Old World, New World
Alumni return to their family roots.
Bucknell *Celebrates* Legacies

What’s Your Connection?

Our legacy programs bring together generations of Bucknell families with their current or prospective students. We want to help you celebrate the roots you have at Bucknell, and keep them growing for the University’s future…

“College Admissions Workshop really is a unique and valuable program offered to the children of alumni. Many of my friends are envious of the opportunity that Kelsey had to get a jumpstart on her college search.”

— Patty Rosvold ’81

For more information on Legacy Programs, please visit www.b-link.bucknell.edu/LegPro.

Additional questions can be directed to:
Patti Struble Flannery ’86
Assistant Director for Alumni Admissions Programs
patti.flannery@bucknell.edu

Please keep us up-to-date on your family information so that your children don’t miss any legacy mailings or invitations. Go to B-Link and add your children’s names and birthdates in your profile.
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We will move with the times, as well as help define them, and wherever and however we can, stay ahead of them. We will be open to new ideas. We will strive to lead where leadership is needed. We will aim to make Bucknell better each day for our students, and better for the students, colleagues, alumni, parents and friends of our university of new generations not yet born.

Who are we becoming?
A home for the sons and daughters who possess new forms of privilege and possibility — those of perception, of the capacity to learn, of the capacity to absorb and sort information readily, meaningfully and proactively. These privileges and possibilities already challenge us in, sometimes, unexpected ways.

Who are we becoming?
The transitional home for students learning how to apply such skills to help all of us — and indeed ourselves — mold a future of global citizenship, of self- and family-fulfillment, yes, even of profitable application of those skills for their own benefit and for the benefit of others.

We are becoming a small part of those interdependent six billion souls who are striving to live a better life, and we are becoming one of the wellsprings that feed the oceans of knowledge and ideas we all will need as we learn, together, how to navigate a very uncertain tomorrow.

For me, the real answer to the question of who we are becoming is found in how we treat one another and in the ways we live up to those highest purposes of a university that have always been at the core of its mission. In the end, at an institution of advanced learning meant to endure, the answer to the question of, “Who are we becoming?” really is, “Who are we?”

Our time here is very special. Our time here also is brief when measured against the life of the institution we share. We have an obligation to carry forward something great. We will get the hard work done, every day, every hour, with focus and commitment. We will set our sights high. And we will achieve the critical, practical objectives that will shape the Bucknell of today and tomorrow, just as those did who came before us. Most of all, in the spirit of the University, I hope we will continue asking, “Who are we becoming?” I hope we will aim to answer it as best as we can in one way: by being together the Bucknellians whom we most aspire to become.

John Bravman, PRESIDENT
ALL EYES ON HER
“Wow” is what the photo caption should read for the photo of Bernice Henry Rathmell ’39 and the four girls on p. 34 [Fall 2010]. Bernice and I have been good friends and sorority sisters since we entered Bucknell as freshmen in 1935. When Bernice the drum major led the band into the stadium, the crowd would think, as one, “Wow.” She strutted with her head held high, and all eyes in the stadium were upon her. She was the epitome of college life.

Marion Stone Wright ’39
Hollidaysburg, Pa.

MAJOR MAJORETTE
I’d like to point out that Bernice was not only Bucknell’s first lady drum major, she was the first at any college. My father, Dr. Melvin Le Mon, was director of the band in the ’30s and came up with the idea of a drum majorette. Bernice and my mother, Jane Orwig Le Mon ’35, were close friends at Bucknell and stayed in touch with each other for many years. Jane passed away last year. I remember seeing a clip from The New York Times about Bucknell’s “girl drum major.” The article also compared the performances of the band with that of the football team.

Bill Le Mon ’54
De Witt, N.Y.

SHARED HISTORY
We received our 2011 Bucknell calendar and were thrilled with the historical photographs of both Bucknell and Lewisburg you incorporated into it. We enjoy reading and seeing images concerning the history of both. Thank you so much.

Anne Mitchell Murcek ’72
Lewisburg, Pa.

LGBT SUPPORT
I was very happy to read “The Legacy of a Gay Athlete” by Sean Coyne ’10 (“Last Word,” Summer 2010). The Safe Space program sounds terrific, as was Sean’s creation of the Safe Team program for athletic teams.

I attended Bucknell from 1974–78 and was a four-year member of both the swimming and water polo teams. I was the captain of both in my senior year — when I also won the A.E. Humphreys Multiple Sport Athlete Award. Most importantly, the teams were my family, and many of us remain close to this day. Unlike Sean, I did not come out as a gay man until after college. I remember how scared I was and how difficult it was to understand and to seek out support or guidance. Fortunately, things have improved since the ’70s, but dealing with one’s sexual orientation in an open, honest and healthy way can still be very difficult for many.

I am so proud of my alma mater for the tangible steps it has taken over the years to support its LGBT students and to encourage a more safe and inclusive campus community. I look forward to more articles.

Jay Fisette ’78
Arlington, Va.

RALLYING ALLIES
Thank you for publishing Sean Coyne’s piece on his experiences being a gay athlete at Bucknell and the importance of his political activism for his own — and the University’s — development. It is encouraging to see the magazine recognize the challenges with which so many Bucknell students struggle.

We started the Safe Space program in 2004 and in the years to follow, we gave presentations to sororities and fraternities, RAs, classes, faculty, administrators and residence halls about being gay (a better term would be “not being heterosexual”) at Bucknell, and how being a “safe space” made LGBT people and their allies more comfortable. I was so nervous standing in front of hundreds of my peers every month, telling them how hurt I was by the homophobia I felt at Bucknell — but I did it, alongside several other brave students — and I believe that it has made a tremendous difference. In my four years at the University, I saw huge strides in the campus climate towards a more inclusive, welcoming culture. It seems to me that things are getting better every year.

I want to commend the University administration for being open to finding ways to help LGBT students, the faculty and staff who serve as a huge support and resource to the students, the wonderful allies to the LGBT community and especially the courageous students who stand up for their right to feel safe and comfortable at the University. We should all know by now that it’s not acceptable for anyone to feel excluded or scared, and we must continue to fight for that position.

Alyssa Schneebaum ’06
Fresh Meadows, N.Y.

CALENDAR ERRATA
Thanks to Alan Raynor ’53 for pointing out an error in the 2011 calendar. The May photo shows a Commencement from the 1940s, not the 1950s. We apologize for this error.

ARE YOU BEYOND PAPER?
Do you love the printed word but hate the paper copy? Let us know, and we will take your name off of the distribution list for the print copy of Bucknell Magazine and send you a notice when each quarterly issue goes live online (Class Notes not included). E-mail: bmagazine@bucknell.edu.

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Inauguration of Bucknell’s 17th President
John Bravman embraces the past and looks to the future.

By Julia Ferrante

Bucknell University President John Bravman stood before an audience of hundreds of Bucknellians at the Weis Center for Performing Arts during his inauguration Sunday, Nov. 14, 2010, and challenged them to answer one question: “Who are we becoming?” The question is one that faculty, staff, students, alumni and other stewards of the University should continually ask as they seek to preserve Bucknell’s traditions while evolving with the times, he said.

“It is a question we inherit and answer not only for ourselves but also to those who shall inherit Bucknell from us,” Bravman said. “As you may have heard me say before, a university is one of the few institutions that we expect to endure in perpetuity. Our part in Bucknell’s life can only be brief against the backdrop of its continual re-creation, already 164 years in progress.”

Bravman’s address marked his inauguration as the 17th president of Bucknell. The celebration of the University’s academic excellence began on Wednesday with a series of academic talks and performances to highlight the creative and technical talents of Bucknell students, faculty and professional staff.

During the ceremony, which also was webcast live, Bravman stood with his wife, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering Wendelin Wright; their son, Cole; and Bravman’s sons, Christopher and Matthew, and pledged to “preserve, protect and abide by” the charter and bylaws of the University.

Chairman of the Board of Trustees Ken Freeman ’72, P’08 welcomed Bravman: “There is no doubt he will lead Bucknell in such a way that it advances as a strong and significant contributor to the lives of our students and the quality of society.”

The president encouraged the audience to consider Bucknell’s past as it contemplates its future. Ensuring the University remains a leader in higher education means anticipating and responding to changes in the economy,
information technology, global connections and demography while remaining open to new ideas, he said.

“I see a university that has moved with the times, and often ahead of them; that has had some of the proudest moments in its openness to new ideas; and that has demonstrated its capacity to lead where leadership is required,” Bravman said.

