

# *The* LEGACY

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fall 2012



SARAH BEATY'S

## *Pop* QUIZ

SCHOLARS'  
*Day*  
HICKORY HILL

WRECKS  
*and*  
SPECKS  
OF FISHING AND FLOUNDERING

HUNGRY  
*for*  
ADVENTURE  
HICKORY HILL'S FOODWAYS CAMP





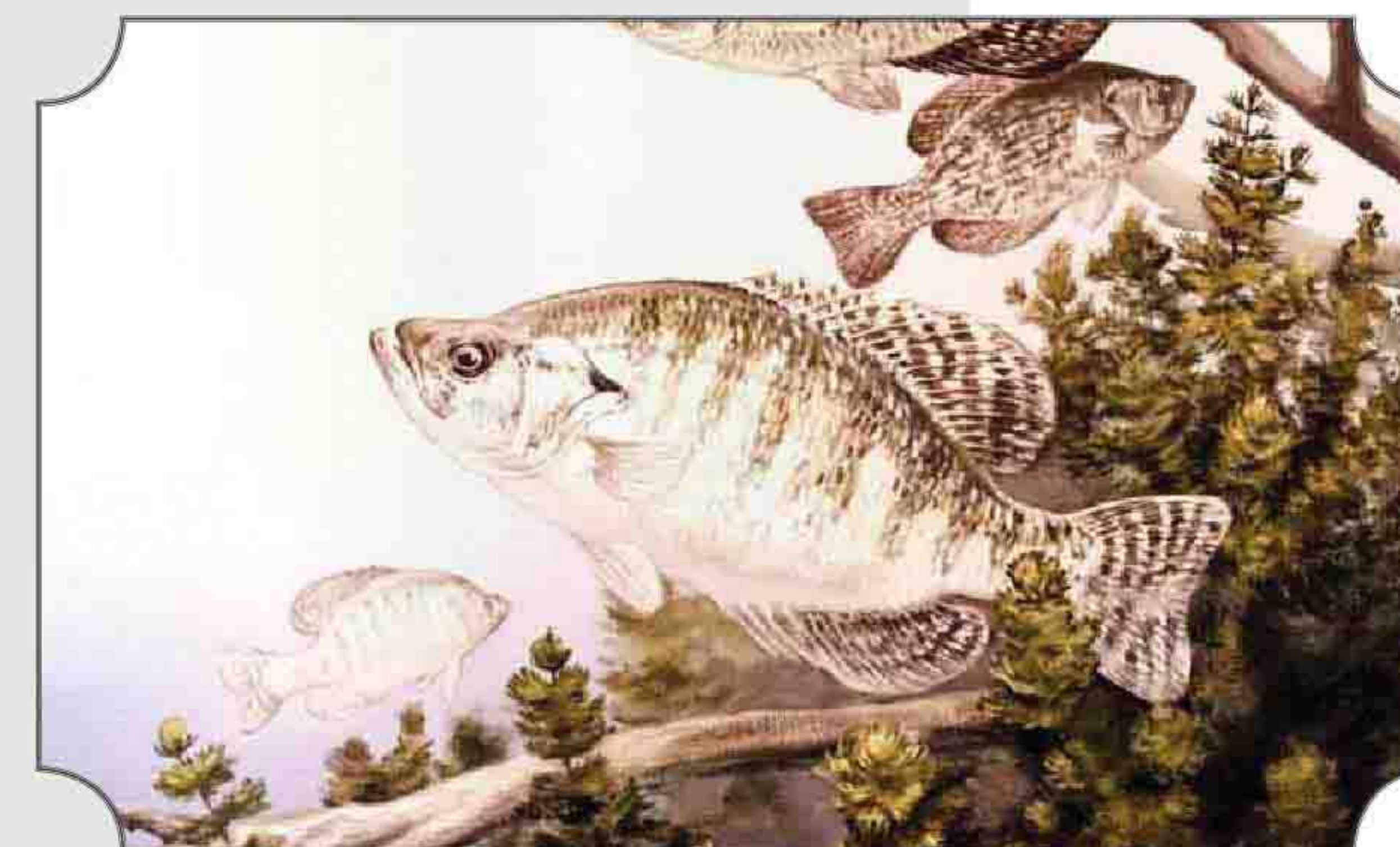
“But if the purpose of any system of society and education be to produce *men*, there was virtue in the colonial system somewhere. Stronger, better men no system has ever produced. The private tutor, the parsonage teacher, the private school, William and Mary College, fireside instructions, home training, association with high-minded people, the reading of a few standard books—accompanied with the manly support of fox-hunting, boat-rowing, horse-back riding, hunting with gun and dog, dancing at country parties—this was the system which formed the men who, in the day of trial, were able to do all that was necessary for their country, both in the council-room and on the field of battle.”



—Thomas E. Watson, *Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson*, 1903

# Legacy

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Issue 3



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## OUR MISSION

The Watson-Brown Foundation, through creativity, diligence and financial support, labors to improve education in the American South by funding its schools and students, preserving its history, encouraging responsible scholarship and promoting the memory and values of our spiritual founders.

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# SCHOLARS' & ALUMNI DAY

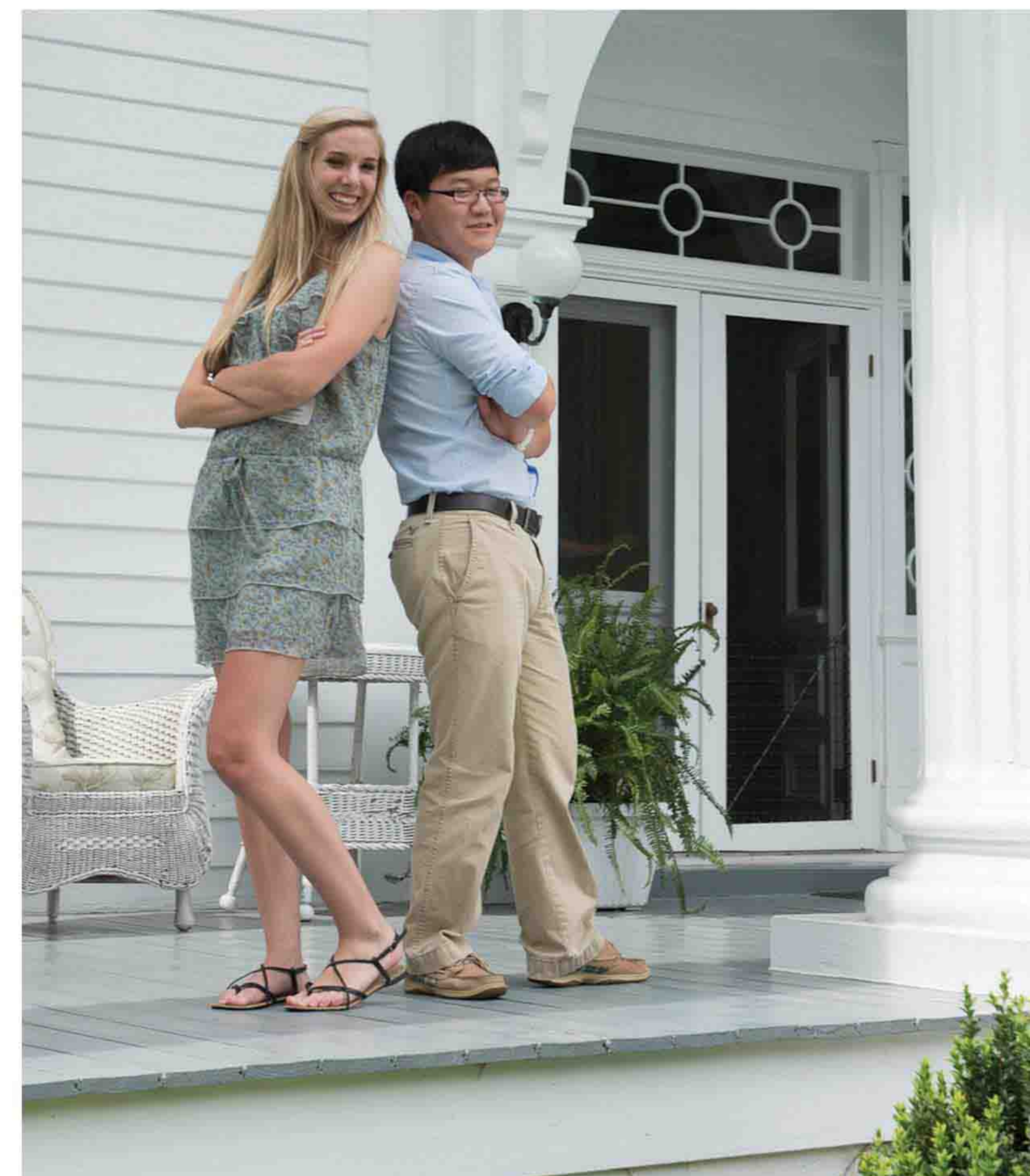
BY SARAH KATHERINE DRURY

The initial glimpse of students arriving at Hickory Hill for our annual Scholars' Day is always stunning. After months of evaluating students' scholarship applications, reading about their triumphs and misfortunes, learning about their passions and goals, the Foundation is finally presented the opportunity to see shining eyes and to hear tinkling voices that appealed for aid. In our world of grades and statistics, the humanizing practice of matching faces with names and stories is poignant. Scholars' Day is a powerful time of celebration when we welcome new members into the Watson-Brown family.

This year, the Foundation received over 1,000 applications from amazing students from sixteen counties in Georgia and South Carolina. We awarded 231 new scholarships to a very talented and deserving pool of students. This year's Watson-Brown Scholars performed extremely well academically: Their average SAT scores (math and verbal) exceeded 1200 and as a whole they graduated in the top seven percent in their high school class. Watson-Brown's scholarship mission is a delicate balance. It recognizes students with academic merit and also looks for students with sincere financial need. If the Foundation can lift a piece of the financial burden college imposes on a family—or make college attendance a reality—then it has accomplished its philanthropic goal.

The Watson-Brown Foundation will be awarding at least 200 new scholarships for 2013–2014, and online scholarship applications will be available this fall. Be sure to tell the students in your family and community about the opportunity and remind them that the deadline is February 15, 2013. Both high school seniors and current undergraduate college students may apply if they are from the eighteen eligible counties (Elbert and Hart counties are new additions for this year). For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me (Sarah Katherine Drury) at [skdrury@watson-brown.org](mailto:skdrury@watson-brown.org) or 706-872-6972 (direct). I look forward to another great scholarship year and am already excited about seeing the new faces at Scholars' Day 2013!

