Write of Passage

The admissions essay.
WHO BRINGS BUCKNELL TO YOU IN 2014?

WE DO.

JOIN PRESIDENT JOHN BRAVMAN, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEER LEADERS AT EVENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO CELEBRATE THE LAUNCH OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY

FEATURING AMAZING STUDENTS, FACULTY AND FRIENDS

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Eternal Spring

Winter has arrived, and with it we have bid goodbye to another season and await with warm anticipation the next. These seasonal shifts remind us that, like the weather, our students are constantly changing, their minds and lives emerging before our eyes as they move through their Bucknell days. Their ceaseless energy and growth make our work as educators both challenging and rewarding.

“Your days are short here,” Adlai Stevenson once wrote of college life. “These are the last of your springs.”

But at a university, at our University, there is truly only one season — an eternal spring. For if spring is the season of new life, new opportunities, new awakenings, we must recognize that our mission at Bucknell, played out each and every day, has as its focus the lives of our young men and women.

At an institution that has already seen 167 annual cycles, and that expects to see well more than 167 to come, we recognize that our job as a faculty and staff is to awaken in our students the fullness of their best, most authentic selves. Our goal as the changes ebb and flow at Bucknell is to inspire their minds, lift their spirits and empower them to direct their passions where the greatest wish of their hearts longs to take them.

We will not always do everything right. But we as a faculty and staff will always try to do our best to live up to our students’ greatest dreams for themselves. As a new year begins, that work is reinvigorated by our students’ return to campus and the reminder of the precious gift of their greatest selves that is placed in our trust. We believe in them. We know that our parents and alumni make everything possible. And we welcome this new season in the lives of the students we are all proud to call our own.

John Bravman, PRESIDENT
GIS IN THE COURTROOM
I just read the article on GIS in the latest issue [Fall 2013]. I was excited to hear that Bucknell has hired a GIS specialist and that the technology is spreading like wildfire across multiple academic disciplines.

I noticed that Professor [Ben] Marsh’s work has been used in lawsuits to great effect. You may be interested to know that the technology is being used close to home in what may be an unexpected application: criminal prosecutions.

I majored in chemistry with a minor in classics and work as an assistant district attorney prosecuting criminal cases in Williamsport, Pa., where I have found great use for GIS technology in my profession. We have been using GIS specialists as witnesses at criminal trials. Specifically, we have been relying on spatial geographic analysis of wireless cell phone signals to approximate the locations of suspects relative to a given crime scene. It is fascinating to note that in our field, GIS intersects with criminal law, geography and electrical engineering. The experts we work with use ArcGIS for mapping. It turns out that when criminals give an alibi, they instinctively try to put themselves as far away from the crime scene as possible.

In the latest trial, a brutal home invasion burglary, we were able to disprove the suspect’s alibi location using GIS technology. We’ll be using the same technology in an upcoming attempted murder trial where the suspect again has an alibi several counties away from the scene of the crime.

Martin Wade ’06
Williamsport, Pa.

REVEALING ROTH
My son is a 2007 graduate, and the recent alumni magazine was sent to my house, where I saw the article on Philip Roth’s ’54, written by Jane Brown Maas ’53 [Fall 2013]. It was great — wise, funny and just this side of irreverent. At least to me, it was far more revealing than Roth’s recent profile in The New Yorker. Maas may be an octogenarian, as she says, but she has a mighty young heart.

Visiting my son at Bucknell, I was always struck by the fact that I never heard a mention of Roth as perhaps Bucknell’s most distinguished alumnus, except for Christy Mathewson 1902. I assumed, because of then-prevailing anti-Semitism — and also because, other than Roth’s later Indignation, I saw nothing about Bucknell in Roth’s novels — that his experience at Bucknell was not a positive one. Your article puts that in a very different light.

Len Levitt P’07
Stamford, Conn.

PHILIP AND JANE
I cannot remember when I read a more interesting or well-written article in Bucknell Magazine than I did last night reading about Jane Brown Maas’ friendship with Philip Roth. It was wonderful! When I started college, Roth’s book Goodbye Columbus, published in the ’60s, was still tremendously powerful.

I met Maas at an event celebrating 125 Years of Co-Education a few years ago at Homecoming. We both were among the keynote speakers. I gave a speech about Bucknell and how its culture of treating women equally in the classroom was so important to my career. Maas lived the Mad Men era and spoke about Bucknell and her life on Madison Avenue. She then wrote a book about it [Winter 2012].

Liz Smith Mao ’71
Darien, Conn.

LONG LIVE THE LIBERAL ARTS
My wife, Suzanne, and I are graduates of Bucknell. We were, to say the least, thrilled with President Bravman’s message in the Fall 2013 issue. Like many alumni, we look back on our years at Bucknell and realize those years formed an invaluable foundation for the decades that followed, not because Bucknell trained us for our jobs but because it prepared us for our lives.

I studied engineering at Bucknell and worked in the field my entire life. For this engineer, the value of exposure to liberal arts during my technical studies at Bucknell has made all the difference. From Dana Engineering to Vaughan Lit was a short walk with rich rewards.

We are so pleased to read that Bucknell intends not to waiver from its commitment to liberal arts.

We are so pleased to know that the faculty still strive to inspire intellectual curiosity.

We are so pleased to imagine a Bucknell that will offer our grandchildren the experience and excitement of learning that we enjoyed a half-century before them.

The “President’s Message” has motivated us to give all we can to Bucknell in our remaining years so it can continue the founders’ vision. We encourage all alumni to do the same.

Steven ’70 and Suzanne Smith Dunn ’69
Canandaigua, N.Y.

(Following text continues on p.71.)

FOLLOW BUCKNELL
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Caving, Kayaking, Camping and More
Bucknell’s Outdoor Education and Leadership program grows by leaps and bounds.

By Gigi Marino

While it may seem counterintuitive that the greatest challenge for an office focused on outdoor activities is integrating technology, the new director of that office will tell you that without reliable infrastructure you won’t have a successful program.

Tony “Tito” Stafford, Director of Outdoor Education and Leadership, has been at Bucknell for a year and a half. As a for-instance, he says, when he arrived on campus last summer, the Bison Bike Shop was supposed to have a complement of 45 bikes to lend to students, faculty and staff. However, 20 of the bikes were missing, and the chalkboard system of tracking rentals was not efficient. Stafford purchased software that logs rentals and another program that records equipment inspections and repairs. Through enhanced tracking, Stafford has increased availability of the bikes for the campus community.

Stafford brings 10 years of experience in outdoor leadership and stewardship to the Bucknell program. He’s been a course director for Outward Bound; sold outdoor gear for REI, the nation’s top distributor; directed wilderness programs in New Mexico, Colorado and Virginia; and led several adventure treks to South American destinations.

In his role here, he directs and coordinates five programs: the high- and low-ropes challenge course located six miles from campus at Cowan; BuckWild, the pre-orientation wilderness trip for first-year students; regularly scheduled off-campus weekend trips that include climbing, caving, hiking, horseback riding, white-water rafting and skiing; the University’s outdoor rental center that makes available kayaks, canoes, camping gear, cross-country skis and snow shoes, as well as an indoor climbing wall, to the entire campus community; and the Bison Bike Shop, which additionally provides free training in basic bicycle maintenance and repair.

Stafford also co-advises the 300-member Outing Club that offers its own spate of trips and activities. Jim
Hostetler, Director of Construction and Design at Bucknell, advised the Outing Club for 26 years and was largely responsible for developing both the ropes course and BuckWild.

“The motto of the Outing Club is, ‘Don’t let schoolwork get in the way of your education.’ I know that rankles some people, but I’m a firm believer in experiential education. Outdoor education — group dynamics, risk assessment, team building — gives you life skills that will serve you whether you’re standing in front of a third-grade classroom or the corporate boardroom,” says Hostetler. “I’ve talked to every president, provost, dean of students and most VPs trying to convince them of the value of the outdoor education experience, and I’m proud of what we’ve built together here at Bucknell.”

Stafford highlights one of the main goals of his office: developing leadership among the student body.

“In keeping with the recommendations of the Campus Climate Task Force, we provide alternative activities in which everyone, including families, can participate,” he says. “We’re doing a better job of training people and elevating the professionalism of our students. We’re also moving toward a green culture and sustainability. With our full-on bike shop, we’re hoping to create more of a bike culture on campus.”

This year over the spring break, Outing Club members will be on a paddling trip in Florida’s Everglades National Park. Stafford hopes soon to offer international trips, one year for students, and the next, for alumni. The first international alumni trip he hopes to plan with Hostetler is to the Dolomites in Italy.

He says, “We want to offer programs that challenge people, create new opportunities for learning and growing, and change lives.”

More and More Students Go BuckWild

Julie Cannon ’14, a senior majoring in sociology and anthropology, says that being involved with BuckWild, the University’s pre-orientation wilderness program, has provided her with “peak college experiences.” During the past few years, she’s led climbing, biking and paddling trips, to name a few.

“My leadership style has really formed through BuckWild,” she says. “Outdoor education even helped me get a job. We conducted group interviews for BuckWild right before I interviewed for Abercrombie & Fitch. The process taught me how to interview well.”

Tony Stafford, Director of Outdoor Education and Leadership, says BuckWild has become a curriculum-based program. Student trip leaders participate in 16 class hours of outdoor leadership practices; a 72-hour Wilderness First Responder Certification; six technical skills weekend training courses in biking, caving, backpacking, winter camping/winter travel, climbing and canoeing; as well as a pinnacle experience to pull all the practices together.

In 2012, BuckWild attracted 86 students; last year, 134 participated. Stafford says the program ultimately seeks 180 participants for fall 2014. “This fall, we’re going to have 56 leaders and offer 18 different trips,” he says. “We’re still on the upward curve of growth and knowledge. We want to find our saturation point.”

