

Dear Sweet Briar alumnae and friends,

Spring is a wonderful time of year at Sweet Briar. The weather is glorious and the campus is glowing with color. As I write, the three-week term is underway. Many of these classes take advantage of the College's natural setting, conducting sessions outdoors. Other classes are taking our students abroad for unparalleled educational experiences that the students will remember all their lives.

Much has taken place on campus this spring. We've been working on improvements that will make our students' experiences at Sweet Briar even better. We spruced up the lobby of the Babcock Performing Arts Center, made upgrades in Prothro Hall, refurbished common areas in the residence halls, and recently completed enhancements to Reid Pit and the Student Commons project in the Lower Quad. We see more progress each day on the new turf field.

Spring events on our academic calendar ranged from the theatre and dance productions to the campus visit by Robin Wall Kimmerer, botanist, member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and bestselling author of "Braiding Sweetgrass," our 2021-2022 Common Read. The students have been busy with classes and activities such as the Midwinter Gala, Step Singing, the Junior Banquet, and the Spring Fling. We've cheered our Vixen athletic and riding teams on to victory and have been thrilled by their successes.

Of course, the capstone event of our academic year is Commencement, when we celebrate our seniors as they commence their lives beyond Sweet Briar. The Class of 2022 has a bright future, pursuing jobs or graduate school and taking their places as a new generation of women leaders. You can read more about their pursuits in this issue.

I am proud of what our seniors and the entire Sweet Briar community have accomplished this year. But we haven't done it alone. You, our alumnae and friends, have been with us every step of the way and I am so grateful for your support. You helped us recruit the Fall 2022 incoming class of Sweet Briar women by reaching out to prospective students. You volunteered by participating in Sweet Work Weeks. You have given generously to the College, providing support for our students, our faculty and academic program, and the stewardship of our historic campus.

Now, as we approach the end of the fiscal year on June 30, I am asking you to contribute to the Sweet Briar Fund. If you have not yet made a gift this year, please make one now. If you have already made a gift, I thank you, and please ask your classmates to join you in supporting the College. Your gift will help us finish the year in a strong position.

Your contribution will also help us meet our goal of thirty percent alumnae participation. This rate currently stands at 23 percent and I hope you can help us increase it, as it is a measure of alumnae engagement and support and is used by outside entities as a factor in national college rankings. Let me emphasize that the amount of your gift is less important than your participation. It's the spirit of your gift that matters and I know that you are filled with Sweet Briar spirit!

Thank you again for being part of the Sweet Briar family. I hope you can join us in June for the All-Class Reunion, but we'd welcome a visit anytime. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,
Meredith Woo
President

Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

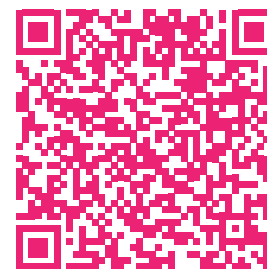
Dr. Meredith Woo,
President of the College
Michael Elliott
Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71
Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85
Sally Mott Freeman '76, *Secretary*
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Lendon Gray '71
Fred "Buzzy" Griffin
Martha Holland '72
Keenan Colton Kelsey '66
Gillian Munson
John L. Nau III
Michelle O'Neill '85
The Honorable Chap Petersen
Holly Prothro Philbin '95, *Executive
Committee Member at Large*
Mason Bennett Rummel '83,
Acting Chair
Stephen P. Smiley
Norma Bulls Valentine '93
Claude Becker Wasserstein '82

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*Senior Vice President for Alumnae
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Communications*
Lea Sparks Bennett '83,
Advancement Services Coordinator
Pam Boydoh, *Executive Assistant*
Lee Anne MacKenzie Chaskes '83,
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund
Margaret McClellan Driscoll '92,
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Caroline Chappel Hazarian '09,
*Associate Director of Alumnae
Relations*
Keeley Sullivan Jurgovan '92,
*Associate Director of Alumnae
Relations*
Sarah Lewis, *Associate Director of
Stewardship, Systems and Major
Gifts*
Lisa Wray Longino '78, *Senior
Director of Major Gifts and
Stewardship*
Kathleen Placidi, *Faculty Grants
Officer*
Rachel Pietsch, *Assistant Director of
Alumnae Relations*
Emily Dodson Sadler '18, *Assistant
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund*
Clélie D. D. Steckel, *Director of
Data Analytics and Development
Communications*
Megan Sunwall, *Alumnae Relations
and Development Assistant*
Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

SWEET BRIAR IN THE NEWS

Sweet Briar was recently featured in a blog post by Scott Cowen, president emeritus and distinguished university chair at Tulane University. To access the post online and share it with friends and classmates, scan the QR code to the right with your smartphone or tablet's camera.