*Director of Scholarships  
Sarah Katherine Drury  
welcomes the 2012–2013  
incoming class of  
Watson-Brown Scholars.*







*Scholars' Day keynote speaker, author and philanthropist Martha Daniels, challenges rising college freshmen to discover the liberal arts.*





# CAMPUS NOTES

## Watson-Brown Scholars in Action



**Jessica Forbes, Junior, Clemson University:** “This year was a very challenging year. I was primarily in all animal veterinary science classes, and I became involved in several more clubs and honor societies. One honor society I really enjoy being a member of is Golden Key. I participated in the Golden Key Relay for Life team. As a part of the team, I raised money for Relay for Life and participated in the all-night event of walking the track and raising even more money for the American Cancer Society. I also became a member of the Clemson Dairy Club. One of the most memorable events that I participated in was the student labor auction we held in order to raise money for the club. Families in the area bid on two students, and then these two students go and work for three hours, doing whatever the family needs. My partner and I shoveled mulch for three hours and, in all honesty, it was the most fun I had all week. Being able to be out of the library, not studying, and enjoying the outdoors was a wonderful break from the stress of upcoming exams. This past summer, I

worked as a veterinarian technician at a local animal clinic. In addition, I worked at the local animal emergency clinic exploring that end of the veterinarian field.”



**Anna Cope, Junior, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill:** “Another incredible year at the University of North Carolina, finished! As a Sophomore, I loved going through the school year with my majors finally declared, after much deliberation and indecision as a Freshman! I am currently studying art history and international studies, with a concentration in Western Europe. One favorite experience of the year was seeing President Obama speak at UNC in the spring, which was definitely worth the five-hour-long line! However, the highlight of my year was taking a coral reef ecology class that culminated in a trip to the small Caribbean island of St. John over spring break to snorkel and study corals and other marine life. I had never snorkeled before the trip or even traveled much further south than Disney World! Each day, the class explored a new bay or reef, and although our professor gave some tips, we were given a lot of independence to explore and study

whatever especially interested us. On my trip, I was lucky enough to swim with reef sharks, an amazing variety of tropical fish, barracuda, and, my favorite, sea turtles. I also enjoyed seeing the island way of life in the Caribbean that it is so different from the scheduled lifestyle in the United States.

“This picture shows me on the boat after an afternoon snorkeling in caves where some of Blackbeard’s hidden treasure has been found! Reflecting on my adventures this year also makes me excited about my plans to study abroad in Montpellier, France, in the fall. I have studied French for many years and, especially as an international studies major, I am thrilled for this opportunity to immerse myself in the fascinating French culture and become fluent in the language.”



**Zidisha Dambuza, Junior, University of Georgia:** “This year I feel that I have really grown as a person and solidified my interests for the future. I got to know some really great instructors who have helped introduce me to new opportunities and point me in the right direction whenever I have questions or concerns.



“This past summer I went to Ghana on a three week study-abroad tour. It was part of an entrepreneurial case study/community trade program, and we visited various female entrepreneurs, as well as took part in service projects such as the Lifeline Girls Project—an organization that rescues girls from human trafficking and teaches them skills like sewing so they can make goods to sell and support themselves. In addition, we partner with a local Athens boutique to purchase and design products while in Ghana and then bring back fair trade items to be sold in their stores. I am so excited to be working with Agora Art & Antiques and even more thrilled to get to know and work with Ghanaian designers and craftspeople.

“One of my reasons for wanting to participate in this study-abroad experience was to learn skills and concepts that will be critical to my future in the fashion industry, while staying in a new cultural environment that interests me. As a sociology major, what interested me about visiting Ghana is the potential to learn about the cultural and structural aspects of Ghanaian life, particularly how social institutions and behavioral expectations have shaped the careers women choose and the lives the citizens of the country lead. I was curious about how the fashion industry, and simply fashion, impacts the lives of Ghanaians, as it combines both of my interests and majors—fashion merchandising and sociology. Seeing a new landscape, interacting with people of various lifestyles, and having the opportunity to expose myself to more of the world was truly exciting. Visiting Ghana was such a unique and eye-opening experience, and I’m so excited I was a part of it.”

**Lilly Elsner, Junior, Wellesley College:** “My Sophomore year at Wellesley has been tough but truly spectacular. It began with challenging new courses outside of my math- and science-oriented comfort zone when I took political science and philosophy. I quickly became enamored with philosophy, as it is really everything and more that I have ever wanted in an academic discipline. Concise, logical arguments must be sound and valid, readings are short but incredibly dense, and it gives me something to think about and challenge myself with as I prepare essays and solutions, pour agar plates, and tend to animals at my on-campus job in Wellesley’s biology department. Thus I have found my passion this past semester, as a philosophy major, biology minor, and have adored every moment of all of my classes since. I credit this, in part, to my trip I took with Wellesley’s Peace and Justice Department this January. I applied and was accepted to take a course on the ‘Legacy of Ghandi in Modern Grassroots Organizations,’ which entailed traveling to India and meeting with organizations ranging from the directors of the World Bank in Delhi, to UNESCO supported programs at the Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, to the isolated Seedi tribes, descendants of the African Diaspora in Karnataka. I got to directly interact with women belonging to many different social strata and interviewed them about their perspectives on Ghandi, the state of affairs in India regarding women, sources of poverty, and what they perceive is the best life that they can live. I could go on

for hours, discussing how this amazing opportunity profoundly changed my perspective on my life, as well as the way I hope to serve my community.

“As a resident of Due West, South Carolina, population 1,200, I had no idea what the scale of a population as large as India’s would really look like. The sights I saw, all astounding—some beautiful and some harrowing—gave me perspective as to what conditions like those described in textbooks are really like and put many faces to those situations. Some of the poverty I saw, sadly, mirrored some of the poverty I see in the United States, mostly in terms of healthcare access (the American uninsured and disabled, versus the residents of the unauthorized settlements of Delhi). This disturbing realization led me to the pursuit of a Wellesley Summer Service Corp grant, which provided me with funding to work at the Greater Greenwood United Ministries Free Medical Clinic this summer.

“I have participated with and learned from the health-care providers and patients about the ways the clinic serves, as well as understanding why people would need a free clinic at all in America. I must say that I feel as if I am really living a full, rich, and blessed life, as I find that I am never bored nor lacking for something to ponder. I thank the Watson-Brown Foundation with all my heart for helping me reach such a fabulous and fulfilling part of my life.”



**Richard Droghini, Junior, Vanderbilt University:** “I had a great Sophomore year. For my pre-med requirements, I took the infamous organic chemistry. I enjoyed the challenge and even enjoyed the subject. My other classes included music theory (form and structure, then twentieth-century music), sight singing and ear training, keyboard training (gaining proficiency on the piano), Western music history, and global music. I also took lessons on the tuba—and saw significant improvement, placing as principle tuba in the spring semester and playing in the Blair School of Music Orchestra—and on jazz guitar.

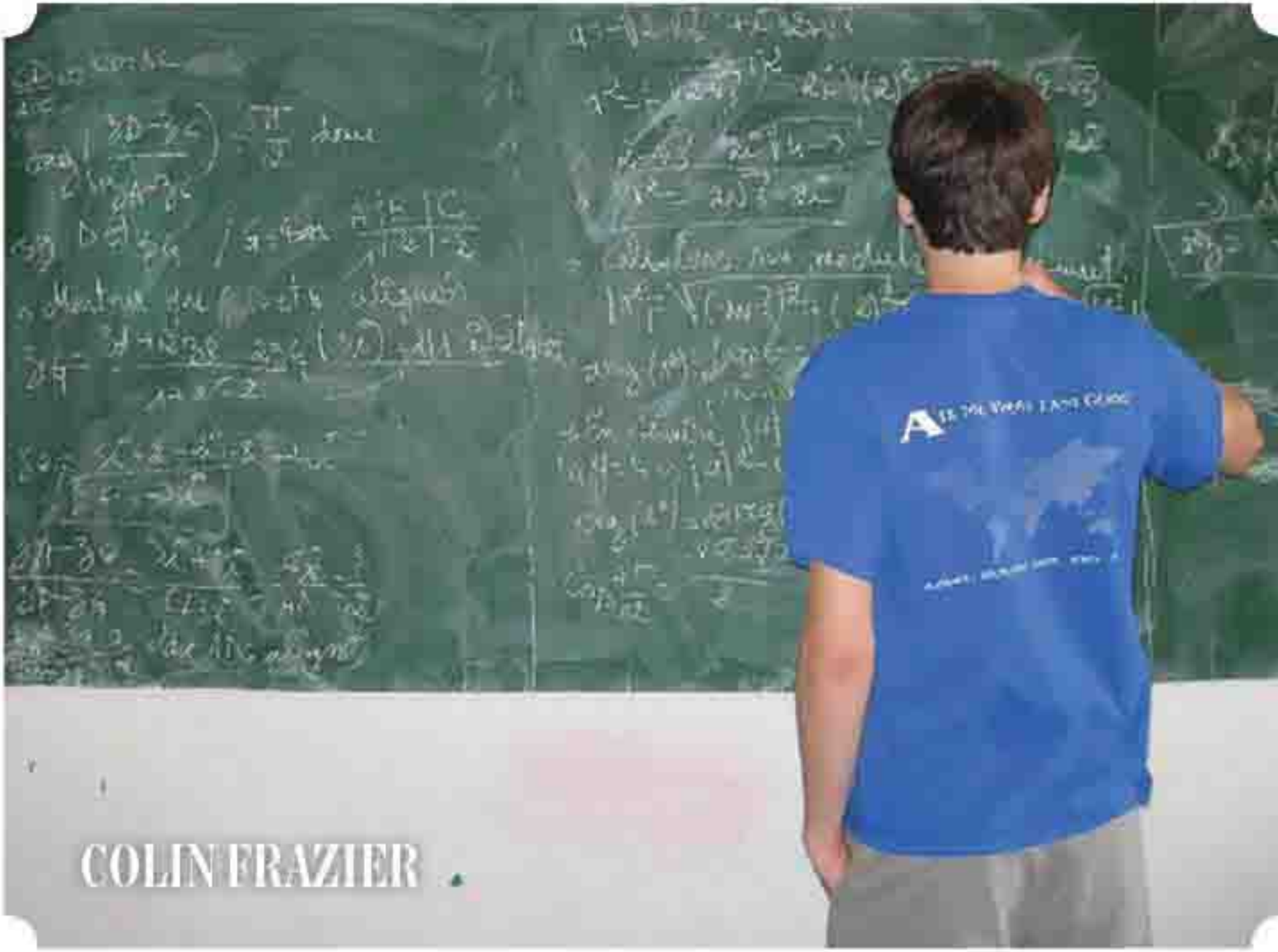


Starting jazz guitar lessons was probably my favorite activity of this past year: The nearly infinite possibilities for solo improvisation and accompanying are incredibly daunting, but learning and practicing has been extremely rewarding.

