

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

SPONSORED BY THE ALUMNAE ALLIANCE AND PRODUCED BY THE ALUMNAE RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

## Together, we are saving our college

My fellow Alumnae and friends,

This weekend, we welcomed home over 590 alumnae from 49 classes and 9 decades. It was quite an amazing celebration of generations of women in leadership reconnecting with each other. While we witness the rebirth of Sweet Briar College on a daily basis, it is clear that the new paradigm of engagement lauded most recently in [Non-Profit Quarterly](#) trumpets the message that Sweet Briar is leading — once again!

Last month, we also read with interest an article in [Virginia Business](#) talking about the “Sweet Briar effect” and the impact we are having as we reaffirm the relevance of women’s liberal arts education in this country. Skeptics continue to question our relevance. Our work ahead is to promote the unique value proposition of a Sweet Briar education. Last week, President Stone, Board member Leah Busque '01 and I met with representatives from top Silicon Valley companies. Each of these representatives validated the value of a Sweet Briar education in the high-tech industry, and discussions are ongoing regarding partnership opportunities. During one of our conversations, a Smith graduate noted “Sweet Briar has put the wind back in the sails of women’s colleges.”

Recently, a fellow alumna referred me to the book *Becoming a Category of One*. We will be driving toward that outcome in the coming months, re-envisioning our path ahead to better enhance and maximize our impact from lessons learned this first year. We have a chance to set ourselves apart. The value proposition of the “Sweet Briar effect” is to provide women’s leadership for critical needs in communities throughout America and abroad.

Think what has been accomplished in a year. Over 500 alumnae assisted in recruiting students for the College. Just three weeks ago, we finished a flawless academic year with 237 students focused on their academics and 81 extraordinary women crossing the stage. Hundreds of alumnae engaged in the work of cleaning up the campus and its buildings, providing the stewardship that our natural and built environment deserves. Our place is loved once again. More than 50 alumnae have offered to mentor students and network for internships and jobs, and more than 90 alumnae signed up to help raise funds for the College from stakeholders, friends, the community, and foundations. All volunteers acted for the love of Sweet Briar.

In a little over a year, we have witnessed the power



Many thanks to Elizabeth Frenzel Casalini '82 for this beautiful photo of a double rainbow at Sweet Briar, taken during Reunion weekend.

of our network and our connections, both of which were revitalized for a purpose and a mission. You have answered the call: **If not you, who? If not now, when?** Together, we are saving our college. While we have a long road ahead, let’s all take a moment to recognize leadership and loyalty in its truest form. Thank you to all alumnae and friends for not only believing in Sweet Briar, but for making the achievements of this past year happen.

With gratitude,

Mary Pope M. Hutson, '83

Vice President for Alumnae Relations and Development

Email: [mpmhutson@sbcc.edu](mailto:mpmhutson@sbcc.edu)

next is **NOW**

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(800) 381-6131

## A timely, tax-smart planned giving strategy

The Charitable IRA Rollover Gift is now permanent. You can make this year's Charitable IRA Rollover Gift in any month of 2016. Your 2016 Charitable IRA Rollover Gift will provide the maximum support for the College for the 2015-16 fiscal year if you make a transfer by **June 30, 2016**. To do so, please call (800) 381-6131.

### The IRA Rollover Gift to Sweet Briar College

The Charitable IRA Rollover Gift can be made in any month of 2016. It provides a donor who is 70½ or older and who has an IRA with the equivalent of a 100% income tax charitable contribution deduction. The gift also reduces the amount that a donor must take as taxable income as an IRA minimum distribution. A donor who is required to take a 5% minimum distribution from her or his IRA can instead direct the minimum distribution to Sweet Briar College and reduce taxable income.

### Direct from Qualifying IRAs

The Charitable IRA Rollover Gift is made directly by the IRA custodian to Sweet Briar College. The gift is a completely tax-free transfer from the IRA to the College. The gift is not included in the donor's income and the donor receives no income tax charitable contribution deduction for the gift. The completely tax-free transfer provides the equivalent of a 100% income tax charitable deduction for the gift.

