



SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

AUGUST 2017 | VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 6

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

Dear Fellow Alumnae and Friends,

As another fiscal year ends, I am once again in awe of you and your love of Sweet Briar and your confidence in her future. As demonstrated through your contributions of time, talent, and treasure, you have done it all — through hours of volunteering with the Alumnae Alliance recruiting students, holding and attending events throughout the Clubs, helping students find jobs and internships through Alumnifire, helping with the Auction, hosting Talbots events and raising and giving precious financial resources. This year alone, through the Alumnae Alliance, more than 335 alumnae have tracked over 116,000 hours for an in-kind donation to the College of \$13.8 million dollars. This is unprecedented and is truly appreciated by those of us here on campus.

Many of our fellow alumnae also remind us to keep working for the College and to strive to promote Sweet Briar no matter what our decade. At the end of June, I was particularly overwhelmed by the fortitude of the Class of 1952, six of whom, led by Joanne Patton, gathered in Topsfield, Massachusetts, for the local playhouse performance of their senior play, “Resting on Our Laurels” that had not been performed since their SBC graduation 65 years ago. When the audience asked them to take a standing ovation, the moment said it all. This class is leaving a legacy and the actions that they demonstrate throughout the year to handwrite all their classmates, to participate in class officer conference calls, to return to Reunion and to engage in the future of the College is noteworthy.



I hope you will read inside this issue about several new special initiatives to enhance the student experience that involve much alumnae time and talent.

Your continued support for the College now and in the future has a tremendous impact as we navigate the path ahead. Thank you again for your confidence and support.

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83
Vice President for Alumnae Relations and Development
mpmhutson@sbcedu

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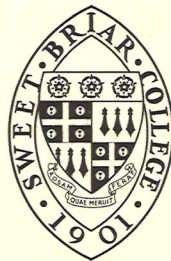
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For more information about Alumnae
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Invitation to All Alumnae and Friends of Sweet Briar

All alumnae and friends of Sweet Briar are welcome to come back to campus this Founders' Day Weekend, September 21-22, for the inauguration of Meredith Woo as the 13th President of Sweet Briar. Activities will begin on Thursday, September 21. On the morning of Friday, September 22, the community will recognize Founders' Day with Convocation and the tradition of marching to Monument Hill. In the afternoon, the community will again gather in the Quad for President Woo's inauguration. Please visit sbc.edu/inauguration for more information. We hope you can join us!



*The Sweet Briar College Board of Directors
requests the honor of your presence at*

*The Inauguration of
Meredith Jung-En Woo*

As the Thirteenth President of Sweet Briar College

*Friday, September 22, 2017
at two o'clock in the afternoon*

*The Sweet Briar College Quadrangle
Sweet Briar, Virginia.*

Reception immediately following the installation

*For more information about the inauguration,
visit: www.sbc.edu/inauguration
Email: inauguration@sbco.edu*

Special initiatives bring beauty and experiential learning to

Sweet Briar students

This summer, Sweet Briar will launch special initiatives to benefit incoming and current students. Geared toward the beautification of campus and buildings, these special initiatives will expose students to art from the College's collection and will improve some of Sweet Briar's most unique spaces.

Sweet Work Weeks volunteers spiff up six residence halls

After an evaluation by President Meredith Woo and Physical Plant staff, it became clear that the six residence halls that will be used this coming academic year were in need of new flooring and paint. House Five on Faculty Row (for nontraditional students), Green Village, Meta Glass, Grammer, Carson, and Manson will all go through this upgrade (Randolph, Reid, and Dew are all offline this year). Thanks to the efforts of Physical Plant staff, the flooring is already well on its way to being completed.



New floors installed in Grammer.

The project of painting these six buildings will be in the capable hands of our Sweet Work Weeks volunteers joined this year by faculty and staff beginning July 31 and will be completed by August 10 in time for the early arrival of student athletes. Don't worry—other projects such as weeding, pruning, and tending to our outdoor spaces will also be carried out by Sweet Work Weeks volunteers.

The total cost of this project is \$140,000 and a funding opportunity of \$15,000 remains. To volunteer for Sweet Work Weeks from July 31 through August 18, visit sbc.edu/alumnae-development/sweet-work-weeks.

