

CLARION

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

FALL 2016

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM



**THE *singing*
*salesman***
JEFF LINK

ON PAR
with
the pros

**HELL-BENT
ON
HELLBENDERS**

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Clarion University Foundation, Inc.

FEATURES

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Conventional wisdom

Seventeen Clarion University students – more than from any other college or university in the country – worked behind the scenes at the Republican and Democratic national conventions in July and were there as Trump and Clinton received their respective parties' nominations.



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The Singing Salesman – Jeff Link

As a Clarion undergrad, Jeff Link learned to love opera, starring as Jesus of Nazareth in a school production. He continues to feed the passion by performing with Pittsburgh Opera, most recently in “The Barber of Seville.”

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Hell-bent on hellbenders

Assistant professor of biology Kurt Regester is leading a study of the eastern hellbender salamander in the western two-thirds of Pennsylvania. He and his students capture and tag the aquatic amphibians to learn about their demographics and health.

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On par with the pros

As MBA students, Josh Domitrovich, Cameron McConnell and Nate Conway performed the work of professional business consultants, providing expertise that helped an area golf and country club get back on course for a profitable future.

DEPARTMENTS

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Student Sarah Strausbaugh sees art when she looks to the sky; a new center addresses needs of first-year students; the School of Education expands post-bac options; two new faces join Clarion University Foundation; Clarion’s Chamber Singers placed third in the world in a Wales music festival.

10 Alumni Gatherings

The Berciks made their first return visit to campus during Alumni Weekend 2016.

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Former Clarion wrestler Bekzod Abdurakhmonov will represent his home country at the Summer Olympics in Rio.



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It’s a bit scary for any college student to leave home and head off for college, but when that home is in another country, it takes an extra dose of courage.

CLARION

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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DANDROY TO LEAD ALUMNI RELATIONS ON INTERIM BASIS



Robert A. Dandoy ('74) has been appointed interim director of Alumni Relations, effective Aug. 29.

He is a proud Clarion alumnus who has been involved with the university in many capacities over the years, including serving on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and as its president from 2011 to 2013, serving on the Clarion University Foundation, Inc., Board of Directors and the Clarion University Theater Advisory Council.

Dandoy's community service posts range from community development to educational English advisory boards. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Education/communication arts from Clarion, a Master of Arts degree from Slippery Rock, and is ABD from IUP in English.

Dandoy has more than 30 years' experience as a secondary educator for Karns City High School. He has also taught at Butler Community College, La Roche College and Slippery Rock University.

He lives in Butler with his wife Julie. They have two children, Jessica (Dandoy '05) Matonak and Justin Dandoy ('07).

A search is being conducted for a permanent director.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



COURAGEOUS.
confident.
CLARION.

Dear Clarion family,

As president of Clarion University, helping students and alumni succeed is my highest priority. As a lifelong educator, I know that learning by doing – or what we call “experiential learning” – can be some of the most transformative experiences during one’s college years. I am pleased to let you know that this issue is chock full of just such high-impact educational practices.

For example, I’m proud that Clarion was in the thick of our national political conventions this summer with 17 of our students participating in both the Democratic and Republican conventions. Clarion had the largest number of students at the conventions of any college or university in the country! These students did more than just attend: They spent a week doing active fieldwork with an assigned party, engaging the media, working with the convention host committee or with a specific interest advocacy group.

A more local example of experiential learning is when Brookville’s Pinecrest Country Club needed expertise on developing a strategic plan, the consultants with whom they chose to work were three Clarion MBA students in a capstone course intended to integrate and put into practice strategic planning theories they had learned at Clarion. It was mutually beneficial – the students gained real-world experience, and Pinecrest gained outside expertise to help them succeed.

Our students are making a difference through research and discovery such as the group of biology students who spent a day capturing, testing, tagging and releasing hellbender salamanders as part of a long-term study led by biology professor Dr. Kurt Regester. Conducting research with a faculty member is a very powerful way to connect what is learned in the classroom to solving problems in the real world.

These are just a few examples of experiential learning opportunities that happen every day at Clarion University. The depth of the academic work done by our faculty and students inspires me, and I’m excited to see what the upcoming academic year brings!

Fly Eagles Fly!

Karen M. Whitney
President, Clarion University

spotlight on:

**DUAL
CERTIFICATION
B.S.ED., EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION AND
SPECIAL EDUCATION**

WHY IT'S HOT

An estimated one of five students in the general classroom today has some form of special needs. Pre-K to 4th grade teachers are on the front lines in identifying and designing instruction for learners with special needs.

WHAT IT'S GOT

Superintendents report a preference to employ a teacher with the dual certification. That person has received courses and hundreds of hours of field experiences learning how to teach students to read, write, understand math and acquire the necessary social skills to succeed in school. The Early Childhood/Special Education Dual Certificate holder also has experience in designing interventions for students with a variety of learning needs.

WHAT'S NEXT

We are developing partnerships with school districts who will treat our future teachers as part of the staff, providing the experiences pre-service students need to become successful teachers. Also, the International Dyslexia Association recently accredited our special education program due to evidence-based reading practices being taught in our programs.



**KETH NAMED SBDC
STATE STAR**

Amy Keth ('91, MBA '12), a consultant for Clarion University Small Business Development Center, was selected as the 2016 Pennsylvania SBDC State Star at the organization's annual network meeting in June in York. Keth's outstanding work with clients, high quality contributions to new projects and initiatives for the Pennsylvania SBDC network, and her performance leadership at the Clarion University SBDC were cited in her selection. She will be honored during the America's SBDC 2016 national conference in September in Orlando.

**FUTURE
*plan***

During his final semester, Brendan Shepherd ('16) placed third in the fifth annual Student Business Plan Competition, held by Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. He received \$2,500 in seed money to start Shepherd's Home Services, LLC, a remodeling business.

Among 223 students who participated, eight were from Clarion, including Shepherd, finalist Ken Kelly and semifinalist Farrah Cornick. The eight students worked with Clarion University Small Business Development Center consultants and student interns to develop formal business plans which were reviewed by PASSHE economic development representatives.





BEAUTY FROM BEAUTY



When Clarion University honors student Sarah Elizabeth Strausbaugh looks into space, she sees more than just stars and planets, she sees beautiful works of art.

“I just wanted to create beauty from beauty,” said Strausbaugh, a physics major

with concentration in astrophysics and a minor in art.

Her works of art are named for what they are: “The Great Nebula,” “Seahorse in the Large Magellanic Cloud,” “The Lagoon Nebula,” “Stellar Nursery in the Carina

Nebula,” “The Soap Bubble Nebula” and “The Iris Nebula.”

Strausbaugh used gouache, an opaque watercolor paint. She manually placed each star in each painting to be as accurate as possible. In the process, she found herself learning more about each of her subjects.

CAPITOL HILL



SENIOR COMMUNICATION MAJOR Braná Hill has completed a summer internship with Leadership & the American Presidency, offered by the Ronald Reagan Foundation in Washington, D.C. Hill received a \$5,000 scholarship to be part of the internship and is also

the recipient of the James D. Moore Scholarship.

Hill was a communications team adjunct for the National Institute for Civil Discourse, helping them to further their mission of enhancing political and social environments with civil conversations and dialogue. In addition to the internship, she took classes at

George Mason University; the class credits will transfer to Clarion for a leadership minor she's hoping to add this fall.

As a communication major with a concentration in digital media and a minor in music, she thought she'd be a reporter, but she has since realized

that "my heart is more toward leadership," a discovery made through organizations such as QUEENS, Black Student Union, Lift Every Voice Gospel Choir, Brothers and Sisters in Christ and University Activities Board. Hill is also a member of Student Senate.

FOUNDATION NEWS

Jamison is director of planned giving

Larry Jamison ('87) has joined Clarion University Foundation, Inc., as director of planned giving. Jamison, who holds a BSBA in marketing, has a professional background in banking, most recently as branch manager for First United National Bank in Clarion. As an alumnus, Jamison served on the alumni board, including two years as president. He has been a member of several committees and volunteer groups, including the inaugural College of Business Advisory Board, alumni representative on Clarion Students' Association Board, wrestling's Pin Club and the Athletic Task Force Committee.



TUITION INCREASE *smallest* IN 10 YEARS

The Board of Governors of Pennsylvania's State System of Higher Education has approved the smallest percentage tuition increase in more than a decade.

The \$89-per-semester increase for the 2016-17 academic year will set the base tuition rate for most full-time Pennsylvania residents – who comprise about 90 percent of all State System students – at \$3,619 per semester, or \$7,238 for the full year. Even with the modest increase, the State System universities will remain the lowest-cost option among all four-year colleges and universities in the state.

The 14 State System universities have eliminated nearly \$300 million in expenditures from their combined operating budgets over the last decade in order to balance their budgets and to help hold down student costs. The commonwealth, meanwhile, has boosted funding to the State System by about \$31.5 million over the last two years, after seven straight years of flat or reduced general fund appropriations.

The recently passed 2016-17 state budget includes about \$444.2 million for the State System, up from about \$412.8 million in 2014-15. The System received an approximately \$20.6 million increase last year and will get an additional \$10.8 million this year.

Jones hired as development director for athletics

Chris Jones has joined Clarion University Foundation, Inc., as director of development for athletics. Jones, who holds a BS in physical education and an MS in athletic administration, has an extensive background in athletics fundraising, most recently as executive director of the athletic booster club and coordinator of annual giving for Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Mo. His professional memberships include: National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, National Association of Athletic Development Directors, Council for Advancement and Support of Education and Association of Fundraising Professionals.



Aharrah lauded for service

Clarion University Foundation, Inc., Board of Directors issued a resolution of appreciation for Dr. Ernest C. Aharrah's 25 years of service to the board. Aharrah ('49), of Clarion, was appointed to the board from 1970 to 1971, and again from 1992 to June 30, 2016. The board cites Aharrah's faithful participation in board and committee meetings, demonstrating careful preparation for sessions, thoughtful consideration of issues and balanced judgment in decisions. He contributed to the foundation's greatest period of growth, in service and through his family's financial support of and active participation in the university's endeavors. Aharrah's wife, Margaret (Behringer '49) is also a Clarion alumna. A beloved, long-time faculty member, he spent 9½ years as a demonstration teacher, 1½ years as director of alumni affairs and 18 years as a faculty member in biology.