Building on that tradition, Bucknell continues to anticipate change and to prepare students to make a difference in an evolving world, in part by bringing in students from varying backgrounds through the Posse Scholars and Bucknell Community College Scholars programs and through civic engagement experiences such as the Bucknell Brigade to Nicaragua and the Katrina relief trip to New Orleans, Bravman noted.

In the past, University officials have made brave and unusual decisions to meet the needs of the world around it, he said. During WWII, Bucknell revised its academic calendar to allow students to finish their degrees in three years instead of four so that they could serve in the military. When the G.I. Bill was enacted, Bucknell allowed students whose education had been interrupted by war to complete their degrees at the University. As a result, in 1946, enrollment nearly doubled to 2,000 students, 1,200 of whom were veterans.

Bucknell consistently has expanded its curriculum to meet changing needs, Bravman noted. During the Industrial Revolution, engineering programs grew. More recently, neuroscience and biomedical engineering programs were added, and centers for environmental studies and civic engagement were established. The University is implementing a new College Core Curriculum in the arts and sciences.

Bravman commended Bucknell’s faculty members for their commitment to teaching and scholarship and for embodying “scholarly habits of mind” that require integrity, civility, fairness and honesty.

“We will set our sights high, and we will achieve the critical practical objectives that will shape the Bucknell of today and tomorrow, just as did those who came before us,” Bravman said.

Snap!
Faculty experts explain their research and teaching in record time.

“Read,” go. In six minutes or fewer, explain how “big lasers” are shining new light on the “tiniest stars.” Describe the “philosophy of waiting.” Or, tell us how your research became “a matter of life or death.” Bucknell faculty members from across disciplines discussed a range of such topics during a two-night set of quick and engaging “snap talks” that kicked off a series of events celebrating and leading up to the inauguration of John Bravman as Bucknell University’s 17th president on Nov. 14, 2010.

In planning the inauguration, President Bravman asked a committee of faculty to design several events that would highlight Bucknell’s academic excellence and the talents of its students and faculty. These included a panel discussion on the role of liberal arts in higher education, a student-faculty scholarship and research poster session, performances by students and faculty in music, theater and dance and a display of student art.

For the snap talks, faculty were asked to present on pedagogy or on their scholarship and research and to do so in six minutes each. The 17 talks, including one by President Bravman, were followed by lively question-and-answer sessions.

In “Engineering Design outside the Bubble,” Charles Kim, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, shared how student projects designed to help those struggling “to meet basic human needs” fostered deeper learning and a greater sense of civic responsibility.

Harold Schweizer, professor of English, in “A Philosophy of Waiting” explained that “waiting is an essential condition for ethical and aesthetic insight” and “therefore an integral part of a liberal arts education.”

In “Using Big Lasers to Study the Tiniest Stars,” Katelyn Allers, assistant professor of physics and astronomy, described how such technology was helping with the discovery and understanding of brown dwarf star twins.

And Tom Cassidy, associate professor of mathematics, talked about how his research evolved from studying abstract structures called non-commutative rings to analyzing something more tangible — demographics on mortality and population growth. Thus his talk’s title: “How My Research Became a Matter of Life and Death.”

—Tom Evelyn

Videos of the talks are available at www.bucknell.edu/snaptalks.
Early 2,000 alumni, students, faculty and staff reconnected on Bucknell’s campus Oct. 28–31, 2010, to celebrate the Orange and Blue at Homecoming. Many alumni leadership groups met and held events, including the Alumni Board, Black Alumni Association, Engineering Alumni Board and Association for the Arts. Faculty, alumni and students shared information on new department initiatives at Academic Village. More than 60 families participated in alumni admissions events for 8th- through 11th-graders.

Six were inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame: Rose Ewan, a coach and administrator at Bucknell for 25 years; Kirk Foulke ’62, a two-time All-American tackle and member of the 1960 Lambert Cup football team; David White ’83, a track and field walk-on who became one of the finest distance runners in school history; Jeff Hilk ’86, one of the all-time leading scorers in Bison water polo history; Charles Cole ’88, a dominant cross country and distance runner; and Lynnette McBride ’91, one of Bucknell’s all-time best women’s sprinters and long jumpers.

Additionally, four alumni were honored for their contributions to Bucknell and the world. Paul Wice ’64 received the Bucknell University Distinguished Citizenship Award (posthumously); Peter Kadens ’00 received the Bucknell University Distinguished Citizenship Young Alumni Award; Richard Humphrey ’74 received the Association for the Arts Academy of Artistic Achievement Award; and George Pierson ’84 received the Bucknell Engineering Alumni Association (BEAA) Distinguished Engineering Alumni Award.

See Homecoming slideshows at www.b-link.bucknell.edu.

Celebrating a Championship

Memories of one of Bucknell’s finest football seasons were revived at Homecoming 2010 as the University celebrated the 50th anniversary of winning the 1960 Lambert Cup, the first of two Eastern Small College championships earned by Bob Odell-coached teams.

The reunion brought together 30 players and coaches from a team that posted four shutouts and out-scored opponents 117-14 while closing a 7-2 campaign with five straight victories. In the ensuing 50 years, only one Bison team has won more games.

The celebrated season brought regional and national attention to Bison football, the latter mainly through the exploits of the late Paul Terhes ’61, a first-team Little All-America and All-East quarterback and the first in a long line of Bucknell athletes who have appeared in Sports Illustrated’s “Faces in the Crowd” feature.

Terhes, one of the finest Bison players ever, is joined in the Bucknell Athletic Hall of Fame by Odell and five teammates who were on hand for the celebration: Tom Alexander ’62, P ’87; Ron Giordano ’63; team captain Mickey Melberger ’61, G ’14; Dick Tyrrell ’63, P ’88 and Kirk Foulke ’62, who was enshrined at ceremonies that weekend. In addition, Rick Elliott ’61 was honored with the annual presentation of the Bison Club Award.

— Brad Tufts
Olympic hopeful Ariel Farrar-Wellman ’08 has lived and breathed competitive kayaking since she was 10, but her brief sojourn into rowing at Bucknell while studying history reaped unexpected rewards.

By Heather Peavey Johns

Q: You live at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Calif., to prepare for the 2012 Olympics. Just how grueling is your training schedule?

A: It’s a full-time job, but you could say that a regular 9-5 job is just as grueling. You spend eight hours a day working hard at whatever it is you do. Everybody works hard, I’m just lucky enough to be working really, really hard at something I’ve loved since I was 10 years old. I have the disadvantage of not being paid for it, but it’s still completely worth it.

Q: Why did you take a break from kayaking to row at Bucknell?

A: Kayaking is a lot like rowing; kayakers just face forward. Bucknell has a very good rowing program. I ended up having to stop rowing before my college career was over, which disappointed me, but I had a back injury that would have eliminated my chances of kayaking at the Olympics. I lived with the girls who were in my freshman boat for my entire four years. It was really great to have a coach and a team that supported what I was doing, even though there’s no such thing as a university kayaking program. This is as close as I could get.

Q: How did academics fit into your plan to become an Olympic sprint kayaker?

A: Bucknell has a very competitive academic atmosphere. Everyone is trying to be the absolute best in class, competing against their classmates. That’s exactly what you have to learn when you’re competing as part of a team. You have to know how to be competitive in something that you care a great deal about so you can achieve more than you would have ever thought possible.

Q: You want to compete in the four-person sprint kayaking team for the United States in 2012, but most of your training is done in a single. How does that fuel the competitive fire?

A: Kayaking is a very technical sport, and much of that is learned in the single. Competitiveness within a team is also a part of what promotes excellence throughout the team. It builds character to compete against someone who you are also rooting for.

For more information on Farrar-Wellman’s Olympic bid, search for “USA Women’s K4” at www.facebook.com.
Playwright Named Janet Weis Fellow

Edward Albee will examine the ‘American Scene’ at Bucknell.

By Kathryn Kopchik

Edward Albee, a three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and author of Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?, has been named the 2010 Janet Weis Fellow in Contemporary Letters at Bucknell University.

Albee, the first playwright to receive the award, will give a talk at 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 22, in the Weis Center for the Performing Arts at Bucknell. The event will be free and open to the public.

Albee describes his 28 plays, written over a period of four decades, as “an examination of the American Scene, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society, a condemnation of complacency, cruelty and emasculation and vacuity; a stand against the fiction that everything in this slipping land of ours is peachy-keen.”