Student participants have a variety of choices during the weeklong program set in the wilds of Pennsylvania, including hiking the Appalachian Trail, backpacking and camping, rock climbing, adventure racing, mountain biking, caving, ropes challenge course and canoeing.

Damon Frezza ’15, another BuckWild leader, says that the essence of leading is “handing over the reins to participants.” He correlates the work he does on the trail to the work he does in the classroom as a tutor. “You don’t want to lead people to an answer; you want to facilitate their progress so that they arrive at the answer themselves.

“One of the things that attracted me is the people. You meet open-minded people who are willing to try new things and be adventurous. These are the people I want to spend time with.” — Gigi Marino
Castle has been awarded a $178,000 grant from NASA’s Mars Fundamental Research Program to undertake a three-year study of carbon dioxide in Mars’ middle and upper atmosphere. Her research will aid NASA researchers and other scientists trying to understand the climate of the red planet and our own atmosphere on Earth.

“The Martian atmosphere is significantly different from ours,” Castle says. “But there are some similarities in the chemical and physical processes in the upper atmospheres of both planets.”

The NASA grant provided Castle a quantum cascade laser, a highly sensitive tool to detect vibrationally excited CO2 as it collides with other molecules and atoms. She hopes her research will help NASA improve Martian climate models and better understand terrestrial climate change. — Matt Hughes

Josh Berliner ’15 was working alone in the basement computer lab of Rooke Chemistry Building when suddenly the lights, triggered by an occupancy sensor, went dark. Rather than feeling annoyed, Josh was triumphant.

“I did that,” he thought.

Josh and his twin brother, Zach ’15, spearheaded the installation of motion sensor lighting in the computer lab and some 25 other rooms around campus, saving the University close to $3,500 per year. They also planned the installation of LED lights over the Bucknell Academic All-Americans Wall, conserving another $1,000 in energy.

The brothers successfully pitched their ideas to the Green Fund, a University initiative providing start-up funding for sustainability projects suggested by students, faculty and staff. The program funds endeavors that will pay back their initial costs within seven years, with additional savings returned to the fund within that span.

“We really like doing projects like these,” Zach says. “It’s something that people can wrap their heads around.”

— Matt Hughes

Josh and his twin brother, Zach ’15.
Q & A
With 40 years’ experience in publishing and book publicity, Alice Brewen Acheson ’58 discusses self-publishing and print-on-demand books.

By Gigi Marino

Q: In addition to working full-time as a publishing consultant and book publicist, you teach a class called “Publishing Choices: Print-on-Demand, Self-Publishing and Traditional Publishing.” What advice do you give authors considering print-on-demand?

A: One of the big disadvantages for print-on-demand (POD) books is that bookstores rarely accept them. POD books have a 20-percent discount. Traditional bookstores ask for a 40-percent discount. Plus, POD companies don’t accept returns. Another problem is national distribution. If you find a distributor who will work with you — and most don’t even work with one-book publishers — you have to give them a 55- to 65-percent discount.

Q: How has the self-publishing phenomenon affected the publishing industry?

A: When I entered publishing in the early ’70s, there were always 50,000 trade titles a year. Back then, we said we were publishing too many books. In 2010, there were 143,000 titles, including self-published and POD. In 2011, there were 211,000 titles. The sheer number of new titles each year is causing problems for bookstores and reviewers. If you take the sales of those self-published or POD books and divide that number by the number of titles, the sales would be about 100 for each book.

Q: Has the presence of the self-published books diluted the market?

A: Yes, simply by the sheer volume. Some say the wind has gone out of print. Anyone can write and publish a book. With the Espresso Book Machine, you can watch the paper go in, be bound and sliced in just minutes.

Q: You mentioned self-publishing and a specific POD technology. What’s the difference?

A: The big difference is that with self-publishing the author owns the ISBN [the International Standard Book Number, a unique identifier, like a social security number for a book]. Depending on the POD company you hire, you may not own the ISBN to your book. If you do hire a POD company [like Amazon’s CreateSpace, Xlibris or Lulu] you should purchase the ISBN, which makes you the publisher and sole owner.

Also, I want to add that the POD process is excellent for a memoir to be given to family and friends or for individuals who speak to a network of organizations and can sell the book at the back of the room, thereby circumventing the need for reviews and bookstore sales.

Bucknell in the News

THE THINKER
The New Yorker traced the enduring legacy of Christy Mathewson 1902, crediting the major league pitcher with shifting perception of baseball from that of “a degenerate game” to “a deliberate, unflashy pastime beloved by stat-heads and amateur historians.” Even the “unmannered galoot” Babe Ruth became an acolyte of Mathewson’s cerebral baseball philosophy.

FIRST IN FAMILY
The Chronicle of Higher Education interviewed Kaitlin Marsh ’14 about expanding opportunities for first-generation college students. Marsh uploaded a video to I’m First, a website offering support to aspiring first-generation students (imfirst.org). Marsh said a resource like I’m First would have helped her transition to University life.

SPEAKING OUT
Soccer player Jesse Klug ’16 penned an open letter to Out Sports appealing to those who disapprove of homosexuality to re-examine their perspectives. Klug used his role on the Bucknell team as an example of why sexual orientation should not define a person. “On the field,” he wrote, “...sexual orientation holds absolutely zero significance.”

IMMIGRATION ISSUES
The Fiscal Times asked Professor Elizabeth Durden, sociology, to weigh in on the shifting attitude toward U.S. immigration reform of Sen. Marco Rubio, who favors a piecemeal approach over the comprehensive reform bill he helped author. Durden said immigration reform has united traditional pillars of the Republican party, including business leaders and evangelicals.

(Subscribe at bucknell.edu/bitn)
Late Night @ KLARC

Late-night programming with twists, turns, dives and slides.

By Heather Johns

The flying disk is neon blue against the black sky. Bucknell students jockey for position beneath it, winded and cold in the brisk night air, waiting for the disk to drop. The students are incandescent blurred, impossible to identify except for the glow sticks circling their heads or wrists to mark them as part of the teams competing. At last, the disk slows and hovers just out of reach before falling into the hands of the victor. Bucknell’s first game of Illuminated Ultimate Frisbee has been won.

It’s well after dark. It’s Late Night @ KLARC.

Late Night launched in spring 2013. It includes keeping the Kenneth Langone Athletic and Recreation Center open until 1 a.m. and holding weekly late-night group fitness classes, events and intramural leagues. The program was created in response to data from the Campus Climate Report.

“The report showed that students were engaging in unhealthy activities at night, or no activity at all,” says Laurel Kopecky, Assistant Director of Recreation Services. “We wanted to initiate more student-focused, robust late-night programming to help turn that around.”

Many Late Night @ KLARC events are co-sponsored by athletic teams, as well as fraternities and sororities. The events have been a mix of the expected and unexpected, from a three-on-three basketball tournament to Dive-In Movie, where students watched a film on the Kinney Natatorium big screen from the pool or the stands. “They’re really popular,” says Kety Silva ’14. “I went to Zumba Party, and there was a great turnout. The glow sticks were cool.”

Other Late Night @ KLARC events include Candlelight Yoga, Glow-in-the-Dark Dodgeball and Bison Idol, featuring the finest lip-synching this side of the Susquehanna. “We have lots of exciting things in store,” says Kopecky, “and we hope it gets even bigger and better.”

SHORT STACK

Bucknell athletes have the highest graduation rate among all Division I schools. The Bison tied Stanford with a four-class average of 93 percent, according to U.S. Department of Education standards. Using the NCAA’s Graduation Success Rate metric, which does not penalize schools for losing transfer students in good standing, the Bison tied for fourth, with 98 percent of athletes graduating.

The Bucknell Brigade in Nicaragua won second place in the 2012–13 True Hero service project competition. Brigade raises money to help sustain a free medical clinic in Nueva Vida, Nicaragua, and sends two groups of student volunteers to the Central American republic each year. The $2,000 prize from True Hero will go toward the Brigade’s $40,000 annual fundraising goal.

The Property and Environment Research Center named Scott Perkins ’14 a Pennsylvania Campus Sustainability Champion for his work in securing a demonstration wind turbine near the Bucknell Environmental Center. Perkins, a mechanical engineering major, also has been active with Campus Greening Initiative Director Dina El-Mogazi’s renewable energy scholars programs.
This Lonely Planet

Researchers discover the first planet not orbiting a star.

By Andy Hirsch

Characteristics of planets vary greatly, and defining one isn’t always easy (just ask Pluto). But one trait astronomers have agreed upon is that planets orbit stars, as Earth does the Sun. Then came PSO J318.5-22, the planet recently discovered by a team of astronomers that included Bucknell professor Katelyn Allers.

“Everything we’ve measured for this object is planet-like — its mass, its temperature, its brightness,” Allers explains. But there’s something missing. “It doesn’t have a parent star. We call it the lonely planet because it’s just traveling through the galaxy, basically by itself.”

The discovery was made using the Pan-STARRS 1 wide-field survey telescope on Haleakala, Maui. Follow-up observations with other telescopes revealed properties similar to those of gas-giant planets found orbiting young stars. Allers’ analysis helped confirm it is indeed a planet.

The absence of a parent star makes the planet particularly valuable for research. “When we look at most exo-planets (planets outside our solar system), we’re also looking at an extraordinary amount of light from its nearby parent star, and that can make studying certain characteristics of the planet challenging,” she explains. “We don’t have that problem in this case.”

The planet also offers researchers another interesting trait — its age. By monitoring the position of PSO J318.5-22 over two years, the team measured its distance from Earth — roughly 480 billion miles. Based on that distance and its motion through space, they concluded the planet belongs to a collection of stars that formed about 12 million years ago. “This planet is relatively young,” Allers says. “For a comparison, our sun is about 4.5 billion years old.”