GOLDEN VOICES

Clarion University Chamber Singers came home champions from the 2016 Llangollen International Music Eisteddfod in Llangollen, Wales, placing third in the Youth Choir Division of the Choir of the World competition July 8.

“Our students now realize that with hard work and dedication, Clarion University can be both competitive and successful on the world stage,” said Dr. Stephen Johnson, Chamber Singers director. “In addition to having an opportunity to compete against and interact with university singing groups from around the world, our students had the opportunity to spend several more days touring and performing throughout the United Kingdom.”

Following the competition, the Chamber Singers performed in recitals in several churches in London and Stratford-upon-Avon, England, and Killarney and Dublin, Ireland.





FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' NEEDS ADDRESSED



The Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs have created The Center for First Year Experience. Dr. Rich Lane, department of English and modern languages, and Erin Schuetz, director for Student Orientation, Acclimation and Retention, will direct the center.

"The center coordinates the efforts of the university's student success coaches and provides collaboration on first-year experiences such as orientation, mentoring, co-curricular programs and first-year courses," said Dr. Susanne Fenske, vice president for student affairs.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION expands POST-BAC OPPORTUNITIES

Graduate-level education degree opportunities have broadened with the addition of the Master of Science in Special Education. The program is offered in an online format. Other Master of Education degree programs include the M.Ed. with special education concentration and M.Ed. pre-K-8/7-12 with reading concentration.

"The university designs new programs that meet the needs of the region, the commonwealth and the nation," said Dr. Alan Arroyo, interim director of the School of Education. Also, as of the 2015-16 academic year, students are now able to earn new master's-level certifications and endorsements, in addition to their degrees:

- Online instruction endorsement
- Reading specialist certification.
- Autism spectrum disorders endorsement
- Gifted endorsement

PARTNERSHIPS aid AREA STUDENTS

CCBC

Clarion University and Community College of Beaver County have entered into a partnership which allows students in CCBC's Associate of Science in Nursing program to complete general education and nursing elective credits at CCBC, then transfer all credits to Clarion University for online completion of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. CCBC does not offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

"This agreement allows the ASN students to gain an edge on the bachelor's degree by taking some of the classes at CCBC before transitioning to Clarion's online format for degree completion," said Dr. Roxanne M. Gonzales, executive dean of Venango College of Clarion University.

"Both CCBC and Clarion are known for their quality nursing programs," said Dr. Chris Reber, CCBC president and former executive dean of Venango College. "This is a win-win partnership for CCBC, Clarion and all nurses in our region."

CCAC

An articulation agreement has been approved between Clarion University and the Community College of Allegheny County to facilitate the admission of students with a CCAC Associate of Science degree in technology, workforce development or aviation into Clarion's Bachelor of Applied Science in technology leadership program. Students with an associate degree will have earned a minimum of half of the 120 credits required of the applied technology degree, at the community college rate. Technology leadership graduates will be positioned to move on to Clarion University's MBA program.

"Through our ongoing partnership, CCAC and Clarion have once again demonstrated our commitment to affordable and accessible quality educational programming that will enable graduates of our two great institutions to successfully compete in an ever-changing global workforce," said CCAC President Dr. Quintin Bullock.





2016 alumni weekend

Clockwise (starting at top, left): A group of friends gather at Alumni-Fest; two alumni enjoy a treat at the Ice Cream with the Mascot event; Patrick O'Toole (center) celebrates his Distinguished Award with wife Tracey and son Patrick; a group poses at the All-Alumni Banquet; Ed and Elaine Bercik; Clarion University Alumni Association treasurer David Reed, president-elect Jeff Douthett and past president David Bailey help alumni check in for the weekend; Jane France (right) president of Clarion University Foundation, Inc., Board of Directors, visits with friends; the band Hit Play performs at Alumni Fest; friends (from left) Richelle Reinsel ('02), Ashley Luton ('07) and Jessica Zacherl ('04) enjoy the evening; and (center) alumni and friends show their Clarion spirit after the Blue and Gold Color Run.





IN THE NICK OF TIME

Many technological advances have occurred since 1966 when Ed and Elaine Bercik graduated with education degrees from Clarion University, but perhaps none so important as the advances in shaving products. That's right – shaving products.

As education majors, Ed and Elaine often were in the same classes. They got to know each other better while they worked together on the Young Democrats' float for the homecoming parade. Quite shy, Ed finally asked her to a dance.

Getting ready for the date, Elaine nicked her leg while shaving and couldn't find a bandage. As she searched, Ed waited for his now tardy date. And waited. And waited.

"I was fuming. Another five minutes, and I was leaving," Ed said.

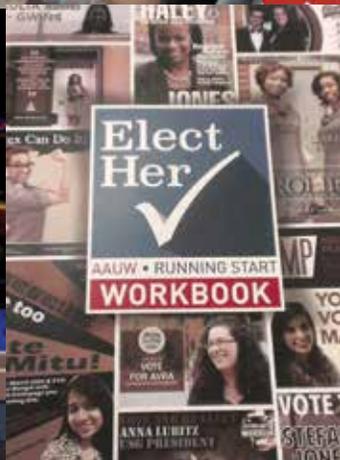
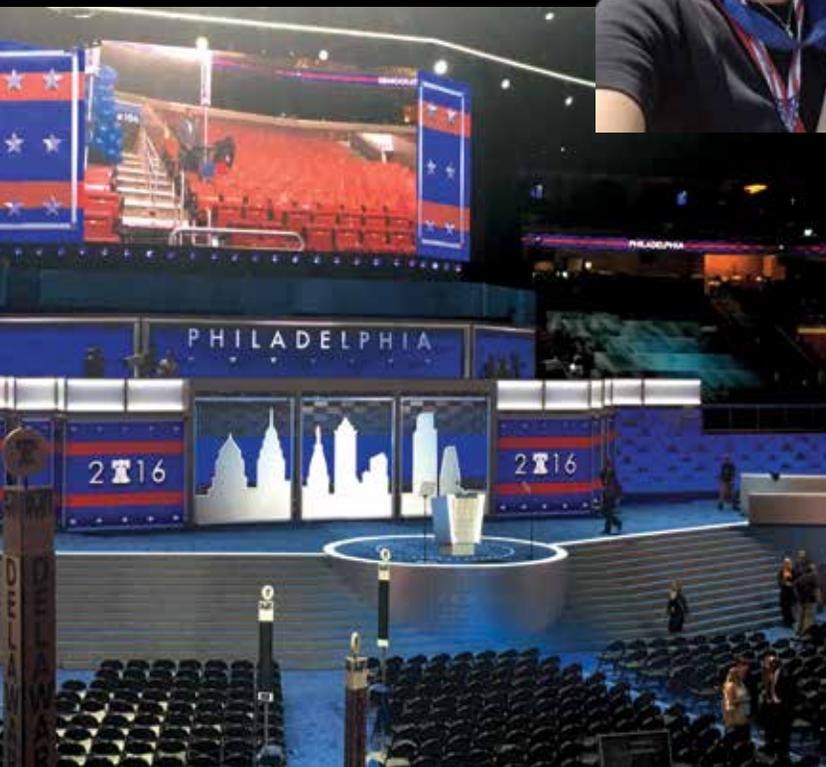
"The next day, we met for class, and he handed me an electric razor," Elaine said.

It's been 50 years since the Berciks both married and graduated from Clarion. They are retired from careers as faculty members at Edinboro University.

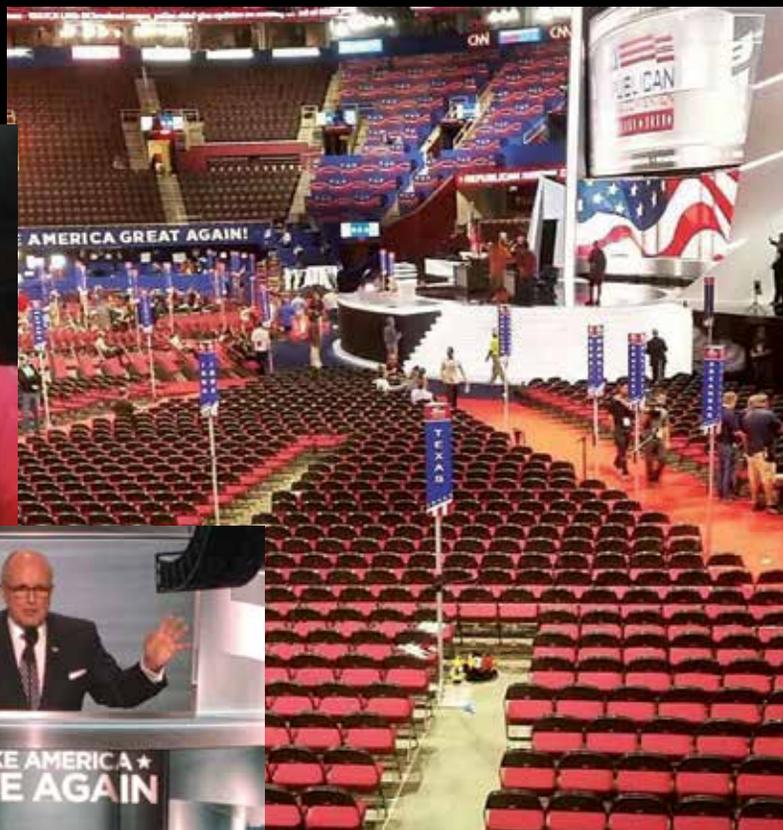
Always very busy, the couple's schedule finally allowed them to return to Clarion for the first time for this summer's Alumni Weekend.