### Direct to Sweet Briar College and Not to a Foundation

The Charitable IRA Rollover gift must be made directly to Sweet Briar College. This gift should not be made to a Donor Advised Fund. This is a technical requirement for this type of gift.

### Example

Susan Smith, who is 71, has a traditional IRA with a balance of \$100,000 consisting of deductible contributions and earnings. Susan can request the IRA custodian to distribute the entire \$100,000 to the College. Under prior law, the entire distribution of \$100,000 would have been included in Susan's income. Under the new law, the distribution of \$100,000 is a qualified charitable contribution. As a result, no amount is included in Susan's income and this gift is a completely tax-free gift to Sweet Briar College.

### Double Your Tax-Smart Gift

Susan and Robert Smith have separate IRAs and both of them are 70½. Each of

them can make a Charitable IRA Rollover gift of \$100,000 in 2016 for a total 2016 Charitable IRA Rollover gift of \$200,000.

*This information is provided for educational purposes. It is not intended as legal advice. Please consult your own advisors who alone are aware of your individual situation and thus in the best position to provide an individual analysis and help you accomplish the best result.*

For more information, please contact:

Claire Dennison Griffith '80

Director, Major and Planned Gifts  
Sweet Briar College

P. O. Box 1057

Sweet Briar, VA 24595

Phone 434-381-6479

Email: [CGriffith@sbc.edu](mailto:CGriffith@sbc.edu)

## Love of Sweet Briar runs deep within families

The most important relationship of Major General L. H. Ginn's life began in 1952. A student at West Point, Gen. Ginn took a summer trip to Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, AL. While there, he joined a classmate who was going on a date with a Sweet Briar student. That student had a yearbook with her, chock-full of Sweet Briar women who would love to date a West Point man. Gen. Ginn met Kathleen Button of Culpeper, VA shortly thereafter they were married right after his graduation from West Point. They were married for 53 years until she passed away in 2007.

Each year, Kathleen made sure to send a gift to Sweet Briar. She demonstrated that she believed in the value of Sweet Briar and women's education. Gen. Ginn also values women's education, and has made a 4-year pledge of \$100,000 to the Sweet Briar Fund. He has been on the board of St. Margaret's School in Tappahanock, VA for 30 years and has seen the decrease in the number of single-sex institutions, which concerns him. "I think it's a known fact that when women are in single-sex schools, they assume leadership roles that they probably wouldn't if they were in a co-ed environment," Gen. Ginn said.

When asked about the impact a single-sex education environment has on women, Gen. Ginn said, "We've seen a great example of this at work with Sweet Briar during the attempted closure — they really got with it. They get a better education and they learn better; that will take care of them later in life. I'm counting on them to make Sweet Briar better than it's ever been."

We are grateful for the outpouring of support from many families of our alumnae.

# Sweet Briar Fund Update: Help us Cross the Finish Line

## Class Challenges Still Underway

During Reunion, alumnae attended a convocation ceremony to recognize the fundraising achievements of the classes who have made outstanding progress for the **Next is NOW** special initiative. Because there is still time before the fiscal year closes on June 30, these announcements focused on rankings rather than the traditional awards that have been given in the past to classes based on their giving and participation. For those who were not able to attend Reunion, we are sharing the rankings, which we find truly inspirational. As vice president for alumnae relations and development Mary Pope M. Hutson '83 emphasized at the ceremony, the College's critical need is for each class to make its most significant gift every year for the next 3 to 5 years. We must rely on fundraising to supplement the College's income while we grow our enrollment.

The front-runner for the Nancy Dowd Burton '46 Award (recognizing the Reunion class with the largest amount of unrestricted gifts to the Sweet Briar Fund, formerly Annual Giving) is the Class of 1966 (as of June 1). They surpassed the previous record held by the Class of 1964, who raised \$1,040,090.64 for their 50th Reunion in 2014. However, this could still change before June 30 — it's anyone's game until then!