Observations of the young planet already have Allers and her colleagues thinking about how a planet changes as it ages. “We knew right away that this was something special,” Allers says. “It really is going to force us to change the way we think about the definition of a planet.”
With more than 150 student clubs and organizations to choose from, Bucknell students can get out and get involved nearly any way they like. Study-weary Bucknellians can get physical with the boxing club or the roller hockey team, sing their troubles away in one of five a cappella groups or pursue harmony with nature in the gardening and fly fishing clubs. They can let their imaginations run wild with Harry Potter interest group, Dumbledore’s Army, and role-playing group D.R.A.G.O.N, or...
stay grounded in the surrounding community with the Bucknell Green Builders or the Friends of the Rail Trail. Club offerings range from the storied and venerable L’Agenda and Cap and Dagger — each more than a century old — to thoroughly modern pursuits like paintball, video gaming and robot building. Bucknellians who can’t find something they’re into here have options — students can start a club, anytime they like.
As a child, Mizuki Takahashi combed through the suburbs of Tokyo with his head down and a smile on his face, hunting for bugs and aquatic critters.

“Since I was little, I loved catching insects, frogs and crayfish and analyzing them,” he says. “A few times, when I didn’t come home by 7 p.m., my parents called the police to look for me.”

These days Takahashi, a biology professor, sets much of his own schedule outside of teaching, and is able to take his time searching for wildlife and making observations in the forests and streams near campus. He sees similarities between central Pennsylvania and Tokyo. Beech and oak trees are dominant. Forests near campus often feel like his childhood home, minus the prevalence of bamboo, and he finds greater opportunity for research here.

“The Japanese people in general pay attention to conservation, but there is less money invested in ecological research than in the U.S.,” Takahashi says.

One of his main interests involves inbreeding in amphibian populations. Using aquatic mesocosms, which are water enclosures used for experimentation, he is testing how inbreeding affects survival, growth and mating behaviors. “We don’t know much about how inbreeding is affecting globally declining amphibian populations,” he says. “They don’t have great migratory abilities. They can’t cross a road or fly. So, habitat fragmentation can lead to inbreeding, which likely interacts with other threats, such as pollution and disease.”

Takahashi introduces students to the natural world through the study of amphibian biology, conservation genetics and behavioral ecology. “A lot of students do not have direct experience with nature,” he says. “Not many students have seen amphibians in the field. It’s important for young generations to experience nature. If you don’t have that appreciation, you can’t recognize the value of nature globally.”
Back on the Home Court

Star basketball player Charles Lee ’06 returns to Bucknell as an assistant coach.

By William Bowman

One of the best players during an unforgettable era of Bucknell basketball, Charles Lee ’06, was recruited to play basketball for the Bison. A few years later, Lee went on his own recruiting trail to return to a game he missed — a trail that, once again, led back to Lewisburg.

Lee, the 2006 Patriot League Player of the Year who helped the Bison to NCAA tournament wins over Kansas and Arkansas, played professionally overseas for four years, which often forced him to be separated from his wife.

In the spring of 2010, Lee walked away from basketball. He took a job on Wall Street at Bank of America Merrill Lynch, allowing him and his wife, Lindsey Geosits Lee ’06, to settle down. Lee played recreationally during his off-hours from equity position trading and, eventually, “got the itch to get back around basketball,” this time as a coach.

Even with his impressive basketball résumé — star player on a team that won two NCAA tournament games, Player of the Year, Christy Mathewson Award winner — Lee knew that if he was to get into coaching, he would have to start at the bottom of the ladder.

Lee put in calls to former coach Pat Flannery ’80 and current Bison coach Dave Paulsen to find out if they knew of any open assistant coaching jobs. When one became available at his alma mater, he jumped. “I was looking for an opportunity to get my foot in the door and, luckily, something on the Bucknell staff opened up,” Lee says. “I left a better paying job for the chance to do something I am extremely passionate about.”

That passion works on and off the court. All of the men’s basketball coaches are academic advisers for one class. In this capacity, Lee has regular discussions with Bison players about their academic progress, conversations that remind him of the rigors that student-athletes face. “It helps that I’ve been through it; the guys know I can relate,” says Lee. “But there are times when I think, ‘I went through this?’”
Going to Kathmandu

Bucknell hosts service trip to the Himalayan nation of Nepal.

By Matt Hughes

Students will explore ancient temples, track rhinos in mountain jungles and aid impoverished children during Bucknell’s first-ever service trip to Nepal in January.

Led by Professor Coralynn Davis, women’s and gender studies and anthropology, and students Ushma Manandhar ’15 — herself Nepali — and Rishard Rheyas ’15, Bucknell undergraduates are making stops at eight World Heritage Sites around Nepal’s colorful capital, Kathmandu, and spending five days engaging in enrichment activities with poor rural children that support the ongoing work of a Nepali organization. They’re also dining with a former Miss Nepal and making a three-day excursion to Chitwan National Park, home to endangered Bengal tigers and rhinoceroses, all in just under two weeks.

“Students will gain an appreciation for the rich cultural differences and deep human similarities between Nepali people and themselves,” Davis says. “Our aim is for students to learn how thoughtful person-to-person cooperation across borders can result in a more just and humane world.”

STUDENT PROFILE

Jillian Korn ’16

When Jillian Korn ’16 was a toddler, her favorite television show was Emergency Vets. “I think I knew, even then, that I’d be interested in a career in medicine,” she says.

Staying true to that dream, the biology major has put herself on the pre-med track and is training to be an emergency room volunteer at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville.

Helping hospitals is nothing new to Korn. In high school she volunteered at her local hospital, and in January 2013 she traveled to Nicaragua with the Bucknell Brigade to work in the health clinic at Nueva Vida.

Korn says the extreme poverty she witnessed in Nicaragua, much like the poverty she saw with her high school Spanish class on a trip to the Dominican Republic, inspired her to nominate the Bucknell Brigade for the 2012–13 True Hero service project competition. Thanks to her efforts, the Brigade won second place in the competition, which was sponsored by a public charity to reward community service. The $2,000 prize will go toward the organization’s $40,000 yearly fundraising goal. (See “Short Stack” on p.8.)

On campus, Korn is a Junior Fellow for the Languages and Cultures Residential College. A seasoned traveler, Korn says she never gets tired of learning about other cultures, and with nearly half of her hall made up of international students, her living situation gives her plenty of opportunity. She adds that she’s considering a minor in Latin American studies and a three-week summer program abroad as well.

When asked what type of doctor she hopes to become, Korn says she isn’t sure yet but leans toward oncology. “When I was a kid, both my mom and grandmother were diagnosed with cancer,” she says. “I guess that’s what inspires me. Actually, they both inspire me in so many ways.”

— Paula Harrison
All Together Now
Who takes pride in an outstanding year of support for Bucknell?

By Christina Masciere Wallace

We do. With gifts and pledges to the WE DO campaign exceeding $300 million, the University has raised well over half of the half-a-billion-dollar goal. The Annual Fund, which benefits all current students, surpassed $12 million in the first year since the campaign’s public launch in October 2012.

“Bucknell reached a new record in giving for fiscal year 2013, and donor participation increased, even though the economy remains a concern,” says Scott Rosevear, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations.

“Our supporters recognize Bucknell’s strength and are confident about its future. We are so grateful for the generosity of our alumni, parents and friends.”

Since the campaign’s private phase began in July 2007, gifts and commitments to Bucknell include

• More than $98 million in new financial aid, which is helping to fund more than 300 new and existing scholarships;
• More than $35 million to support 15 current and future academic positions and one coaching position;
• More than $80 million in Annual Fund giving, including $11 million in financial aid; and,
• More than $87 million in endowed financial aid.

Tangible examples of campaign impact abound. In August, the University opened Academic West, Bucknell’s first new academic building in nearly a decade. In November, it broke ground for four new residential halls slated to open in fall 2015. A few miles north of campus, the new Geisinger–Bucknell Center for Autism Studies has dramatically increased the availability of screening and medical services for individuals on the autism spectrum.

“We are extremely grateful for the generosity that makes these initiatives possible,” says President John Bravman. “What has really impressed me is the genuine enthusiasm I see for WE DO, both on campus and across the country. The theme has transcended the campaign and become part of our institutional identity.”

Over the past year, more than 1,200 Bucknellians have attended WE DO events in major cities, including San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston and New York. Each features presentations by faculty and students.
and an array of interactive areas.

Alumni attendees have ranged from the Class of 1940 to the Class of 2013, with many reconnecting with Bucknell for the first time in years. Guest feedback tells the story: “The best part of the night was snap talks by faculty,” commented a 2012 graduate. “They’re provoking Bucknellians to explore and think outside the box and continually improving the education level at Bucknell.”

An eight-minute snap talk by biology professor Mark Haussmann was well received at the WE DO event in New York. Haussmann, who studies the effect of stress on aging, emphasized student participation in scientific research at Bucknell.

“At many schools, undergraduates can be involved in one aspect of the scientific process. But at Bucknell, students are doing all aspects of science, which is amazing. They help design experiments, do their own research and analysis, write up papers and give presentations at national conferences.”

WE DO also has sparked a surge in Bucknell volunteers, who have been critical to the success of campaign events and networking. They encourage classmates to make gifts or give in other ways — by hosting internships, sitting on career panels or serving as guest lecturers in classes. It’s part of a new culture of engagement at Bucknell, says Rosevear.

“This campaign is about far more than donor commitments. It’s about revitalizing a culture of pride and engagement in a way that keeps all Bucknellians excited and involved well beyond this campaign. Our WE DO tour introduces them to the accomplishments of today’s students, faculty and staff in a way that makes them want to strengthen their connections with the University.”