Let's Educate More and Better Leaders— The World Needs Them

*April 27, 2022
by Scott Cowen*

Leadership is a fascinating phenomenon: it seems rare even when there is a plentitude of it. After a nearly 50-year career in higher education, decades on corporate and nonprofit boards, and years of teaching an undergraduate course on leadership, I have concluded that we need more and better leaders and leadership studies should be an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum.

It is not that there is a shortage of leaders—people in leadership positions are all around us and even those not in formal leadership roles can easily emerge as leaders in the era of social media. However, the kind of leadership we need in our organizations, local communities, the government, our country, and in the world seems to be in short supply. We commonly complain about a general dearth of leadership, point with outrage at those deemed to be bad leaders, and are horrified by examples of destructive leadership.

At the same time, we worship leaders whose success and character inspire us. We know well that good leadership has great potential to make things right; give our work and lives meaning; and foster stability, unity, innovation, and equity. If our hopes and dreams rest on the promise of leadership, shouldn't leadership studies in college be an explicit and widely implemented strategic priority?

For decades, colleges have been eagerly marketing themselves as the places that make the leaders our world needs—for good reason. Not only is the college experience naturally saturated with opportunities for deepening one's passions, learning and growing, and stepping into leadership roles inside and outside the classroom, but it also commonly involves access to at least a few elective courses on leadership as well as co-curricular programs and centers dedicated to leadership development. A growing number of colleges have degree-granting programs that allow students to major or minor in leadership.

Still, I am familiar with only two cases in which the study and practice of leadership have been integrated into the collegiate core curriculum.

Centering leadership: The nation's service academies and Sweet Briar College

West Point and the Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine academies are well known for having leadership at their center, but a small liberal arts college for women that last made headlines when its alumnae saved from certain death in the face of seemingly hopeless financial problems in 2015 may be a rather unlikely pioneer. As I learned from leading Tulane University in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina though, an institutional near-

SWEET BRIAR IN THE NEWS



Students in CORE 130, *Women and Gender in the World*, use the balconies in Mary Helen Cochran Library to practice debate.

death experience breeds bold innovation. It is clearly not in spite of its major existential crisis, but rather because of it, that Sweet Briar has emerged as a remarkably forward-thinking and daring player in the field of leadership education and development. Two years after its shocking closure announcement and subsequent rescue, Sweet Briar unveiled a core curriculum focused on examining and defining women's leadership in the twenty-first century with an emphasis on experiential learning and core courses such as *Decisions in a Data-Driven World* and *Sustainable Systems*.

To have more great leaders, we need to empower the next generation to grapple with the theories and realities of leadership. All of our students should develop a nuanced understanding of what leadership is and isn't. They need to understand the complex process that is leadership and the fact that anyone—not just a select few—can lead. We need them to know the difference between transactional and

transformational leadership as well as how to identify and address technical versus adaptive challenges. They should comprehend why ethics matter in the context of leadership (a helpful definition by Joanne B. Ciulla describes leadership as a "complex moral relationship between people, based on trust, obligation, commitment, emotion, and a shared vision of the good"). And they should value the powerful and important role followers play—for the world also needs more exemplary followers, and there is no leadership without followership.

Leadership education can't be optional or take place on the periphery of the college experience; it should be an integral part of the undergraduate curriculum. I have experience with embedding a field that was previously considered "nice but not essential" into the core curriculum, and I know it can be done. After Hurricane Katrina, faced with destruction and the herculean effort of rebuilding our university and city, public service became a lifeline. My leadership team and I realized that doing good and engaging with the community should no longer be something students could opt in to if they felt like it; it should be expected. We became the first major private research university in the country to require public service for graduation. I believe a parallel argument can be made for incorporating leadership into the core curriculum at colleges across the country.