Bucknell established the annual Janet Weis Fellow in Contemporary Letters in 2002 to honor and recognize individuals who represent the highest level of achievement in the craft of writing within the realms of fiction, nonfiction or biography.

The Air Out There, Here, Everywhere

Alumnus brings his award-winning one-man show to Bucknell.

By Kelly Anzulavich

The Common Air, a one-man play written by Alex Lyras ’92 and his writing partner, Robert McCaskill, opened in Los Angeles in 2008 and won a number of awards, including the LA Weekly award for best solo performance. The piece had an off-Broadway run in 2009, and in September 2010, Lyras performed the piece at the Tustin Studio Black Box Theatre.

The play explores themes from truth, secrets and reality to post-structuralism, chicken, technology and radicalization through six different characters, who are stranded at the JFK Airport during a potential bomb scare. Every character discusses his perceived reality, while the next character serves as a mirror of that narrative, spinning a strange, chaotic web of everyday human experience and connection.

Lyras, a philosophy major who wrote and directed his first plays as a member of Delta Upsilon, says, “I am still mining all that philosophy for the writing I do because those are the big ideas. I think that all writers are trying to say one thing clearly, over and over again.”

Paula Davis, chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance, says, “the performance of The Common Air at Bucknell provided a great opportunity for both faculty and students to see the current work of an alumnus who is creating challenging new forms of theatre. Students were inspired by both Alex Lyras’ performance and his workshop to think about ways in which they can invent and pursue their own careers in theatre and film.”

Lyras also has appeared in Showtime’s Californication and a number of films.
Expanding a Longtime Partnership

The Campus Theatre becomes an official part of the Bucknell campus.

By Julia Ferrante

Bucknell University and the Campus Theatre are expanding their longtime partnership to secure the future of the historic landmark on Lewisburg’s Market Street. For several years, the University has assisted and provided financial support to the Campus Theatre.

With the new arrangement, Bucknell will take formal financial responsibility for the theater building, while the Campus Theatre organization will maintain authority over the theater’s programming, including film schedule, events and other cultural offerings.

In partnership with the Campus Theatre LTD, the University is applying for state economic development grants that would pay for improvements to the theater and would continue to allow the theater to operate itself as an independent nonprofit organization.

To be eligible for these grants, the University must have a controlling ownership interest in the theater. The theater’s nonprofit community board will remain responsible for day-to-day operations.

“For years, the Campus Theatre and Bucknell have had a great working relationship that has benefited the entire community,” says Campus Theatre Executive Director Ellen Flacker-Darer. “The expanded partnership allows us to continue to pursue much-needed renovations so that the theater will continue to serve as an important cultural resource in the greater Susquehanna River Valley.”

The Campus Theatre partnership is part of a continuing effort of the University and Lewisburg to work together and improve the town-and-gown relationship. As part of that effort, the Barnes & Noble at Bucknell University bookstore opened this past summer.

Academic West

Five alumni wielded shovels, and President John Bravman drove a front-end loader to break ground on the infrastructure for Academic West’s South Farm Village site, part of the Campus Master Plan. Preliminary construction is slated for early spring.

For video of President Bravman’s earth-moving performance, see www.bucknell.edu/x65321.xml.
The Bucknell University School of Management will launch a new curriculum featuring four new majors in fall 2011. The majors are interdisciplinary, incorporating courses from across the University to prepare management majors to address the complex challenges of the 21st century.

“One of Bucknell’s strengths is the integration of traditional liberal arts and professional programs,” says Provost Mick Smyer. “The School of Management’s curriculum embodies this integration — both in the courses that the school offers and in its integration with offerings from throughout the College of Arts and Sciences.” This innovative approach to management education, he believes, is distinctive among undergraduate programs.

School of Management students in the Class of 2015 and beyond will be able to choose from:

ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
This program will prepare students to make sound financial and accounting decisions while also helping them to understand the broader economic and political contexts in which these decisions are made.

GLOBAL MANAGEMENT
Students will learn how to lead organizations in a world with increasingly complex flows of goods and capital. They will gain proficiency in another language and study the various dynamics that shape business in a global system.

MANAGING FOR SUSTAINABILITY
Students will understand the managerial challenges involved in realizing environmental, social and economic sustainability, from local to global levels.

MARKETS, INNOVATION AND DESIGN
This program looks at the creative, analytical and technical processes that result in the images, products and services that shape culture. Students will learn quantitative and qualitative techniques for identifying consumers’ needs, and they will gain experience transforming ideas into reality.

Each major leads to a bachelor of science degree in business administration. A core curriculum shared by all four majors aims to ensure that Bucknell management graduates are firmly grounded in the science of management and that they will be competent, creative, technically skilled, thoughtful and inspired.

SHORT STACK
Bucknell University engineers took third place in November’s national ChemE Car Competition in Salt Lake City in a test of the nation’s best to design, build and power a vehicle using alternative fuels and innovative materials — the highest finish since the competition started in 1999. Bucknell students took first place in four of the 10 poster competition categories.

The Bucknellian was awarded Gold Medal status for the fall 2009 run and the spring 2010 run by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA). The paper was evaluated on concept, presentation and general operations. Of a maximum score of 1,000, The Bucknellian received 947 and 953, respectively. There were 9,460 Gold Circle Awards entries.

Bucknell senior linebacker Travis Nissley ’11 was named a National Football Foundation (NFF) National Scholar-Athlete. He also was a finalist for the Campbell Trophy, recognizing the best scholar-athletes in the nation. As an NFF National Scholar-Athlete, Nissley will receive an $18,000 postgraduate scholarship. He is the second Bison to be an NFF National Scholar-Athlete, joining David Berardinelli ’93.
New Bucknellians on the Block
Alumni club events welcome recent graduates.

By Julie Dreese

“People kept asking me why everyone in the bar seemed to know each other,” says Cordy Elkins ’08, president of Boston’s Bucknell Club. The club’s fall 2010 welcome event for recent graduates attracted a crowd of more than 100 Bostonian alumni. “I’m pretty sure by 9:30 p.m. there wasn’t one person in the bar who had not gone to Bucknell,” says Elkins.

Across the globe, 42 Bucknell Clubs help alumni, students and friends of Bucknell network through local events within specific geographic regions. Each September, clubs organize welcome receptions for recent graduates. In 2010, more than 600 alumni across the country and around the world, from Boston to Bangkok, attended welcome events organized by 20 local Bucknell Clubs, doubling 2009’s participation.

The Bucknell University Alumni Association’s (BUAA) Board of Directors, the BUAA’s Clubs and Young Alumni Committee (CYAC) and the Council of Club Presidents served as co-sponsors of last year’s program. Thanks to new BUAA funding, local clubs were able to host welcome events on a larger scale. Working with Alumni Relations staff members Kim Thompson and Cheryl Kunkel, participating Bucknell Clubs welcomed recent graduates with appetizers and spirit packages of orange and blue pompoms, buttons and balloons. For Elkins’ Boston gathering, Thompson helped organize an online pre-registration and a growing menu of appetizers as the RSVPs poured in. “It was triple the attendance we have had for such events in the past, and we were extremely grateful to the Alumni Board for providing a round of appetizers,” says Elkins.

The welcome events have grown in popularity with local clubs, notes Paul Stratton ’87, co-chair of the Council of Club Presidents. “One reason is that the Alumni Board, specifically through the [CYAC], has been encouraging local clubs to hold events if there are sufficient number of new alumni moving into the area,” he says. The BUAA Board also helps the University and Bucknell Clubs organize the Nationwide Community Service events each spring, to correspond with National Volunteer Week.

For more information about regional clubs in your area, please visit the Classes, Clubs, Networks page in B-Link or contact Kim Thompson at kim.thompson@bucknell.edu or 570-577-2189.

Zartman Construction Inc. of Northumberland, Pa., won an Associated Builder & Contractors 2010 Excellence in Construction Award for the renovation of the historic downtown Lewisburg property that houses the Barnes & Noble at Bucknell University bookstore. The company took first place in the restoration and renovation category for the circa-1900 Market Street property.

Four Bucknell University teams battled head-to-head in the “Battle of the Brains” computer programming competition in November at Wilkes University in Scranton, Pa. Bucknell’s “Team” finished best — second among 25 local teams and 17th among 157 teams from the mid-Atlantic region. Bucknell will receive a plaque that will be placed in Dana Engineering’s front hallway.