An alumnus from the Class of 1969 who attended the New York event put it succinctly: “I was blown away and very proud to be a Bucknellian.”

For more information about the campaign and WE DO tour, please visit bucknell.edu/WeDo.

Rising to the Challenge – and Then Some

“$100K IN A DAY” DRIVE NETS NEARLY $900K.

It all started last spring with a challenge from a group of alumni: Raise $100,000 for the Annual Fund in one day, and the alumni would match it with funding for scholarships and financial aid. To sweeten the offer, another alumnus offered a $40,000 gift if 200 donors participated in the challenge, dubbed “$100K in a Day.”

The Annual Fund team launched the massive call to action on April 25, 2013, relying on student callers and social media to reach Bucknellians around the world. Donors responded quickly and met both the fundraising and participation goals by noon. The momentum spurred a new challenge from another group of donors, including President John Bravman and Professor Wendelin Wright, a parent and two more alumni. This group promised to give $75,000 if a total of 500 donors made gifts by midnight.

Then, late in the afternoon, two trustees and another alum upped the ante yet again: If a total of 750 donors made gifts by the end of the day, they’d pledge an additional $75,000.

That goal was met by mid-evening, but Bucknell’s student callers were on fire. Working the phones to reach Bucknellians on the West Coast, enthusiastic students were determined to reach 1,000 gifts and pledges — and they succeeded.

When all was said and done, 1,168 donors made gifts and pledges totaling $604,319. Add in the matching donations, and donors raised many times the initial goal, reaching a total of more than $890,000.

“It was an incredible response,” says Loni Kline, Director of the Annual Fund. “Bucknellians were so excited to participate, and the student callers had a blast. We are so grateful for the loyalty and generosity of all our donors, and the leadership of our match sponsors.” The day was so successful that two dozen other colleges and universities contacted Kline to find out how Bucknell did it.

“The credit goes to Bucknellians,” she says. “They love the University, they love a challenge and they love doing things together — and doing them well.”

— Christina Masciere Wallace
Dancing Across the Generations

Legacy Dance Concert brings alumni back to the Bucknell stage.

*By Paula Harrison*

“Dance is an experience,” says dance professor Kelly Knox, “that connects the generations as we pass our tradition and learned wisdom from body to body.”

The Bucknell dance tradition was honored on the stage of the Weis Center for the Performing Arts last April when the Department of Theatre and Dance presented the Spring 2013 Legacy Dance Concert. The concert, which commemorated decades of dance at Bucknell and was performed by students and 20 alumni dancers, culminated in a 12-minute piece, “Blush,” set to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and originally co-choreographed by the late Danna Frangione (1952–2002), founder of the dance program at Bucknell, and her successor, Professor of Dance Er-Dong Hu.

Kristy Kuhn ’00 also contributed to the choreography of “Blush” for the occasion. “I was honored to be a part of the celebratory weekend as an alum and co-choreographer,” she says. “To share the studio and stage with 19 other dance alumni, from the class of 1990 through 2013, and blend my choreography with Er-Dong Hu and Danna Frangione’s is an experience I will always treasure.”

Because people traveled from a variety of locations to perform at the event, opening night was the first time all of the dancers were together in the same place at the same time. But, according to Knox, this only added to their excitement and anticipation. “The performance came together beautifully,” she says. “It was a testament to the talents, professionalism and dedication of the alumni.”

For Hu, who has taught dance at Bucknell for nearly 20 years, it was a powerful experience to see so many of his past students on stage and to know that — although they may be engineers, accountants, doctors or homemakers — they remain connected by this one thing: dance at Bucknell.

“To me,” says Hu, “that is simply beautiful.”
A new minor at Bucknell aims to help students explore a practical side of the arts: Arts Entrepreneurship. The program, developed and directed by the Bucknell Arts Council, offers an interdisciplinary perspective on artistic endeavors, as well as on promoting the work that artists produce.

“This is one of less than a dozen similar programs across the U.S.,” says Professor of English Carmen Gillespie, the Bucknell arts coordinator. “Students self-define their roles as innovative practitioners and entrepreneurs in artistic enterprises.”

Students pursuing the five-course minor may select classes from an array of departments, including management, finance and business, and arts disciplines. They must also complete an internship in the arts or arts management. The initial required course features guest lecturers with expertise in a variety of fields, and is designed to give students a solid foundation for a number of potential arts careers.

Drawing from Both Sides of the Brain

New arts minor encourages entrepreneurship.

By Rebecca L. Willoughby

Vulture Sculpture

FINE ART MEETS ENGINEERING AND ROBOTICS.

Explaining his decision to build an animated vulture, Professor Joe Meiser, art and art history, says, “I originally envisioned a doomsday cuckoo clock, a quirky machine I would rig myself. Then I met with Steve Shooter [professor of mechanical engineering], who suggested robotics would create a more reliable final product.” Their meeting — by way of the Bucknell Innovation Group — opened the door to collaboration, fusing art, science, learning and the liberal arts tradition.

Meiser completed a computer model of the vulture’s outer shell and passed on his design to mechanical engineering student Eric Lynn ’13, M’14, whose interests brought him to Meiser’s digital sculpture class. Lynn was selected to design the “mechatronics” — the gears and skeleton animating the robot. “I had digital dimensions but nothing with a real foundation to build on,” says Lynn. “I’d never done anything this complex. It was daunting.” With Shooter’s supervision and the addition of electrical engineering student Phil Diefenderfer ’13, M’15, Lynn developed the vulture’s skeleton and actuation mechanisms, put them place and had it wired, programmed and tested.

This fall, mechanical engineering student Christine Sorrentino ’15 joined the team. She says, “We’re on version 2.0, and my role is to provide failure analysis, determining which parts of the robot are least robust, or more likely to break down. I’m considering a career in theatrical animatronics, so working on this robot makes sense for me,” Adds Diefenderfer, “The nice thing is, this project allows us to build on our strengths.”

The team hopes to have the vulture finished by the end of the 2013–14 academic year. Shooter claims that completion isn’t the only goal, and that undertakings like this highlight the interdisciplinary benefits of a strong engineering program at a liberal arts university. “Successful projects,” says Shooter, “aren’t possible without broad-minded students with interests and intrinsic motivation of their own.”

— Terri Peterson
**BOOKS**

Derek Palacio  
*How to Shake the Other Man* (Nouvella)  
In his novella, *How To Shake the Other Man*, English Professor Derek Palacio explores the problem of preventing the counter impulses of movement and steadiness from careening out of balance through the lives of two Cuban American brothers, Marcel and Oscar. Fleeing a toxic Miami convection of climate and troubled hearts, Marcel becomes a successful coffee cart entrepreneur in New York and entices Oscar to follow and manage a boxing school. As the story opens, Oscar is reluctantly coaching his brother’s young lover, Javi, as both grapple with the recent street murder of Marcel. Palacio defies the physics of an economic form to create a fully realized world that is as lyrical as it is brutal, in which souls desperately seek that moment of knowing how and when to act.

Palacio also is the author of “Sugarcane,” one of 20 short stories selected for the 2013 O. Henry Prize Collection (*Random House/Anchor Books*).

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**Everyday Book Marketing**, including advice solicited from colleagues such as Alice Acheson. An award-winning publicist who has seen several of her clients’ titles make the bestseller lists, Acheson contributes a Q&A chapter on promotional strategies. She stresses the importance of writers educating themselves about all aspects of publishing to make the most of their limited resources. (*See also p.7.*)

David Soll ’93  
*Empire of Water* (Cornell University Press)  
America’s largest city requires water for more than 8.3 million residents, 50 million annual tourists and countless daily commuters. How New York meets this challenge while delivering high quality water is the topic of David Soll’s engaging and meticulously researched history, *Empire of Water*. It is a story of engineering design and political negotiation well over a century in the making, as the city outgrew its Croton River aqueduct in the 19th century and looked northward to the pristine Catskill Mountains. Soll recounts dramatic clashes between rural watershed communities and the metropolis, as well as the development of landmark legislation, including the Clean Water Act, water metering and the epic achievement of the Watershed Memorandum of Agreement signed with the EPA. Soll teaches in the Watershed Institute at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire.

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**Eric Hart ’01**  
*The Prop Building Guidebook for Theatre, Film and TV* (Focal Press)  
Since graduating as a theatre major with an emphasis on set design, Eric Hart has earned a national reputation as a prop master, working on major stage and screen projects and maintaining the popular *Prop Agenda* blog at props.eric-hart.com. He has recently written the definitive...
reference for his industry that is being hailed for its clarity and breadth, *The Prop Building Guidebook*. Hart identifies the different categories of custom set items that are not actors, costumes or scenery, and covers in depth the equipment, materials, techniques and safety considerations necessary for fashioning items ranging from horror film body parts to a woodland set’s trees. Hart’s profession requires more than creativity; in addition to heavy equipment operating licenses and OSHA and CPR certifications, he holds an NYPD permit for stage firearms. Propbuildingguidebook.com, the companion website, offers career advice and instructional videos.

**Jeffrey Rhoads ’75**


Forget about building the résumé; the chief reason kids should play sports is because they enjoy them. Unfortunately, a lack of intellectual, physical and emotional readiness can interfere with an experience that should impart competence and community.

To make sure they make the most of an opportunity, Jeff Rhoads, a youth sports coach for more than 25 years, has written a manual for students age 13 and up, *The Young Athlete’s Guide to Playing Sports*. Comprehensive, honest and lucid, the book tackles beginners and advanced players’ concerns. He offers advice on how to improve physical skills and mental acuity, deflect negativity and keep the nature of competition in perspective. Parents will want to read this along with their children.