Dorm rooms to house students—and art

President Woo is still shaping her vision for Sweet Briar's future, but one component will certainly be immersing our students in beauty throughout both indoor and outdoor spaces. The College has more than 4,000 objects in its collection. President Woo saw an opportunity: to bring art into each student's room. Thanks to the work of Karol Lawson, Director of the Art Collection and Galleries and the Sweet Briar Museum, Laura Pharis, Professor of Studio Art and Member of the Fine Arts Program Committee, and the Friends of Art, more than 400 works of art will be framed to be displayed throughout the residence halls. Each student will be able to choose a work of art to hang in her room through a lottery this August, and pieces will also once again hang in the parlors.

"I want visual art to be a major part of the Sweet Briar experience," said President Woo. "I believe a more proactive display and use of artworks all throughout the campus will add depth to the education we provide. The campus needs

greater vibrancy and color. I believe a more proactive display and use of art works all throughout the campus will lift our spirits and add depth to the liberal arts education we provide. Art collections in a collegiate setting should be in service of learning, whether in classrooms, in galleries, or as we plan to do, in the halls and rooms of residence buildings. Having exciting exhibits should help not only with recruitment but attracting others to come to Sweet Briar."



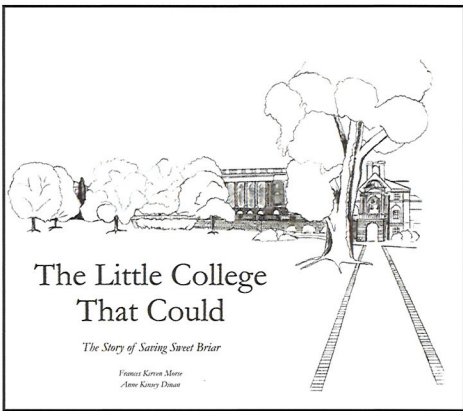
Using mostly works displayed in Sweet Briar's "116" exhibit, Prof. Kimberly Morse-Jones discusses interpretations of each piece with Summer Honors Research Program students and Engineering Professor Hank Yochum. Artworks will now hang in current students' rooms, making them accessible and part of an experiential learning experience outside of Sweet Briar's gallery spaces.

This project has been partially funded by an anonymous donor. Donations to fund the remaining amount of \$35,000 can be made through the Friends of Art. The cost to frame each piece of art is \$100-\$150.

If you are interested in investing in any of these funding opportunities, please contact Claire Dennison Griffith '80, Director of Major and Planned Gifts, at 434-381-6479 or cgriffith@sbc.edu. ■

The Little College That Could: The Story of Saving Sweet Briar

When Sweet Briar College successfully avoided the attempted closure in June 2015, the global Sweet Briar family celebrated in many, many ways. This celebratory book was written and illustrated by two Sweet Briar '68 classmates who, with the help of technology, bridged the 3,000-mile gap between California and New York.



Frances Kirven Morse, in a fit of euphoria, wrote the story of the saving of her beloved college in three hours. The alumnae's uphill struggle to save their school reminded her

"STORY" CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Sweet Briar's campus is an excellent ecosystem for grant-funded sustainability internships

This summer, five Sweet Briar students are hard at work as campus sustainability interns. The internships are funded by a half-million-dollar grant from the Judith Haskell Brewer Fund of The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia, which supports Sweet Briar's environmental programs, and a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Over the summer, the interns have worked on three major projects: growing produce in the community garden; a project focusing on carbon budgets, forests and alternative fuels; and monitoring an invasive water plant. Each intern is focusing on one major project suited to her interests and abilities for part of each week and contributes to other projects.

The students involved in the program include Shannon Skeffington '19, a double major in environmental studies and international affairs; environmental studies major Chelsea McKinney '18; and rising sophomores Valeria Gofigan-Ramirez, Blake Newton and Brianna Garcia — all of whom are leaning toward majoring in biology.



Community garden liaison Michael Lachance, sustainability interns Chelsea McKinney '18, Shannon Skeffington '19, Blake Newton '20, Brianna Garcia '20, Valeria Gofigan-Ramirez '20, and community garden member Alix Ingber.