Our world is more complex, fragile, and unpredictable than ever before. Without the right leadership (and plenty of it), our institutions, democracy, and economy don't stand a chance. We would be prudent to take a closer look at what longstanding experts like the U.S. Air Force Academy and trailblazers like Sweet Briar College are doing to put leadership front and center in their students' education and growth. Much is at stake, and anyone can emerge as a leader to capture people's attention and imagination—but it is paramount that the next generation of leaders can tell the difference between good and bad leadership. They must have the capability to lead (and follow) with competence and awareness.

This post originally appeared on higheredtoday.org. Scott Cowen holds the title of president emeritus and distinguished university chair at Tulane University. He was Tulane's president from 1998 to 2014 and served as interim president of Case Western Reserve University during the 2020-21 academic year.

CLASS OF 2022



Zelda Vasquez Ramirez '22

An engineering major, Zelda will be joining the Hersey Company in Stuarts Draft, Va., as an associate engineer.



Chloe Kersch '22

A business major with an equine studies certificate, Chloe will be an assistant at Greenway Farm in Afton, Va.



Rachel Davis '22

Rachel will join Mount Vernon, George Washington's estate, as youth program associate.



Weatherly Ryder '22

Weatherly will head to Wyoming after graduation to be a wrangler and trail guide at Grand Teton National Park.



Reesa Artz '22

Reesa will join the Disney College Program at Walt Disney World this summer. Following her time there, she will be attending Duke University's School of Nursing.



Hannah Epstein '22

Hannah will be attending the University of South Florida for an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in college student affairs, where she will also work as the graduate assistant for the office of summer initiatives.

CLASS OF 2022



Natalie Czarra '22

Natalie will be starting a job as a research technician at the Frederick National Lab under the National Cancer Institute.



Caroline Czarra '22

Caroline will be the research assistant for Sweet Briar art history professor Kimberly Morse-Jones. The position will take her to Europe for research, which will help her prepare for graduate school.



Taylor Shaw '22

Taylor will be attending the University of California Los Angeles to earn a Master's degree in East Asian studies.



Iris Williams '22

Iris, an engineering major, will join InterAmerica Stage, an entertainment rigging company based in Florida, which works with theme parks in the area and theatres across the country.



Jacki Vari '22

Jackie will be a development associate for the Menokin Foundation near Richmond, Va.



Jesseca Ballard '22

Jesseca will continue her education at the Atlantic Veterinary College in Prince Edward Island.

2022 COMMENCEMENT

113th commencement celebrates the Class of 2022

On Saturday, May 14, to the rousing sound of Albemarle Pipes and Drums, Sweet Briar College held its 113th commencement for the Class of 2022. The 83 graduates, most of whom arrived on campus in the fall of 2018, have experienced a remarkable amount of growth and change, both in their academic and personal life and in Sweet Briar's development and transformation.

They are the first class to follow the new Women's Leadership Core Curriculum for all four years. They saw Sweet Briar's vision of sustainability and stewardship of the land come to life with the construction of the greenhouse, the establishment of the apiary, the planting of the vineyards and the creation of the wildflower pollinator meadow. They saw impressive athletic facility improvements with the renovation of the riding center's main stables and the groundbreaking of the new turf and grass fields.

The Class of 2022 began college life as expected, and then, at the end of their sophomore year, the pandemic struck. Dealing with such change and uncertainty in the middle of their academic career was no easy feat, yet they tackled it with grace and determination. In the end, together with the entire community, they overcame numerous challenges to stand confidently on the other side — stronger, wiser and even more connected to each other than before.

With so many life lessons and experiences over the past four years on their beloved campus, the graduating class fully enjoyed the traditional Senior Week activities that led up to the awards, baccalaureate and commencement ceremonies.

At last, the final celebration arrived, but not without the typical pre-event decision of whether or not to implement the rain plan. Thanks to frequent spring showers, Sweet Briar's beauty



was in full splendor, but that also meant that commencement was held in the Upchurch Field House. As families and friends took their seats, the excitement became palpable as the first sounds of the Albemarle Pipes and Drums filled the field house and the procession began.