**Lisa McComsey ’81**

*The Vegan Cheat Sheet* (Perigree/Penguin Group)

In 2009, the McComsey clan, including Ed ’52 and daughter Lisa, started a fitness challenge, with a $400 prize. Lisa wanted to improve her cholesterol levels and prepare for marathon races, and her chief strategy was going vegan, consuming plant-based foods only. She won the contest without feeling deprived. The *Allure* magazine copy director and athlete remained a vegan, and with her friend and mentor Amy Cramer has published *The Vegan Cheat Sheet*, a reference and cookbook for beginners. They provide tips for negotiating restaurant menus and planning meals. Amy’s hundred plus “idiot-proof” recipes include vodka cream sauce for pasta, mac and cheese, pad Thai and chocolate chip biscotti. They ably demonstrate that “going vegan” is doable and not weird, punishing or labor-intensive.

**Peter G. Engler ’66**

*New and Improved!* (Grantham Press)

Madison Avenue meets, or more accurately, collides with Pennsylvania Avenue in Peter Engler’s debut thriller, *New and Improved!* Ad executive and distinguished Vietnam War Navy fighter pilot Ben Coleman must draw on all of his life experiences when President Brad Rogers summons him to Washington to work on his re-election bid in the summer of 1992. Coleman’s first impression is that the political stratosphere is a zoo of ambition. His second is that it is very dangerous, as the president and his entourage are attacked at an event in Vermont. It takes outsider Coleman to intuit and thwart an international threat originating out of the Cold War past. Engler doses his fiction with real-world events and role models out of his own advertising and combat pilot careers to good effect.

**Paul Landes’ first thriller, *Wings to Redemption*, Boudreau saved and became involved with philanthropist and adventurer Benjamin Hunter, who went mysteriously missing at the end of that book. In the series follow-up, *Latitude 87.7*, she learns Hunter is the target of covert intelligence agencies that believe he holds the key to biological weaponry. The race to protect Hunter and world leaders is on, taking Boudreau from California to Africa to Antarctica and places in between. This follow-up is as packed with reversals and suspense as its predecessor, and ends provocatively with the suggestion of more adventure to come. Nancy Roberts ’72 again served as editor.

**Robb Cadigan ’86**

*Phoenixville Rising* (Rodgers Forge Press)

The past is always present in Phoenixville, a southeastern Pennsylvania town that took its name in the 19th century from its now defunct anchor industry, the Phoenix Iron Works, which in turn was named for the creature of ancient myth that rises from ashes. The renowned furnace that produced Civil War cannons and the struts for the Eiffel Tower grabbed at area native Robb Cadigan’s imagination until he sat down and wrote the novel, *Phoenixville Rising*. Plumbing local history, his narrative travels back and forth through generations whose destinies were forged in and at times consumed by the fire. Cadigan, who has worked in advertising and television, fuses the conventions of tragedy, romance, historical fiction and contemporary realism with unusual sensitivity.

Claudia Ebeling reviews books, film and music for Bucknell Magazine. She can be reached at bucknellreviews@gmail.com.
WRITE of PASSAGE
The personal essay reflects writing skills but often reveals more.

Writing a college admissions essay is a daunting task. Students must write well, often about themselves, and address a judgmental audience of application readers. The following essays by members of the Class of 2017 do that and more. In their own voices, these students share personal stories, highlighting the experiences that have shaped them. From the walls of a small bedroom to a perspective shift influenced by literature, their lenses vary, but the authenticity of each voice is clear.

BY ROBERT G. SPRINGALL • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE PHILLIPS
WHEREVER I GO

By
Jack Robinson ’17

I’m sure if I went back there today, I could reach out my arms and graze my fingertips on both sides. It was barely enough for a twin bed and a dresser, but plenty of room for a little kid with a carefree attitude. The radiator next to my bed always provided the perfect amount of heat during the winter months. I can still hear the Christmas wreath outside my window, needles scraping the panes, reminding me of the holiday season. I used colored construction paper to make Christmas streamers that outlined my small bedroom. My mom’s homemade curtains with blue-and-white fish that draped the windows matched my favorite blanket. I had a small chalkboard that always had a list of things I needed to do, and a sign I made outside my door that incorrectly said, “Knock frist.” It was truly my favorite place to be.

I gained a lot of insight, looking at the world from such a tiny space. It was from this room that I heard my parents in the hallway, talking about how my cousin Megan died in a car crash, learning about the void you endure when loved ones pass away. It was where I learned the value of a dollar, saving up money from chores to buy my first iPod. It was from my room that I watched my dad start his own business right down the hall. I admired his entrepreneurial spirit and the excitement of his efforts to make his own path. I could see it was not easy, and I was constantly taught that nothing worthwhile ever is. While uncertainty carries with it a measure of fear, it also carries possibilities of new beginnings.

Eventually we moved to a bigger house — the house where my mother grew up — to care for my grandma. I carried with me the comfort of that little room and the knowledge with it. The fish curtains were replaced with blinds; the radiator, with central heating. My new bedroom doubled the size of my previous room. And while I still try my best to treat it as the same refuge I had before, it will never have the same character and value in my life.

A small bedroom is a cozy room. It stays the warmest at night, and provides all of the comfort you need when you want to relax under the sheets and read a good book. It is the easiest to paint when you want your walls to be your favorite color, blue, and it’s the easiest to clean. If my old walls could talk, they would share what makes a house a home. They would tell jokes, shed tears, motivate, teach. And while I left behind the comfort of my little home, my insight on life carries on wherever I go, to whatever walls I’m surrounded by.*
A STRANGER IN THE HOMELAND

By Tamara Hijazi '17

Born and raised in Illinois, I moved to my parents’ homeland, Palestine, at the age of 10. Hearing Arabic for the first time, not knowing what the famous falafel was and learning that shekels were in fact not equal to dollars were constant reminders that I was a foreigner in my own homeland. I sought different ways to express what I was feeling in this unfamiliar country — violin, Arabic dance and art — but none of these provided the right outlet.

Palestine was my home, but it was also a stranger. I was lost in its alleyways of communication. I could not voice my opinions to the two men arguing about the economy in my cousin’s coffee shop or talk to the 17-year-old rebel who had just been released from jail the night before. I wanted to find my voice in Palestine, a voice I could use to show people the true Palestine they did not see on TV. One day, I confessed this to my mother. In response, she scavenged out an old film camera and handed it to me.

My mother took me to Al-Zahra Street in Jerusalem, asked me what I loved about Jerusalem, and told me to reply in Arabic. I said I could not, and she told me to find an alternate way to answer. I found one with the camera in my hand. As I walked to Al-Zahra Street, I photographed an old woman selling bread to a farmer, Palestinians sliding through checkpoints in front of Al-Aqsa mosque, schoolboys playing soccer in an empty lot.

I no longer felt lost within language. I no longer felt lost within my homeland. Now I could articulate what I felt about Palestine in my own way. Photography became more than a hobby; it became a way to extract essence from the misunderstood reality I was a part of — the simple, innocent parts of Palestinian everyday life. Photography became my language. I want to show people that cultural differences are not actually barriers, but opportunities to understand the world from more than one perspective.

IN THE DRIVER’S SEAT

By Allison Ward '17

One of the things I most enjoyed about my first three years of high school actually occurred each day before school. At 6:57 a.m., my mom and I embarked on our daily drive to the bus stop. We fine-tuned the logistics to a near science. If we left at 6:58, we had a two-minute grace period to get to the bus before it departed at 7:10. Some days, we found ourselves leaving at 7, allowing no margin for error and requiring my mom, whispering as she looked at the car clock, to do a Danica Patrick imitation through the winding streets of Wellesley.

We developed an established morning routine: I brought my breakfast on a paper plate, Mom (wearing what she calls “carpool attire,” but others would call “pajamas”) brought her coffee in an orange polka-dotted travel mug, and I turned on NPR’s Morning Edition. We rode in silence for the first five minutes, listening to the day’s headlines.

Around the halfway point we came to life, often focusing on a story we had just heard. Sometimes, we spent our five minutes discussing my upcoming day, with my mom providing gentle (and not so gentle) reminders about logistics or words of encouragement before an important test or big game.

We even gossiped on occasion. I came to treasure that early morning drive: the freshness of the morning brought a clean slate to our relationship, and we looked optimistically ahead, no matter what had happened the prior day. I realize now that by the time I leaped out of the car, I had already enjoyed 10 of the best minutes a day could bring.

As I begin my senior year, that nurturing routine has been replaced by a new, exciting and slightly daunting one. With my sister Caroline as an incoming freshman, and me now a licensed driver, I am responsible for driving the two of us to school. Signs of paradigm shift are everywhere: 7:10 has become the new 6:58, and I’m the one whimpering as that deadline approaches; my Dunkin’ Donuts iced coffee sits where my mom’s polka-dotted travel mug used to rest; and construction zones and aggressive commuters on I-95 have replaced the winding roads we traveled to the bus stop. To be sure, we have already experienced some logistical hiccups that resemble my “Adventures with Mom” — like having to eject Caroline at the front of the main building to keep her on time for assembly on one particularly horrific commuting day.

