who have strong self-esteem do not teach them to add transcendent notions of goodness to their arbitrary physical qualities. Because in all reality, one day their skin will wrinkle and their hair will go drab and all they will have to cling onto is the catchphrase that "they are beautiful, if only they choose to see it." And in the romantic sense that might be true, but it is still an insufficient foundation to build one's sense of worth.

Instead teach them that some days they will be incredibly striking, and other days will be a little rough—but what they should put their faith in is not the physical attributes of their body, but the mind inside it. Because whether or not the corporeal image is attractive, the mind shall always be enticing. A person who knows that they themselves and those around them are valuable, both when they are physically striking and when they are rough around the edges is a person who has mastered the art of confidence and has shed off shallow notions of love. ★

And may I say that although this is very romantic in nature, we cannot hold physical appearance so close to our value (even positively), because it is just not realistic.

*Jiwan is a sophomore philosophy major.*



# We're Just Plain Scared to Be Wrong



ANTHONY BURDO

WYNN HORTON

In the last year, several important pieces of research have contributed to the idea that the Millennial Generation (that's us) is full of contradictions and laden with confusion. First and foremost, is a report from the Pew Research Center titled Millennials in Adulthood. The opening descriptions of the Millennial Generation are appropriately conflicting: "unattached...distrustful...but optimistic about the future." The survey explains that while a record low 26% of people 18-32 are getting married, almost 42% of children born to this generation are born out of

wedlock, and 58% of us believe that being a single parent is, "a bad thing for American society!" We are statistically more likely to engage in activities like hook-ups on Craigslist, couch surfing across Europe, and starting relationships at bars - yet only 19% of Millennials think that most people can be trusted (the lowest of any generation). More than half of this generation identifies as politically independent though upwards of 65% vote blue. In addition to all of this, almost 30% of Millennials consider themselves free from religious fetters, clinging instead to some form of agnosticism, atheism, loosely defined spirituality, or nothing at all. For a generation repeatedly praised for its activist mindset, we lead the field in supporting gay marriage (68%), while appearing to care little for the environment (32%). How can there be so much confusion in a generation that is the most highly educated? After the report's release, journalists and scholars had a field day predicting the impact of the "Confused Generation" upon the great American future. For the most part, these are highly

## The Plugged-In Generation is ruled by confirmation bias to an extent no generation has been before.

negative - from prophecies regarding the downfall of the American political system to discussions of how mainstream religions might soon face their doom. Some, however, spouted positivity, rejoicing over the Democratic Party leanings of what will soon be the largest voting demographic or praising the "open-mindedness" of this intellectual generation. Christian magazines drafted entire issues discussing how to bring young adults back into the Church or start ministries targeted at the "lost." We have inspired, in a word: chaos. So where do Houghton students fit into this picture? Are we chaotic individuals filled with contradictions? For example, as Christian-liberal-arts students do we each have our own version of faith, highlighted

by individualized heresies, just to make us more comfortable when we leave and go off into the world? Well - yes. In the face of this conclusion I would present two responses: first, many of the Millennials' contradictions stem from a fear of being wrong - a fear inspired by the idea that there is no objective truth. We are afraid of committing to a major because we "might be wrong." We are afraid of committing to a relationship (much less a marriage) because "they might be wrong." Graduating seniors are afraid to look for or commit to jobs - their career choice "might be wrong." The examples are endless and the what-ifs are paralyzing. Secondly, this fear is coupled to a generation who, more than ever before, is more easily polarized by and controlled through informal peer pressure, or rather, the fear of being judged by our peers. The leading cultural trends of the United States - which

are determined in large part by a few powerful individuals and social media - are embraced by a generation hungry for someone else to define them. At the same time, ironically, we have been taught that there must be no middle ground - you are either for gay marriage or a bigot; you are either for women's rights or a chauvinist; and so on. The Plugged-In Generation is ruled by confirmation bias to an extent no generation has been before. Hopefully any reader will ask: so what? I would challenge my fellow Millennials to do two simple things. First, find reasons for what you believe. If your worldview is based on what your pastor says, what your parents say, or what some pop idol says on her Twitter wall - rethink your life, and find some defensible foundations upon which to base your beliefs. And secondly, stop being afraid! Don't let options render you indecisive. As humans we are trained to learn from our mistakes. As Christians we are supposed to take risks and trust that the decisions we make will help us grow. You will never go anywhere if you don't make decisions, and you will never make mistakes if you don't make choices. ★ Wynn is a senior political science major.

We have inspired, in a word: chaos.



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.

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# Artist of the Week

# Abby Harrelson

//junior Art and International Development major

She uses a variety of mediums to guide her exploration and representation of different ideas and experiences. She is inspired by the healing, restorative, and revelatory power of art and creativity, and hopes to one day pursue art therapy.