After an invocation by Rev. Sarah Fox Schofield '11 and a warm welcome from President Meredith Woo, two members of the Class of 2022 delivered their remarks. Presidential Medalist Annika Kuleba began by sharing precisely how connected the Sweet Briar community is to this uniquely special campus. There is much symbolism in the land, in how it's used and how it reflects the people that have called it home.

"The rural Virginia setting has influenced the women we have become and who we will be in the future," Annika shared. "It is said, you are a product of your environment. As I look upon you today, I see the mountains, the lakes, the river, the trees, the bees, the vines and the buildings that grace the Sweet Breezy landscape. Think about the opportunities we have been afforded because of our environment and the memories and inspiration they have provided us."

In her parting words, Annika solidified the connection between Vixens, the College and a shared vision: "I would say we have grown in our environment and our environment has grown on us. We made Sweet Briar a greener pink and

2022 COMMENCEMENT



The Class of 2022 at this year's Fancy Hat Brunch.

green. We became more sustainable, and ladies, we did it all together."

Senior class president Shee Young-Mitchell shared the achievements and memorable moments of the Class of 2022, but above all, she spoke of sisterhood. "Among us today we have engineers, writers, psychologists, mathematicians, artists and teachers, but most importantly, among us is a sisterhood that has been cultivated these last four years. We've made our mark on this campus these past four years. We came together and unified as a class. We discovered our passions and cultivated them in and out of the classroom. Sweet Briar has given each of us the tools to control our own story and start our own path."

Next, Maria Thacker-Goethe '02 gave the commencement address. As a first-year transfer student who arrived at Sweet Briar in January, halfway through the academic year, "Little did I know," she said, "that the next 3-½ years would afford me friendships that I've cherished every day of my life, a skillset that I lean into regularly

for my job, and a passion for making a difference in this world."

The theme of Maria's address was centered on proving your mettle, and she acknowledged how the class is "graduating into difficult times that will test your mettle, and you will also need courage."

"My challenge to you as new graduates and as young women," she said, "is to consciously work toward developing the courage needed to take the leap, to make the

risky decision, to come alive so you can create a stronger ecosystem for your community, whatever that may be."

After those words of encouragement, the candidates crossed the stage for the conferring of the degrees. Family, friends, faculty and staff all cheered them on in true Sweet Briar style.

Following that exciting moment, the acting board chair Mason Rummel '83 addressed the graduates and spoke of the weight and importance of what they accomplished. "You have a Sweet Briar College degree.... Don't take that lightly, because others won't.... Be proud of it, because we are proud of you.... You proved yourself here as you will prove yourself out there."

Next, Ellen Saunders '75 with the Alumnae Alliance Council congratulated the new alumnae, and like Annika, linked them to their environment. "We are connected to this land, the trees, the mountains and most of all to each other. We can't wait to nurture your roots and help your branches grow in new directions."

As the end of the ceremony drew near, Dean Garrett recognized several of the individual and perpetual award winners, followed by SGA executive leaders Elizabeth Sanford and Hannah Epstein who announced the winners of the SGA Excellence in Teaching and SGA Excellence in Service awards. The teaching award went to performing arts professor Cheryl Warnock and the service award went to Jeffrey Owen, media services specialist. To say the graduates were thrilled with these winners would be an understatement.

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STEWARDED SWEET BRIAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

And lastly, President Meredith Woo delivered her charge to the Class of 2022, beginning by referencing the first course in the leadership core, Design Thinking, and what it teaches. "You stay focused on your purpose — what you aim to achieve," she said. "You survey the lay of the land; the constraints you must live with; the obstacles around which you do an end-run; the support you need; the method you must deploy to get you over the finish line."

Strategy was the running theme as President Woo called to mind great figures throughout history who demonstrated the importance of strategy — but not just any strategy, "one that is fluid and flexible, governed by the starting point and not the endpoint," she said, an idea taken from Lawrence Freeman's book, simply titled "Strategy."

President Woo also quoted tennis legend Arthur Ashe, of Richmond, Va., saying, "Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."

"The realm of your life's strategy is one where the game is constantly changing," she concluded. "You deploy through life all manners

of bargaining and persuasion, threats and pressure, psychological and physical effects, and words as well as deeds. In the end, you get more out of a situation than the starting balance of power would suggest. Strategy is the art of creating power, which is wonderful."