I also see other, more meaningful parallels with my former routine. Given our three-year age difference, I have not been in the same school with Caroline since fifth grade. Although I might not admit it to her, I am eagerly anticipating discussing classes, teachers, sports and high school life in general with Caroline during our daily drives. A few weeks ago, she sat nervously in the passenger seat trying to distinguish compound from complex sentences for a quiz. Another day, when she was musing about the talk she is required to give in front of the entire freshman class, I tactfully dissuaded her from choosing a questionable topic relating to housecats. We also deal with important issues of the day, such as wardrobe-sharing transactions and unreasonable parental requests. I have come to realize that the privileges and rewards of sitting in the driver’s seat can more than compensate for its burdens and responsibilities. Although I treasure my days riding with Mom, I am thrilled finally to be in control of my own journey, and hope I can make the trip as smooth and enjoyable for my passenger as my mom did for me.
am ketchup on rice. Ketchup, the all-American condiment. Born and raised in our nation’s capital, I am my mother’s freckles splattered delicately across my face. I am football Sundays, cheeseburgers and fries, and as American as apple pie. I am also rice, the foundation of every Chinese meal. I am the walls of the Forbidden City, fireworks on Chinese New Year and a strong sense of family.

Spring break 2012 started with a 21-hour flight to Shanghai for a cousin’s wedding. Two dozen people packed my aunt’s small apartment. Everyone rushed around bumping into one another trying to get the best shot of the bride as sounds of dialects, unrecognizable to me, resonated off the walls, engulfing the room so no corner was left quiet. The ceremony took place in both family homes, with the entourage of wedding guests, including myself — the only American-looking girl, and the only one wearing a traditional Chinese dress — closely following behind until finally, after seven hours of nonstop commotion, the elaborate dinner commenced. The dinner tables in the restaurant boomed with loud voices, clanking chopsticks and the constant sound of spinning lazy Susans towering with dishes. Even when the long night came to a close, and the old Asian grandmothers tried desperately to get their kin to eat one last bite of the succulent beef chops so as to not waste an ounce, or the small children fell asleep, the familial love and warmth that filled the room seemed it could last an eternity.

Another 21-hour flight brought me back to America, to what I usually call my home. But the notion of home for me at this point is a funny thing. With every plane landing, a feeling of dissatisfaction washes over me. I’m mostly disappointed that I have to leave everything in China to come back to a country that is so opposite and where I initially feel out of place. But soon the recognizable sounds of English stream back into everyday life effortlessly and the feeling of being disconnected disappears. China recedes; America rises to the surface of my consciousness.

In either place, crafting my favorite snack is easy: squeeze the vibrant red ketchup in zigzags until it covers a bowl-sized mountain of white rice. Unfortunately, though, my cultural dynamic isn’t always easy to resolve as concocting the perfect balance of ketchup to rice. There’s no way to put both cultures perfectly in sync. My kitchen here will never feel like the bustling restaurants in China. The language in China, free flowing and forever a challenge for me to speak fluently, will never feel like English, comforting to hear and easily understood. The dichotomy of cultures I have experienced growing up has been confusing. One part of me is bolted down in temples of Shanghai, and the other part is rooted in the monuments of D.C. No single place feels like a true home. But I like that. Knowing there are two homes for me with families full of love makes the dichotomy reassuring, rather than overwhelming. I am split right down the middle. This split is even evident in my last name. “Benson” brings the American flavor to the traditional Chinese culture that “Xu” holds so sacredly. I am the curves of my father’s eyes, the waviness of my mother’s hair, the one who layers ketchup on top of rice.

TO CHINA AND BACK

By Emma Benson-Xu ’17
At times, I feel I was born to help the world around me. My mother manages a nonprofit, and my father is a cardiologist. Even as a 3-year-old, I painted walls at the Jewish Community Center and from that moment on, I was hooked on community service.

I believe it is a moral duty to help anyone I can. To most of my friends and peers, I’m considered the student-body therapist: there is rarely a social situation in my school community I can’t fix. Which is why, when I attended a camp called Seeds of Peace (SoP) last summer, I was shocked to confront a situation that challenged my values and belief system, and made me question my place in my family and the world.

The goal of SoP is to bring kids from countries such as Israel and Palestine to experience American summer camp while discussing conflict resolution for their areas. I was there to help. However, I realized how helpless I was when my best friend at camp, a 15-year-old boy from Gaza named Omar, told his story. In 2008, the Israeli Army bombed Omar’s house. His father was hospitalized for seven months, and his neighbors were killed.

All of my father’s family has served in the Israeli Army, relatives I know and love. My entire life, I’ve heard only one side of this conflict. Even writing this, I am conscious of what my father will think. I don’t want to hurt him or his family, because I know they have suffered from this conflict as well. But at SoP, I learned there was another side.

Toward the end of camp, I became distraught. I was going back to my comfortable life, and Omar was going back to Gaza, where he said he was never sure he’d wake up in the morning. Oddly, though, he was the one to offer reassurance; he told me that the simple fact of me attending Seeds of Peace meant more to him than he could express.

The last day of camp, Omar gave me a bracelet beaded in the pattern of the Palestinian flag. I wear it proudly with my Star of David necklace. While the bracelet has garnered some negative comments from strangers and family members, I have no plans to remove it. I now have my feet planted firmly in two worlds: the world I inherited with its old conflicts and assumptions and the new world I hope people like Omar and I can create. To be sure, there are real grievances on both sides. I don’t pretend to have all the solutions, but understanding and knowing the people directly involved has changed my ideas about what is possible for the future.

Sowing Seeds of Peace
By Emma Shimony ’17

I give it to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools.”
— William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury

One two three.
One two three four.
One two.

Sitting at the piano, I repeated these three sentences in my head for over an hour. I was attempting to play “Deux Arabesques” by Claude Debussy, my favorite composer. I had heard the piece over 100 times, and I fell in love with the gentle crescendos, decompressing ritardandos and the emotion that exuded from each and every bar, sublimating from dimension, transforming into something that could not be contained or defined. The piece was aural perfection.

In music, timing is everything. Without it, the artistry and creative nature of the piece are lost, floating aimlessly in an ocean, a ship that has collapsed into a pile of driftwood. Attempting the piece, I was drowning, trying desperately to grasp onto something that seemed to inevitably slip through my fingers. Like so many things in my life, I wanted to control the rhythm of the piece, to transform it into something it was not.

As my piano teacher has often reminded me, one cannot control time. It cannot be molded to fit our desires. It exists whether we want it to or not. Though we must follow the rules of time, we must also learn to forget it, to transcend its control and reach a place where we are cognizant of its existence, yet not restricted by it. Time should reign as an enlightened monarch, where defiance is blasphemy, yet creativity is still possible.

Faulkner’s words finally shifted my thinking. Reading the work, I was reminded of the temporal challenges I faced in music through the character Quentin. Like me, Quentin desperately tried to control time. He wanted to change it, rearrange it into a place he had mentally deemed as correct. Realizing his absurdity shed light on my own.

Yet again, I sat down in front of those black and white keys, and slid my fingers atop them. Heeding words of Quentin’s father, I simultaneously remembered and forgot time. As I began to play, I finally let myself give in to the rhythm of the piece. Though it took a while, after I mastered the timing, my artistry was freed — a prisoner walking outside for the first time. Time was never constricting me; it was guiding me. I just had to let it.

Learning by Forgetting
By Zoe Ettinger ’17
Two perfect innings on the final day of the regular season at Houston brought Matt Daley ’04 his first victory in the American League. It was a satisfying end to an unexpectedly joyful September, but nowhere near as thrilling as his three-pitch outing three days earlier at Yankee Stadium.

That’s when Daley relieved legendary New York Yankees closer Mariano Rivera after longtime teammates Derek Jeter and Andy Pettitte stunned Rivera by telling him he was coming out of what proved to be his final game.

“That is something I will remember until the day I die. I’ll be telling that story for a long, long time,” says Daley.

Rather than go to the mound himself, manager Joe Girardi sent Jeter and Pettitte to take out Rivera in the ninth inning.

“When I saw them coming out, I made sure I waited in the bullpen for Mariano to walk off the mound, because I knew it was going to be a little while,” Daley says. “I didn’t want to be that guy who’s running in while they were doing their thing on the mound.”

An emotional Rivera hugged Pettitte and cried on his shoulder before heading toward the dugout.

Somebody had to relieve Rivera. Daley, 31, was an unlikely somebody. His career has defied long odds. All 30 major league teams bypassed Daley in the 2004 draft after his senior season at Bucknell. He signed with the Colorado Rockies as a free agent, slogged through five minor league seasons and had started a sixth before reaching the big leagues in April 2009. His one National League win came with the Rockies that season. Shoulder soreness began in 2010, ultimately resulting in Daley undergoing shoulder surgery in August 2011.

He signed with the Yankees as a minor league free agent and missed the entire 2012 season while rehabilitating his shoulder.

In 2013, Daley pitched in 44 games in the minor leagues, the final 30 very effectively at Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, the Yankees’ Triple-A farm club. When the minor league season ended Sept. 2, Daley went home to Hoboken, N.J., assuming he had thrown his final pitch in 2013. Four days later, the Yankees summoned Daley. He made the 25-minute trip to the South Bronx and that night made his debut at Yankee Stadium.

Daley pitched six scoreless innings in seven games for the Yankees. He allowed two hits and no walks with eight strikeouts, one after relieving Rivera. Daley threw three pitches — fastball, curveball, fastball — to Ben Zobrist of Tampa Bay and struck him out swinging to end the ninth.

When Daley entered the dugout, he saw Rivera sitting there. “He was taking it all in,” Daley says. “So I went up to him, and I just said, ‘I know you’ve had a lot of amazing experiences on the baseball field, but I just want you to know that for me, this is the most amazing experience I’ve ever had being a part of baseball. I want to thank you for allowing me to be part of it.’ He just had a big smile on his face and told me, ‘Good job.’”

Daley took more than a lasting memory from that game. He has a keepsake, the ball he used to throw three pitches, the one he asked Rivera to sign.

Jack Etkin is a freelance writer in Denver who has covered professional baseball since 1981.