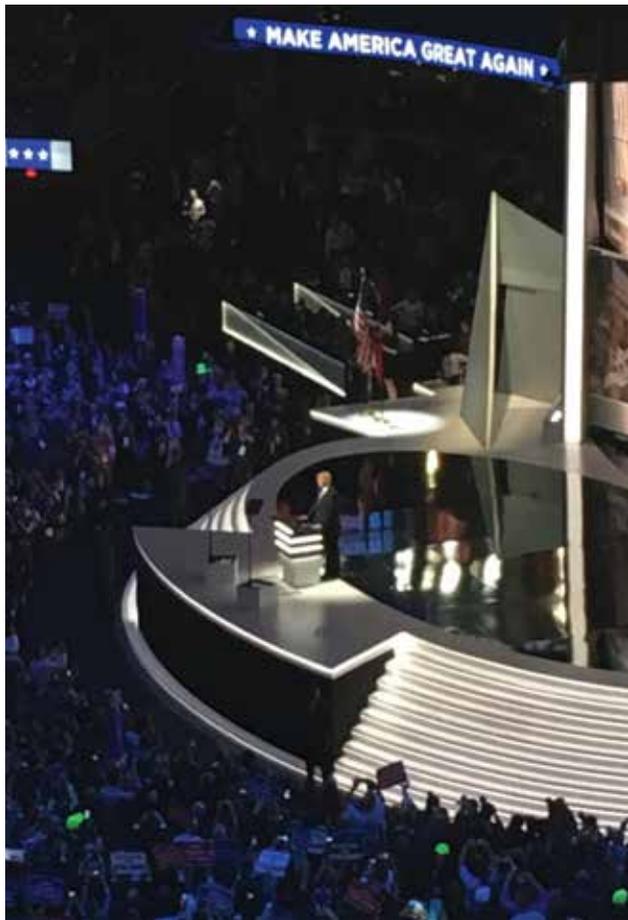
Conventional Wisdom



national co
and **17 CL**
– **MORE T**
were there



This summer's
REPUBLICAN and DEMOCRATIC
conventions were interesting, *to say the least*,
CLARION UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
MORE THAN FROM ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY –
and, taking part in the process. →



Six students attended the Republican National Convention July 10-22 in Cleveland, and 11 students attended the Democratic National Convention July 17-29 in Philadelphia. The two-week seminars are part of Dr. Kevan Yenerall's experiential political science course, The National Political Convention Experience, which he has offered since 2008.

"Students completed two weeks of intensive experiential education on site, including one full week of speakers, discussion groups and convention site visits with political scientists, media figures, elected officials and party leaders, among others," Yenerall said. "During the convention week, students completed fieldwork with an assigned party, media, convention host committee or interest-advocacy group."

"What an amazing experience the past two weeks have been," said Corinne Hoopes, who attended the Democratic National Convention. "They have been full of educational experiences, excitement, hard work, and - of course - fan girling over famous people. I will forever be grateful to the Washington Center, Kevan Yenerall and Clarion

MIKE FRIEND ('14)

Associate producer • WJW Fox 8 • Cleveland

I attended the 2012 Republican National Convention in Tampa, Fla., during my junior year. I was a mass media arts and journalism major with minors in both political science and history. The RNC was the perfect chance for my passions to blend and put everything I'd learned to practical use.

The first week I was in Tampa was amazing as I listened and learned from experts in the election process and media like former Congressman Mickey Edwards and former CNN anchor Aaron Brown.

During the convention I interned with The Dallas Morning News where I covered stories and broke news from the floor of the convention. I covered people who agreed and disagreed with the candidates, the party and entire political process. The skills I learned from working in the field as a reporter helped me gain a new appreciation for my major and eventual career.

Even though my time at the RNC was brief, I learned lessons that would stick with me as a student and a professional. I

returned to Clarion with the advice of the media professionals with whom I worked, and I honed my skills as a journalist. That helped me succeed in the classroom and in my career.

My experience in Tampa also helped me form lasting friendships with students from around the country. The students came from diverse backgrounds and fields of study, and I consider myself lucky to have stayed in contact with many whom I now not only call friends, but colleagues.

When I came back to Clarion, I and other 17 students who attended the conventions had the chance to discuss our time at the conventions and share our stories with one another. Our combined experiences were put into perspective and context by Dr. Yenerall.

Dr. Yenerall is really the unsung hero in this whole experience. He not only told the students about the program, but he also worked tirelessly to secure the interest and funding to send more than two dozen students to represent Clarion on the biggest stages of all.



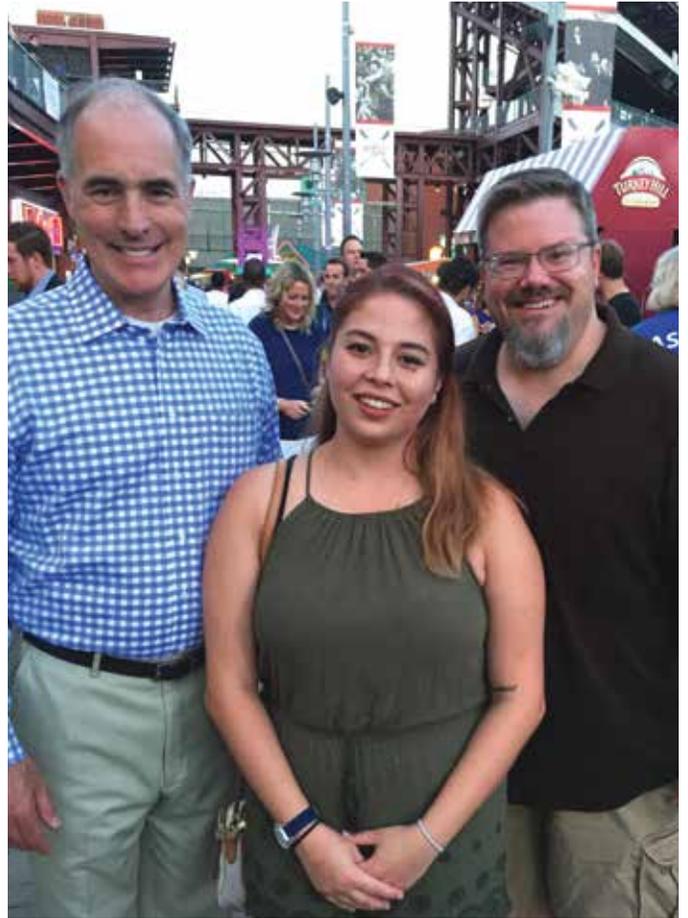
Ultimately, I think that the experience I had in Tampa and the things I took away helped me succeed both academically and professionally. In April, I accepted a position as an associate producer at WJW Fox 8 in Cleveland, the number one station in a major media market. I was fortunate enough to play a role in the station's coverage of the Republican National Convention when it came to our backyard. I am thankful that Clarion provided me the opportunity to attend the convention in 2012, because I was able to take my knowledge and experiences and play a major role in the coverage.

University for giving me a front row seat to history. I look forward to the day that my future children learn about this profoundly historical election in school, so that I can proudly say that I was a part of it. This experience has strengthened my mind, enriched my being, and opened my eyes to a whole new world.”

“ I WILL FOREVER BE GRATEFUL TO THE WASHINGTON CENTER, KEVAN YENERALL AND CLARION UNIVERSITY FOR GIVING ME A FRONT ROW SEAT TO HISTORY. ”

The seminars are held each presidential election year by The Washington Center and includes students from colleges and universities across the United States.

The students were awarded Clarion National Conventions scholarships. ■



MATTHEW KNOEDLER ('14)

Multimedia journalist • WICU-TV/WSEE-TV/Erie News Now • Erie



Covering the 2016 election and following this year's Republican and Democratic National Conventions sent me on a trip back in time. I attended the 2012 Republican National Convention as a junior, a political junkie and aspiring reporter, but not as in tune with the operations of a convention.

I followed our Erie-area delegates and worked with local political analysts throughout the week. Knowing what happens behind the scenes at a convention from my experience four

years ago, I knew what to ask and whom to interview. When I got to interview a Clarion student from our coverage area who was attending the RNC, everything came rushing back to me about the day's and week's events. I felt like I was in Tampa, Fla., all over again.

The Washington Center/Clarion political conventions course has certainly been a building block for my professional career.

While I didn't attend the 2016 conventions in Cleveland or Philadelphia, my experience from the 2012 RNC has helped me immensely on the campaign trail beat. I've covered events for Donald Trump, Sen. Bernie Sanders, former President Bill Clinton, and Gov. John Kasich throughout this year's primary and general election. Knowing how these events operate and the way each candidate presents his or her message has helped me become a better journalist.

Most importantly, my time at the RNC helped me become less "star-struck." Four years ago, seeing Mitt Romney, Paul Ryan

and other top politicians was like seeing a rock star because of all the hype. This time, Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders were just other people, ones whose stories I'm telling.

This year, things came full-circle. I saw New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie speaking, and I remember being on the convention floor four years ago watching the same man speak, but just feet in front of me. It was surreal to watch it unfold and think back to that time four years ago when I was watching him speak in person.

Another example: I was in a car listening to the radio this July when I heard the RNC and speeches on the Monday of the convention. I worked for Fox News Radio in 2012. Knowing the behind-the-scenes work of the radio and the convention and now, four years later, hearing it all unfold again, it made me realize how much of an impact the TWC/Clarion course had on me and shaped my professional life.

I can only hope other students are given the same experience in 2020.

STUDENTS, HOME TOWNS AND CONVENTION ASSIGNMENTS

REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION

Kara Sorenson, Corry
PBS "To the Contrary"

Samuel Richardson, North Versailles
CNN

Jennifer Goehring, Darlington
Pennsylvania delegation

Stephen Hartley, Clarion
RNC Committee on Arrangements;
Trump for President

Jacob Regenye, East Stroudsburg
City of Cleveland Office of
Special Events

Robert Ellis, Irwin
RNC Committee on Arrangements



DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

Stephanie Kulikowski, Lower Burrell
Pennsylvania Delegation,
PA Democratic Party

Seth Ickes, Duncansville
Pennsylvania Delegation,
PA Democratic Party

Elizabeth Williams, Beaver
Democratic National Convention
Committee

Amanda Conklin, Athens
The One Campaign; Emerge

Amanda Hryckowian, Freedom
Democratic Party Women's Caucus;
Political Fest; National Constitution
Center

Caleb Gilliland, Knox
CNN

Corinne Hoopes, Pilesgrove, N.J.
CNN

Rachel Harrison, Greensburg
Pennsylvania Delegation,
PA Democratic Party

Natalia Naranjo, Norristown
Fox

Daniel Corridori, Grove City
Pennsylvania Delegation,
PA Democratic Party

Dillon Waldschmidt, Cheswick
CNN





PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTIONS

2 0 1 6





Jeff Link, left, performs in Pittsburgh Opera's "The Barber of Seville."

THE SINGING SALESMAN



BY DAY, JEFF LINK IS A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER AND SALESMAN. BY NIGHT, HE SINGS HIS HEART OUT AS A MEMBER OF THE PITTSBURGH OPERA.