Strategy, strength, confidence, flexibility, respect, truth and, above all, connection to each other and to the environment are qualities that ring true for the Class of 2022. Holla, holla to Sweet Briar's newest leaders and alumnae. There is nothing that you cannot do!



Sweet Briar dedicates the Kelley and C. T. Fitzpatrick Center for Creativity, Design and the Arts

On Friday, May 6, Sweet Briar College dedicated the Kelley and C. T. Fitzpatrick Center for Creativity, Design and the Arts.

When President Meredith Woo joined the Sweet Briar community in 2017, one of the first things she did was charge the faculty to create innovative programming around the College's strengths. The faculty responded by developing the Center for Creativity, Design and the Arts to leverage the College's excellence in creative endeavors and heighten its role as the region's cultural pillar.

Meanwhile, Kelley and C.T. Fitzpatrick's visionary support of Sweet Briar laid a strong foundation for the College's resurgence. Kelley was instrumental in the effort to save the College from closure by providing critical funding. The couple's



STEWARDED SWEET BRIAR

most recent gifts have been pivotal components of the College's recent enrollment growth by providing funding for prospective students to travel to campus to see for themselves the life-altering beauty of the College. They have also provided necessary resources for marketing Sweet Briar in Virginia and beyond.

In addition to giving, Kelley '85 is an active volunteer, serving on the Sweet Briar Board of Directors since 2015. "Kelley and C.T. have been our close and invaluable partners in rebuilding the College and raising it to national distinction," noted President Woo. "It is therefore eminently fitting to name the center in their honor."

The Center for Creativity, Design and the Arts is an interdisciplinary center that strives to cultivate creativity through the fine and performing arts and provide opportunities for collaboration among artists, educators and students across academic disciplines and global boundaries. Under the able leadership of Professor Carrie Brown, the center has supported a central element of the Sweet Briar Women's Leadership Core Curriculum, helping students appreciate beauty and increasing their capacity for creative thinking and empathetic understanding.

The center seeks to raise awareness of the Piedmont region's importance to Virginia. The resultant educational, cultural, artistic, culinary and outdoor programming will attract visitors from around the nation and the world and broaden the cultural horizons for Sweet Briar's students, community and neighbors.

The center has also deepened the College's relationship with the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Together, Sweet Briar and VCCA have sponsored visiting fellows who have taught the Fellows Studio course, which is part of the College's leadership curriculum. Other fellows regularly participate in Sweet Briar's arts classes and have discussed their work with the Sweet Briar community and the public in our salon series. This partnership also fosters international experiences for our students and faculty.

The center's programming, which showcases work by women, is vital to the College's mission to challenge and inspire students. They will be uplifted by women's cultural achievements as they cultivate their own creativity and prepare to take leadership positions in the art world or in other endeavors.

The goal of inspiring women leaders resonates with the Fitzpatricks. Kelley has served on the



boards of several arts organizations, including the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. Through her work with the YWCA of Central Alabama and with GirlSpring, Kelley has also worked to broaden the horizons and prospects of many, particularly young people, as has her husband. In addition to their other interests, the Fitzpatricks have been leading supporters of the University of Alabama, founding and endowing the Fitzpatrick Center for Value Investing. In 2020 they were named Outstanding Philanthropists of the year by the Alabama chapter of Fundraising Professionals.

The Fitzpatricks' family foundation focuses primarily on higher education and the arts. "We believe education is the best way to lift families out of poverty and to empower individuals to direct their own destiny," Kelley explained. "We support the arts because it is a touchstone of our humanity and makes life worth living."

"To have the Center for Creativity, Design and the Arts named for C.T. and me is perfect because we believe that creativity is vital for innovation and problem-solving in every field," Kelley said. "A Sweet Briar education teaches young women how to think for themselves in a constantly changing, chaotic world. The kind of empathetic leadership we need in this world is impossible without creativity."