“Another very rewarding activity I started this past year was volunteering as a guitar teacher at WO Smith, a music school for low-income children. I was also involved in the Spirit of Gold, the school marching band, and acted as Sophomore representative in Tau Beta Sigma, an organization that serves the band, and in Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, national men’s music fraternity, for which I have been elected to the position of fraternal education officer for the upcoming school year. I also played for the club water polo team. I’ve continued to learn the game and enjoyed playing in tournaments.

“Academically, I continued working in a research lab studying laughter. Our lab analyzed laughter samples, and I helped run data collection using electrode sensors and caps.

“For housing, I lived in a Mayfield, which is a ten-person house that works on a year long project; we researched different genres of music and their impact on and place in American culture. I am living in another Mayfield this coming year with a project focused on educating the campus on food choice and sustainability. I also decided that I want to pursue medical school following undergraduate study. Goals for this upcoming year include advancing my medical ambitions and gaining experience shadowing and volunteering, achieving semi-professional ability on jazz guitar, and continuing to improve on tuba.”



**Colin Frazier**, Sophomore, Augusta State University: “My experience as a math tutor over the past year has given me a better understanding of the field I’m studying. Being able to help people who are having difficulty with math, or who are just generally curious, has been a very rewarding experience. Augusta State has a

diverse group of students, different backgrounds and age groups. As a math tutor you have to relate to mature students trying to refresh their skills and peers who are just trying to make it ‘out’ of their math core. I’ve been able to reach out and spread some of the passion I have for what I’m doing with other people, who have hopefully taken as much from the experience as I have. Being able to help other students reach their goals is rewarding. I look forward to continuing to assist people in whatever way I can.

“I am currently pursuing my undergraduate degree in mathematics at Augusta State University and hope to continue on to graduate-level studies. I would eventually like to teach at a college level. My experiences as a math tutor have been at times rewarding and at other times frustrating. I think I have been experiencing life as an educator. When I am helping a mature student struggle with the concepts that were once second nature and they have a moment of clarity, this is rewarding. As I move forward with my education and look towards graduate school, I plan to continue to learn something, passing on that information, and enjoying moments of clarity.”



**Joon Koh**, Sophomore, Georgia Institute of Technology: “My Freshman year has gone by so quickly! It was filled with lots of laughter and countless all-nighters at the library. I feel like I have become best friends with Georgia Tech Library! But befriending the library has helped me achieve the magic number, 4.0, both the fall and spring semesters. My name was even on *The Augusta Chronicle* for being achieving the highest academic honor, the Faculty Honor. Although it took lots of dedication of time to achieve this honor, I believe that I could not have done it without my friends. Whenever I am struggling to stay focused on my assignments, my friends were always there. Whenever I did not know how to approach a problem, my friends were there. Whenever I needed to relieve stress from

all the schoolwork, again, my friends were there for me. Who knows, without them, maybe I might have gone cuckoo from stress and get a lower GPA. Moral support from friends are indispensable to college life. To help me maintain the magic number, I am planning on studying for classes that I will be taking during fall semester over the summer. I will be taking my first chemical engineering class during fall, which is exciting, but at the same time, very nerve-wrecking, because it is notorious for drowning students’ GPA. While studying for my chemical engineering class, I will be helping out at my parents’ cleaners.”



**Maggie Dunlap**, Junior, Sewanee: The University of the South: “My first year at Sewanee was centered on finding my place in the community. I joined the catechumenate and was confirmed in the Episcopal Church at the Easter Vigil; I joined the orchestra and the jazz band, where I revisited my love of the clarinet, and I was blessed to be able to travel to Ecuador on an outreach trip. Looking back, my second year on ‘The Mountain’ was focused on how to give back to the community that embraced me with open arms.

“As a Freshman, I joined Kappa Delta sorority. In November of my sophomore year, I ran for and was elected as vice-president of community service for our chapter. It has been a privilege to serve my sisters and the surrounding Sewanee community in this role. My job has included coordinating events for local girls with the Girls Scouts of Middle Tennessee, participating in other campus-based service projects like the fall and spring break university outreach trips to New Orleans, and planning our biggest event of the year: Shamrock, a fundraiser that Kappa Delta chapters all over the country host for Prevent Child Abuse America. These events can be anything from a 5K run to a wing contest. Our chapter decided to have a Pancake Supper, and it was my job to plan it. After setting an original fund-raising goal of \$1,000, we were thrilled to more

than triple this goal, raising over \$3,500 for this incredible cause. Eighty percent of the proceeds directly benefited Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee. The remaining twenty percent is sent to the Kappa Delta Foundation to support our partnership with Prevent Child Abuse America.

“In addition to seeking a leadership role as an officer in my sorority, I was accepted into the All Saints’ Sacristans’ Guild this past spring semester. This important group of undergraduates, led by the Associate Chaplain, is charged with caring for the sacristy, the church, and all the materials contained therein. I feel privileged to be able to serve in this role. I loved learning the meaning behind liturgy and the names of everything involved in the Eucharist.

“This summer, I volunteered at Solomon House, an outreach ministry of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in New Iberia, Louisiana. Solomon House is a food pantry that gives out more than 100 bags of groceries weekly to needy families. Solomon House points to the intersection between service and faith that has come to be the theme of my Sophomore year. I hope to continue to serve the Sewanee community and find ways to serve beyond ‘The Mountain.’ Thank you Watson-Brown for helping to make my time at Sewanee possible!”



**Brent Anderson**, Senior, Furman University: “My junior year of college at Furman University has been extremely beneficial and directive. I was accepted into the biology and history honors societies and made the Dean’s List both semesters. My fall semester was especially enjoyable. I participated in a study-abroad program, wherein I took seven weeks of classes, traveled through Eastern Europe (Germany, Austria, Poland, and the Czech Republic) for five weeks and returned for the last two weeks to write reflection papers and exams.

“Traveling in Europe and learning of the area’s culture and history beforehand opened my eyes to different peoples and the complexity of their past. World War

II and the Cold War are still fresh in the memories of many Eastern Europeans, and they all see it differently from Americans, especially because their homelands were the battleground. The program gave me two upper-level history courses that will enable me to finish my double major.

“In the spring, I returned to my biology track. During the summer of 2011, I did environmental microbiology research that literally revolutionized my life. The research opened my eyes to a world of science I had never considered. Therefore, my original career goal of being a medical doctor was changed to possibly getting a PhD in a biology field, likely microbiology. In the spring of 2012, I took a microbiology class in order to be certain that I enjoyed the field. The class was outstanding. Now I am looking forward to another summer of research that will hopefully solidify my career plans.”



**Jennifer Dandron**, Sophomore, Valdosta State University: “My first year of college was an experience like none other. At Valdosta State University, I discovered something beautiful. I went in to VSU having declared my major in mass media. Through taking all the media courses throughout the year, I realized that I absolutely love the direction my future is headed! Nelson Mandela said, ‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.’ Media influences the way people think, and the way a person thinks changes the world; no major exists that can change the world as much as a mass media degree—that, precisely, is what I find so beautiful!

“Beyond realizing my passion for my future, my first year was also full of various accomplishments. In August, when I first began my journey, I set a goal to maintain a perfect GPA for the entire year, which was accomplished through hard work and dedication. I joined the Honor’s College at VSU and the Honor’s Student Association. I was elected as a Freshman representative for the organization. Likewise, I was elected as the Sophomore representative for the upcoming year. At the end of the

year ceremony for HSA, I was awarded ‘Freshman Student of the Year.’ I was honored to receive such an award. Also, I was inducted into the honor society Alpha Lambda Delta, which requires a student to have at least a 3.5 GPA and be in the top twenty percent of his/her class. Another accomplishment which I worked hard to obtain is the fact that I am one class away from being classified as a Junior! I accomplished this feat because I exempted twenty-six hours of college classes thanks to passing my advanced placement exams. However, I would not be so close to being a Junior had I not taken seventeen hours during my spring semester. I am very proud of the fact that I have, basically, skipped a year of college.

“My plans for the summer are to continue my education on my own. I chose not to take summer classes as a way to reward my hard work. However, I do not plan to let summer derail my education. I am currently learning the Russian alphabet so that I will be prepared next semester for my Russian 1001 class. Moreover, I have a summer reading list of fifty books so that I can stay well read.

“Ultimately, college is a place where valuable educational experiences are offered. It is up to the student to capitalize on such opportunities—to seize the day. I am confident when I say that my first year at Valdosta State University was two semesters worth of each day being seized.”



**LaPortia Jones**, Sophomore, University of South Carolina: “In the fall of 2011, I began a journey into uncharted territory as a Freshman at the University of South Carolina. I was nervous and unsure if the talents I possessed in high school that made it inevitable for me to succeed would be as powerful in the college setting. I refused to let these worries overtake me; instead I allowed these uncertainties to motivate me to do my best as I made my transition to college. I tackled the challenges head on and was able to complete my first year with a GPA indicative of how hard I had worked during the year.



“In an attempt to reach a healthy balance between my academic pursuits and social endeavors, I found time to take advantage of all that USC and the city of Columbia have to offer. Shortly after arriving on campus, I made many friends, and, as the year progressed, the list grew longer. This enhanced my first-year experience, because it made my transition a lot smoother.

“During the fall, the biggest attractions in the city are the home football games of the University of South Carolina fighting Gamecocks. Over 80,000 people converge on the capitol city with hopes of a Gamecock victory. I attended every home game except one, and I believe that these events were the highlight of my fall semester. I was able to bond with my friends and even many people that I did not know, as we had fun in the stands cheering on the Gamecocks.

“Before coming to college, I knew that I wanted to become very involved on my campus and in my community. Once I got to the University of South Carolina, I started persevering towards this goal. I volunteered throughout the year by taking part in Martin Luther King Day of Service, Adopt a Highway, a clothing drive, and being of assistance at a local nursing home. I became active on campus by joining numerous organizations. These organizations include the Minority Assistance Peer Program [MAPP], Gamecock Connections, and Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society for First Year Students. Along with these organizations, I also became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

“Over the summer, I have already begun setting goals for next year. I plan to advance into the upper division nursing program at USC, become a mentor for incoming students, and continue to push myself to be successful in all that I attempt.”



**Sareen Ali**, Senior, University of Georgia: “This year, as always, was even better than the last. I continued my job at the Dean Rusk Center for International Law and Policy, working closely with the director of

the office in his research, as well as helping the director of international study and global internships with preparing materials for study-abroad programs in China, Brussels, and Geneva. I also became president of the Muslim Students Association. In our organization, we introduced numerous new events and programs that members and nonmembers alike responded to with great enthusiasm. We held several interfaith panels, fundraising events for international relief efforts, and Muslim Culture Fest—a daylong festival showcasing Muslim culture and identity around the world.