The Classes of 1975 and 1972, who are not in a Reunion year, each raised over \$1 million this year as well. This is truly exceptional; they exemplify the paradigm of giving to Sweet Briar each year.

### Nine Decades of Annual Giving: Participation by Class as of June 1

*(Reunion classes highlighted in green)*

Year	Participation
1934	2.6%
1935	2.7%
1936	0%
1937	0%
1938	14.8%
1939	5.8%
1940	10.4%
1941	12.7%
1942	11.8%
1943	20.5%
1944	29.1%
1945	20.8%
1946	16.7%
1947	13.5%
1948	15.5%
1949	20.6%
1950	24.2%

Year	Participation
1951	32.1%
1952	23.4%
1953	30.1%
1954	27.6%
1955	30.3%
1956	21.5%
1957	31.5%
1958	28.1%
1959	25.0%
1960	28.0%
1961	23.0%
1962	29.5%
1963	33.3%
1964	34.1%
1965	27.8%
1966	28.8%
1967	37.2%

Year	Participation
1968	21.5%
1969	13.5%
1970	27.8%
1971	22.8%
1972	25.8%
1973	23.3%
1974	26.7%
1975	30.6%
1976	18.7%
1977	18.1%
1978	30.7%
1979	21.5%
1980	22.0%
1981	20.1%
1982	16.0%
1983	25.1%
1984	19.9%

Year	Participation
1985	19.3%
1986	25.9%
1987	15.4%
1988	20.3%
1989	17.2%
1990	13.8%
1991	21.5%
1992	23.2%
1993	28.6%
1994	20.0%
1995	22.6%
1996	28.5%
1997	21.5%
1998	33.3%
1999	31.4%
2000	26.9%
2001	22.8%

Year	Participation
2002	21.1%
2003	21.2%
2004	20.1%
2005	20.3%
2006	24.1%
2007	18.0%
2008	17.9%
2009	16.0%
2010	20.8%
2011	20.3%
2012	13.2%
2013	18.9%
2014	14.4%
2015	15.6%

### Rankings for Non-Reunion Classes: Annual Giving Amounts

1930s & 1940s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1949
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1942
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1935
1950s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1954
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1957
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1955
1960s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1964
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1963
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1960

1970s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1972
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1975
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1979
1980s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1983
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1982
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1980
1990s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1997
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1990
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1998

2000s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	2000
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2004
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2002
2010s	
Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	2010
2 <sup>nd</sup>	2012
3 <sup>rd</sup>	2014

### Reunion Classes

Place	Class
1 <sup>st</sup>	1966
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1976
3 <sup>rd</sup>	1961

**To make a gift to Sweet Briar, visit [sbc.edu/gift](http://sbc.edu/gift) or call (800) 381-6131.**

next is **NOW**

## Sweet Briar Matters: Why I Give to Next is NOW

by Keenan Colton Kelsey '66

A visionary giver.

That is not a term I would ever apply to myself. I don't spend time wondering about a vision. And I don't see myself as a leader or innovator. But I do spend time worrying about the world. And I do hate the fact that so much good is left undone, not because of will, but because of money.

I was among those paralyzed by the news of the college closure — stunned and numbed, confused and angry. When I came out of the initial shock, I cried. And then I was angry. And then I was confused. What was the truth? What happened?

Fast as I regained some stability, a group of alumnae on the East Coast gained it faster. They immediately stood up: "Not so fast. You can't do this. This is not a done deal." When then-President Jimmy Jones expressed bewilderment, as in, "Where did all this resistance come from?" one alumna said, "You taught us this. We are Sweet Briar women."