The Fitzpatricks are proud of the College's recent growth and are gratified that they have been able to be a part of it. "C.T. and I made an investment in Sweet Briar, and we have seen a return on our investment including increasing enrollment, an innovative curriculum, a refreshed campus and a reputation for excellence in higher education," Kelley observed. "The return on our investment is that self-directed young women will continue to have the Sweet Briar experience. Future generations of women will reach their innate leadership potential, and the world is better for it."

NEW THAYER TURF FIELD

Sweet Briar breaks ground on state-of-the-art, water-based turf field



Sweet Briar College hosted a groundbreaking celebration for the construction of a synthetic, water-based turf field on Wednesday, April 27, at 4:30 p.m. The new Thayer Field is named in honor of Mildred "Bee" Newman Thayer '61.

With the generous support from Sweet Briar alumnae and friends, the College raised over \$2.6 million for these state-of-the-art athletic facility improvements. "Today's ceremony is a touchstone in Sweet Briar's history and one that marks a new era for field sports at the College," says Mary Pope Hutson '83, Senior Vice President of alumnae relations, development and communications. "We are incredibly grateful to the alumnae, students, parents, faculty, staff and friends who helped us reach this moment and paved the way for our students' continued success on the field. Thanks to their support, this is just the start of great things to come."

In the first phase of this project, the former Babcock Field (now Thayer Field) is being converted to synthetic, water-based turf and will be used by the field hockey and lacrosse teams. In addition to the turf, a new LED field lighting system and scoreboard will be installed.

The adjacent grass field — used by the soccer team — will be reoriented, resodded and also receive new LED lights and scoreboard. The upgrades to the grass field are generously funded

by donors and the College's Friends of Athletics.

More than 30 percent of Sweet Briar students participate in a field sport. With these improvements, the field hockey, lacrosse and soccer teams are excited by the speed of play on the turf field as well as the ability to be more flexible in game and practice times with the addition of lights.

Upgrading athletic facilities not only enhances the experience of current students but also the ability to recruit student-athletes for all sports. "The investment in Thayer Field is evidence of the College's support and enthusiasm for athletics," observes Athletics Director Jodi Canfield.

Thayer Field is expected to be completed before the fall semester begins in August.

About Bee Thayer '61

Mildred "Bee" Newman Thayer '61 is a former member of the Sweet Briar College Board of Directors, the Alumnae Association and a member of the Fitness and Athletics Center Gifts Committee. In 2009, the original Thayer Field, located near Sweet Briar's Upper Lake, was named in honor of Bee and her late husband, Brad. Bee was not only a lead donor on the turf field project but has a long-standing history with Sweet Briar as a former player on the field hockey and tennis teams and an avid supporter of the athletics program.

ATHLETICS ROUND UP

Sweet Briar seals successful season with Athletics & Riding Banquet

Sweet Briar Athletics & Riding capped off a successful 2021-22 campaign with its annual banquet, held in-person on Sunday, May 1 for the first time since 2019. The event saw over 200 student-athletes, families, guests, faculty and staff flood the Upchurch Fieldhouse as year-end awards were presented to student-athletes and faculty.

The banquet started off with the presentation of the **Robert Barlow Award**, presented this year to **Dr. Michelle Gervasio**. Dr. Gervasio has always supported athletics and was a staple at home competitions.

The Crispin Award, formally known as the Pink and Green Award, is given to a player on each team at the coach's discretion. The winners of the Crispin Award are as follows:

- Cross Country: Angelyn Wiggins '25
- Field Hockey: Jolin Daughety '25
- Golf: Annika Kuleba '22
- IHSA: Chloe Kerschl '22
- Lacrosse: Valen Foster '25
- NCEA: Emmy Longest '24
- Soccer: Kaitlyn Burns '25
- Swimming: Acadia ElzHowe '24
- Tennis: Ruth de Souza '23

The Jean Pschirrer First-Year Athlete of the Year Award was presented to first-year golfer **Amani Narang** (Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India) for her dedication, motivation, sportsmanship and love of her sport. Narang has broken every single program record this season.

Junior swimmer **Peyton Murphy** (Norfolk, Va.) was presented with **The Class of 1977 Sportsmanship Award**. Murphy is an extremely vocal supporter of her teammates and is extremely courteous to opponents.

Dual-sport athlete **Avery Jones** (Union, Conn.) on the field hockey and tennis teams was named the winner of the **Whiteman Scholar-Athlete Award**. Jones is the top of her class with a 4.0 GPA as an engineering major.