“This summer, I will be interning with the Department of Justice in the Office of Public Affairs. In the fall, I will also be completing my Arabic degree at the Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan. I am extremely excited about both of these opportunities and am confident that the Watson-Brown Scholarship will help in easing the financial burden and allowing me the a fulfilling experience.”

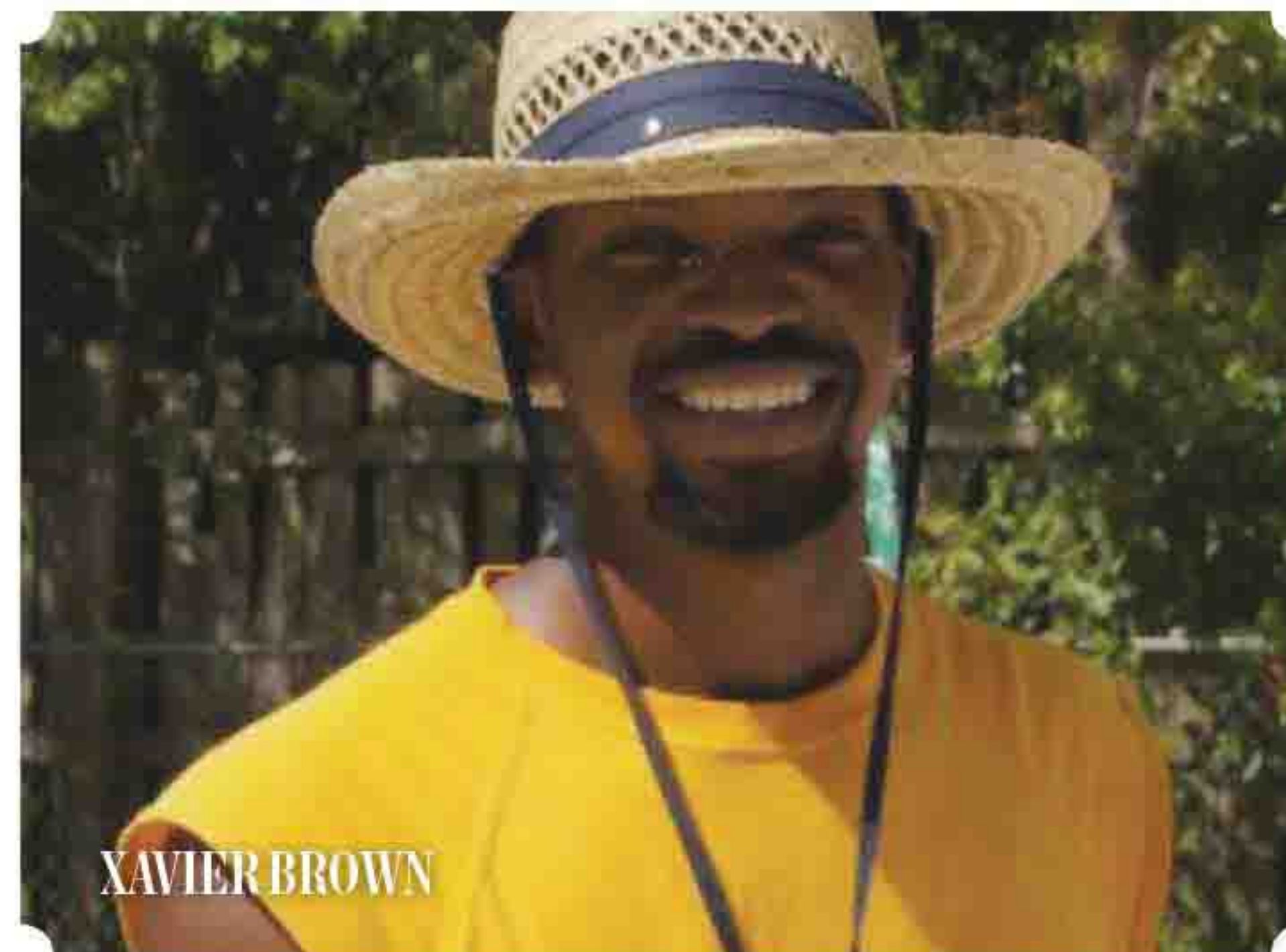


**John Christopher**, Senior, Clemson University: “My Junior year has been full of so many blessings. The summer prior to my Junior year, I was selected as a Dixon Global Policy Scholar through the Calhoun Honors College. I was sent on a trip to Strasbourg, France, in May to study the European Union and went on another in July to study architecture in London.

“During the year, I was selected as one of three Clemson students as an ACCIAC (Atlantic Coast Conference Inter-institutional Academic Collaborative) Fellow. I have been awarded a grant to research campus sexual violence at Clemson University. Clemson’s department of sociology and anthropology is fully backing my research. They also awarded me the Larson-Krupka Award for Excellence in Sociology. A gathering I organized to protest gender-based violence in the fall received an outpouring of community support as well as media attention. (You can Google ‘gender-based violence’ plus ‘anderson independent’ to see the article!)

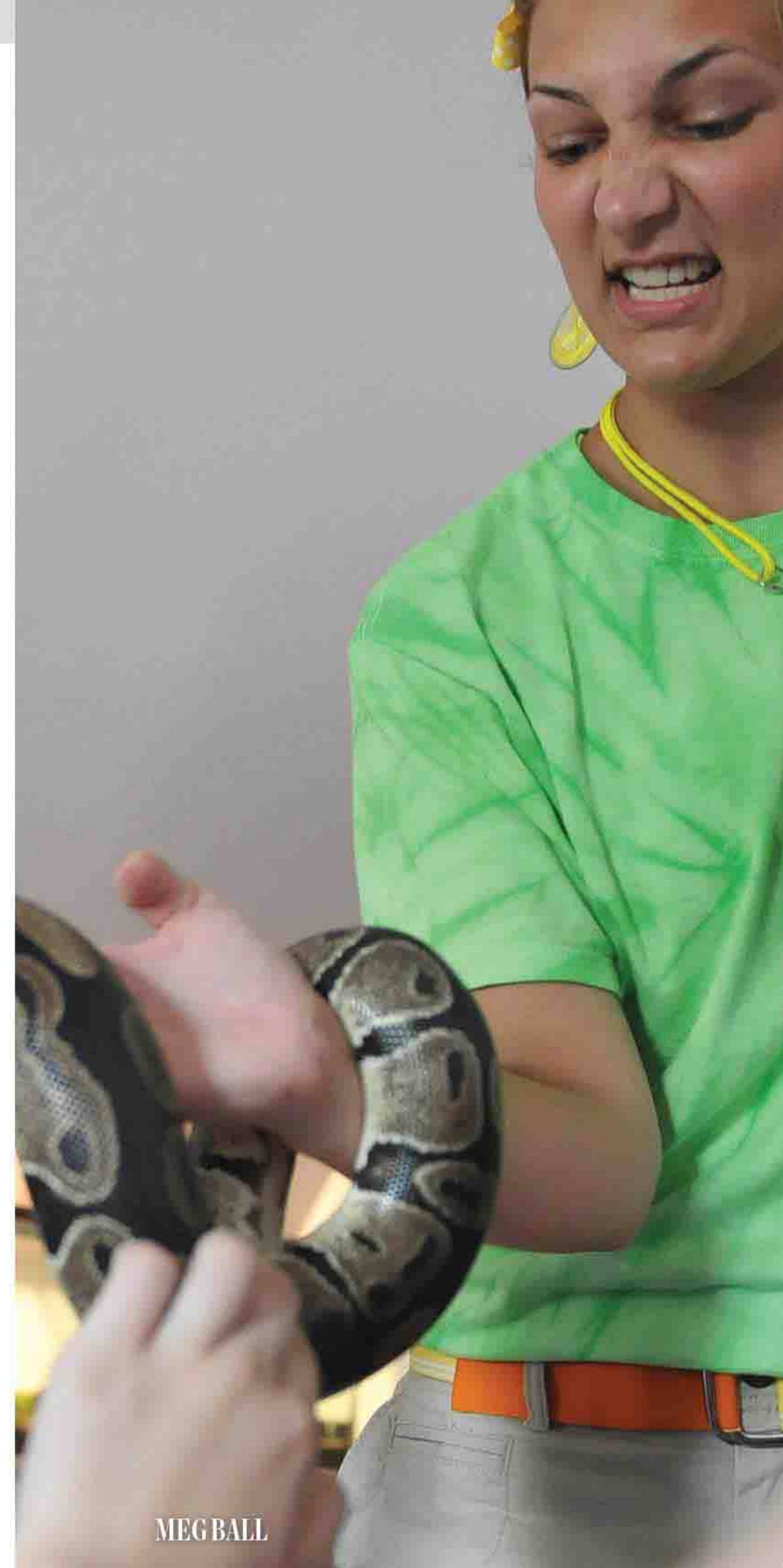
“The newly established campus organization, Tigers for the Elimination of Campus Sexual Violence, has recently informed me that I will be club president for the 2012–2013 school year. To coordinate efforts between TECSV, the department of sociology and anthropology, Clemson Gay Straight Alliance, university faculty, and my own research, I will be organizing a repeat gathering to protest gender-based violence as well as a Take Back the Night run to raise awareness of violence against women in the fall of 2012.

“I have also decided on a path after my undergrad—studying correlations between globalization practices and shifting attitudes toward gender, sexuality, and gender-based violence in the developing world.”



**Xavier Brown**, Senior, Georgia Southern University: “Upon entering my Junior year of college, I realized how fast my college career has progressed. I decided to challenge myself to the best I could academically, while also keeping my social life intact and making new friends. I was asked to be on another leadership team for Christian Campus Fellowship and decided to take the opportunity. The name of our leadership team was FLAVA: F stands for Freshman, and LAVA is for outreaching to the Georgia Southern community of students. Our goal was to provide a home away from home and love to as many Freshmen as possible. In addition, I embarked on my third spring break mission trip. This time we went to help the Valdosta, Georgia, Habitat for Humanity in bettering their community. The mission trip was an awesome experience, as usual, and I learned a lot about service, leadership, and the importance of community.

“As an incoming Senior, I plan on making the most out of my last year as an undergraduate student. I will be joining the senior leadership team for Christian Campus Fellowship and trying to continue my academic success. I would like to thank all those involved with the Watson-Brown



Foundation for even giving me the chance and opportunity to graduate from Georgia Southern. The support is truly appreciated and without you I would not have had the opportunity presented to me this year. I pray that you continue to help common people who deserve the opportunity to an education but otherwise would not be able to afford it.”