And indeed, we are Sweet Briar women! I went to Sweet Briar because my mother went there (Class of 1938). I had heard about it all my life; some of her happiest moments were there. I found some of my happiest moments there as well. But to tell the truth, for many years I took my college for granted. I knew I had made lifelong friends there — my college roommates and I have grown even closer. But I did not immediately realize the value of a same-sex education, the opportunity to find a strong sense of identity and ability and purpose — and the sense of pride in being a woman. Who I am — indeed, who my mother was, and what I know and can do — all grew from this women's liberal arts experience.

Many years later, when I felt the call to ministry, much to my utter astonishment, my college roommates said, "Oh, we can see that, that makes sense." They knew me better than I knew myself. I learned to think critically and to write well. I was exposed to a wide and deep cross-section of scholarship. I remember being tested for entry into seminary, at age 49 no less, and one of the comments was, "Keenan is very well educated."

When the College was threatened, I was one of the earliest to sign on, both as donor and activist. I personally would have donated for the conversation alone. Press around the country started talking about women's education, liberal arts, and small schools. Financial challenges were shared. And Sweet Briar's collateral grew.

Sweet Briar, with our help, will flourish. We have an amazing story to tell. I will offer what I can, even to a "sacrificial" level of giving. Because Sweet Briar is unique; because same-sex education is still relevant today; and because the world needs more "Sweet Briar Women!"

## Vixen Voices: Transfer students attracted to Sweet Briar

In addition to the incoming class of 2020, 16 transfer students will come home to Sweet Briar for the fall 2016 semester. These students come to the College from a range of other schools. Three of the transfer students were delighted to speak with the alumnae relations and development office about coming to Sweet Briar. All three agreed that they are attracted to Sweet Briar because it is a small community that provides students with experiences that they would not have at larger schools.

Rachel Ransone '19, a transfer student from Vinton, VA who attended Virginia Western Community College, said that she paid attention to the news about Sweet Briar last year during the attempted closure. "It was very inspiring to watch a group of women come together and pull that off — I don't think that other colleges would have been able to." Rachel is a rider and plans to double-major in archaeology and art history. Morgan Rayno '20, from northern Virginia, agrees that Sweet Briar's community is what makes it unique. "I heard that alumnae just reach out to you. If you need a job, or a place to get on your feet, you find out if there are any alumnae who can help you. I find that amazing, especially as I'm trying to find out about the different careers that I want." Morgan, who heard about Sweet Briar from her friend Willow Schull '18, is interested in psychology and Sweet Briar's Masters in Teaching program.

Emma Thom '18 is a transfer student from the University of Virginia who spent her first year of college at the American University in Paris and her second year in Charlottesville, VA. Emma is the transfer student this year who is probably most well-acquainted with Sweet Briar since she is the daughter of Marcia Thom-Kaley, who leads our alumnae admissions recruiters (AAR). Initially, Emma says, she wanted to get as far away from home as possible. After much soul-searching and finding herself unable to get what she needed out of her experience at UVa, Emma felt called back home to Sweet Briar. "The ways in which the community gathered together to build the school back up were really incredible to me," Emma said. She is thrilled to have small classes and be part of a tight-knit student body. Emma will focus her academic interests on English and has joined the swimming and tennis teams.

Each of these students couldn't say enough kind words about Gloria Simon, Sweet Briar's director of outreach for non-traditional students. From answering all sorts of questions about Sweet Briar, to arranging meetings with professors and coaches, to facilitating their visits to campus, Gloria does her job with joy and enthusiasm. Thank you, Gloria, for bringing these amazing young women to Sweet Briar!

**Do you have questions or comments about The Briar Wire? Please contact Clélie Steckel, editor, at (800) 381-6131.**



## Current Challenge Opportunities for Special Initiatives

The Office of Alumnae Relations and Development has three challenge giving opportunities for our alumnae and friends. **If you'd like to make a gift to one of these initiatives, call (800) 381-6131 or email [rpietsch@sbc.edu](mailto:rpietsch@sbc.edu).**

### Alumnae Scholarship Fund

We have the opportunity to give immediate additional funds to some of our talented incoming students. In the past year, Sweet Briar has enjoyed more national press coverage than ever before. Because of this well-earned notoriety, more young women know who we are and, better yet, who they can become. Some of these women thought college was impossible. We at Sweet Briar know that "impossible is just another problem to solve." Help us solve the impossible for a few select young women who dream of becoming a part of the Sweet Briar family.