Senior **Emily Wrenn** (Franklin, Va.) was given the **Susan Lehman Courage Award** for her efforts in coming back to the court after an injury. Despite incurring what could be considered a season-ending injury, Wrenn worked hard to make it back to the court for two matches during the dual season and ended up going undefeated in both those doubles matches.



First-year **Paige Kennedy** (Purcellville, Va.) hailed as the **Rookie Rider of the Year** for her efforts with both the IHSA and NCEA teams.

Acadia ElzHowe (Georgetown, Texas) was crowned **Rookie of the Year** for her outstanding season. The first-year broke five school records, placed first 26 times at dual meets and was named to the All-ODAC team.

Senior **Britt Larson-Jackson** (Washington, D.C.) on the NCEA team received the **Coaches' Award**. Having been approved by 2/3 of the department, the Coaches' Award is given to a deserving graduating athlete who has participated in her sport for a minimum of three years.

Rider of the Year was awarded to first-year **Katherine Atherton** (Montpelier, Va.). Atherton had an outstanding season where her accomplishments speak for themselves.

Junior **Allison Wandling** (Mechanicsville, Va.), who has not lost a singles match since early March, was named **Athlete of the Year**. Along with her impressive singles record this season, Wandling has broken the program record for most career singles wins and is undefeated against ranked teams this season.

The highlight of the night was the **Crysler Award**, given to a four-year, graduating student-athlete who has demonstrated continuous commitment, sportsmanship and achievement in her sport. This year, the award was given to **Annika Kuleba** (Endy, N.C.). Kuleba has had an outstanding career at Sweet Briar, holding every golf record for the school at one point in her career.

**Make your gift to the
Sweet Briar Fund today at
sbc.edu/give**

The Writer Abroad: Three Weeks in Auvillar, France

by Susannah Nevison, Visiting Assistant Professor of English and Creative Writing

After a two-year delay because of Covid, we were finally on our way: a bus carrying twelve Sweet Briar Students, one representative from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts residence in France, and one weary professor (me), was pulling into the port in Auvillar, France. We had flown from Dulles to Paris, then Paris to Toulouse, and the bus was our final leg—we had made it. I had no idea what lay in store.

When you decide to take a group of students to France, several scenarios flash through your mind: baguettes by the Seine. Jaunty accordion music. Grocery store aisles solely dedicated to cheese. An echo of Bemelman's famous Madeline: Twelve little girls in two straight lines. We weren't in Paris, so the first and last scenarios were out; as for the accordion music and the cheese, France's picturesque Occitanie region certainly delivered. Through a generous partnership with the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA), my three-week intensive course, "The Writer Abroad," posted up at the VCCA's campus in Auvillar, France. We held classes in their studio, where we discussed the central concerns of a writer abroad: how does one write about place as an outsider? How does one's background—both cultural and personal—shape what we see and how we respond to it? What constitutes travel writing, and how do today's travel writers reckon with the genre's history, rooted as it is in exploitative practices?

I can't say we answered all those questions. But I can say that we spent a full three weeks thinking and exploring and learning about Auvillar's deep and complicated history. We stood outside a convent where nuns sheltered Jewish children during World War II; we marveled at the local faience, the product of thirteen potteries that opened at the urging of Louis XIV. We sat quietly



in churches, admiring frescos that dated back to the 14th century. We learned about Auvillar's famous floating grain mills that once dotted the Garonne river. We saw twenty-thousand-year-old cave paintings in nearby Pech Merle. We learned to see the ways the new and the old collide, how one thing slips quietly beneath another—we began to see the town's stratified layers, both figurative and literal. And in doing so, something else came into focus: the ways our new selves collide with the old, how one part of us can slip quietly beneath another. We confronted our own stratified layers.

Now that we're back, I can still hear the accordion music drifting from a neighbor's backyard. I can recall the look of wonder on my students' faces as they peered down at the Garonne river from the highest point in town, and I can recall how it looked to me: a gray-green current cutting deep into the countryside. As I look across my own bright field, the world is beginning to look a little different. Perhaps that's the point of travel in the first place: to understand where we're from, we must first leave home.