**Maranda DeBusk**, Senior, Furman University: “This year I took courses in scenic design, theatre history, education, physics, philosophy of religion, costume crafts, and an independent study in advanced lighting design. I learned how to draw and draft; how the public education system operates; how to design, pattern,

and construct clothing; how the universe operates; and how tolerance is the most important aspect of religious debate: not a bad year.

“Beyond course work, I designed the lights for the Furman University Theatre Arts Department’s production of ‘The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee.’ My other design credits this year include the lighting design for Pauper Players’ ‘Once Upon a Mattress.’ In March, I stage-managed the Theatre Art Department’s production of ‘Beyond Therapy,’ as well as traveled to California to present my lighting design for ‘Spelling Bee’ at the United States Institute for Theatre Technology’s annual conference. I applied and have been accepted to study abroad in the U.K. with the Theatre Arts Department and the English Department beginning in August 2012.

“From November through February, I had the great fortune of being the assistant director and lighting designer for ‘Hairspray’ with the Greer Children’s Theatre. This experience in particular helped me realize that I truly love working with youth, and I think that I will want to include it in my future life plans. This summer I plan to work as an intern with the Warehouse Theatre in Greenville, South Carolina. I will be the assistant lighting designer, assistant technical director, master electrician, and light board operator for their summer production of ‘Twelfth Night.’ I will also be working their box office and with their publicist, as well as reorganizing their props and costume storage. I am able to take this internship with the help of Furman Advantage, a program through Furman that provides students with supplemental funding in the event of unpaid and low-paid internships.”

**Meg Ball**, Sophomore, University of Georgia: “I never thought I would be that college student who changes her major three different times, each time going in a different direction. I was always set on one goal, certain that my dream would never change. However, through my first year in college, I became that college student, ever-changing and exploring what my future had to offer. Once I arrived in Athens at the University of Georgia, I saw so much of what the school had to offer me. I joined Sigma Delta Tau, the sorority that has the largest philanthropy event on campus to help raise money for Prevent Child Abuse America. Not only did I want to help support this cause, but I also wanted to get involved in other philanthropies on campus. In order to do that, I became SDT’s Panhellenic delegate.

By serving in this capacity, I am the liaison between my sorority and the governing body and am in contact with all other sororities on campus.

“The University of Georgia has so much to offer me. Participating in some of those opportunities, like the Panhellenic Council, was part of the driving force that made me rethink my major. College is a time for thinking, planning, and exploration. It would be a disservice to the world and myself without exploring my options for a future career.

“This summer, I will further explore my future as a camp counselor at Rock Eagle 4H Center. As a Cloverleaf Adventure Program counselor, I will send fifth and sixth graders down the zipline and other high ropes elements. If that does not inspire change and exploration, I do not know what will.”



**Michael Harpe**, Sophomore, Wofford College: “My Freshman year at Wofford College was one of academic challenges and triumphs. Learning to manage my time played an important part in achieving my goals. First semester, I was a little overwhelmed playing football, trying to study, volunteering as a big brother, and just learning the ropes as a Freshman. After first semester exams, my GPA was 2.92 and this was a surprise to me because of my success in high school. I realized that in college I was a middle-of-the-pack student and that I had to work even harder to obtain my academic goals. Second semester, I knew that my scholarships were riding on my GPA being above a 3.0 for the year, and I studied countless hours to reach this goal. For a high school student who was in the top three percent of his graduating class to come to an academically challenging school, I failed to reach my potential. I think that I responded to the challenges and received a wake-up call to manage my time more effectively, and hopefully I will use this knowledge to achieve academic excellence for the remainder of my three years at Wofford.”



# Alumni Spotlight

Pen pals would've had a hard time keeping up with a young Sarah Beaty. Before the age of thirteen, her family followed her dad's Air Force assignments from Victorville, California, to Los Angeles, then to Boise, Idaho; Fairfax, Virginia; Las Vegas; Washington, D.C.; and Tokyo, Japan, finally landing in Aiken, South Carolina. Her mother grew up in the Southern town, so even though Sarah's early years were full of Hollywood Hills, casino lights, and skyscrapers flanking views of Mount Fuji, the world of fox hunts, steeplechase, and live oaks was just as familiar.

A “typical” workday for Sarah at the Venetian Resort, a Venice-themed mall/casino, involves rowing a gondola through the canals and standing on a balcony overlooking St. Mark’s Square, singing “O Sole Mio” or “Volare” to the Asian tourists. Between working full-time and planning her latest adventure (in the past five months she’s visited Hong Kong and Zhuhai, China, multiple times; Seoul; Beijing; Taipei; Bangkok; and Tokyo), Sarah answered our pop quiz, shedding light on her fascinating career and the impact that the Watson-Brown scholarship has had on her life.

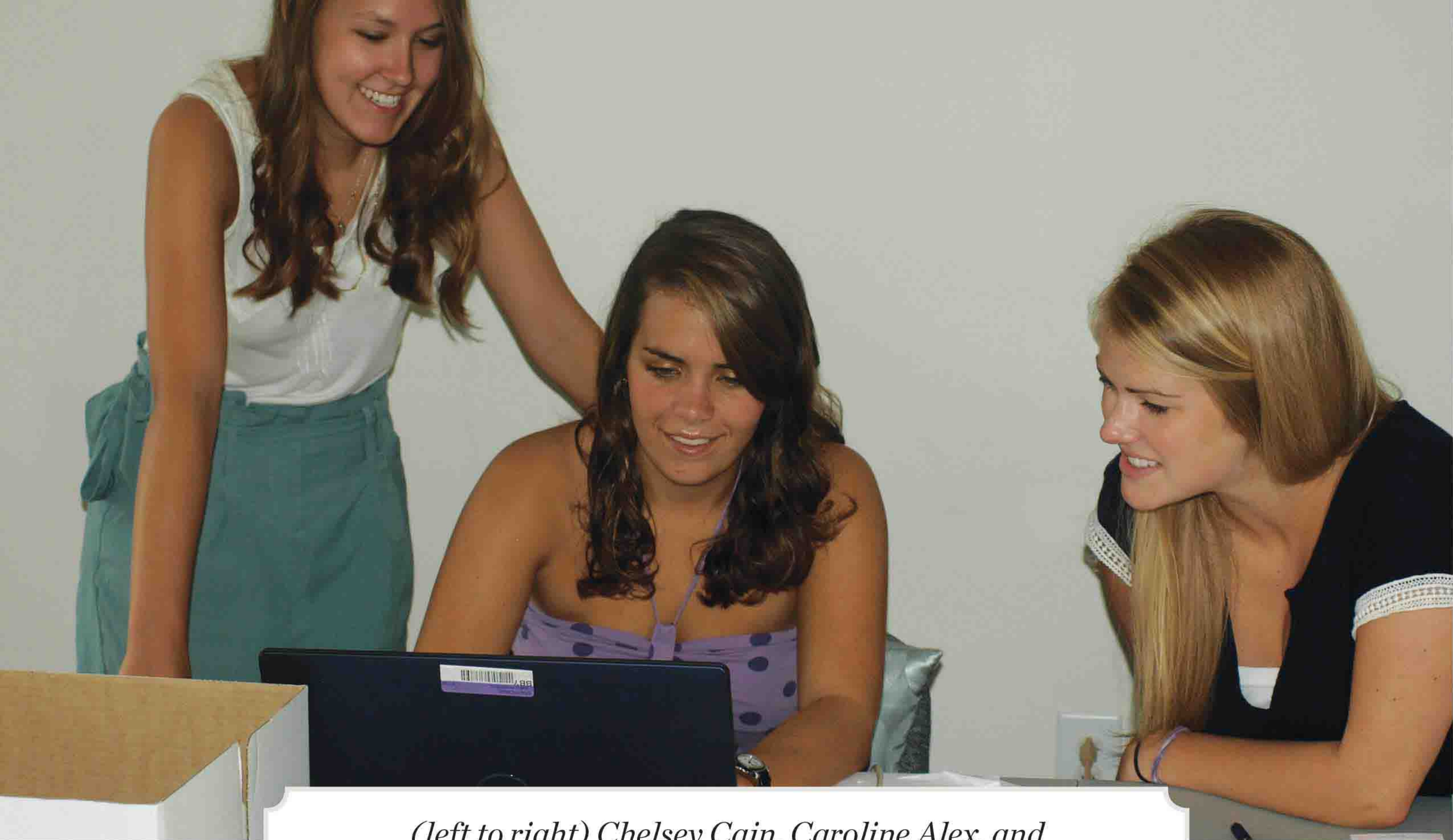
**The biggest misconception about opera is**  
... *that it is simply overweight people wearing  
horned helmets, singing at the top of their lungs.*

When you think of the Watson-Brown scholarship, what thoughts come to mind?

*Gratitude and respect. I am so grateful to have had this support from Watson-Brown, and I truly admire the opportunities you have given to students from the South. Not only is it a scholarship organization, it is also a community. WB is always diligent about keeping in touch with their alumni and planning reunions and continuing their relationship, well after the scholarship period has ended.*







(left to right) Chelsey Cain, Caroline Alex, and Kiersten Rom build the Howell Cobb Collection database.



# T.R.R. COBB HOUSE OPENS HISTORY “SWEATSHOP”

BY SAMUEL N. THOMAS, JR.

At 42 linear feet and more than 3,000 letters, *The Howell Cobb Family Collection* is among the larger manuscript holdings at the University of Georgia's Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Our experts estimate that perhaps ten percent of the correspondence in the collection is from Cobb's younger brother, Thomas Reade Rootes (TRR).

Problem is, the collection is arranged chronologically and does not have subject headings. The files are simply organized by year. For those attempting to glean tantalizing morsels from brother Tom's writing to Howell over a span of three decades, they have to pack very substantial lunches, because the journey, even by trained researchers, would take months. Those of us charged with interpreting Tom's life obviously consider the trove of letters invaluable.

So at the risk of upsetting the ghost of Tom Cobb, we took a cue from New England history and built a sweatshop whose workers would build a subject and topical index to the collection. Our thoughtful partners—capitalists all—heartily blessed our mission and salivated over dreams of future dividends.

Toby Graham, director of the Hargrett Library, traded access to the collection and strategic advice in return for whatever our workers produce, plus one lunch a week for the next ten years. Investor Graham ultimately will reap the benefit of the sweatshop labor because *The Howell Cobb Family Collection* will have a deeper index than any other in the Hargrett. Graham is a speculator and a “plunger,” because he has no idea what the finished product will look like or if he can stuff it into any extant library format or protocol. He will eat well, however.

MoWerks, an Athens-based educational software company, dropped from the sky into our midst an additional laborer. MoWerks pays her, too. MoWerks is interested in building a 3-D antebellum map of Athens at some point in the future and hopes the letters will shed light on homes and venues and names.