- By Jack Etkin -
Sept. 30, 2010, was a historic day for Dimock, Pa., a rural hamlet of scattered farmhouses, one traffic light and a handful of natural gas wells at the heart of the national debate over hydraulic fracturing. The whole town, it seemed, had packed into a small Baptist church to hear then-Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary John Hanger announce a landmark decision bringing the hammer down on extraction company Cabot Oil and Gas. DEP held Cabot responsible for contaminating nearby drinking water wells with methane, and that afternoon demanded that the company finance a $12-million pipeline to provide public water to the 18 affected households.

Hanger’s order was challenged in court almost immediately and ultimately rescinded under the current administration, but to me (then an energy reporter for the Wilkes-Barre Times Leader), and undoubtedly to many of those who filled the room with a swell of applause, the announcement felt like history unfolding before our eyes. Flanking the walls that damp and cold afternoon were reporters from dozens of local and national media outlets; filmmaker Josh Fox, whose documentary Gasland made the town a paradigm of the dangers of unconventional gas extraction; and three classes of Bucknell researchers take an up-close look at natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania communities.
of Bucknell students, there to observe history in action.

“It was a great moment for students to see how regulators work, how they deal with these instances,” says Professor Amanda Wooden, environmental studies, who organized the trip. “Then to see company representatives talking to people, holding their own mini-press conference; to see how an activist working in the area fed off of that; to see how journalists communicated about it. It was a really great lesson in how all of this plays out in a small town.”

David Manthos ’11 was one of those students. Manthos works for SkyTruth, a West Virginia–based nonprofit that documents changes wreaked on the environment by resource extraction with satellite and aerial photography. He remembers that day as a “pivotal moment” in his life, in which he could feel the impact of gas drilling on a small-town community.

“Certainly there’s a lot of nuance to the claims on either side, but to see that level of intensity and how it was changing a community, not just the landscape, was fascinating,” he says.

The tale of natural gas drilling in Pennsylvania is one of small towns and an industry that in every way seems larger than life. Rigs tower above the surrounding landscape; pipeline easements slash over once-pristine forested mountaintops, cutting through miles in a matter of months; and at the height of the drilling boom, hundreds of water-laden trucks
created 30-minute delays to cross a bridge in Towanda, population: 2,919. But massive as they may be, those impacts also are multifaceted and often perceived differently in different places.

Rural sociologist Brandn Green ’03, director of Bucknell’s Place Studies Initiative, is intrigued by the ways Marcellus drilling impacts communities and says the issues can’t be oversimplified. “Trying to say this is good or bad for everyone, or ‘Ah, those poor people in Bradford County,’” he says, “just isn’t true.”

Even the narrative of Dimock, the town where the gas industry most clearly got it wrong, is more nuanced than that of an idyllic community crushed by evil fossil-fuels companies, though many have portrayed it that way. As a keen observer of the Dimock story once pointed out to me, there is a marked difference between the rallying cries of “Clean water for Dimock” and “Ban all fracking now.”

Wooden brought her students to Dimock that day not to join the aggravated townspeople and anti-fracking activists in either of those cries, but to observe and interview those individuals in hopes of better understanding the personal reasons they raised their voices in the first place, as well as the ways they viewed their community, the gas industry and themselves. And to do that, they needed to be there, and they needed to listen.

Bucknell’s location at the epicenter of the Marcellus Shale in Pennsylvania affords convenient access to places like the Dimock Baptist Church, and several researchers at the University are using those opportunities to understand the consequences of natural gas drilling on individual communities.

“Bucknell has been in and around a lot of the communities that have been affected. We have connections,” says Professor Carl Milofsky, sociology. “We’re the only people who are perfectly situated to do it.”

Milofsky works with Green and management professor Jordi Comas to study the varied responses of two demographically similar communities to construction proposals for hydraulic fracturing wastewater treatment plants within their municipal borders. One community organized in protest to block the plant’s construction, while the other raised essentially no objection and viewed the project with ambivalence, or as a positive economic development. The researchers want to know why.

“There are always going to be disruptions — something else that’s new, that shifts all the pieces around,” Green says. “We have an opportunity to understand how that happens with this particular issue, and maybe those lessons are transferrable, and useful to communities in other places at other times.”

One theory the Bucknell researchers developed has to do with the presence and visibility of nonprofits and other organizations within a municipality that can help provide a sense of community. Individuals who possess a stronger sense of community will feel more empowered to effect change at the local level.

Professor Alf Siewers, English, believes that Bucknell is playing a role in building that sense of community by empowering townspeople to make their own, collective decisions. In 2011, Siewers led students in an oral history project to document how residents living near Wellsboro and Dimock felt impacted by gas drilling. “The polemics about fracking and gas drilling, on all sides, tend to work against narrative in terms of giving people in communities their own voice to tell their stories,” he says. “The work the students...
Both showed a way to involve universities in helping people tell their stories to a larger public, and to themselves.”

Siewers says the narratives compiled by student researchers, which they supplemented with sound, video, mapping and photography, “connect the dots” between industry, communities and individuals by providing a complete picture of the industry’s influence in specific areas.

“It helps present the whole natural gas phenomenon as it’s woven into the stories of people’s lives,” Siewers says. “It presents the complexities of the situation in a way that’s perhaps more digestible because it involves narratives.”

For as long as a town exists, its story will never end, but the volume of Dimock’s tale declined from a 2010 roar to a more moderate tone in 2014. Though a public water line was never built, in 2012 Cabot settled for an undisclosed sum with 32 of 36 plaintiffs in a lawsuit over contaminated water. The residents said through a spokeswoman that they were relieved.

There are dozens of Dimocks in Pennsylvania and other states that the Marcellus Shale underlies. As its development marches through the gas-field regions, communities will continue to feel its impacts, positive and negative, in their own ways. And Bucknell will be here to watch, study and listen.

Researching Marcellus Shale Drilling and Its After-Effects

Debate over Marcellus Shale drilling generally pits the risk of environmental and public health impacts against the potential for economic gain. While some Bucknell researchers have focused on less-explored aspects of this new industry, others are tackling these broader impacts as well.

CARL KIRBY, geology

Carl Kirby directs the Marcellus Shale Initiative and its Publications Database (bucknell.edu/script/environmentalcenter/marcellus), an online databank to help community members obtain reliable information about gas drilling. The database allows users to search and locate scholarly articles that the initiative has vetted for accuracy of data and research methodology.

“Reports from the government or industry or advocacy groups will vary tremendously in terms of how valuable the information is and how it’s presented,” Kirby says. Kirby also has a research interest in the chemistry of flowback water produced by hydraulic fracturing.

KEVIN GILMORE, civil and environmental engineering

While critics of natural gas drilling frequently decry the chemicals added to the water injected during hydraulic fracturing, Kevin Gilmore is most interested in the flowback water that returns to the surface after a well has been fractured. Gilmore says this water, which can contain up to 10 times as much salt as seawater, has not been well characterized. He is working with Kirby to improve that characterization.

Funded by the Pennsylvania Water Resources Research Institute, Gilmore has evaluated membrane separations as a method of removing salt and other dissolved solids from flowback water using membranes. While the method was effective, he found it wasn’t economical. Gilmore says this water, economic effect, though significant, is smaller and more complicated.

“We’re not just working with conventional pollutants any more,” Gilmore says. “We’re working with novel contaminants that require new solutions.”

NANCY WHITE, economics

Nancy White is skeptical of some astronomical “economic impact” numbers stemming from industry-funded research that used outdated methodology. She suspects the industry’s real economic effect, though significant, is smaller and more complicated.

“Fracking can create some jobs, but it can also destroy some jobs,” White says. “Nobody ever talks about that.”

White, who hosted a 2012 conference at Bucknell and edited an economics journal issue about shale-gas economics, is preparing to embark on her own study of how states with viable gas reserves can best mitigate the bust that often follows a natural resource boom. White hypothesizes the answer may lie in using extraction tax revenues to diversify a state’s economic base in industries not connected to the gas industry.
Sun and Snow

The magic of winter happens on those early mornings when the world is still and silent under a blanket of snow.

Photography by Aurimas Liutikas ’12

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When Jesse Dondero ’13 landed in Washington, D.C., to start a new job with the federal government, he didn’t realize the extent of the social and mentorship network awaiting him in his new hometown. That changed in September when Dondero stepped into a Bucknell Alumni Association Welcome Reception at the Public Bar in Dupont Circle.

“I ran into several people I graduated with but didn’t know were living in D.C. Since then, I’ve been able to meet up with them and build a nice base of friends,” Dondero says. “I also ran into a few alumni I had never met in person, and it’s been really helpful to have people who have been around the block to answer any questions I might have about the city. It’s a great network.”

Each fall, the Alumni Association and regional Bucknell Clubs host Welcome Receptions in the far-flung locations where alumni migrate after graduation. This year, the association hosted receptions in 15 U.S. cities and in London.

“Turnout was strong in the cities where receptions were held,” says Alumni Association board member M.L. Hedison ’78. “Lots of new connections were made. New alums met older Bucknellians who remember what it’s like starting out.”

Nearly 100 Bucknellians, including Dondero, attended the D.C. gathering. About half were new arrivals from the Class of 2013, while others graduated more than 30 years ago. Alumni Association board member Joel Berelson ’85 said the gatherings hold appeal for both groups.

“I get to come back to campus and meet students three times a year, but others who don’t get that opportunity enjoy meeting recent graduates and talking to them about their experiences at Bucknell,” Berelson says. “It helps older alumni stay in touch with what’s happening on campus.”
There’s no back of the room where members can hide at TROTFITNESS, the exercise studio opened by Nisan Trotter ’05, a mile from the Bucknell campus. Trotter pushes his clients to their personal limits during the boot camp-style workouts he leads, which incorporate a wide variety of exercises that boost metabolism.