In the community garden, the interns grow produce that will eventually find its way onto plates at Prothro, the College's dining hall. "The ultimate goal is learning to produce healthy, local food and market it to our dining services," said Dorys McConnell Duberg Professor of Ecology Linda Fink, who is supervising the interns.

"We will figure out what vegetables to grow that would be the highest yield to sell and produce," said intern Chelsea McKinney '18 of Lynchburg. McKinney's interest was piqued by a sustainable agriculture course she took last spring at Sweet Briar.

The second major project students will be working on began last summer, when Katie Ferguson '17 spent eight weeks as part of the 2016 Honors Summer Research Program studying *Hydrilla verticillata*, an invasive water plant that inhabits Sweet Briar's Lower Lake. Ferguson, then an instructor with the Sweet Briar Outdoor

Program, became interested in studying hydrilla after noticing its impact on recreational activities, such as canoeing, at the same time the College was introducing sterile grass carp to the lake in the hope the fish would help to control the hydrilla.



Sustainability interns using canoes to map the density of hydrilla in Lower Lake at Sweet Briar.

In an effort to determine whether the carp were doing their job, Ferguson spent the summer developing standard methods to map the distribution and density of the hydrilla. This summer, the sustainability interns will continue Ferguson's work to determine what effect the carp are having on the invasive plant.

The third project the interns are working on involves alternative fuel sources, namely loblolly pines and switchgrass, both of which grow on campus. Their research explores which option is a better biofuel. In 2014, the College converted about 300 acres of its hayfields to switchgrass, which is harvested and sold to a company that converts it into an environmentally friendly heat source. The warm-season grasses take a few years to mature, and last year's harvest was the first to produce revenue, Fink said.

Tom O'Halloran, a former Sweet Briar environmental studies professor who now is a research faculty member at Clemson University, is leading the project and the interns are also collaborating with scientists at Virginia Tech. O'Halloran says the fact that Sweet Briar students are doing this kind of research, funded by a federal grant, is a "big deal," but also something that aligns with the College's commitment to finding educational uses for its 3,250-acre campus.

"The College has always looked for ways to use the land, because that's one of its unique assets," he said. "That's something they've always been proud of. They've utilized that resource, and now that resource is translating into student learning.

"This is a prime example of students being involved in federally funded research that helps inform questions of environmental sustainability and biofuels research, which is really cutting edge on the national and global scale." ■

Sweet Briar students and alumnae expand use of Alumnifire

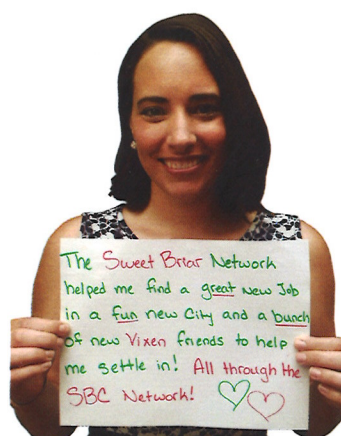
Thanks to the efforts of the Alumnae Alliance, Sweet Briar's Career Services Office, and the interest of current students, the College's use of Alumnifire is growing. This online tool, which connects alumnae, faculty, staff and students for internships and job opportunities, is one that helps us all leverage the College's powerful alumnae network.

Our network now has more than 1,700 alumnae, faculty, staff, and current students registered for Alumnifire. Students who join have the opportunity to seek the advice and expertise of alumnae, faculty and staff in four areas:

Opportunity	Number of Members Offering Help
Introductions/ networking	805
Resume reviews/ feedback	761
Informational interviews	728
Job shadowing	470

The ratio of alumnae, faculty and staff to students is currently approximately 15 to 1. There are 462 members working at a company that is hiring, and 199 members are seeking interns.

Nancy Drew '10 learned the power of Sweet Briar's Alumnifire network when she reached out to Debra Elkins '93 for help exploring job options and making a transition. Nancy has a PhD in biomedical engineering, and was considering jobs in the federal government. "Along with discussing federal government job options, we brainstormed some different companies in her current location that might fit her interests and skills. I helped her with her resume a little bit, then she applied and was quickly hired by Abbott Labs."