The Bee’s Knees

Dancer and choreographer Kelly Knox looks to nature for inspiration.

By Barbara Maynard ’88

Associate Professor of Dance Kelly Knox revels in the creative cross-pollination of ideas that occurs at a liberal arts university. After reading in The New Yorker that honeybees are the only non-human dancers, she spent time with Bucknell’s honeybee expert, Associate Professor of Biology Elizabeth Capaldi Evans.

Capaldi Evans took her to an artificial colony. Knox then worked with nine students and her “talented design colleagues” to create a half-hour collage on all things bee, from the making of honey to colony collapse disorder (a mysterious plague decimating hives) to flowers. “I think it resonated with the audience because there was this factual world, this scientific world, behind the piece,” she says.

Before coming to Bucknell, Knox taught for two years at a conservatory in Turkey, where she learned how to train dancers for a professional career. Knowing how to keep students challenged while working at crucial but mundane drills has served Knox well at Bucknell, where she relishes the same interdisciplinary collaboration with her students that she enjoys with her colleagues.

“They might be classicists or scientists, and they can bring that into the creative process or into the classroom in a way that we can learn from each other,” Knox says. “I can use these other fields to make dance more exciting for them.”

Whether she’s working with colleagues, students or children, Knox loves and fosters a sense of community and shared accomplishment in her studio, where all dancers learn from each other. “Dance can be an empowering experience that resonates in other aspects of life,” Knox says. “Imagine people working together, learning from each other, cheering each other on as they develop and take risks, whether in a banking career or a relationship. Imagine that I get to do this for a living while wearing sweatpants and playing great music. Not a bad way to spend one’s life energy, right?”

FACULTY PROFILE

Chipper Dean

As much as psychologists would like to develop one model that applies to all behavior choices, heat-of-the-moment decisions probably have different factors coming into play than cold, light-of-day decisions. For instance, Assistant Professor of Psychology Chipper Dean says, the decision whether to have sex or whether to wear a bicycle helmet.

Current models of decision-making point to several factors that influence what an individual will do in a given situation. According to the theories of reasoned action and planned behavior, attitudes, social norms and self-efficacy all predict an individual’s intent to behave a certain way.

Intent is one thing; action is another. “The relationship between intent and behavior is not as strong as people would like it to be,” Dean says. To move the theory from predicting what an individual intends to do to what that person actually will do, two more factors have to be considered: environmental factors and skills and abilities.

Dean’s research focuses on understanding how all these factors determine why adolescents make risky health decisions. “Understanding which factors are most important for a given behavior could not only improve our theoretical understanding of health decision-making, but also could tell us how to help kids make better decisions,” he says. — Barbara Maynard ’88
Artistry On and Off the Court

Women’s basketball star has a balanced, extraordinary career as a student and an athlete.

By Adam Hinsbrey ’09

Forward Cosima Higham ’11 is co-captain and a key player on the women’s basketball team. She’s also a dean’s list student majoring in art history. Higham grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., in a family with an affinity for the fine arts. Her father teaches film and manages the theatre department at Poly Prep Country Day School; her mother designs costumes for Broadway shows and teaches costume design at Virginia Commonwealth University; and her brother is a sculptor. Higham’s passion for art is practically genetic.

She has been an ardent museum-goer all of her life. “There’s something about seeing a work of art up close,” she says. “It makes you connect to the piece.”

When she attended a summer sports camp at Poly Prep in the fifth grade, she connected to her own innate talent for basketball. Higham eventually led Poly Prep to four Ivy League basketball titles and four New York State Athletic Association of Independent Schools Athletic League championships. She was also a three-time All-Ivy League selection.

At Bucknell, Higham excels in her areas of passion. On the basketball court, she is known for her athleticism and rebounding and for dominating matchups against opposing teams’ forwards. In the 2009–10 season, she was third on the team in points at 8.8 per game and second in rebounds at 7.1 per game. As for art, Higham interned at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts this past summer. She hopes to find a full-time position in the education department of an art museum after she graduates. Like her family members, she expresses herself through painting.

Higham believes her experience at Bucknell has prepared her for the next step. “Being a student athlete has built a sense of personal responsibility in me,” she says. “It has taught me how to balance commitments, and I know that I am prepared for my future after graduation because of it.”
Civil Servants

Students inspire movement to restore manners.

By Gigi Marino

In the wake of disturbing national events involving bullying and discrimination, and increased attention to the social climate on Bucknell’s own campus, Michael Davis ’13 created a Facebook page called Bucknell’s Movement for Manners (M4M) with a group of like-minded friends. Davis points out that he had hoped to spark an initiative that would take on a life of its own, not start a student group that required organization. His success is measured in numbers. Within 24 hours of launching, M4M attracted 400 members; within a week, that number doubled.

“M4M is essentially an active petition,” says Davis. “When you join the movement it is assumed that you believe in the following four statements: We stand for a safe campus, both physically and emotionally. We stand for respecting others. We stand for treating others as we ourselves would like to be treated. We stand for taking responsibility for our words, and actions.”

Davis feels strongly that this movement should be student-driven. “I wanted my fellow classmates to see what an idea and some initiative can do for an environment,” he says. “I wanted people to know that there was a positive force against the negative. I think we succeeded in doing just that.”

To join M4M, you must be a member of Facebook. Search for M4M to bring you to the page.

STUDENT PROFILE

Paul Brazinski ’11

As a first-year student in Professor Kevin Daly’s introductory Greek civilization course, Paul Brazinski ’11 often told himself, “Someday, I’m going to be part of the archaeological dig at the Athenian Agora.” Less than three years later, he was at the birthplace of democracy, assisting with a dig. “To be a part of that, to be working where Socrates and Pericles once walked, was incredible,” he says. “We found a lot of pottery shards, some Byzantine coins and animal bones, and some days there would be special finds, too, like attic red figure pottery or Turkish pipes.”

Brazinski, a four-year offensive lineman for the Bison, selected Bucknell for a number of reasons — he liked the football team and its coaching staff, and he especially valued the emphasis they put on academics. He also took comfort in the fact that he would not have to select a major until his sophomore year. He need not have worried, though; he found his calling early on.

“I really enjoyed that first course, so I asked Professor Daly what it takes to become a classics professor,” Brazinski recalls. Following Daly’s advice, Brazinski has studied Latin and ancient Greek and has participated in digs in Italy as well as Greece. He is writing his honors thesis in classics about a Greek Orthodox church he learned about while studying in Greece his junior year. While in Greece he also volunteered at the Ancient Corinth Museum. He is now applying to graduate schools.

In addition to football, Brazinski’s eclectic mix of activities at Bucknell include dancing in the Choreographer’s Showcase, cofounding the Classics Club with Wenonah Nelson ’10 and serving on the University’s Committee of International Education. “I didn’t start dancing until I was in college, and I liked it so much that I kept studying ballet and jazz,” he says. “At Bucknell there are so many opportunities for new experiences.”

— Theresa Gawlas Medoff ’85, P’13

On location at the archaeological dig at the Athenian Agora.

LEFT: ROBERT LANDRY, RIGHT: COMPLIMENTS OF PAUL BRAZINSKI ’11

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David Ekedahl ’56, P’79, a retired General Electric global consumer finance chairman, is intrigued by environmental issues. He’s even more intrigued by the myriad academic approaches to the subject. To strengthen Bucknell’s resources in this area, he and his wife, Patricia Ekedahl P’79, recently established an endowed professorship. Peter Wilshusen, associate professor of environmental studies, was selected as the first recipient of the David and Patricia Ekedahl Professorship in Environmental Studies. The position provides him an annual stipend of $5,000 for three years.

“This was a great opportunity to support multidisciplinary learning as well as the Environmental Center,” says Ekedahl, a trustee emeritus. “I’m impressed with the faculty and their breadth of expertise and various skills, like social science, engineering and biology. We wanted to do something to help their projects advance a little bit faster.”

Provost Mick Smyer expressed gratitude for the Ekedahls’ generosity and foresight, noting the importance of endowed academic positions to the University’s future. “A partnership like this one is critical for our current and future faculty recruitment and retention efforts,” says Smyer. “We have a great pool of talent in environmental studies, an area that is increasing nationally. Having a named professorship, with the funds and honor that go with it, helps ensure that we have the resources to attract and retain the best possible teacher-scholars.”