ANTHONY BURDO

## Titles & Media

*Clockwise from top right*

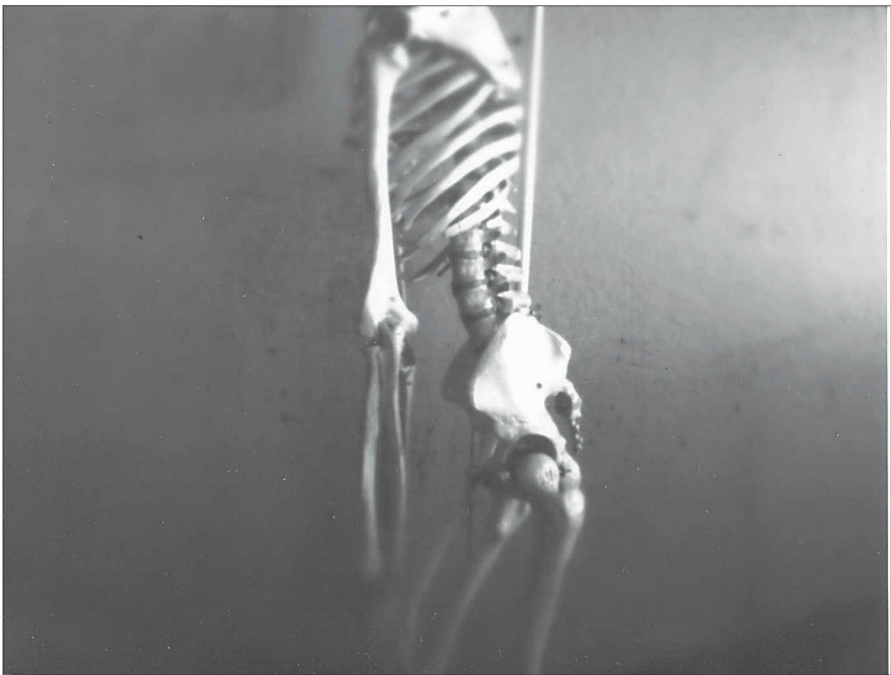
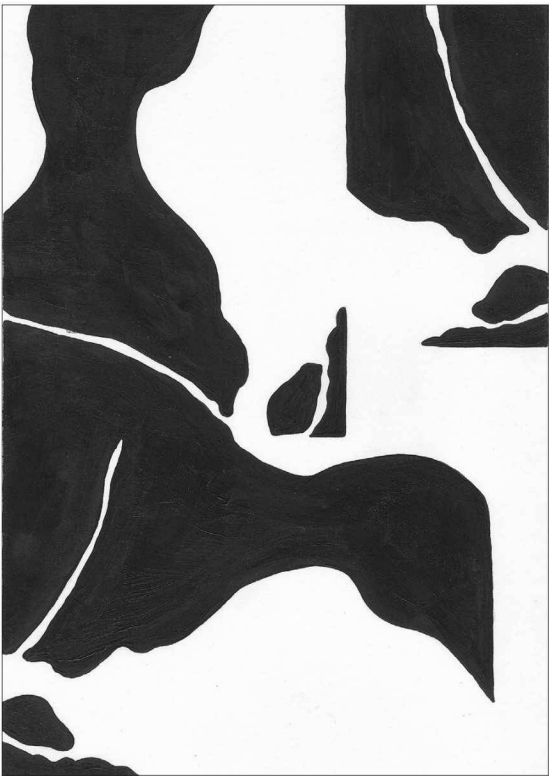
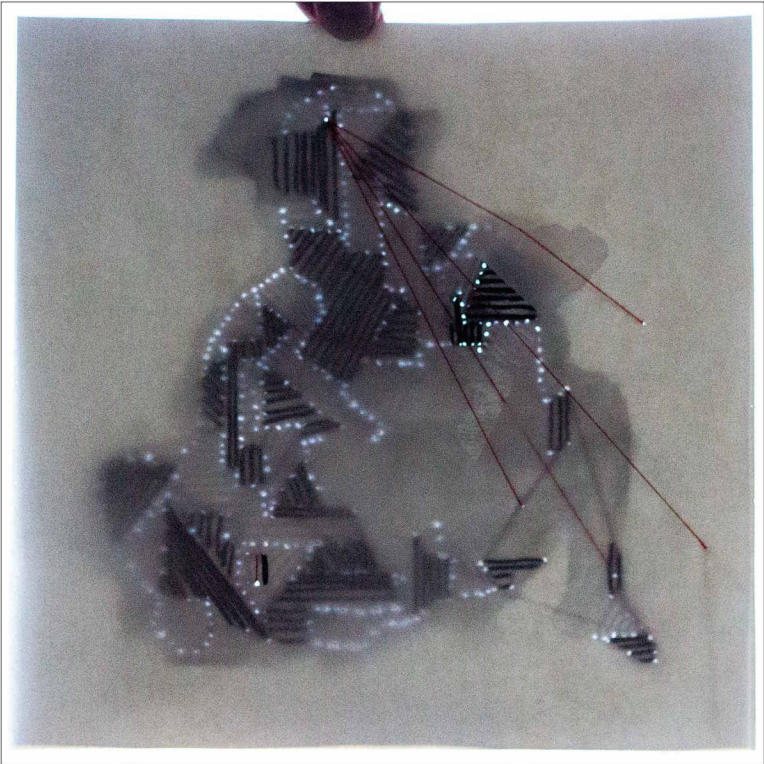
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“To create beauty is to testify to restoration and transformational love.”  
-Tracy Howe Wispelway