Chelsea Capizzi-Walsh Lomicka '08 was exploring career and location moves and sought advice on Facebook. Another alumna pointed her in the direction of Alumnifire, and Chelsea has learned of many prospects. "The Sweet Briar women have really stepped up and have been purposefully reaching out and checking in and asking how I'm doing—women I have never even met before are keeping me moving forward. It is an amazing and truly special thing."

If you are able to help a current student or are looking for new opportunities yourself, visit sweetbriar.alumnifire.com. ■

"STORY" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

of a favorite children's book, *The Little Engine That Could*. She read her story to family, friends, and other alumnae. Her desire to have it illustrated and published grew as 2015 turned into 2016. Then, working by phone with old friend and classmate Anne Kinsey Dinan on the Alumnae Magazine news for the Class of 1968, she casually (or so she says!) asked Anne if she could draw. Anne demurred, but asked to see the manuscript. She read it, fell in love with it, and volunteered to try illustrating it.

Throughout the course of the project, Frances and Anne shared ideas, rewrites, laughter, and images. They shed a few tears and grew some gray hairs as they struggled to learn new technical skills. By March of 2017, they conceded that they needed professional help and Frances' amazing California networking led them to Selman Design in Brooklyn, New York, a short subway ride from Anne's Manhattan home. Two weeks later, thanks to Selman's state-of-the-art video conferencing, Frances and Anne actually saw each other for the first time in over 40 years. Selman Design provided a video reunion as well as the

help they needed. Over the next several weeks, Selman's team married the text and the drawings, producing a professional look and turning their dream into reality. Finally, Frances created her first website, proving again that at Sweet Briar, the impossible is just another problem to solve! The Selman designers were so impressed with the Sweet Briar story and the authors' passion that they generously waived their fee, enabling Frances and Anne to donate all book profits to Sweet Briar.

The Little College That Could: The Story of Saving Sweet Briar is a tribute to everyone who worked so hard to save Sweet Briar and the indomitable spirit she continues to engender in her students, faculty, administration, and alumnae.

More information about the book can be found on the website: www.thelittlecollegethatcould.com. It is available for \$25 at the Sweet Briar Book Shop, in store and online (free shipping). All book profits go to Sweet Briar. Visit shopsweet.sbc.edu to purchase online. ■



Revitalized Parents Council launched by Alumnae Relations and Development Office

The Alumnae Relations and Development Office has evaluated Sweet Briar's previous parents programs and restructured the concept to create a revitalized program consisting of a Parents Council. The Parents Council is intended to function as a sounding board in order to help students and their families gain the most from the Sweet Briar experience.

Activities of the Council are coordinated by Marcia Thom-Kaley as Parents Council liaison and mother of Emma '18. The Council will:

- serve as a vibrant network of current and former parents
- develop closer ties between parents and the College
- help parents serve as ambassadors for the College
- assist the College in overseeing the welfare and development of students
- advance the College's academic reputation and strengths

Co-Chairs will lead the Council for a two-year term. The Council will consist of four strategic teams focused on key topics:

- Athletics and Activities
- Communications
- Career Readiness and Preparedness
- Student Recruiting and Retention

Members of the Parents Council will meet once each year on campus during Families Weekend in the fall. They'll also be invited to attend events at local alumnae clubs across the country in order to answer questions

and act as ambassadors of the College, supporting the Admissions Office in recruitment and working with the Student Life Office on student retention. They will welcome new students to campus once they arrive. They will also be engaged in career planning and mentoring programs and will identify and secure internships, as well as assuring the quality of the Sweet Briar experience for all students.

"I am so thrilled to be able to serve the College as a liaison for the Parents Council," said Thom-Kaley. "I am already having a wonderful time re-connecting with the parents of current and former students and very much look forward to getting to know the parents of the Class of 2021. I have a remarkable opportunity to learn and grow from women I deeply respect and admire and can pour energy and devotion into one of Sweet Briar's most important constituencies." ■

YOU CAN HELP RECRUIT THE NEXT CLASS OF SWEET BRIAR WOMEN!

Sweet Briar is asking alumnae and friends of the College to personally refer prospective students to the Admissions Office through a new referral form that can be found on both the Admissions and Alumnae pages of our website as part of a referral initiative. There is no time commitment or follow-up required, so please keep it in mind as a simple but significant way to help Sweet Briar's growth and renaissance. Visit sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student/ to make your first referral today!