Randy Reid, PhD, Chair of the Humanities Department at Athens Academy, a local college prep day school, is our primary investor. He gave the project his 3,000 handwritten 5-by-8 notecards from his graduate-school days when he researched the collection to

produce his 1,400 page dissertation on Howell Cobb. His school is interested in crafting future courses from the experiment in research and technology.

Our sweatshop manager is Dr. Christopher Lawton, a wildly enthusiastic historian of the antebellum South, who also is interested in instructional research methods. Lawton's classroom performances can inspire the dead, and he continues to amaze with the prodigious output of his three worker bees.

Finally, our proletariat are interns Caroline Alex, Kiersten Rom, and Chelsey Cain. The history department of the University of Georgia donated them. Between laughs about college social life and groans about reading Reid's boxes of cards, our terrific transcribing triumvirate is producing a reference base of every letter in the collection under such categories as “Slave Life,” “Social Life,” “Politics” and “Business.” The computer groans under the ever-increasing weight of the Excel spreadsheet.

Delighted to say that their job is almost complete, one worker irreverently sighed, “Thank God that Howell Cobb died in 1868.”





# A SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



## *Cobb's Legion Flag Comes Home*

BY SAMUEL N. THOMAS, JR.

Few Civil War artifacts elicit more emotion than Confederate battle flags. Among the dozens of Confederate banners, the Southern Cross is an internationally recognized icon. One need not go beyond the den television to be bemused by European soccer fans who enthusiastically fly the Southern red, white, and blue from their stadium seats during frenzied matches. If fluttering emblems of Dixie are fading on our shores, they sure seem to be rising in unusual circles across the pond.

Notwithstanding its contemporary life, many once respected the Confederate battle flag as a historical artifact. Notable flag collections include those at the Museum of the Confederacy, South Carolina's Confederate Relic Room, and the dozens of Confederate banners at the Georgia State Capitol. Lovingly doted over by Dorothy Olson, who for years oversaw the conservation and preservation of her "babies," the Georgia collection benefited from her sober interpretation as well. "What begins as a symbol of a unit," Olson would observe to her audience, "ends as a representation of each person who followed the banner into battle. . . . [t]herefore, these flags become inextricably related to the experiences of war—suffering and death, fear and valor—from the common foot soldier to the highest ranking officer." The vast majority of Olson's collection was battle flags that featured the Southern Cross—the same design incorporated into the Georgia state flag for two generations.

As Olson reminded her tours, Confederate battle flags assumed individual histories with each military engagement. Civil War regiments typically

carried into the field the "stand of colors," or a national flag and a battle flag. Each stand of colors was safeguarded by a four-man color guard. Flags were one of the most important sights on a battlefield. The smoke, dust, and general chaos of "modern" warfare quickly obscured the battlefield, and regimental flags served as invaluable navigational aids for disoriented or confused soldiers. Soldiers also recorded history on them. Flags frequently had the names of engagements and battles stitched on their fields.

During the first year of the Civil War, Confederate troops carried an assortment of company and regimental flags—so many that it was difficult on the battlefield to differentiate friend from foe. The Confederate battle flag was created to help alleviate that problem. Designed by Confederate Congressman William Porcher Miles for General P.G.T. Beauregard, the new regimental standard was intended to correct the identity confusion witnessed at the Battle of First Manassas. The battle flag design featured a blue saltire, or St. Andrew's cross, on a field of red.

The cross of Saint Andrew—brother of Simon Peter and the first of Christ's disciples—was not new to heraldry. History remembers that Andrew was crucified under Aegeas in Patras, Greece. Modestly refusing to be executed in the same manner as Jesus, Andrew requested his cross be placed on its side. The Romans complied, and furthered his torture by tying (not nailing) his hands and feet to the cross.

Early Christians were quick to adopt the symbol of Andrew's martyrdom, or saltire. It was used on early English coins. In the twelfth century it appeared in religious seals in Scotland and on military uniforms thereafter. Scotland flew the saltire flag as early as the sixteenth century. In 1712, Russia, whose patron saint is also Andrew, proposed the "Andreyevsky" flag be used as its official naval ensign. The British Union Jack formally incorporated Saint Andrew's cross in 1801. Across the Atlantic, Nova Scotia predictably used the saltire in its national flag design of 1858.

The recognized Christian symbol found its way from Celtic strongholds into the Confederate battle flag in 1861. In the Confederate version, the blue saltire was dotted by thirteen white stars: One each for the Confederate states, one star for Kentucky and another for Missouri—border states of powerful Confederate sympathies. The battle flag was square.

After the Confederate War Department approved Miles's design, volunteer sewing circles in Richmond, Virginia, promptly went to work stitching flags. By the close of 1861, they had distributed 120 silk Southern

Cross battle flags to regiments in the Army of Northern Virginia.

Silk, however, did not hold up well in combat, and within months most regiments were in need of replacements. The new flags, issued in the summer of 1862, were made of high quality, durable English wool bunting. They were available in three different sizes: 48 inches for the infantry, 36 inches for the artillery, and 30 inches for the cavalry. Furnished with a canvass hoist edge and eyelets for attaching to a flagstaff, the flags were hemmed on three sides with orange borders sewn in sandwich fashion over the outer edges. The stars and stripes were polished cotton. These flags became known as the second Richmond Depot flags, because they were sewn by women who picked up their flag kits at the Richmond, Virginia, railway depot.



Gordon Jones and Virginia (Ginny) Wolf pose under the Cobb Legion battle flag.

A second Richmond Depot battle flag is now on exhibit at the T.R.R. Cobb House; however, it is not just any Southern Cross. This particular flag belonged to Cobb's Legion Infantry, who received it in the summer of 1862. Those troops flew it during the Antietam campaign where it saw heavy fighting in the battle of Crampton's Gap and at Sharpsburg. In December 1862, the Legion Infantry also fought under the flag from behind the stone wall at the base of Marye's Heights during the battle of Fredericksburg.

During that battle, Brigadier General T.R.R. Cobb, directing the defense of the stone wall, was mortally wounded by artillery fire and soon died in a nearby field hospital. Five days later, his body arrived by train to Athens, Georgia, and lay in state in the library of the T.R.R. Cobb House. According to family tradition, the battle flag carried by Cobb's Legion Infantry adorned

the casket during its return from Virginia and was draped on Cobb's body as it lay in state. That was 150 years ago.

According to Virginia (Ginny) Wolf, Tom Cobb's great, great, great granddaughter, the flag was displayed in the house for years by Cobb's widow, Marion. She in turn handed it down to her oldest surviving daughter, Sallie. She left it to her son, Marion Jackson, who passed it to Henry Jackson, who in turn bequeathed it to Henry Rootes Jackson. For most of that history, the flag was kept in a cedar chest as it traveled among the Cobb descendants. In recent history, Henry R. Jackson transferred the flag to Beverly Dubose Jr., prominent Atlantan and one of the best-known Civil War artifact collectors in the country. In 1986, Beverly (Bo) Dubose III gave the flag (and much of his personal Civil War collection) to the Atlanta History Center, where it joined the enormous collection his father bequeathed to that establishment a year earlier.

The Cobb's Legion Infantry battle flag measures 41 inches by 41-1/2 inches and is made of three strips of red wool bunting seamed together. In early 2010, the Watson-Brown Foundation funded the flag's conservation. It was examined, cleaned, stabilized, and remounted by noted textile conservator Patricia Ewer. As part of the process, Ewer also conducted a microscopic fiber analysis prior to cleaning and stabilizing the flag. She determined the flag was heavily soiled and displayed evidence of glue and tape adhesive residue. In the 1950s, the borders of the flag were removed for an early framing, which accounted for the unusual size and a great amount of adhesive found in the flag's fibers.

Cobb's Legion flag returned to the T.R.R. Cobb House on April 14 on loan from the Atlanta History Center. During a celebration of Cobb's birthday (April 10), Dr. Gordon Jones, Senior Military Curator at AHC, gave the keynote address. "In the field of history," Jones remarked, "our job is to help people remember—not just with their heads, but with their hearts, too. Here's what we, what all Americans, should remember about this flag: It was probably the single most important possession in the world to those who fought under it—important enough for them to die defending it. And die they did. Under this flag, Thomas Reade Rootes Cobb and many other Georgians gave their last breath. It isn't entirely a cause we would embrace today. But it was and is our history as a nation, a history encapsulated within the fibers of that flag."

For the next five years, the flag can be seen in its temporary home at the T.R.R. Cobb House. We trust our visitors agree that the fibers of history are best enjoyed at home and off the field.





# EXPLORING HISTORIC FOODWAYS



## Sticks & Stones

BY MICHELLE L. ZUPAN

A few years back we hatched an idea to plant a garden containing heirloom plants to supplement our summer camp offerings. “Wouldn’t it be neat,” our staff offered, “to teach children where their food comes from?” The subsequent summer we were met with howls of derision and confusion from our campers. “What do you mean a pickle is actually a cucumber?!” they yelled through the otherwise serene halls of Hickory Hill. The concept that cucumbers, zucchini, and gourds are all from the squash family nearly caused a riot. Clearly we had a long row to hoe.

Many of Georgia Watson Craven’s memories about her grandfather, Thomas E. Watson, included mealtimes: what was served, who attended, and the nature of conversations. “As I think of him in the home,” she recalled, “I think of him mostly at the table—I think of mealtime, at dinnertime, which was in the middle of the day.” In an effort to drive ourselves slightly closer to insanity, we created *Hungry for Adventure*, a historic foodways summer camp, using the garden as a starting point. But we wanted the experience to be tied to history and thus to Tom Watson.

Realistically, there are many historically accurate foods that modern children (and to be fair, modern adults) simply will not abide. Squab comes to mind. The Fannie Farmer recipe for Potted Squab begins, “clean, stuff, and truss six pigeons.” Oh, dear. While we have a lovely dovecote at the Hill, we don’t intend to fill it with prey. First, we had to locate recipes that did not involve housing or cleaning birds or trussing anything!

Most visitors to Hickory Hill’s replicated kitchen find it expansive, but it magically shrinks when three camp counselors try to keep eight middle schoolers from cutting off limbs or setting their hair on fire. We needed simple recipes. As luck would have it, Georgia’s memories included foods she didn’t like: Campbell’s soup!