Wilshusen, who joined Bucknell in 2002 and co-founded the Environmental Center, is a social scientist who focuses on environmental policy and planning. He is wrapping up a 10-year study of agrarian land use in Mexico. The professorship has already helped him transition to his current projects, which include...
teaching in the inaugural Semester on the Susquehanna program and initiating, with student researchers, a regional study of land-use planning.

“I’m very thankful for this award, which will support travel costs for my students and me and help to produce research grants,” says Wilshusen. “These can be leveraged into bigger funding for more projects involving more students. The impact of the professorship has great potential.”

Wilshusen was a natural choice for the appointment, says Smyer. “Peter embodies the intersection of scholarship and student learning,” he says. “[H]e is an acknowledged scholar in the international community of environmental studies, and he will provide his students with opportunities to work on environmental issues in a global context, both in class and in research apprenticeships.” Those students include David Manthos ’11, whom Wilshusen advised last fall on an independent project that examined the effect of development on a local stream.

“I’m looking forward to working with him this spring and creating a sustainability index that analyzes environmental policy of local governments in the Susquehanna watershed,” says Manthos, a geography major who plans to pursue his own career in academia. “Bucknell provides exceptional opportunities for undergraduates to be involved in the research community. It’s inspirational to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of environmental issues.”

The Ekedahl professorship takes full advantage of Bucknell’s interdisciplinary expertise in environmental studies, says Smyer, who added that the University’s work in this area is further distinguished by the fact that it has been largely driven by faculty. “It’s a gift that will continue to reverberate and have positive impact on the quality of our faculty,” he says. “Fifty years from now, it will still pay off.”

— Heather Peavey Johns

Johnny Picardo ’11 discovered his artistic passion at Bucknell.

A New Path
Family scholarship supports eclectic interests.

When he arrived at Bucknell, Johnny Picardo ’11 didn’t consider himself an artist. But it didn’t take long for him to realize his true passion. “I took an art class and found I was really passionate about art-making,” he says. “There are so many opportunities in the arts here, and I immersed myself in them when I got to Bucknell.”

A studio art and education major and co-captain of the track and field team, Picardo comes to Bucknell from Rochester, N.Y., with the help of the Oristaglio Family Scholarship. Established in 1999 by Stephen Oristaglio ’77, the scholarship is awarded to students with demonstrated financial need, with preference for varsity scholar-athletes who have an interest in the arts.

“Being a recipient of the Oristaglio Family Scholarship is a wonderful honor,” says Picardo. “It would be difficult for me to attend school and still be involved in extracurricular activities without such support.”

Oristaglio had students like Picardo in mind when he created the scholarship. “Financial need and a diversity of interests are the main criteria,” says the former Bison basketball player, who enjoys the arts (he started the Etruscan Press, a nonprofit publishing company, with classmate Phil Brady ’77) and began playing and recording music actively over the past decade. “A broad range of experiences has been valuable in my life, and it’s certainly a valuable part of a liberal arts education.”

Picardo credits support from his scholarship, the Bucknell Public Interest Fund (BPiP) and his professors for gaining confidence and experience in the art world. Picardo completed an Association for the Arts BPiP-funded summer internship last year at the Rochester Contemporary Art Center and has exhibited his work at the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art and the Center for Fine Art Photography in Colorado. He also works at the Samek Art Gallery on campus. “The gallery has really amazing shows every semester,” he says. “It’s a great resource for students.”

Picardo is applying to graduate school, where he hopes to use the tools he’s acquired at Bucknell to turn his passion for art into a profession. “I’ve realized that the path many artists take isn’t necessarily the path of a business or engineering major,” he says. “You have to make your own path.”
The Mind and the Muse

Reviews & Criticism

BOOKS

Peter Balakian ’73
Ziggurat
(University of Chicago Press)
Quoting Sir Leonard Woolley’s Ur of the Chaldees in the epic centerpiece of his new volume of poetry, Peter Balakian poses the question of the purpose of Ur-III ziggurats, or Mesopotamian towers, and whether they were inspired by new religious concepts or “merely the final stage of a long architectural development.” The imagery serves as an inspired portal for considering the significance of the World Trade Center bombing and September 11 on global and personal levels. Balakian similarly addresses Vietnam, Cambodia, Sarajevo and Armenia, stopping occasionally to observe personal experience and the concurrent artistic zeitgeist. Writer and human rights activist Carolyn Forché says of Ziggurat, “What Balakian has achieved here is a brilliant assimilation of the historical, philosophical, political and psychological.”

John Wheatcroft ’49
Telling Tales
(The Wessex Collective)
The title of Bucknell professor emeritus John Wheatcroft’s new book, Telling Tales, throws out several associations: oral traditions, telling lies, tattling, myth-making ... all of which the author plays off in 10 strikingly original short stories that bend the rules of fiction. The first and last are metafictional meditations on inspiration, voice, character and the creative process. They frame an interior of characters in times of war, social change and personal loss that variously make meaning as best they can. Soldiers, veterans, postal workers, rivermen and others are retrieved from anonymity and made remarkable through love and art. Wheatcroft delivers prose that is contemporary yet seasoned with traditions that reach back to the original urge to craft stories.

Nancy Keating ’75
Always Looking Back
(Purgaea)
Nancy Keating never let go of the inspiration of Bucknell’s poetry seminars. She graduated into advertising and journalism careers but returned to her creative roots in 2000, developing her poetry. The fruits of the last decade, many of which first appeared in literary journals, are collected in Always Looking Back, a volume that is at once a debut and a retrospective. The opening lines of the titular poem — “Weekends. I approach my yard with tools/and a mission, meaning to find:/Amelia Earhart. Meaning. Peace of mind./Bits of my lost selves” — become a gateway through which she explores memory and the overlooked details of everyday landscapes. Keating is enthralled with the power of poetry to express wonder, frustration, love and humor and wields it with confidence and energy.

John J. Kaminski ’96
Mista (Authorhouse)
“Ka-what? I ain’t sayin’ that.” Thus began John Kaminski’s teaching career in 2002 in the Twilight program in Jersey City, alternative evening education for the kids for whom regular school was not working. Kaminski, a product of the comfortable suburbs, came to Twilight not out of idealism but because he needed a job — and all he asked was to be addressed as Mr. Kaminski, not “Mista.” In his memoir by the unwanted name that stuck, he relates the daily battles and occasional triumphs of teaching English to students with backgrounds of unspeakable violence and poverty. Kaminski, who later transferred to a suburban high school, writes briskly and with candor, bringing the gritty realities and glimpses of possibility in inner city
followed, they endured many challenges to reconcile, but ... they are not proactive about their care. She learned this first-hand when she was diagnosed with a rare, fatal cancer and nearly underwent a grueling chemotherapy treatment. Only when she began asking questions and demanded second opinions did she learn that she was not sick. In You Bet Your Life!, she draws a dark picture of a dysfunctional system driven by profit in which the patient inevitably loses. She recommends strategies for communicating with doctors, mastering insurance plans, researching and keeping track of medical records. Ultimately she recommends the power of preventative health to limit the need for medical care in the first place.

Lois Huffines
Lewishburg (Arcadia Publishing)
With historic homes and buildings that stretch from the banks of the Susquehanna River to the Bucknell campus, Lewishburg seems frozen in time. In fact, it is a dynamic community that has seen many changes since its founding in the late 18th century, as attested to in the profile produced as part of Arcadia Publishing’s popular “Images of America” series. Local historians Lois Huffines, professor emerita and former Bucknell administrator, and Richard Sauer, an author and museum director, set narrative to previously unpublished photographs from private collections and local historical organizations. The pages document the rise of the canal industry, the railroad, Bucknell University and the nearby federal penitentiary. Market Street changes from a dirt road to its 21st century face, and is seen in times of flood, fire and celebratory parades. Lewishburg has welcomed the world but keeps its small town charm.

Marlin Thomas ’61
Looking thru Lewey’s Lens 100 Years Ago (Aardewark Global Publishing)
Marlin Thomas moved away from his native Central Pennsylvania to Virginia after graduating from Bucknell, taking with him a trove of local historical treasure: original photographic postcards produced by his father, Lewis Donaldson “Lewey” Thomas (1883–1949). From 1906 to 1915, Lewey produced photographs of local scenes and residents using a 1903 Eastman view camera with glass dry plate negative film. Realizing that many of the subjects have passed on or vanished, Marlin published 68 of the pictures. He added historical notes on the images and the complicated process by which the pictures were produced, assuring that this part of the American experience will not be forgotten.