The great news is that this fund is already off to a great start: of our \$100,000 goal, we already have a challenge donor who will match up to \$20,000 in donations. Give to the non-endowed Alumnae Scholarship Fund to provide merit- and need-based aid to some of the brightest students coming to Sweet Briar and make the "impossible" possible.

### Tennis Court Resurfacing

In order to have a first-class tennis facility for ODAC competition as well as summer camps and clinics, the Sweet Briar tennis courts are in great need of resurfacing. The existing courts have surface layers that are cracked and are not adequate for collegiate competition.

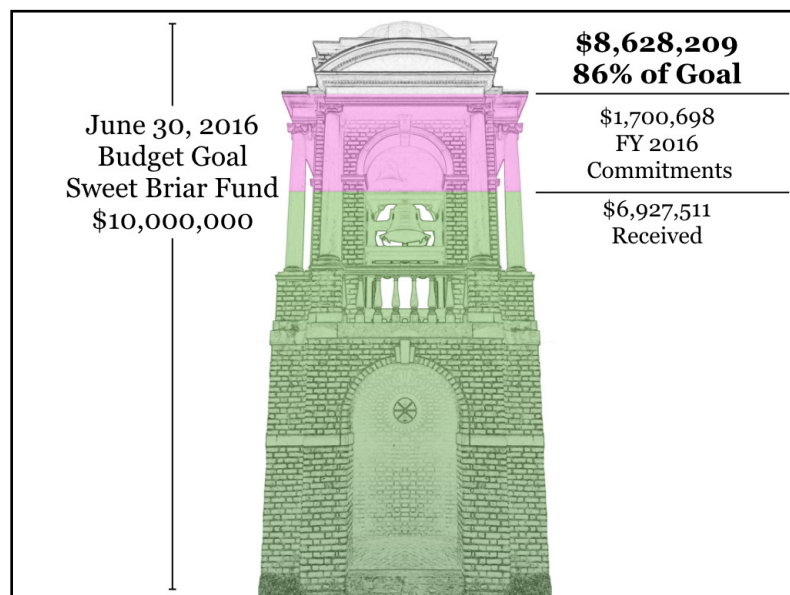
With new courts, we could host local and regional tournaments, clinics, and can attract camps like Van Der Meer and other tennis programs. Appropriate fencing and seating are also necessary to help attract auxiliary high-caliber competitions.

The total amount needed for this resurfacing is \$250,000. Thanks to two generous donors, \$50,000 has already been contributed to this challenge. Consider making a gift today — our tennis courts need to be renovated before October in order to have them ready for the spring competition.

### Environmental Sciences Challenge Grant

As we announced in February's issue of *The Briar Wire*, Sweet Briar has received a challenge grant from the Judith Haskell Brewer Fund of The Community Foundation *Serving Richmond and Central Virginia*. We received an outright gift of \$500,000. In order to secure another \$500,000 toward this initiative, we must raise another \$500,000 over the next two years. In total, we have the potential secure \$1.5 million to support faculty positions, the community garden, summer research stipends and to conduct an assessment on how to leverage our environmental sciences program.

To date, we have raised \$200,000 of the \$500,000 needed to receive the matching funds from the Brewer Fund. Please join us to support one of Sweet Briar's most important programs.



As of June 9, 2016. The \$7,000,000 Saving Sweet Briar donation is not included in these totals or goals.