*[Tom Watson] had that vegetable soup that Grandma had, I think, 365 days a year. It was Campbell’s Tomato Soup, and I didn’t like it because Mammy always put sage in it.*

—Georgia Watson Craven

The soup led to bolder foods. By the end of the week, we had successfully produced chocolate zucchini cupcakes with yogurt frosting, zucchini-raisin cookies, a tomato cake with cream cheese frosting, blueberry-peach jam (canned in a water bath), summer squash pickle relish, herb cheeses, herbal vinegars, chocolate-cherry tamales, a Three Sisters soup, corn salsa, candied mint leaves, baked potato chips, and soft pretzels. Through discussions of cooking chemistry, the campers learned what reactions cause bread to rise, how

rennet curdles milk to make cheese, and why a hot water bath kills bacteria that would normally cause foods to spoil.

Will we attempt a cooking camp again? Hmmm, it bears consideration. Perhaps we might try etiquette classes along with it. After all, Tom Watson provided some fascinating food for thought:

*It may drive this thought home, if I tell you that I attribute my eternal youth and inexhaustible vitality to the fact that I eat so little. Last fall, when making two or three speeches a day, riding sometimes more than a hundred miles in an open car to reach the next appointment, besides doing my usual amount of work on The Jeffs, a glass of milk and a soft-boiled egg constituted my regular meal. Often, it was the milk, without the egg. Never forget this: Most people eat too much.*

—Thomas E. Watson, *Short Talks to Young Men*, 1912

*Don’t crumble bread, or crackers, in your soup. You can season it, if you like, with salt, pepper, Tabasco, or any other sauce on the table; but you take your bread with the soup, and not in it. Don’t mix a dog’s mess in your soup-plate.*

—Thomas E. Watson, *ibid*.

*The table at which the preacher and the soldier sat down to dine with the family of the Squire was graced with the substantial array of home-raised victuals once so common, now so rare in the South. Served in the usual country style, the whole of it*

*was on the table at the beginning of the meal, so that one’s first mouthful could be taken with reference to all that was to follow. The food did not come to the guest, dish after dish, as it does at one of those formal dinings, which most people praise in public and heartily damn in private. No, the food was all there at one and the same time: your plate remained unchanged until you reached the pastry. Thus, you could systematize your eating, and get a dinner to suit your individual taste.*

*It has happened to me several times in my life to be arrested, convicted, and sentenced to dine in company with other well-dressed convicts, male and female, at a swell dinner—one of those formal functions where solemn flunkys bring you one thing, only, to eat at a time. When you have pecked a while at one thing, whatever it may be, somelemon flunkys take it away, and bring you another plate, and some other one thing to peck at a while. Sometimes it happens that this one thing is a big, defiant-looking tomato. To sit in one’s chair, gaze [sic] at the last course which the flunkie has just put one; to realize that this entire course consists of a solitary tomato, looking fiercely red and raw; to glance along the table and to realize that all the convicts, male and female, have one tomato apiece, and are trying to look cheerfully at the convict boss—the host—has overwhelmed me everytime it got the chance. The scene is heartrending.*

—Thomas E. Watson, *Bethany*, 1904



# WEEVIL WOES

## Forest for the Trees

BY DEXTER RHODES

On the wall behind my desk is a cartoon image of a boll weevil. Every morning when the guys come in to get their marching orders, we play a game. I point to the bug on the poster and say:

“Repeat after me: ‘It’s.’ ”

They all say, “Ees.”

Then I say, “No.”

“No.”

“Good.”

“Good.”

Then I say, “Let’s try that all together. From the top, now: ‘It’s No Good.’ ”

The chorus responds, “Ees no good.”

“Great!” I exclaim. Then, still pointing to the wall, “This bug is no good.”

“Dees bug ees no good!” Then we all nod together, clap each other on the back in congratulations, and adjourn to the cotton field to have a big ol’ time checking the boll weevil traps. We call that quality entertainment in Thomson, Georgia.

In another life, I worked for a cotton broker and I know a thing or two about



boll weevils, certainly more than I know about teaching English. The boll weevil is a nasty rascal with a big schnoz that almost ruined the South in the early twentieth century. Heck, it wasn’t until the early 1990s that Georgia finally eradicated the little cotton cruncher.

Probably of Mexican or Central American origin, the boll weevil appeared in Texas about 1892 and soon spread to most cotton-growing regions of the United States. In short order, the weevil was destroying about ten percent of the annual U.S. cotton crop. Boll weevil devastation was a major reason for diversification of the South’s historic cotton economy. Ever wonder why the ugly boll weevil is memorialized with a monument in Enterprise, Alabama? It forced farmers to diversify their crops—a good long-term practice.

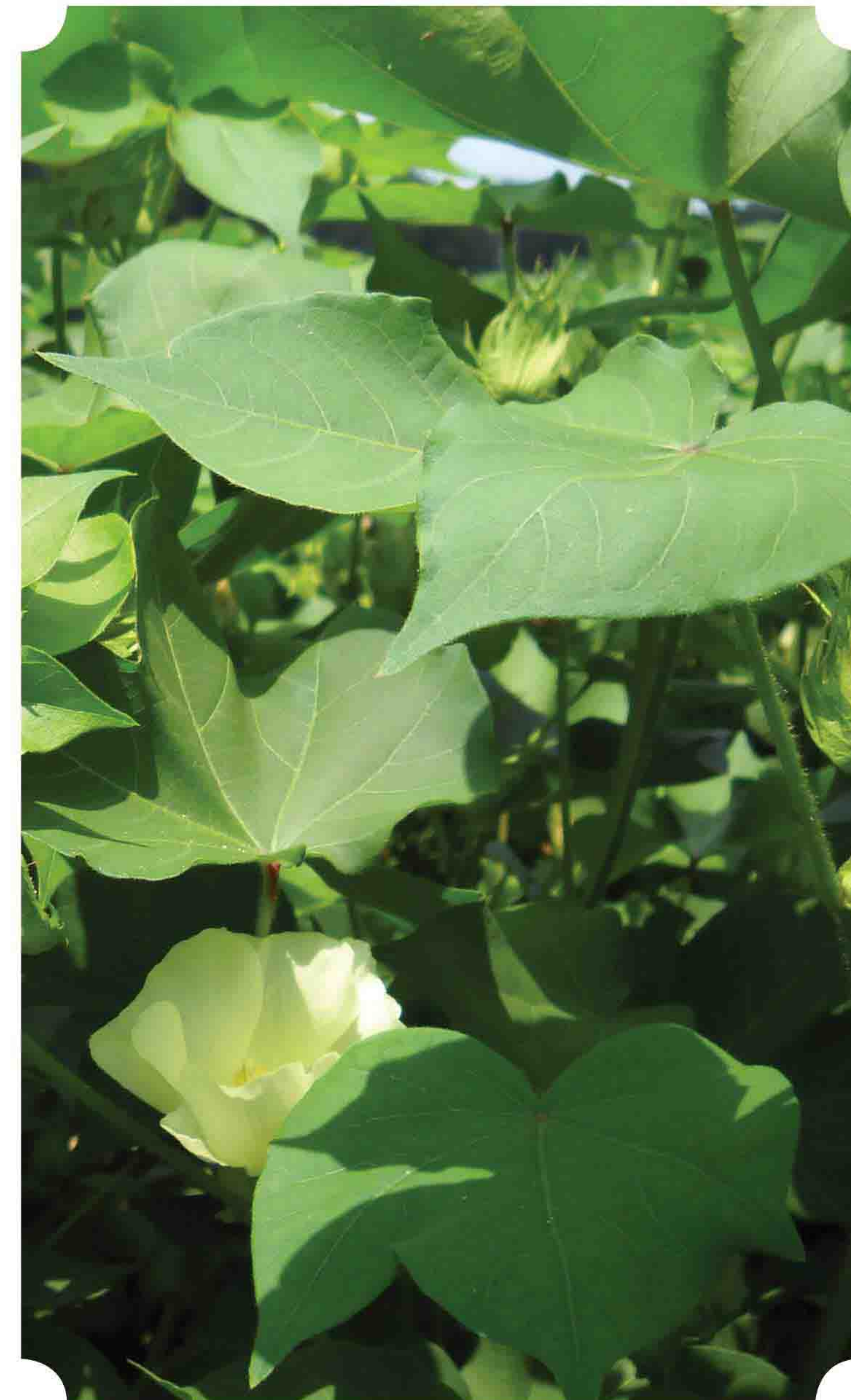
But just because he’s cast in metal doesn’t mean we have to wrap our arms around him. The weevil is really a bad little dude. Almost half of his

body is a snout crafted to poke holes in a cotton boll. For you Yankees out there, a cotton boll is what becomes of the cotton plant’s flower after it’s pollinated. Anyway, weevils feed on the cotton fiber inside the boll. Girl weevils (yes, you pesky Yankees, weevils are sexed) lay their eggs in the bolls. When the larvae hatch, they go to work gobbling up the cotton fibers inside. Those little weevils make up one hungry family, and that family can decimate a cotton crop.

In 1978, the U.S. Department of Agriculture began a concerted eradication campaign, and Georgia cotton farmers had to participate in the Boll Weevil Eradication Program (BWEP). By the end of the century, the weevil had disappeared from most of the nation except for Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, where the campaign continued. This involved the intensive use of broad-spectrum insecticides. But there was a hitch: Boll weevil control often caused outbreaks of other insect pests, because these insecticides destroyed natural enemies, such as parasites and predatory insects that fed on weevils. In time, farmers began using selective insecticides.

When it comes to controlling boll weevils, farmers place traps at the perimeters of their cotton fields. I don’t need to describe boll weevil traps to you because you’ve seen them in the summertime all along rural highways: bright green canisters hung waist-high from posts

along the field edges. Inside the trap is a pheromone attractant designed to lure the male boll weevil. If a farmer finds a weevil in the trap then, as groundskeeper Robert Bergamy says, it’s time to drop the bomb.



Organic, I-Hate-Monsanto farmers might try natural controls, such as the introduction of predatory bugs. More pragmatic cotton growers opt for chemical warfare. When it comes

to a crop that has to make it or our curator, Michelle, won’t have cotton for her school tours and will be mean to me for a month, I zip up the space suits and ready the malathion. It ain’t DDT, but it’s still tougher on bugs than

Grandma Rhodes was to mischievous young boys who replaced her Polident with Preparation H. (Lord, how a woman who didn’t weigh a hundred pounds soaking wet could swing a peach switch so hard I’ll never know.)

The weevil’s resistance to some poisons and the removal of some poisons from the market has encouraged integrated pest management. That’s a fancy-sounding term for the use of safer insecticides, synthetic growth regulators, and pheromone traps. Also helpful is the elimination of field litter, especially cotton stalks, which controls weevils because that’s where they “over winter.” Short-season cotton, bred to mature early, escapes much damage from weevil larvae. Some experiments even released sterile males to frustrate reproduction.

Truth is, today’s farmers are more likely to encounter the bollworm or tobacco budworm—caterpillar pests that feed on squares and bolls—than they are the boll weevil. A little science and a lot of research have largely kept Mr. Weevil at bay.