Like others, [Link] came to Clarion to prepare for his career, and along the way he discovered a life-long passion.

J

JEFF LINK ('77) is a small business owner whose company supplies automotive after-market ancillary products to auto dealers. That may be surprising, when paired with the fact that Link is also an active opera singer, having performed with the Pittsburgh Opera for more than 20 years. Most recently, Link has performed in the productions of "Barber of Seville" and "The Rake's Progress" but over the years has also landed many cameo roles.

While his specific, diverse interests certainly make Link unique, his story is like that of many Clarion University alumni. Like others, he came to Clarion to prepare for his career, and along the way he discovered a life-long passion.

A Butler native, Link chose Clarion for its convenience, affordability, and its potential to unlock new opportunities for his future. He started school as a medical technology student, when, on a whim, he decided

to audition for a musical put on by the university's theatre and music departments.

"I had always enjoyed singing. I grew up singing in the church, so I knew I loved it," Link said. "It was just a question of 'How good are you, and do you have the chops to do this at a different level?'"

As it turned out, he did have those chops, and then some. At Clarion, he went on to take part in numerous operas and musicals, discovering a particular passion for opera.

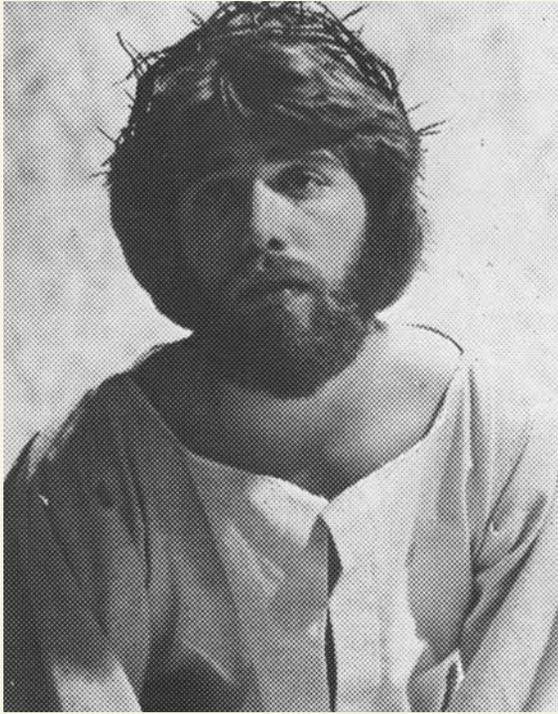
Link credits his interest in opera in large part to Dr. Pat Conner, who was a professional opera singer and his vocal instructor at Clarion. "I was fortunate to be at Clarion – you know, as the old adage goes – 'at the right place at the right time.' The music department was blessed with many talented students and, under Dr. Connor's leadership, Clarion produced at least one opera every

season," he said. He went on to note that the opportunity to play leading roles in so many full production operas is rare for most college vocal students.

This newfound interest led him to change his major to music education, the degree with which he would graduate, but teaching wasn't in the cards and he turned to sales. He mentioned that many of his most important lessons at Clarion came from his time outside of the classroom and that sales is not that far removed from performing.

Singing took a back seat for a time, but, after returning to the Pittsburgh area from out of state, he attended graduate school at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, performing in that school's opera program while studying voice with Mija Novich. While there, he was noticed by famed Pittsburgh Opera director Tito Capobianco, who encouraged him to audition for the company. Since then, Link said, opera has been a steady part of his life.

Link credits his interest in opera in large part to Dr. Pat Conner, who was a professional opera singer and his vocal instructor at Clarion.



Link stars as Jesus of Nazareth in Clarion's 1977 production of "Jesus Christ Superstar."



Link, right, in Pittsburgh Opera's "The Grapes of Wrath."

It hasn't always been easy. "Managing the schedule required for rehearsals, directing a church choir—which I did for years—and handling our company can be taxing. My wife Nancy ('76) has always been supportive and keeps me going in the right direction, but even she sometimes has difficulty." It has all been worth it however, as he said performing has helped him grow physically and mentally.

"Medical studies back me up," Link said. "It's good, physically, for your lungs and for your brain. Singing and memorizing shows in four different

"Performing gives you confidence, helps you learn how to produce under pressure, and builds character."

languages... that helps you stay sharp."

He also says his experience performing helped him achieve his career goals.

"Getting up in front of audiences and performing prepares you for so

much," he said. "It gives you confidence, helps you learn how to produce under pressure, and builds character."

"I think a lot of people don't realize the impact of the arts, in that way," Link said, explaining that the "off the field" benefits people often ascribe to athletics also apply to the arts. He noted that he hopes for a resurgence of artistic study in universities across the country, so more people can reap those benefits.

"You may never get rich in the arts, but it's so satisfying and opens many unexpected doors." ■

PITTSBURGH OPERA TICKETS

Jeff Link's next performance with Pittsburgh Opera will be "La traviata" by Giuseppe Verdi Oct. 8, 11, 14 and 16 at Benedum Center. He will perform again in "Turandot" by Giacomo Puccini March 25, 28 and 31 and April 2 at Benedum.

Clarion University is part of Pittsburgh Opera's CheapSeats program, which was developed to encourage students, faculty and staff at area colleges and universities to attend performances by offering them significantly discounted tickets to its Benedum Center productions.

To take advantage of the CheapSeats program, visit www.pittsburghopera.org/tickets/student-tickets, then scroll to the bottom of the page, find Clarion University in the alphabetized listing, and use the promo code POCLARION.

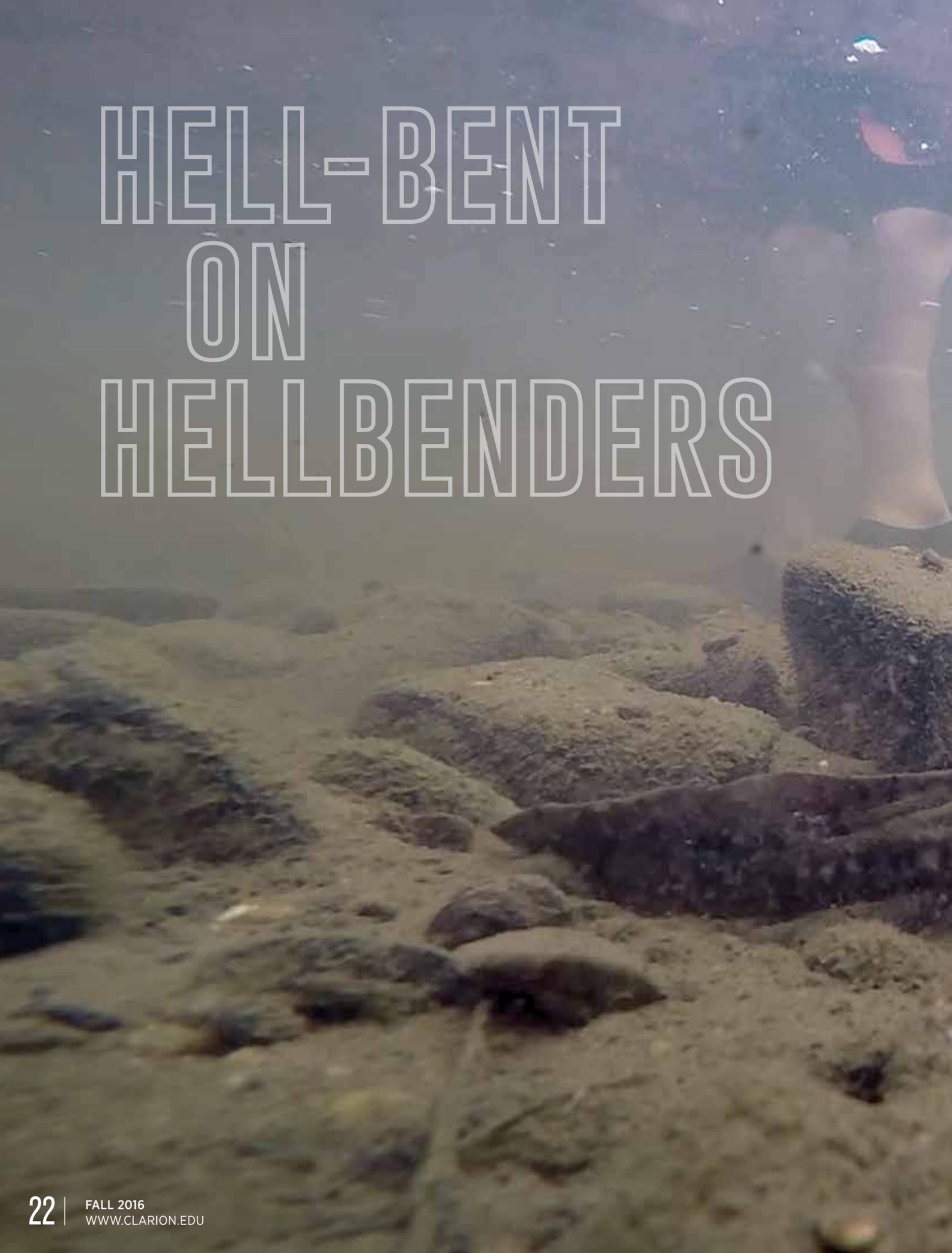
In honor of Link's performance, Pittsburgh Opera is also extending a 10 percent discount on tickets to "Turandot" with the promo code POCALUM.

Both codes will be active once single tickets go on sale Aug. 29.