**\$1.371 million to go!**

**Help us cross the finish line by making a gift at [sbc.edu/gift](http://sbc.edu/gift).**

## Next is NOW Update

**We are very grateful to the following visionary donors:**

**Anonymous**

**Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85**

**Nancy Hall Green '64**

**Keenan Colton Kelsey '66**

**The Pauley Family Foundation,  
Katharine Pauley Hickok '72**

**Allison Stemmons Simon '63**

**Nan M. Stuart '75**

**Begun with Saving Sweet Briar and propelled forward by Next is NOW, this special initiative continues over the next 4 years to put Sweet Briar on a path to sustainability. Your leadership is essential to our future.**



## Welcome Home to All Classes!

### Photos from Reunion 2016

Many thanks to all who attended Reunion this year — those alumnae who were in a Reunion year, those who were in a non-Reunion year, their families, and the current and former faculty and staff who attended. Over 590 came home, and each of you made it truly special. We were so happy to have you here and hope to see you again next year!



*The Class of 1966 had the largest percentage of its members come home for Reunion out of all the Reunion classes.*



*Members of the Classes of 1985 and 1986 enjoyed the music of the Buzzard Hollow Boys on Friday evening.*



*The Class of 1991 celebrated their 25th Reunion at the Boathouse on Friday evening (including coordinating their scarves!).*



*The Class of 1966 took home three awards from Reunion Convocation: the largest Reunion gift, the largest amount of total giving over the last five years and the largest attendance at Reunion.*



*Reunion guests thoroughly enjoyed the music of The Janitors at the gala on Saturday evening.*



*One of the Saturday afternoon Alumnae College sessions was a question and answer period with the Co-Chairs of the Alumnae Alliance Council, Debra Elkins '93 and Sarah vonRosenberg '72.*



# Welcome Home to All Classes!

## Photos from Reunion 2016



*The Class of 1966 presents their check for \$1,252,706 — the amount of their gifts to the Sweet Briar Fund as of June 1 — to President Stone at Reunion Convocation.*



*During the gala on Saturday evening, the members of the Saving Sweet Briar, Inc. Board of Directors were presented with the Distinguished Alumnae Award. Pictured, from left: Christine Davis Boulware '77, Sarah Clement '75, Sally Mott Freeman '76, Jo Ann Soderquist Kramer '64, Brooke Linville '04, Ellen Ober Pitera '93. Not pictured: Tracy Stuart '93.*



*The Class of 1966 and the Post-50th Reunion classes came together for an update on the College from President Stone during breakfast on Saturday morning.*



*There was a little rain over the weekend, but no matter the weather, Sweet Briar's campus is always beautiful!*



*Classmates Debra Elkins '93 and Lauri Dabbieri '93 connected at Saturday's Engagment Festival in the Quad.*



*Four alumnae served as clergy during the Service of Remembrance on Sunday. Pictured, from left: The Rev. Dr. Kathryn Carroll Mathewson '66, Rev. Deacon Kathy B. Chase '67, The Rev. Dr. Makanah Dunham Morriss '66 and The Rev. Keenan Kelsey '66.*



## Meetings with tech giants in Silicon Valley

by Leah Solivan Busque '01

I was so happy to host President Stone and Mary Pope in the Bay Area last month and take them on a tour of the world's top tech companies. Bringing more women into technology, engineering, and computer science fields is a hot topic in Silicon Valley, and I knew these companies needed to hear our amazing Sweet Briar story.



We met with top leaders at Google, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. I was thrilled to see how engaged these companies were as the President and Mary Pope shared the state of the college and how genuinely they wanted to support and help our vision of moving forward education dedicated to women.



These companies clearly see a "pipeline" problem of female candidates and are actively looking for new channels to recruit and support women. Sweet Briar is now an active part of this conversation and seen as not only a solution, but as a college that is innovating in the space.



Because of the rebirth we've had as an institution, we are in a unique and very strong position to innovate along side of these companies moving forward, and the timing is perfect with Silicon Valley's focus on diversity and bringing more women into the industry. It was an inspiring 48 hours in Silicon Valley!