Our cotton crop is looking swell, or as we now say in the cotton patch, “Ees berry good.”

Come see me—I’m the mischievous one at the field edge, bombing bugs and speakin’ Spanish!



# THE FLIP SIDE

## Rocks of Ages

BY TAD BROWN



A long time and several dreams ago, I fished the green waters of Clarks Hill Lake with my grandfather. Moderate in most things, Puritanical in all others, he allowed only one afternoon of any given weekend for fish. I was bound during the week by Atlanta asphalt, women, and school, but when Friday afternoons arrived I squirmed and clawed my way back to boyhood and McDuffie County to test his waters of self-discipline.

My grandfather was a character of some renown but not a great or passionate fisherman. He spent time on the water in the same relaxed manner he enjoyed international travel or eighteen holes of golf: They were tonics, ways to balance stresses of work, one executed on behalf of the other, and he pursued them with similar muted enthusiasm, as his other tasks in life. That is not to suggest my grandfather was heavy hearted or beyond humor, simply that he ordered his time in sorts of numerical quadrants, only a portion of which might be devoted to leisure. All boy

to craft a man from a restless boy. “You can’t fish all the time,” he would insist into my dull eyes. “You must tackle your work and school.” I was impatient and unmoved. Between our metaphysical divide lay 71,000 acres of water transcended by a natural force that christened with absurdity our time together.

In those days Clarks Hill appeared as lonely and ragged as I was. Much of the lake still showed flooded timber above its waterline, not unlike what stands now at the extreme north end just below the Russell Dam. To enter a cove and encounter another fisherman was a rarity. I do not recall ever seeing a skier. Of course, that was also a halcyon era before personal watercraft polluted the world and pontoon boats appeared on the lake like crabgrass in an unkempt lawn. No, the primary recreation of the lake then, at least on the upper end of Little River, was quiet fishing. To my grandfather’s mind, that meant the pursuit of crappie.

Its unfortunate name to the contrary, *Pomoxis nigromaculatus*

is a fish of understated beauty that captured my imagination even as a boy. Silver and speckled black, its shoulders reflecting iridescent green, pectoral and anal fins huge and delicate like fans, the crappie shares the same aesthetic as houndstooth or gray tweed. Those who have hunted bobwhite quail or perhaps ruffed grouse understand when I say God perfectly resolved the lines, patterns, and colors of their environment in plumage and proportion so that even to the untrained eye each bird makes natural and beautiful sense. They are works of art, built not just to reflect their world but to rise slightly above it in visual refinement, simply and modestly, alive and dignified. By contrast, one might point to a pheasant or a mallard, lovely but garish, and argue their appearances indicate The Almighty had just returned to His post at the holy assembly line having endured a particularly raucous Mardi Gras. Not so with the crappie: Its creation was sober and perfect and because it mostly resided in large reservoirs, exotic to a city boy.

My grandfather revered crappie on the plate. Not one necessarily given to ethereal considerations, and certainly not an early advocate of catch-and-release conservation, he cherished them dredged in cornmeal by ebony hands, fried deeply in a number ten skillet, and set with care next to coarse grits, scrambled eggs, biscuits, and fresh sliced tomatoes. They were breakfast food, mind you, reserved for Sunday mornings and among the few appearances in this natural world capable of eliciting an excited “Hot ziggedy!” from his mouth. Fish were meant to be caught, my grandfather argued, and consummately eaten.

So on Saturday afternoons we would descend on the Thomson Boat Club in desperate attempts to land enough fish for Sunday breakfast. If we brought home a dozen crappie we considered the trip successful. Something near twenty bordered the miraculous.

There were reasons for those modest expectations, and ones I am now

convinced were supernatural, because however innocently conceived, our trips always blossomed into adventures, and if we did not recognize it at the time each moment of alarm and hilarity on the water subtly winched our ages closer until we were neither boy nor man, but a curious and ordained stage of development that existed somewhere between the two.

*“Give her a shot,  
my grandfather  
growled. “She’s  
got asthma.”*

The noble vessel from which we pursued our speckled grail was an olive green, eighteen-foot Glassmaster tri hull that left its Columbia, South Carolina, factory in 1969. Ungainly and heavy as a car, it was nearly indestructible, a fact my grandfather routinely tested. Of his many talents, he would never be accused as able or even competent behind the steering wheel, whether it be attached to a car, a tractor, or a boat. My grandfather treated all vehicles as pieces of heavy equipment, prodded into service by a “Damn the torpedoes, full steam ahead!” mentality that is immortalized even today by stories of his reckless driving. The only fact that made his piloting of watercraft appear reasonably safe was the absence of yellow and white lines on the water.

Nor was my grandfather a mechanic, and a carbureted boat irregularly run was a recipe for interminable frustration. At the helm on any given Saturday, he was one sweaty gyration of khaki-clad activity: frantically manipulating the throttle back and forth, lifting the choke, simultaneously cussing and turning the ignition key. Invariably, the motor’s failure led to a trip astern to tilt back the engine cover and check the points or poke a screwdriver into the carburetor followed by a return to the controls to start the process anew. Always there was the last desperate effort that separated fishing from a dejected trip home: the use of starter fluid.

So it was on this day, where we struggled to wake the boat from dockside slumber, that I was called upon to fetch the precious aerosol can of ether from the side panel of the boat. “Give her a shot,” my grandfather growled. “She’s got asthma.”

I dutifully squirted a blast into the carburetor. He turned the key, and the motor started just long enough to burn the ether, only to bog down again. We repeated the process and were rewarded with similar results.

But my grandfather was not one to accept defeat lightly. “This time don’t stop,” he ordered, and then he turned the key, spinning the motor, while I aimed the spray can at the carburetor and held down hard.

What happened next is likely the reason for the safety warnings that adorn so many boathouses on the lake. The cantankerous motor fired, naturally and simultaneously igniting that which gave it life. One moment I held a can of starter fluid, the next I wielded an incendiary weapon that shot a five-foot yellow flame across the top of the engine. Shrieking with horror, I dropped the blowtorch, which landed on the spinning top pulley of the motor, ricocheted off with impressive speed and an audible “ping” into the tin roof of the boathouse, from which it clanged in relaxed cartwheels out into the lake. The





musical sequence alone was enough to garner the attention of other boaters. “What the hell’s going on back there?!” my grandfather cried, staring at his saucer-eyed first mate, who was now huddled in terror against the transom of the boat. “Lower the cover on that motor. Can’t you see she’s running?”

Navigational difficulties complicated mechanical ones. In the days before GPS and sophisticated sonar devices, mariners relied on maps, buoys, channel markers, and the like to cruise the lake safely. My grandfather’s nautical world existed entirely on the portion of the Little River above the Georgia Highway 43 bridge, and if he read the charts that were stowed in the glove box our performances disproved it. How many times we ran aground while attempting to cross a previously unknown route I cannot remember, but in each event I wound up wet.

The drama began and ended the same every time: the boat slammed into an underwater shallow, followed by cussing at the helm, a quick shift

into neutral and agitated manipulation of the trim switch, followed by a shift into reverse. This was followed by a predictable cloud of red mud in the water as the propeller tried in vain to extricate the heavy boat’s center hull from the mud flat. A few stabs at the bottom with a paddle confirmed the obvious. Then my grandfather would look to his first mate: “Get in the lake.”

I would bail off the bow, heave and wiggle the middle vee of the hull until she was floating again, then knowing all too well my grandfather’s deficiencies behind the wheel, frantically board the vessel before he found the throttle. Barely one foot would hit the deck and he would go full bore, sending me tumbling from bow to stern as he desperately tried to clear the shallows and get the boat on plane. Once back on course he would yell into the wind: “I don’t know why they don’t mark those damn places!”

At length we would make our destination. My grandfather’s crappie fishing technique was simple: Locate

standing timber, tie off to a trunk or limb, and submerge a minnow threaded through the back with a number one Aberdeen hook. He always fished from the bow, nearest the structure that held the fish, while I was generously left the rest of the boat. If the hole failed to produce a fish in thirty minutes, the lines came in and we would go in search of another tree. Oftentimes, while the first mate was stowing the tackle, his grandfather would impatiently throw the boat in reverse, forgetting for the moment the method by which they moored the vessel. Over the years, the violent results marked our fishing spots all along the Little River: mangled aluminum bow cleats that dangled at the waterline from frayed scraps of rope.

When sundown arrived, despite my efforts to contrary, my grandfather would command I stow the tackle for the run back to the boathouse. I hated the act of ceasing to fish. The only mitigating circumstance that could lift my spirits was the chance to run the boat back to the dock.

To a boy, running a boat is an exhilarating slurry of conflicting senses: responsibility, freedom, and power, all mixed by the wind across the calm, non-threatening surface of the water. It is a feeling that has no peer on land, and when my grandfather silently entrusted the helm to me, I would nearly burst for all the pride.

Typically, he would relieve me when we passed at idle speed beneath the Highway 43 bridge. Only once did he allow me to take the boat all the way into the no-wake zone of the boat docks and into the slip. Perhaps it was the one Lowenbrau he allowed himself each fishing trip or maybe a silent test of my abilities. Either way, when I lined up the bow with the slip and made my approach, he knew he had made a mistake.

“Whoa there!” he yelled from the bow, “slow down!” My shift into neutral did precious little to slow our momentum, and when it appeared I was going to wreck into the dock, I

*“My grandfather might have anticipated a crash landing, but he was not prepared for reverse at half throttle, which instantly and decisively separated him from his boat.”*



did what came naturally: I frantically threw her in reverse.

My grandfather might have anticipated a crash landing, but he was not prepared for reverse at half throttle, which instantly and decisively separated him from his boat. By the time I regained control and shut off the boat in fear, I was thirty yards into the lake looking for my captain, who just then surfaced amidst his poplin golf hat, wallet, and eyeglasses case, all of which were merrily bobbing around their owner in the slip.

The ride back from the lake was nearly silent. Sensing my embarrassment and remorse, my soggy grandfather attempted to break the mood: “Where the hell did you learn to drive like that?”

Then, just as quickly as the words left his lips, he added, “That was a rhetorical question.”

And with hints of smiles we made our way home, secure in the knowledge that above all else, a crappie really was a damn fine fish.



# WATSON BROWN FOUNDATION

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Completed in 1876 and declared a National Historic Landmark in 1974, Jubilee Hall is the oldest permanent building on the Fisk University campus. Its construction was famously funded by the Jubilee student singers tour that began in 1871.

Congratulations to James S. Bonds, Brian Edwards, Sebastian Gray, Doug Slaughter, and Kendall Driscoll who correctly identified the building and college campus!