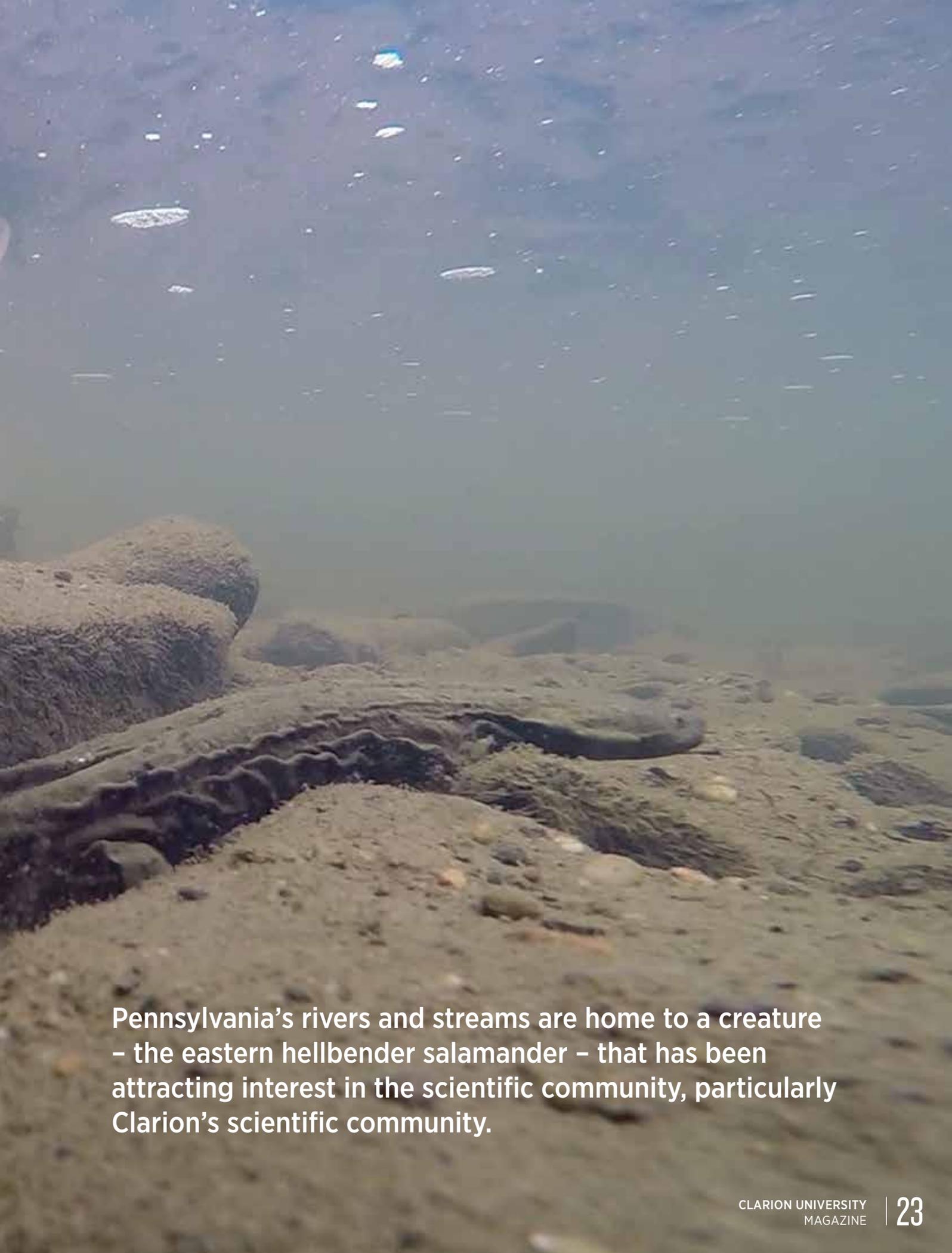
Jeff Link's upcoming performances with Pittsburgh Opera

**LA TRAVIATA
Oct. 8, 11, 14 and 16
Benedum Center**

**TURANDOT
March 25, 28 and 31
and April 2
Benedum Center**

An underwater photograph showing a diver on the right side of the frame, partially obscured by the large, dark, textured body of a hellbender (Cryptobranchus alleganiensis) in the foreground. The water is clear and blue, with some light rays visible. The hellbender's body is the central focus, showing its characteristic wrinkled skin and dark coloration.

HELL-BENT ON HELLBENDERS



Pennsylvania's rivers and streams are home to a creature – the eastern hellbender salamander – that has been attracting interest in the scientific community, particularly Clarion's scientific community.



If the name is any indication, the large aquatic amphibian is not what you'd call attractive. The creature can be various shades of brown, gray or black with markings down its back and fleshy folds on its sides. It has a large, flat head, tiny, wide-set eyes, short legs and a tail. The hellbender can grow to about two feet in length and primarily feeds on crayfish.

Their highly permeable skin takes in oxygen from the river or stream in which they're living. For this reason, their presence is an indicator of environmental health.

Kurt Regester, Ph.D., assistant professor of biology, has been leading a long-term study of the eastern hellbender throughout the western two-thirds of Pennsylvania. The purpose of the study is to assess the abundance, distribution and health of hellbenders in our region.

During the past eight years, Regester and his students have captured and tagged hellbenders by inserting a microchip, similar to the microchips offered at veterinary practices, in the tail. Each year, the hellbenders are

THEIR HIGHLY PERMEABLE SKIN TAKES IN OXYGEN FROM THE RIVER OR STREAM IN WHICH THEY'RE LIVING. FOR THIS REASON, THEIR PRESENCE IS AN INDICATOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.

recaptured to obtain measurements of each animal and collect swab and tissue samples from them.

One of the aims of the research is to learn demographic information – how many males, females and juveniles are present, how many offspring are being produced, and how many hellbenders survive from year to year.

In addition to demographics, Regester and his students study the health of each animal in the population. There are two infectious pathogens for which they have continually tested, including the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or Bd for short, and a virus called ranavirus.

The good news is that when the hellbenders are recaptured and scanned for a microchip from year to year, Regester often recognizes them. In other words, a large percentage of the population that has been tagged for research survive from year to year. Regester said 60 to 70 percent of the animals they capture at their sites are animals that have already been tagged with a microchip.

On a research team excursion this summer, Regester and his students captured a hellbender that never before had been captured. To capture the animal, they had to search the creek for suitable large, flat rocks. Hellbenders

ONCE THE ANIMAL WAS EXAMINED AND DATA AND SAMPLES COLLECTED, IT WAS RETURNED TO ITS EXACT HOME IN THE WATER – A PRACTICE THAT IS PERFORMED FOR EACH ANIMAL.



A juvenile hellbender

live under these rocks, but researchers must find the rocks with adequate openings for the hellbender to enter. Often times, these rocks are large and require two to three people to carefully lift the rock, while other people wait with nets to capture the creature.

“It’s a young hellbender in beautiful condition,” Regester said when the hellbender was being examined.

The hellbender was tagged, measured and weighed. The animal also was gently stroked with a sterile swab, and a small piece of tail was preserved to test for the pathogens of concern. Once the animal was examined and data and samples collected, it was returned to its exact home in the water – a practice that is performed for each animal.

The hellbender that was captured was small, indicating successful reproduction there, and was without marks or blemishes – unlike most of the older adult salamanders.

“The old ones, especially the males, have many old injuries and can appear really beat up,” Regester said.

Regester explained that during the fall, males defend their home rock as a territory for mating, vigorously defending them from other males, noting that most males have scars and missing toes from combat. He’s captured several with missing legs.

Through the research, they’ve also discovered that even if the hellbenders contract the fungal pathogen Bd, they show no symptoms of disease and are doing quite well, Regester explained.

Unlike Bd, those that test positive for ranavirus are never caught again, leaving researchers with concern for those individuals and more research questions about the consequences of infections by the virus, he said.

The good news is that ranavirus appears to have only affected about 5 percent of the population. The bad news is it’s not just an amphibian virus, so fish, turtles and other animals that share this same environment may be infected as well, Regester said.

“We are working on figuring out which species are big players in disease processes and how hellbenders are getting infected,” Regester said.

This is the conservation biologist’s dilemma.

“A conservation biologist will always work to protect species and habitats before problems occur, but they often



Samantha Sullivan ('13) talks with Regester and students while looking for hellbenders.

SULLIVAN SAID HER WORK AS A STUDENT IN THE FIELD WITH REGESTER PREPARED HER FOR HER WORK WITH THE DEP AND IS STILL RELEVANT TO HER PRESENT WORK.



Regester



Haley Eisenmann ('15)

spend much of their time addressing an immediate problem, such as the threat of diseases to global amphibian populations,” Regester said. “In some cases, it can be a race against time.”

Another such problem can be siltation – a problem in which fine particles pollute the stream water, disturbing habitats filled with aquatic life. Samantha Sullivan, a 2013 Clarion University graduate who works as a water pollution biologist with the state Department of Environmental Protection in Pittsburgh, said her work deals with the impact gas drilling has on waterways. She came back to help Regester and his students search for hellbenders this summer.

“I absolutely love to do hellbending, as we call the work in the field,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan said her work as a student in the field with Regester prepared her for her work with the DEP and is still relevant to her present work.

As biologists work to figure out why certain amphibians are disappearing, the population declines continue to

occur in many regions of the world, Regester said. The good news is that for hellbenders in western Pennsylvania, populations are fairly large and generally healthy – giving us a responsibility for one of the remaining core populations of the species. Regester says that hellbenders in the Midwest and our neighboring states are not faring well,

so he’s happy that the amphibians seem to be thriving here.

“The bottom line is that although our hellbenders appear to be doing well, we now have even more questions about these fascinating animals and a renewed commitment to conserve them here in Pennsylvania,” Regester said. ■



A hellbender is measured, weighed and tagged before being returned to its home.

“The bottom line is that although our hellbenders appear to be doing well, we now have even more questions about these fascinating animals and a renewed commitment to conserve them here in Pennsylvania,”

OTHER PROJECTS

Regester also is associated with a handful of other projects in Pennsylvania.

PARS

The Pennsylvania Amphibian and Reptile Survey makes everyday citizens scientists in the field. The survey is conducted when everyday people take photographs of amphibians and reptiles, collectively known as herps, while outside enjoying nature. These volunteer participants then upload their photos to a publically accessible database on the Pennsylvania Herp Survey site: www.paherpsurvey.org.

In addition to uploading a photo of the animal they've found, participants are asked to fill in as much basic information as possible, including the county where the herp was located, the time it was located, the number of animals seen, age, sex, air temperature, cloud cover, weather conditions, elevation and habitat. Once this information is submitted, a team of five experts confer to make certain the report is plausible and approve the finding. Once the information and photo are approved, the findings live in the database.

The purpose of the survey is to determine where herps live in the state, if any of animals are making a comeback in specific counties, or if their population is spreading to other counties, Regester explained.

"You can't conserve an animal if you don't know where it lives," he said.

Regester first learned about this project at a local Audubon Society meeting, decided to get involved and is now serving as the Clarion County coordinator for the project. The information is invaluable to a conservation biologist.