Paul Heimer ’93
Li’l Earth (Maple Road Publishing)
Paul Heimer was inspired to become a publisher after seeing the text and watercolors that his wife, Patricia Solner Heimer, created to explain the solar system and environmental issues to children. Their collaboration has produced Li’l Earth, a book of uncommon quality for children featuring sophisticated illustrations of the planets even as the text personifies them. At bedtime, thirsty and itchy with overpopulation, Li’l Earth can’t sleep, so he and best friend Moon set off to visit all the others, who gently but factually explain why they cannot help. Fortunately, the Sun has some timely advice.
Vineyard manager and owner Aline Baly ’02 follows practices set forward centuries ago.

By Brett Tomlinson ’99

Illustration by Greg Becker
Château Coutet sits at the center of a 95-acre plot in the countryside southeast of Bordeaux, not far from the point where the Ciron River meets the Garonne, an artery that flows from the heart of France’s wine country to the Bay of Biscay. For centuries, wine connoisseurs have treasured the region’s vines, including the ones that surround this 13th-century stone house. They bear the Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle grapes that supply a livelihood for Aline Baly ’02, her winemaking family and about two dozen year-round employees.

Baly, who joined the family business full-time after earning her MBA at Northwestern University in 2008, walks the two-mile perimeter of the property each day she is on site. Sometimes she slips out in the morning, when the fog settles so thick and low that it makes the local roads nearly unnavigable by car. On other days, she takes her break after sharing a family-style lunch with the workers who tend the vines. Occasionally, she saves the walk for dusk, when the sun casts a golden glow over the estate — a light that reminds her of watching sunsets from the top of Freas Hall.

“Every day looks different,” Baly says of the vineyard. “It’s growing, and it’s beautiful. I feel very, very lucky every day that I walk through it.”

While relishing the natural splendor, Baly also feels the stress of a winemaker. She’s attuned to all the things that must go right to make a memorable vintage — particularly for a Barsac, the sweet, golden appellation that Coutet produces. To grow grapes with the right sweetness and composition, vintners in the Sauternes region rely on Botrytis cinerea, a naturally occurring fungus nicknamed the “noble rot,” to attack the vines and drain some moisture to sweeten the grapes before they are harvested.

Baly serves as the face of Château Coutet’s brand for much of the year, traveling to tastings in Asia, North America and Europe to share her wine’s virtues with restaurateurs, journalists and wine enthusiasts. But listening to her explain the Botrytis, it is clear Baly is more than just a marketer.

While the vines need moisture to get the fungus started, she says, too much rain can wash it away. And Botrytis is “a bit of an anarchist,” she adds, growing with little regard for consistency. Pickers have to pass through each row of vines several times, selecting grapes by hand. The process stretches from late August, when the fog and fungus first settle in, to mid-November, when the last grapes are picked. For parts of that time, Baly dons a green jumpsuit to help manage the harvest teams.

“People say, ‘Wow, you’re in the wine business — there’s so much luxury,’ and there are certain sides of my job that are fantastic,” Baly says. “I get to go to fantastic restaurants and meet individuals who love wine and have traveled so much and seen so much. But the other part of it is that I’m in agriculture. If I have bad weather conditions, I don’t have wine. And I often feel like my job is really to link agriculture to this wine, this luxury good.”
To those who knew Baly at Bucknell, a life in the wine industry might seem like a curious path. On campus, she studied economics and international relations and lived in the Global College. She also was active in CALVIN & HOBBES, the University’s substance-free activities group. While she now drinks wine regularly, Baly notes that like everyone in the industry, she does her share of tasting and spitting as well.

Born in France to French parents, Baly spent nearly all of her childhood in the United States, after her father’s job had been transferred to Massachusetts. But at home, Baly’s mother aimed to maintain a sense of tradition and heritage. The family spoke French around the house and dined on a mostly French diet. There were a few exceptions, like American-style turkey dinners on Thanksgiving, accompanied by a bottle of Château Coutet.

Baly spent summers in France visiting relatives, including her uncle and paternal grandfather, who ran the Château Coutet vineyard. Her grandfather had come to the wine business relatively late in life, purchasing Château Coutet as a retirement venture a few years before Aline was born. But the vineyard itself has a deep heritage, with wine production on the estate dating back to the 1640s. Thomas Jefferson wrote a glowing review of Coutet in his wine journal,

“I often feel like my job is really to link agriculture to this luxury good.”
calling it the best Sauternes from the Barsac region. In 1855, the vineyard was designated “first growth” in an influential classification of French wines that still holds sway today.

Baly knew about Château Coutet’s heritage and enjoyed her trips to the vineyard, but she hadn’t given much thought to joining the family business. Her parents wanted her to follow her own path, and she did, working for a life-sciences company after Bucknell and then returning to business studies at Northwestern’s Kellogg School of Management to expand her marketing and operations skills.

At Kellogg, Baly began to think seriously about working for Château Coutet, believing that she could add a new perspective to the internationally distributed brand. So she arranged to spend a summer in France, learning the ropes alongside her uncle Philippe to find out whether their management styles were compatible. (Baly’s father, Dominique, also helps run the business but continues to live in the United States.) After that trial run, Baly went back to Northwestern for her second year and made plans for a more permanent return to France.

Just a few days after finishing business school, Baly arrived at Château Coutet wearing sneakers and a backpack, looking very much like an American college student on a semester abroad. “I unpacked my suitcase, repacked my suitcase and was off to Russia for my first tasting mission,” she says. With help from a few new friends, she was able to find her way in the wine industry relatively quickly.

Today, Baly’s work blends Old World tradition with a modern business sense. At French vineyards, workers care for the vines by hand and rely on dry farming (no irrigation). Save for a few conveniences like stainless-steel tanks and mechanized wine presses, the winemaking process at Château Coutet is much the same as it was three centuries ago. In other aspects, though, Baly and her family take advantage of 21st century perks like a worldwide distribution network and “just in time” labeling. (Each importing country has its own standards for what information must appear on the label.)

In her marketing efforts, Baly has used online social networking to spread the word about her wine. She invites touring wine enthusiasts to Château Coutet via Twitter and sets up face-to-face meetings through Facebook during her travels. Through more formal channels, she’s helped Château Coutet earn praise from mainstream magazines and news organizations. In the last year alone, the brand has been spotlighted by Food & Wine, Wine Spectator, Bloomberg.com and the Associated Press.

In interviews and casual conversation, Baly frequently is called upon to recommend food pairings for Coutet, and though she’s only been in the business for two years, she delivers with the confidence of a seasoned professional. Traditions vary, she explains. In France, Château Coutet is often served with foie gras; in the United Kingdom, it’s paired with Christmas pudding. But today’s wine lovers are moving away from these conventions, Baly says, exploring dinner options that work well with a Sauternes, such as poultry or sweet crustaceans, like lobster.

Roasted turkey is a personal favorite for Baly, who encourages people to look past the boundaries of tradition and experiment with different combinations. “It could be something you enjoy, just because of your own individual tastes,” she says. “Tasting is very much an individual sport.”

Brett Tomlinson ’99 is an assistant editor at the Princeton Alumni Weekly and a frequent contributor to Bucknell Magazine.
GOING WITH THE GRAIN

A third-generation leather craftsman walked away from Wall Street for the family shoe-repair business 20 years ago and hasn’t looked back.

In more than two decades working for his family’s leather- and shoe-repair business, Tony Rago ’81 has developed a handful of guiding principles. Take pricing, for example: His philosophy comes from his father, Tom Sr., who taught him to do what it takes to keep customers coming back — repeat business is more important than haggling over the cost of one job. For customer service, Rago relies on a loose adaption of the golden rule: “Treat people the way that you would want to be treated if you were on the other side of — the counter.” And in addition to the overarching goals of quality and service, he says, Rago Brothers puts a premium on speed and efficiency. There’s no money to be made from leaving unrepaired orders on the shelf.

BY BRETT TOMLINSON ’99 • ILLUSTRATION BY GREG BECKER
To hear Rago tell it, there was no grand plan behind his move into the shoe-repair business.

But as with any rules, there are exceptions — namely, anything from Rago’s own family. Somewhere in the shop, a favorite pillow awaits a new button, and a couch cushion, splitting at the seam, remains untouched, collecting dust. It’s gotten so bad that Rago’s wife started filling out order tickets for her shoes so they would get processed in the customer queue.

So that old saw about the cobbler’s family having no shoes? Rago lets out a deep laugh. “Yeah, they might,” he says. “They might.”