Trotter, a former Bucknell scholarship football player and fundraiser, opened TROTFITNESS in November 2012, after several years of teaching in parks and community centers around Lewisburg. He was inspired to make fitness his career by his wife, Yorelis, a Zumba instructor who enrolled him in his first trainer certification course, and by former teammate Daris Wilson ’05, who teaches boot-camp fitness in New Jersey. TROTFITNESS has five employees, including Nisan and Yorelis.

“The Small Business Development Center at Bucknell has been pivotal in our success,” he says. “People at Bucknell have also been awesome mouthpieces for our business, sending people our way or signing up themselves.”

—Matt Hughes

ALUMNI ENTREPRENEUR: NISAN TROTTER ’05

As I near the halfway point of my OB/GYN residency at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, I feel confident about the career in women’s health ahead of me. Even when the long nightshift hours leave my brain fried, and my work with some patients breaks my heart, I cannot for a second picture myself doing anything else. It’s hard to imagine I wasn’t always so sure.

Looking back, I realize the commitment to service that led me to my career was there all along. While in the third grade, I began volunteering with a church youth group in some of the poorest neighborhoods in inner-city Baltimore, handing out sandwiches to people living on the streets. In high school, I raised money and flexed my muscles renovating an elderly woman’s house.

What my Bucknell experience gave me was the chance to explore what drew me to help others, and identify the type of service that most entices me. I was active in many clubs and activities, from seats on committees promoting diversity to the role in The Vagina Monologues that helped me uncover my interest in women’s health. It gave me opportunities to explore, to try things on for size, and I learned more about myself in the process. Two trips to Nicaragua with the Bucknell Brigade and a semester in Tanzania, where I worked on an independent study project with local indigenous healers, helped me realize that touching people — healing them physically and connecting face-to-face — is what I most love in life.

I haven’t had the chance to get back to campus or keep in touch with Bucknellians as much as I’d like — moving straight from college to med school to residency has kept me busy — but I still feel connected to my alma mater. Every time I enter a surgical suite or meet a new patient, I carry my Bucknell experience with me.

Nayo Matthews Williams ’08 finished her M.D. in obstetrics and gynecology and is in residency at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School at Rutgers University. If you have a We Do story, please submit to bmagazine@bucknell.edu.

Nayo Matthews Williams ’08

How Bucknell Helped Me Get To Obstetrics

By Nayo Matthews Williams ’08

WE DO — WORDS FROM OUR ALUMNI

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FOCUS ON OCEAN HEALTH

Congratulations to Archis Ambulkar M’05 on his appointment to the UN World Ocean Assessment initiative, an important and timely endeavor. Unfortunately, the Q&A announcing his appointment [“Moore Avenue,” Fall 2013] focused on the issues of global warming and sea-level rise. These are terrestrial issues. Far more important to the health of the oceans is the problem of ocean acidification.

Ocean acidification is directly caused by the burning of fossil fuels. Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, the ocean has absorbed over 255 billion tons of carbon dioxide and presently absorbs about one-third of fossil fuel emissions or 11-12 billion tons annually. Carbon dioxide reacts with seawater to form carbonic acid lowering ocean pH. Average surface ocean pH is already down 0.1 and is predicted to be 0.3-0.4 lower by the end of this century. While that may not seem like much, pH is on a log base-ten scale so a decrease of 0.3 represents approximately a doubling of seawater acidity. With this change in pH, carbonate ion concentration is reduced by about half. For calcareous organisms, this could be catastrophic.

While the chemistry of ocean acidification is entirely predictable based upon the amount of carbon dioxide added to the ocean, the biological impacts of ocean acidification are largely unknown and difficult to predict. Calcareous organisms will most likely suffer detrimental impacts; non-calcereous organisms may prosper from lack of competition, while ecological entanglements will surely complicate any simple extrapolations. During the next 100 years, as we proceed to peak oil and gas production, the health of the ocean will be severely challenged. How this will impact ocean fisheries and the people that depend upon them is anybody’s guess.

Edward Peltzer ’72
Soquel, Calif.

RECONSIDERING CHINA

I was struck by Professor Zhiqun Zhu’s response to Paul Moore’s ’81 letter about the article “10 Myths about Modern China” [Fall 2013]. I am now in my second year of living and working in China, and I find that Prof. Zhu’s comments align completely with my own experiences.

Let me first comment on Mr. Moore’s letter. He seems to feel that Prof. Zhu propagates the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) by failing to note the discrepancies between official documents and everyday events. That is true for all countries. All have their inherent contradictions. In the U.S., the myth of the Lone Ranger or rugged individualist is belied by the syndrome of “keeping up with the Joneses,” the extreme power of peer pressure that is felt by many Americans — not to mention the ongoing disputes played out through the courts and in the political arena about how to interpret key provisions of America’s constitution.

The most salient point in Prof. Zhu’s response is his contention that the view Americans have of modern-day China is outdated at best, if not completely distorted (leaving aside the squabble about an “open media”). This has been my own experience. When I arrived in August 2012, I was stunned by what I found. China’s infrastructure is highly advanced: high-speed trains, modern highways, well designed airports, new and often architecturally innovative buildings in cities, convenient local transportation systems, 4G networks and beautiful green spaces. I am a teacher, so I have noticed as well the heavy investment China is making in its educational system. And I teach in a Chinese public school, not an exclusive international school. Also in my experience, most people under the age of 30 speak English well enough for me to communicate with them. This is not to occlude the many problems in China as a result of this development, pollution most obviously, or the extremes between wealth and poverty (also seen in the U.S.), which Prof. Zhu discusses.

Mr. Moore seemed in his letter to be particularly concerned about the issue of religious freedom. On that topic, I can only say that I have seen several churches in the city where I live. I do not detect any particular pressure concerning religion. One can go in and out of the churches freely. A number of Chinese people I know wear crosses around their necks. When I talk about Thanksgiving or Christmas, others volunteer that they are Christians. In my school, the Western staff are given Christmas day off to celebrate it. Of course, many Chinese are not Christian. Many follow Asian systems of belief: Buddhism or Taoism to name two. But many also have no particular religious belief, just as in many other countries where I have lived. In that respect, I find China to be no different.

In people’s daily lives, I find the CCP plays no more important role than does any political party in Western countries. Many of the Chinese people I meet are, or seem to be, apolitical, no more involved in politics than I have seen people to be in other countries, including the U.S. The young people I meet seem much more interested in their jobs, their love lives, in making and spending money. In fact, my impression of China is not that it is a communist country or a capitalist country so much as it is a consumerist country. If married, they are obsessed about the family. Sound familiar?

In short, China is a fascinating country, both modern and ancient, sophisticated and backward. It is rapidly evolving while also cherishing its more than 5,000 years of continuous history as a civilization. We would do well to recognize and acknowledge its complexities rather than to content ourselves with potted half-truths or outdated stereotypes.

John F. Larner ’73, M’78
Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China
The Hope of Dallas
A lifelong interest in the JFK assassination leads an alumna to new conclusions.

By Pamela McElwain Brown ’64

The sunlight and warmth of Nov. 22, 1963, enveloped me in a comfortable cocoon as I sat, reading a book, in Hunt Hall library when the chatter of a transistor radio outside broke my reverie. Suddenly, Carol Caughey Bowen ’64 burst into the room, asking “How can you sit there? Don’t you know the President has been shot?”

I could not think. I could not breathe. I felt I was suffocating. I had to get outside. I had to hear firsthand what was happening — thus began my lifelong need to know exactly what had happened to President Kennedy that day in Dallas.

Those days cast a shadow over my senior year. I moved to New York City after graduation, unsure what to do with my life, unsure what lay ahead for our country.

In September 1964, the Warren Commission Report was published. Its conclusion puzzled me — three shots from the rear. After an early viewing of the Zapruder film in 1964, I realized that the crime had taken place in the limousine. The Warren Commission specified the wrong direction for the shots. I eagerly gathered news articles, books and magazines, but ended up tossing them out in discouragement following the failed investigation of Orleans Parish, La., District Attorney Jim Garrison.

The images of JFK in the exquisite midnight blue limousine, from the Zapruder film, haunted me. JFK had said, “Do something for your country.” But what? During the ’80s, I met a researcher who pointed me to new books and documents. I again joined the quest for answers, this time at full throttle.

I dug for information in the National Archives, Henry Ford Museum and the JFK Library. The blueprints were proprietary. No details for security reasons. I started a website on the limo in 1998, and quickly came under attack. This niche was really a vortex of mystery. But now, I did my best to accept discouragement and disapproval, and began to stoically persist. My findings challenged everyone’s understanding. I’ve lived in that vortex ever since.

This November, my husband, Donner, and I journeyed again to Dallas, this time to share “Midnight Blue to Black — the Vanishing Act of the JFK Presidential Limousine in Broad Daylight,” at the JFK Lancer 50th Anniversary Conference. I defined the security flaw of the limo in open configuration. I demonstrated that the limo was rebuilt immediately following the assassination under a cloak of secrecy and disinformation. It was then painted black at LBJ’s insistence. It was conveniently unavailable for the Warren Commission re-enactment in May of 1964. Within the conference walls there was agreement with what I had said. Outside, however, the press said almost nothing about the limousine, while still promoting the conclusion of the Warren Commission Report. What is so terrible about this event that even 50 years later, we are not supposed to think it through on our own, I wondered? Just the same, I left Dallas with the conviction that wherever men and women can reason and ask questions there is hope for the future, and for our country.

Pamela McElwain Brown ’64 is generally acknowledged to be the foremost authority on the JFK assassination presidential limousine, SS-100-X. She has given several presentations on the famous limousine, published articles in the U.S. and abroad and has been featured in numerous television programs. To learn more, go to her site, ss100x.com.

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