"I think it's good to know how things are changing," Regester said.

In the two years since the project launched, there have been 1,350 registered participants who have recorded 98,000 records, which is encouraging to Regester.

"These are people who just care about the critters," he said.

This project is between the Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology

and Conservation and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission with additional funding from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Wild Resource Conservation Fund.

“These are people who just care about the critters.”



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/ Travis Russell



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/J. Poston

Northern Ring-necked Snake (*Diadophis punctatus*)

Record Information		Observation Information	
Created:	July 28th, 2019 - 02:31 PM	County:	Venango County
Last Modified:	July 28th, 2019 - 02:31 PM	Time:	2019-07-27 19:52:00
Entered by:	Brandon Hunsberger	Qty:	1
Record #	117933	Age:	Adult
		Sex:	
		Air Temperature:	
		Cloud Cover:	Clear
		Weather Conditions:	Calm
		Elevation:	1467.00ft
		Habitat:	Trail edge



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/Brandon Hunsberger

Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)

Record Information		Observation Information	
Created:	July 27th, 2016 - 12:24 PM	County:	York County
Last Modified:	July 27th, 2016 - 12:24 PM	Time:	2016-07-13 14:30:00
Entered by:	Marlin Corn	Qty:	1
Record #	100971	Age:	Adult
		Sex:	Female
		Air Temperature:	85.00F
		Cloud Cover:	Partly Cloudy
		Weather Conditions:	Showers
		Elevation:	479.00ft
		Habitat:	on road near artificial wetland construction area



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/ Marlin Corn



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/ Kenneth Anderson II



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/ Nick Wachter



Photo: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation/ Ed Patterson

NEWT STUDY

Regester's work with PARS also led him to ask representatives of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation if they would like to partner, using some of the active PARS volunteers, for a statewide sample study of the eastern red-spotted newt.

The study involves 45 recruited PARS volunteers who are gathering skin swab samples and very small tail samples from newts in the 67 counties across Pennsylvania. The samples are required to discover if the newts have any of three pathogens, including *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, ranavirus and a new fungal pathogen called *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*.

Regester said for one person to take all of the samples, it would be very time consuming. He knew he needed a minimum of 30 people to cover the state's 67 counties. He has 45 volunteers and will get 1,500 samples back after volunteers collect all of the samples, starting in the spring and ending in the fall. The volunteers will keep their samples in a freezer until they are sent to Regester.

The volunteers were trained at a PARS meeting in March at the Elk County Visitor Center. The training covered how to collect the samples in a noninvasive way. Those who were trained could already identify the newts, he said. At the training, volunteers were given their sampling kits.

This study also is an opportunity for two different fields of biology to come together. When the samples are returned to Regester, they will be processed at Clarion University by assistant professor of biology Helen Hampikian, Ph.D., and her students. Hampikian is a molecular microbiologist.

"Helen and her students will have a lot of work," Regester said.

Regester said he and Hampikian hope to have the students trained in each area of the study with students

training citizen scientists and learning lab techniques.

"It's cool that we can combine our expertise," Hampikian said. "It's awesome for the students."

Hampikian said once the samples start coming in this fall, she and the students will begin the labor-intensive work to extract DNA from the samples to determine if the two fungal pathogens and the viral pathogen are present.

Initially, Hampikian will spend time in the lab training her students, but once they are confident with the process, they can work on the project in their spare time.

"I'm hoping to be able to recruit more students to work on it," Hampikian said.

Once the DNA is extracted, Hampikian and her students will go to the Barnes Center to use a special machine that amplifies the pieces of DNA. Hampikian isn't sure how long it will take to process all of the samples,

but she expects to have results by next summer.

Regester hopes he can begin to publish the findings of the study sometime next summer, which is something Hampikian said is exciting for the students. They'll gain experience with research manuscripts and have the opportunity to present findings at conferences.

The project is supported by a grant from the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, facilities at Clarion University and the Barnes Center for Biotechnology Development, and a generous donation from a PARS member.

Regester believes the project was a good fit for the PASSHE grant because it is a research project in its truest form with citizen scientists and the involvement of students who are being cross trained in the field and lab.

"The science is so much better when you can combine the disciplines," Regester said.

[Students] gain experience with research manuscripts and have the opportunity to present findings at conferences.



RATTLESNAKE STUDY

Along the same lines of Regester's hellbender and salamander work, Regester has been spearheading a study of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake, which has a presence in two nearby counties.

The eastern massasauga is prone to a fungus which disfigures the reptile's face, making it impossible for them to eat. They also will collect demographic information on the snakes.

He will be working with Clarion University alumnus Howard Reinert, Ph.D., ('78, M.S. in biology) on the project. Reinert is a professor of biology at the College of New Jersey. Matthew Allender, Ph.D., of the University of Illinois, will complete the lab work for the project.



VERNAL POOLS STUDY

Regester also will begin a two-year study in 10 different state parks to survey the types of species living in vernal pools.

Regester explained that vernal pools are often temporary pools of water that have a short life before they dry up. However, before they dry up, vernal pools often support different species of animals such as frogs and their tadpoles.

The parks included in the study are Bendigo State Park in Elk County, Chapman State Park in Warren County, Clear Creek State Park in Jefferson County, Cook Forest in Clarion and Jefferson counties, Laurel Hill State Park in Somerset County, Maurice K. Goddard State Park in Mercer County, Nescopeck State Park in Luzerne County, Pine Grove Furnace State Park in Cumberland County, Promised Land State Park in Wayne County and Swatara State Park in Lebanon County.

The study is supported by the Wild Resource Conservation Fund which is established by the sale of wildlife license plates in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

ON PAR WITH THE PROS



EACH SPRING, Dr. Kevin Roth, professor of administration sciences, teaches Strategic Management, a capstone course for students pursuing an MBA. As part of the requirements for that course, students work on a live case, much like clinicals for nursing students or student teaching for education majors.

“We’ve been pretty successful at placing students either individually or as a small group with a wide range of organizations,” Roth said. At the end (of the term), they provide a presentation to the organization, and the organization provides feedback. It puts the students in a professional consulting environment.”

Lucy Ames is well acquainted with Roth through their mutual affiliation with Clarion’s Small Business Development Center. Ames had been a business consultant for SBDC, and Roth is its director.

Ames was approached in 2013 by Larry Smith, president of the board of governors for Pinecrest Country Club. Smith knew of Ames’ work with SBDC and asked her to sit on the board and

provide some business advice.

“At my very first board meeting, my first question was what I ask of any company: I need to understand the organizational structure. ‘What kind of legal entity are you?’” Ames said. “No one knew.”

Once she found those answers, her next question was, “How are we making money?”

“No one could answer, partly because we didn’t have good financial records, and most of the board was, then, comprised of non-business people who did not know if the information they were getting was correct or not,” Ames said. “It led us to a place of ‘We need to figure out who we are, what we can do, how we can make money. To do that, we need a strategic plan.’”

Ames met with Roth and Cindy Nellis, assistant director of Clarion SBDC and recent Clarion MBA program graduate.

“We started a good outline of a strategic plan and realized that the scope of what we needed was bigger than that particular board could do,” Ames said.

Josh, Cameron and Nate

After completing their bachelor’s degrees, Josh Domitrovich, Cameron McConnell and Nathan Conway returned to Clarion to study for Master of Business Administration degrees. Domitrovich took a graduate assistantship with Student Orientation, Acclimation and Retention; McConnell

“It led us to a place of ‘We need to figure out who we are, what we can do, how we can make money. To do that, we need a strategic plan.’”



“ IF THEY WANTED TO BE
HERE NEXT YEAR, CHANGE
HAD TO BE MADE.”

accepted a graduate assistantship with the College of Business Administration and Information Sciences; and Conway's graduate assistantship was with SBDC.

“Mrs. Nellis approached me one afternoon at work and asked me if I would be interested in participating in a strategic planning process the next Saturday,” Conway said. “I eagerly accepted.”

At the Pinecrest board meeting, Conway intently observed the debating and the occasional quips, but above all, he saw the passion the members had to reshape, reorganize and rejuvenate their beloved club.

“The motivation they expressed that Saturday morning triggered the memory of a conversation I had had several weeks earlier with Dr. Roth,” Conway said. “I approached him and explained that I saw an amazing opportunity for Pinecrest to be utilized for the upcoming (Strategic Management) course.”

Along with Conway, McConnell and Domitrovich would also be taking Roth's class.

Digging in

“We immediately delved into the scope of our consulting,” Conway said. “Cameron had a strong focus on finance and economics, Josh on management and human resources, and myself in accounting.”

They evaluated Pinecrest's structure, attending board meetings and sitting with the company's leaders.

“We knew the goal was a strategic plan, but before that could be accomplished, we had to get a feel for the culture, people and processes at Pinecrest,” Domitrovich said.

“Our purpose for the organizational and strategic assessment was to provide Pinecrest with the recommendations, strategies,

fundamental approaches and skills to exploit their resources, all while mitigating their weaknesses,” Conway said. “The first thing we did was to strip the organization's processes down to the core. We had to fully know all of the internal and external factors impacting the organization.”

“They looked to us like three consultants. Conversing with true professionals gave us an indescribable amount of knowledge,” Domitrovich said. “The most frequent conversation we had was about change. We explained the difficulties that would surround change and that our suggestions weren't derived for our own good, but for the betterment of Pinecrest – to have financial solvency. If they wanted to be here next year, change had to be made.”

“During the meetings, anytime one of us was speaking, everyone in the room was paying attention,” McConnell said. “Every single person in the board



“ With the combination of declining membership and golfers, as well as the presence of strict regulations and environmental laws, most golf courses need to consider generating revenue from more sources than just membership dues.”

meetings knew that the club needed to be transformed, and they were willing to make sacrifices for the club to survive and operate like a well-oiled machine.”

One of the first changes made was to hire a CPA in place of the bookkeeper, Ames said.

“Now, we had a true picture of how much money we had and didn’t have, and how much the kitchen was costing us. We leased it out, and it was costing us \$52,000 a year to keep open, and we were only recouping \$26,000. Someone else walked away with the profit.”

The pro shop was run in a similar way. Domitrovich, McConnell and Conway also dug thoroughly into the industry and its trends before making recommendations to the board.