Adages aside, Rago is far from the shoe-maker of yesteryear. Gregarious and energetic, the barrel-chested one-time football player paces through his family’s shop and its surrounding neighborhood in sturdy, well-shined shoes, sharing smiles and gravel-voiced greetings with nearly every person he sees. Rago’s daily routine includes fielding phone calls from around the country through a Bluetooth earpiece while supervising about 55 employees in the three-story Morris-town, N.J., headquarters that his business calls home.

In Rago’s youth, he says, the shop seemed dark and uninviting. But today, thanks to a recent renovation, it is bright, ventilated and remarkably calm, given the amount of activity inside. At stations crowded with well-worn metal tools and small jars of polish and preservatives, the staff works with a quiet diligence, repairing shoes and boots in one room and refinishing purses in another. In the basement, a third team packages finished orders in plastic bags and loads them into boxes for shipping.

Tony and his brother, Tom Jr., are the third generation of their family to manage Rago Brothers. On the wall near the counter, a grainy black-and-white photo shows their grandfather and great uncle, two young men from the south of Italy, proudly posing in front of the shop they opened in 1911. In the last century, the shop has moved about 20 paces to the north, and in the last two decades, it has rapidly transformed its mission, developing a specialty in repairing high-end shoes and designer handbags.

Take a pair of Ferragamo shoes or a Christian Dior purse to your local retailer for repairs, and within a few days the item will find its way here. Rago Brothers has exclusive repair contracts with both brands, and a handful of others, along with less formal arrangements with more than 800 individual retailers. Shoe and leather repair has become something of a lost
art as shoes have gotten less expensive and more easily replaced, and Rago Brothers aims to hire the best craftsmen available. Using that skilled labor pool and a sophisticated computer tracking system, the company repairs and ships up to 1,500 orders per day, in addition to walk-in jobs for local clients.

To hear Rago tell it, there was no grand plan behind his move into the shoe-repair business. As a kid, he never romanticized the job. He’d seen his dad return home at night, exhausted and sweaty, the thighs of his pants caked in glue.

For the six siblings in Tony Rago’s generation, college was the goal, and college meant a broader range of opportunities. By the time he reached his senior year as an economics major at Bucknell, Rago had chosen finance as his destination. For eight years, he worked as an options trader on Wall Street. But when his company was sold, he found himself out of a job.

With a family history in small businesses, Rago thought about opening one of his own — a hardware store, maybe. In the meantime, he began hanging around the shoe-repair shop with his father and brother. As they worked, Rago watched. Occasionally, he saw little ways to do things better, and he didn’t see much sense in keeping them to himself. The backseat driving started to get on his brother’s nerves. “My father said, ‘Listen, you either come here and work or stay out of here. Stop bugging your brother,’” Rago recalls. It was an easy choice.

At the time, the shop relied entirely on local clients. But that started to change one day when a woman came in with a high-end pocketbook, hoping to have it refurbished. Rago Brothers made the well-worn purse look new again, and a day after picking it up, the woman, who managed a store at the nearby Mall at Short Hills, returned with another pocketbook and a message: If you can come to the mall, about 20 minutes away, we’ll have more orders for you.

Seizing the opportunity, Rago Brothers became the go-to repair outfit for a handful of retailers. As store managers moved to other malls, they carried their loyalty with them, sending handbags and shoes to Morristown from around the country.

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Seizing the opportunity, Rago Brothers became the go-to repair outfit for a handful of retailers. As store managers moved to other malls, they carried their loyalty with them, sending handbags and shoes to Morristown from around the country. Tony and Tom Jr. worked late into the night to keep up with the orders and expanded their workforce as the company steadily grew.

By 2004, Rago Brothers had a handful of exclusive deals with designers and a growing list of clients. But everything changed in March of that year, when a catastrophic fire at the shop threatened to shut down the company.

More than six years later, Rago still cannot talk about the fire without getting choked up. As he gathers himself and tells the story, though, it becomes clear that the family’s most trying hour also was its finest. Watching the fire department fight the flames, Tony and Tom Jr. decided almost immediately to open a temporary shop, borrowing an old carriage house behind a doctor’s office nearby.

The next day, scores of people in Morristown helped the Rago brothers get back to work. Family members, friends and customers started building shelves and counters, tiling the floor, painting the walls and wiring the building for computers. Neighboring businesses and clients from the mall sent food for the volunteers. A local man loaned sewing machines, unprompted. Even the local government pitched in, providing speedy approval for permits. It was, in the words of one member of the local board of freeholders, the New Jersey equivalent of an Amish barn-raising.

“We had nothing,” Rago says. “We watched the building burn down that morning, and with the help of everyone, we opened up next door 36 hours later. It was incredible.” Two years later, the company returned to its former location in a refurbished and redesigned shop.

For a man surrounded by shoes and accessories that retail for thousands of dollars, Rago maintains a distinctly working-class measure of success. One of his greatest moments, he says, was seeing his parents react to seeing the company’s new home, which included a small office not far from the counter. “My mom told me, ‘I never thought I’d be able to come down to this shop and sit in an office,’” he says. “That made me so proud.” Being in the office is part of Rago’s job, but he seems happiest at the counter, working with local customers and immersing himself in the tiniest details, like dissecting the best way to take an inch out of a snakeskin belt without changing the contours of the ends or leaving a visible seam. A craftsman with a knack for solving problems, he revels in some of the strangest requests that have crossed the counter: replacing accordion straps, repairing a leather elephant or re-lining kneepads for a high school basketball player.

A few years ago, one loyal client brought Rago an antique fireplace screen — a bit of a head-scratcher for a leather specialist. But Rago broke it down to its component parts and found a way to make it look new again. He sent the bronze parts to a plating expert in Rhode Island. He asked a cousin to refinish the screen at his auto body shop. When the pieces were ready, his staff reassembled the screen. Just another day at the shop.

“Send it to me,” Rago says with a smile. “People come to Rago’s because they know we can fix anything.”

Brett Tomlinson ’99 is an assistant editor of the Princeton Alumni Weekly and a frequent contributor to Bucknell Magazine.
Land I

A young writer journeys to Italy in search of a connection to

BY CARA MARIA CAMBARDELLA ’08, M’10 • ILLUSTRATION BY GREG BECKER
Recognized
her family’s history.

White June hail pinged off the twin glass doors in front of the small train station in Dicomano, Italy, a town of 5,000 people, 30 kilometers east of Florence.

A group of 10 or 12 rain-soaked travelers stood waiting in the gray lobby, watching the water pour and whip with the rare black gusts of a summer storm in Tuscany.

Christina, one of the two owners of the raspberry farm my boyfriend and I were headed toward, met the two of us there that day. For what seemed like hours,

we stood quietly together by the glass, silently watching and listening,

waiting for the pounding waves of Tuscan summer rain to ebb.
Last May, I graduated from Bucknell with a master’s degree in English. For the two years of my graduate study, I researched and wrote about my Italian great-grandmother’s life, attempting to name what there is to name in memory, family stories, documented history. I remember her — four feet tall, white-haired, black-eyed, with golden, olive skin, the same as every other 80-year-old Italian woman I have ever known. She loved me with an old-world fierceness I distrusted, and yet I intently watched her, studied her, felt drawn to her. When I was a toddler, my nonni mesmerized me: she was at once familiar and foreign — one of my mothers, my supposed protectors, yet intimidating, unnerving. Her grasp was firm, her face was as serious as mine was around her. In photos and home videos I watch now, I see that she looked as bewildered at my youth as I was at her old age.

For my thesis, I wrote about my great-grandmother’s history, her immigration from Campania, Italy, her difficult childhood; I wrote about my grandmother’s story, and my mother’s story; I wrote about my own experiences traveling around the world, where I found figures of mothering and feminine images in unexpected places — Thailand, India, Egypt. But at the end of spring, in my writing, and in my life, one essay was still missing. I had to experience my great-grandmother’s world. I had to work the land in Italy the way she had done as a younger woman. I wanted to dig into the same ground she dug. I needed to feel Italy’s dirt deep beneath my fingernails. In early June, I traveled to a small, organic raspberry farm in Tuscany, the closest thing I could find, 80 years later, to return to.