## Alumnae and prospective students invited to Devon Horse Show and Country Fair as special guests

Friday, May 27 marked a very special occasion in the history of the Sweet Briar Alumnae Club of Philadelphia: the inaugural event at the Devon Horse Show and Country Fair, which will become an ongoing partnership. The College and the Philadelphia Club were invited as special guests after the Show's Chairman, Wayne Grafton, was particularly inspired by Sweet Briar alumnae's victory saving the College last year.



The alumnae in the Philadelphia Club not only invited other area alumnae, but extended the invitation to prospective students in the region, recruiting from local horseback riding facilities. The Show's organizers also invited Sweet Briar's President Phillip C. Stone, vice president for alumnae relations and development Mary Pope M. Huston '83, and director of major and planned gifts Claire Dennison Griffith '80 into the ring to present the award for the winner of the junior hunter-jumper competition.



The event was also the kick-off for the new Friends of Riding group, which, like our other "Friends of..." groups, supports the College's programs and activities. You can now make a gift online to Friends of Riding using the drop-down menu at [sbc.edu/gift](http://sbc.edu/gift).

**Do you have an email address you want to share with us? Do we need to update your information in our database? If so, please give us a call toll-free at (800) 381-6131 or send an email to [alumnae@sbc.edu](mailto:alumnae@sbc.edu).**



## Sweet Weeks of Service volunteers make campus sparkle

May 16 through 26, Sweet Briar welcomed home over 15 alumnae for the first of two sessions of the 2016 Sweet Weeks of Service. These women (and some of their families) traveled from as far as France to perform myriad tasks to make Sweet Briar's campus sparkle. Many of our local alumnae also came to campus to help.



These volunteers got out the pressure washers to spiff up the Boathouse, painted many of the railings around campus (and on occasion, themselves by accident), weeded the flower beds, pruned some of the over-enthusiastic plant life, and helped the alumnae relations and development office with some of the administrative tasks related to Reunion. Among them was Dede Conley '72, who also served as the group's photographer (she took the photos on this page).



The group stayed in Carson, and various departments on campus took turns sponsoring their meals or hosting them. One day, the athletics department grilled a feast for the group, and later President Stone joined them for afternoon ice cream.



Tell Fritzler, development assistant, said, "They did some back-breaking work, which contributes to the overall beautification of the College. When people visit campus, what they see of our buildings and our landscape

affects how they view the campus overall. Because of Sweet Weeks of Service, the quality of the College is moving in the right direction: Onward!"



The College is extremely grateful to those who joined us on campus in May. Their enthusiasm for their work and for Sweet Briar was nothing short of inspirational.

## Visiting the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts

by Kathleen Keogh Weidner '88

In the April Briar Wire we shared with you some information about the Virginia Center for Creative Arts (VCCA). We had interesting responses to that article and we thought we would dig deeper for more details about this historic gem. We are so fortunate to have such an outstanding arts organization at our doorstep.

As of 2010, more than 5,500 VCCA fellows from all over the world have completed residencies at VCCA. Its international exchange program is the oldest and largest of all American artist colonies.

There is also a VCCA community in France, the Moulin à Nef. The property became part of the VCCA in December 2004 and is non-profit as well. By the summer of 2010, 86 fellows had completed their residencies there. It has enjoyed interesting collaborations with academic institutions such as Yale's Institute of Studio Studies. VCCA's French connection became even stronger when VCCA advisory council member Cy Twombly became the first American invited to do a permanent installation at the Louvre, painting the ceiling of the Salle des Bronzes with the assistance of VCCA fellow Barbara Crawford.

In addition to American master the late Cy Twombly, notable VCCA fellows include authors Gregory Maguire (*Wicked*), Cheryl Strayed (*Wild*), Christina Baker Cline (*Orphan Train*) and singer/songwriter Kathy Mattea. Residents have received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy in Rome, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and some have won National Book Awards, Pulitzer Prizes, Grammy Awards and MacArthur "genius" awards, making VCCA, in the words of one fellow, "one of the most important sources of art in the world."