“Decades ago, golf courses were able to be very successful establishing themselves as a social club,” McConnell said. “The benefit of being a section 501(C)(7) social club is the tax exempt status. In order to achieve this status, the club’s money has to be generated entirely from membership dues. However, with the combination of declining membership and golfers, as well as the presence of strict regulations and environmental laws, most golf courses need to consider generating

revenue from more sources than just membership dues.”

“We all had different focuses, and we all had different outlooks on the same issues,” Conway said. “It sparked friendly debates and cross examinations of each other’s thoughts, with the end result always being a well-thought-out action for Pinecrest.”

“We sought to provide a holistic perspective: Here’s what we saw –

“ —————
THE BENEFIT WAS MUTUAL: WE GAINED REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE, AND THEY GAINED AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE.”
 —————

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and most importantly, what needed to be addressed immediately,” Domitrovich said. “We used visual aids at the presentation to emphasize our

findings and suggestions. It was an ‘Aha!’ moment for them – they didn’t realize the immediacy or extent of the need for change.”

“The board moved forward with the majority, if not all, of our suggestions,” Domitrovich said. “The benefit was mutual: We gained real-life experience, and they gained an outside perspective.”

“Now, everyone has a clear understanding of what we have and what we don’t,” Ames said.

Ames said people who have reviewed the document describe it as outstanding, and they ask, “Where in the world did you come up with \$50,000 to get that done?” They are both thrilled and shocked to learn the answer.

“The board frequently spoke of our 120-plus-page report as their ‘bible,’ referencing it at every board meeting. What a tremendous feeling of accomplishment it gave us, three young professionals about to step into the professional world,” Domitrovich said.

“As business students, we complete numerous case analyses and business plans as assignments, but we never get to see if all of our research and time is accurate or would be implemented,” McConnell said. “In this case, however, we were actually able to help a business stay alive and had the opportunity to see our strategies come to life.”

“We felt 100 percent prepared. A lot of that came from the capstone course, the purpose of which is to tie together all the courses, to give students the ability to put theory into practice,” Domitrovich said. “Each course built off the last and worked cohesively together. Little did we know we’d have a chance to put all our hard work into action.”

The experience was made even more dynamic when Dr. Paul Woodburne wrapped his Advanced Managerial Economics course, in which the trio was enrolled, into the Pinecrest Project. The result was an entire economic analysis, in addition to the strategic plan.

“It redefined who we were as a club, going from an exclusive, hands-off type of organization to one that is, for the first time, being run as a business with an emphasis on knowing we have to make money to survive,” Ames said. “When the guys came in, they took the skeleton and developed it into a living, breathing, walking, eating entity. They created something very real out of something that was a lot of fluff.”

“It wasn’t just a class project for us. This was as real as it gets for Pinecrest. They believed in us to provide guidance, and we had to deliver,” Domitrovich said.

Onward and Upward

“It sets them apart,” Nellis said. “They’re being consultants. They’re at the front end, not the back end: ‘Here’s what we have assessed, here are various ideas and recommendations.’”

“The edge it gives them is huge,” Roth said. “It gives them the ability to go in and say, ‘I’ve done well in the program as a student,’ but it also gives them the ability to say, ‘I’ve taken what I learned and applied it, and here is the work I’ve done.’” ■



Conway

Domitrovich

McConnell

Cameron McConnell

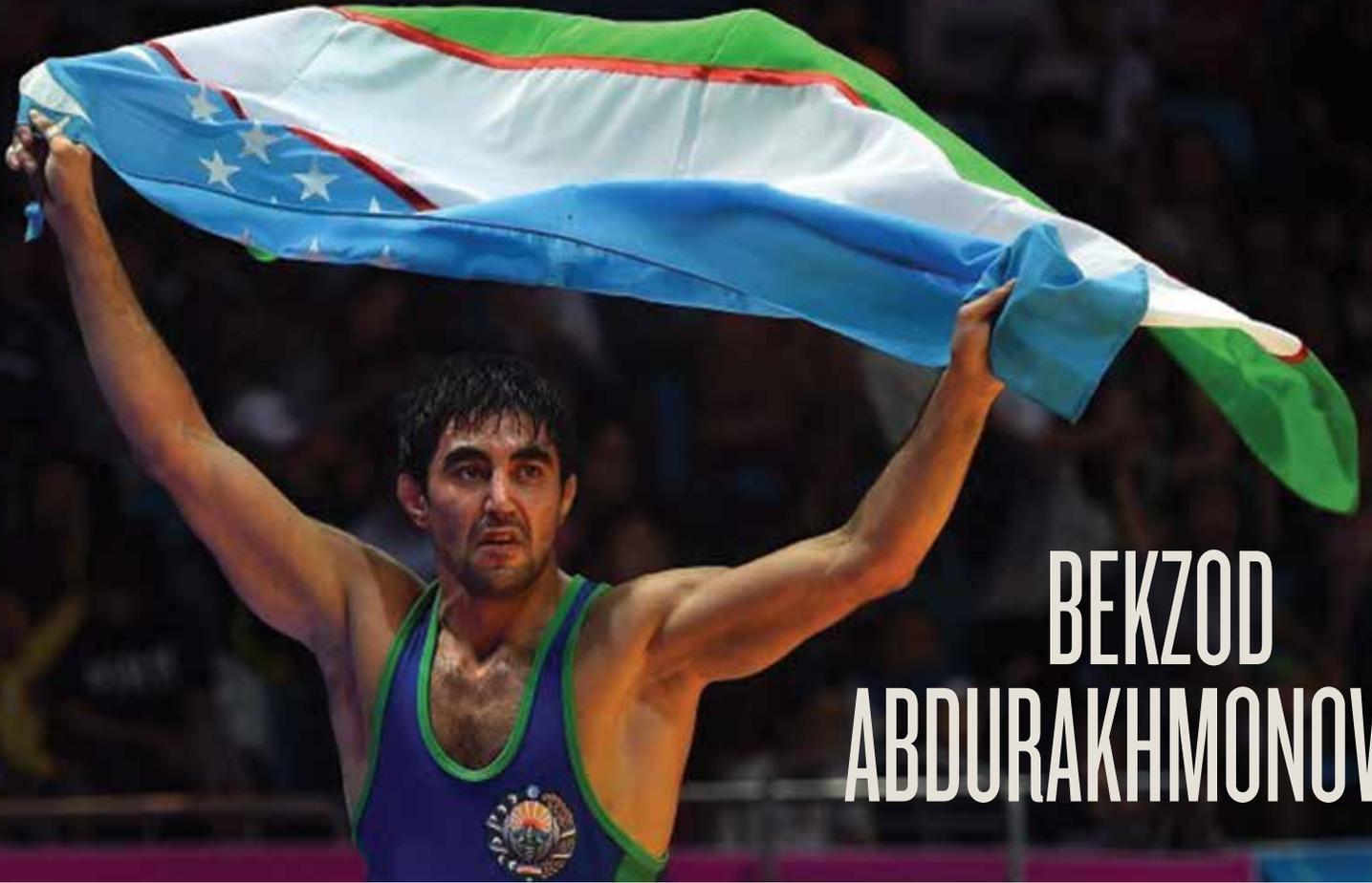
Staff accountant
Bielau Tierney, Coon & Company, P.C.
Pittsburgh

Joshua Domitrovich

Coordinator for career mentoring and internships
Center for Career and Professional Development
Clarion University of Pennsylvania
Clarion, Pa.

Nathan Conway

Advanced staff accountant
Herbein & Co.
Reading, Pa.



BEKZOD ABDURAKHMONOV

Bekzod Abdurakhmonov knew something was off. The day had seemingly started as so many others did, with the ringing of the alarm clock and his older brother's urging to wake up and begin his daily workout.

Muzaffar Abdurakhmonov was a wrestler, and his baby brother was eager to follow in his footsteps, so the elder Abdurakhmonov began Bekzod's training when he was just 10 years old. Muzaffar would set the alarm to 6 a.m. and immediately wake his brother, sending him on a workout that consisted of a run followed by other exercises.

"It was too dark to see outside, which I remember thinking was weird," Abdurakhmonov said. "But I decided to run laps at the local school as I normally would."

Abdurakhmonov returned home and decided to slip back into bed for another hour of sleep before breakfast, but he was once again startled awake by his brother.

"Muzaffar woke me a second time and asked me to go for a run," Abdurakhmonov said. "I was confused. How was it 6 a.m. again?"

The clock, they later found out, was broken. Abdurakhmonov had put in a serious workout at 2 a.m. but his brother asked if he would go out again.

"No, that would have been too much," Abdurakhmonov said.

He decided to go back to bed. Even on the path to greatness, there must be time for a nap before breakfast.

In August 2016, Abdurakhmonov ('12) lived out the dreams of every athlete when he represented his home country in Men's Freestyle Wrestling in the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He locked in his spot on Uzbekistani National Team at the United World Wrestling World Olympic Games Qualifying Tournament in Istanbul, Turkey, in May by defeating Spain's Taimuraz Friev Naskidaeva in the finals of the 74kg weight class.

This came on the heels of great success in other international competitions. Abdurakhmonov was the champion of the 2014 Asian Games and took the bronze medal at the 2014 World Championships in his hometown of Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

"That's every athlete's ultimate goal: to go to Olympics and represent their country," Abdurakhmonov said.

ABDURAKHMONOV WAS THE CHAMPION OF THE 2014 ASIAN GAMES AND TOOK THE BRONZE MEDAL AT THE 2014 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN HIS HOMETOWN OF TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN.

It's not as if he didn't have other options. Abdurakhmonov followed in his brother's footsteps at Harvard, where he serves as a volunteer assistant coach for the Crimson. And he spent a brief period on the mixed martial arts circuit, recording a 6-0-0 record as a prizefighter before focusing strictly on competing as a wrestler – a path Abdurakhmonov has not given up on, either.

"Right now, I'm focused on being a world and Olympic champion," Abdurakhmonov said. "MMA is something I'm going to think about a little later."

Abdurakhmonov's work on the mat began when he was very young, when he was following in his brother Muzaffar's footsteps. Muzaffar was a junior world runner-up and a two-time National Junior College Athletics Association national champion at Colby Community College. The elder Abdurakhmonov transferred to American University and earned All-American status in 2006, finishing third in the country at 165 points.