My nonni grew up farming fig and olive trees within the agricultural triangle made by the southern cities of Caserta, Naples and Avigliano. Without money or resources, she raised her two younger siblings after her father died and her mother became deathly ill. As an older woman, my great-grandmother hated to remember her younger life — that time and place in which she first learned the gnaw and struggle of living that she would carry with her forever. “I work all’a time,” she would tell my mother. “All’a time I work. Up on the stone. No shoes. No elettricitá.

No thing.” My great-grandmother picked coal as a little girl, gathered water, worked the fields, chopped wood, cooked, cleaned, raised her

“She loved me with an old world
sister and brother and nursed her dying mother. In Carbondale, Pa., decades later, my mother would ask questions of her increasingly frustrated grandmother. “You’ll never know,” she told my mother repeatedly. Telling our family only the framework of her life in Italy, my great-grandmother must have been able to remember only pieces of a childhood working in the mountains. I imagine she could bear to tell no more than displaced fragments.

At the age of 24, my nonni left her family’s farm in the hills of Campania for a husband and a small house in Carbondale, the town in which she lived for 60 years. Now, at 24, I am the same age she was when she left Italy. Now, in the midst of my own becoming, I hold an even greater fascination and curiosity about her than I did when I was a child. I went to Italy in search of the details and landscapes she refused to remember — the memories that may have made her feel sad, empty, nostalgic, resentful. I hoped in traveling to discover a little more of her history, a few more details of her lost stories.

On our second day in the mountains, we walked a quarter mile to see what Christina had described as a small overlook — a “pretty little walk.” Bare and vertical, a narrow climb straight up led to what seemed to be a stage wide enough for only one of us to stand. I put one foot cautiously in front of the other, never looking down or beyond, thinking of all the things I had ever heard about overcoming a fear of heights, a fear of conquering, a fear of success, one foot and then the other. I slipped once, caught myself on the rocky path, and eventually ascended the cima. The breeze kicked. I felt the ground ease level with my hips. I knew there was nowhere else to go but down or off the edge, so I raised my eyes from the path. Knees weak, breath shallow, stomach in my chest and bowels at once, I looked out onto a panorama of the distant, winding road which took us from the city to that horizon, split in places by the crests of mountain waves, the roofs of Christina’s house, the storm rolling away across the fields on either side of our cabin, the gardens, the terracotta — shimmering joyously against the moon’s reflection on the nearby water, for love of youth and desire for connection.

In my memory, I seem to leap, plunge miraculously straight off of that mountain top into the raspberry fields below. A sharp scene change of a grand panoramic vision to the acuteness of concentrated work. Days after that first day on the cima, my knuckles throbbed and my skin peeled from weeding. Fingers and fingernails, knees and feet, a sore back from mornings spent working in the fields. My boyfriend uprooted huge parasitic vines. And I, covered in dirt and sweat, forearms stinging from raspberry thorns, paused every once in a while to allow the overwhelming thought of my great-grandmother and her young life’s work to settle, or pass.

The work I did was nowhere near equal to the work to which my great-grandmother was bound. But as I hiked those mountains, dug in that soil, felt that sun on my neck, breathed that mountain air, spoke and listened to her language, I felt as though I was completing something bitterly, painfully abandoned 80 years ago. She left that landscape at 24; I found it at 24. When I was a young child, my great-grandmother pulled me unwillingly into her, and quietly, forcefully, adored me — my youth, my privilege. I feared her; I ran from her. For the past two years I asked questions about her life, gathered fragments about her world. Eighteen years after she died, I traveled to her country, stood on top of her mountains, dug fiercely into her soil, spoke her language, cooked her food and felt her still pulling me, her tired hands forever urging me closer.

I didn’t travel this summer to discover any simple truth behind the disjointed, ever-changing stories my family recounted of my great-grandmother. I went to Italy to further detail what I already knew about our family’s heritage. I experienced the big cities, the northern countryside, the Tuscan mountains, the southern oceans, the seaside towns. I will never completely understand my great-grandmother, or the life she left. I will never have access to her world. But her younger life became clearer with every experience I encountered, every cracked tile pieced together with her story’s grand mosaic in my mind, every meal of minestrone, every new landscape. Every conversation I had with an old, weak-voiced woman at midnight about where to buy bread gave me one more part of Italy, one more image about my great-grandmother, one more image, one more piece. As I learned about Italy, I learned about my inheritance, my heritage, my family and myself. At the end of the summer, after farming, after almost everything, that weak-voiced woman, whose name I never learned, who lived downstairs in our apartment by the Adriatic, patted my face with hands as soft and small as a child’s when I asked where I could find bread. She answered me in a gentler way than my great-grandmother ever did, with familiar eyes — eyes I recognized — shimmering joyously against the moon’s reflection on the nearby water, for love of youth and desire for connection.

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Celebrate
Festive wreaths adorn the Rooke Chapel doors to welcome Bucknellians to the Bucknell Candlelight Christmas service.

Photograph by The Wild Studio
You can download this and other campus beauty photos at www.bucknell.edu/bmagazine.

If you would like a reprint of this photo or the photo on the back cover, please e-mail fullframe@bucknell.edu with your name and address, and we will send you a complimentary 8x10 photo.
Owen Murnane '54 and I were struggling with the same problem as we drove down the George Washington Parkway to Arlington National Cemetery for the funeral of classmate and SAE fraternity brother Fred Locke '54. We knew that Fred’s family would want stories of his life at Bucknell. The problem was that we had no stories, and that worried us. I searched my memory for an anecdote, something that I could say, yes, that was typical Fred Locke. But all we could offer was that we lived together for four years, knew little about Fred’s outstanding accomplishments as a soccer player and that he was quiet and unassuming, modest and stoical, with strongly held opinions which he kept mostly to himself.

Now Fred, who was so modest and secretive about his athletic achievements at Bucknell, was being honored posthumously for service to his country and as a recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross. We had difficulty reconciling the young Fred Locke we remembered lounging on one of the ancient leather sofas at the fraternity house, grinning sardonically while watching the antics of the less mature brothers, with the heroic Marine he became. The Marine who, under near impossible conditions, in “excruciating pain,” with blood on his visor obscuring his vision, wrested the controls from the mortally wounded pilot and safely landed his helicopter at Da Nang hospital, saving the lives of his remaining crew.

When did Fred acquire the personal qualities for heroic action? Perhaps those values had grown in him in the intervening years?

Lieutenant Colonel Locke, Vietnam hero and graduate of Bucknell University, was finally laid to rest among the other heroes in a place that “represents the soul of America,” and finally, I understood. It was futile to try to remember some conspicuous act from his undergraduate days that would have given a clue to his later heroics. It was dead wrong to assume that somewhere between Bucknell and that fateful day over Quang Nam province Fred had received a sudden injection of heroic characteristics. I know they had always been there.

I imagine that in the critical moment of Fred struggling to regain control of the wildly spinning helicopter, he remained the quiet, unassuming man I remember from our college days, but also a man faced with the most difficult of circumstances. Duty called and he answered. As a Marine officer, the ultimate private man responded with courage and honor. I finally realized the makings of a hero: One who sees his or her duty and fulfills it, without question. The more difficult the situation, the more important is the obligation to duty. Fred’s resolute determination to do his duty had led him to his heroic acts.

Fred Locke had arrived at the University knowing instinctively what was important. His time at Bucknell nurtured that sense of duty through his athletic and academic endeavors, which was sharpened and redefined with the added responsibility of combat command. The intervening years had not molded Fred to prepare him for that fateful day over Vietnam. He always had the capacity for heroism.

Fred’s resolute determination to do his duty had led him to his heroic acts.”

In 1929, Wall Street crashed. Herbert Hoover became president. And 16-year-old Fannie Wood entered Bucknell.

Fannie Wood Brown ’33 loves to share stories of meeting friends at Bechtel’s for buttermilk, skating on the frozen Susquehanna, listening to live jazz at fraternity dances, and wearing high heels and stockings to class.

“Bucknell has always been part of my life,” says Fannie, whose parents were the first of four generations to attend the University.

Fannie and other family members established the Thomas ’05 and Blanche Stoner Wood ’05 and son, 2nd Lt. James Wood ’43, Scholarship, to memorialize her brother, who was killed in WWII, and her parents. The scholarship was partially financed with gift annuities Fannie funded for her husband, their children and their spouses. Now, just as Bucknell has always been a part of Fannie’s life, the Wood family will always be a part of Bucknell.

To learn how you can honor family and friends with a gift that pays income for life, please contact Kathy Graham, Interim Executive Director of Development and Director of Gift Planning, at 570-577-3607.