This had a strong impression on 16-year-old Bekzod, who also attended Colby. A two-time NJCAA runner-up for the Trojans, Abdurakhmonov recorded an impressive 84-8 record from 2008 to 2009 before making the jump to Division I wrestling at Clarion. As would be expected, the transition was a stark one.

"Colby is a very small community college in a very small town in Kansas," Abdurakhmonov said. "The wrestling room, the weight room, everything was so much smaller than what we had at Clarion."

Size wasn't the only difference Abdurakhmonov found in his move.

"It was tough in the first year, both academically and athletically," Abdurakhmonov said. "There's such a big difference in wrestling between junior college and NCAA Division I."

Abdurakhmonov posted a fantastic record of 38-12 in his first season as a Golden Eagle, recording a 3-2 record

at the 2011 NCAA Championships to reach the All-American round at 165 pounds. The junior went 2-1 on Friday in wrestlebacks before falling 5-0 to fourth-seeded Josh Asper of Maryland.

All-American status would have to wait one more year.

"My performance wasn't as good as it had been at Colby," Abdurakhmonov said. "It was a whole different level. My second year, I was much more prepared and confident."

Abdurakhmonov posted a fantastic record of 38-12 in his first season as a Golden Eagle, recording a 3-2 record at the 2011 NCAA Championships to reach the All-American round at 165 pounds.

It showed. One of three Clarion wrestlers to earn a bid to the NCAA Championships that year, Abdurakhmonov posted a record of 36-5 in 2011-12. The senior blitzed his way to Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and Eastern Wrestling League championships at 165 pounds and earned the fourth seed at the big dance in St. Louis.

Once at the NCAA Championships, Abdurakhmonov displayed the lessons he learned at the previous year's tournament. He started the weekend with a 7-4 win over Northern Colorado's Gabe Burak and blasted Army's Coleman Gracey with an 11-3 major decision to reach the quarterfinal round. One more win was all that was needed to achieve All-American status.

The clincher came Friday, March 16, when Abdurakhmonov scored an impressive 6-1 win over 12th-seeded Paul Gillespie of Hofstra. He went on

to lose by fall in the semifinal round to the top-seeded grappler in the bracket but rebounded with a victory on Saturday, beating Appalachian State's Kyle Blevins 6-2 in the third place match. It remains the best finish for a Golden Eagle wrestler since Mark Angle took third place at 141 pounds in 1999 and the best ever for a Clarion 165-pounder at the NCAA Championships.

After graduating from Clarion, Abdurakhmonov spent time competing and training while taking a job as a volunteer assistant at Harvard in December 2014. He helped three Crimson wrestlers reach NCAA Championships in 2015-16, including Devon Gobbo at 165 pounds, and has coached eight All-Ivy League selections in his time.

"It was fun to be the coach," Abdurakhmonov said. "To teach the guys what you know and have them look up to you is one of the best feelings.

But while coaching is fun, and the mixed martial arts circuit is alluring,



there's still something a little more important on his mind this summer.

"I'm just overwhelmingly happy that I could represent my country at the Olympics, on the biggest stage possible. ■

ACADEMIC HONORS

ACADEMIC HONORS CONTINUED TO POUR IN FOR THE **GOLDEN EAGLES** IN THE SPRING OF 2016, with another trio of student-athletes earning Collegiate Sports Information Directors of America Academic All-American honors in June.

To qualify for a CoSIDA Academic All-American honor, a student-athlete must be a starter or important reserve with at least a 3.30 cumulative grade point average (on a 4.0 scale). No student-athlete is eligible until he/she has completed one full calendar year at his/her current institution and has reached sophomore athletic eligibility.

To date, six Golden Eagles have earned CoSIDA Academic All-American honors in the 2015-16 academic year, with Matt Koerper (football), Kaley Pittsley (volleyball) and Morgan Seybold (volleyball) all taking the honors in the fall. Here's a look at the three student-athletes to garner the accolades in the spring:

Tyler Falk (baseball)

Falk became the first Clarion baseball player in program history to earn Academic All-American honors, earning Second Team accolades one year after earning CoSIDA Academic All-District II honors in 2015. He maintains a perfect 4.0 GPA as a finance major and was once again the Golden Eagles' most dominant hitter, leading the team in most major statistical categories and serving as the only Clarion player to start every single game this season. Falk



posted a slash line of .374/.446/.525 for an OPS of .971, with all four figures representing the best marks on the team. He was at his best in conference play, recording a slash line of .422/.475/.622 for an OPS of 1.097.

In addition to earning Academic All-American honors, Falk was named one of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference's Spring Top 10. Initiated in the 1997-98 academic year and chosen by the league's sports information directors, the PSAC Top 10 Awards are designed to recognize student-athletes who excel both in the classroom and in athletic competition.



Lauren Slayton (At Large – Swimming & Diving)

Slayton recently completed a stellar four-year career at Clarion that saw her earn eight NCAA All-American honors in diving. This year she took 13th place nationally in both the 1-meter and 3-meter dives to take All-American honorable mention honors in both. Having graduated with a 3.9 GPA and a degree in athletic training, Slayton was the Golden Eagles' nominee for the 2016 NCAA Woman of the Year award; in 2015, former teammate Kristen Day won the prestigious honor.

Sarah Zerfoss (At Large – Swimming & Diving)

Zerfoss is another eight-time NCAA All-American diver, having placed 12th and fourth, in the 1-meter and 3-meter dives, respectively, at this year's NCAA Championships in Indianapolis. A communications/public relations major, Zerfoss maintained a 3.5 GPA at the time she was nominated for her award.

ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT CHANGES



Katis takes expertise to the classroom; Snodgrass and Bevevino fill AD roles



Change came to the athletic department this summer as Dave Katis ('85) made the jump from his office in Tippin Gymnasium to the classroom. After spending many years working with the athletic department in some capacity – be it as a coach or administrator – Katis stepped down as athletic director after 11 years in the post to take a faculty position in sport management.

Stepping into the athletic director role is a face familiar to Golden Eagles fans. Dr. Wendy Snodgrass, herself a 12-year member of the department, took over as interim athletic director July 2. She served as the university's associate athletic director, senior woman administrator, compliance coordinator and Title IX deputy since 2007, after spending two years as an acting associate athletic director. D.J. Bevevino, the women's track & field coach since 2009, transitioned into the role of

interim assistant athletic director.

"I felt the time was right to make this move for me, my family and the Clarion family I love," Katis said. "After being involved with Clarion athletics in many capacities for 35 years, I felt it was time to take that experience into the classroom. As athletic director, I have given this position everything I have, and I feel fortunate that I have been able to give back to my alma mater in this capacity. I wouldn't change a thing.

"We have a young, energetic coaching staff in place, and they are on the verge of doing some incredible things," Katis said. "The student-athletes are the cream of the crop in the conference, and it will be a pleasure to see them in the classroom."

Snodgrass has been prominent among her peers while at Clarion, most recently serving as the chair of the Clarion University Intercollegiate Athletics Task Force in 2014. She acted as the chair of the NCAA Division II Swimming and Diving national committee from 2008 to 2013 and in 2010-11 was the chair of the Joint Committee on NCAA Swimming and Diving for all three divisions. Snodgrass is currently the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference athletic director liaison for swimming and diving championships. Her other duties at Clarion have included NCAA eligibility certification, compliance and student-athlete progress.

"My experience at Clarion has been outstanding, and I am grateful for the support that I have received," Snodgrass said. "Clarion has a rich tradition of both academic and athletic success, and I am excited for the opportunity to continue working with our student-athletes, coaches, alumni and the community to continue to build on that success.

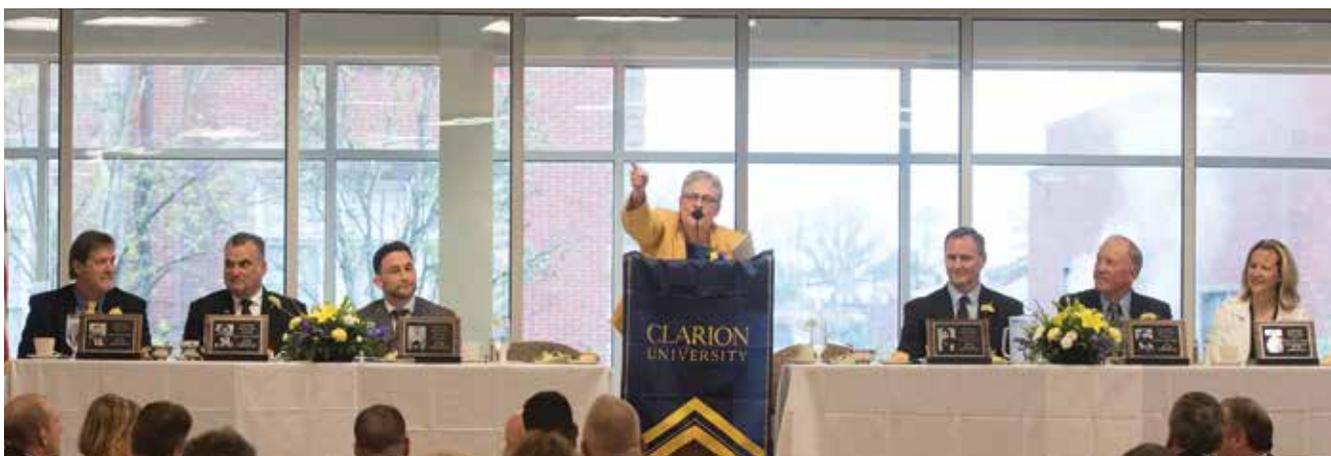
"I look forward to continuing the relationships with our internal and external stakeholders to build upon the Golden Eagles tradition of excellence by cultivating an environment that emphasizes the growth and development of our student-athletes, championship caliber competition, and civic engagement," Snodgrass said.

A 1977 Clarion alumnus and an eight-time All-American diver for the Golden Eagles, Bevevino started as head women's track & field coach in the 2009-10 season and also served as the head women's cross country coach from 2010 to 2014. A 37-year coaching veteran, he has coached a number of successful individual student-athletes, including 2016 United States Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches of America All-Region Track and Field selections Kristen Belko and Tatiana Cloud and 2013 Cross Country selections and NCAA National Outdoor Track and Field qualifiers Ciara Shorts and Megan Toddy.

“We have a young, energetic coaching staff in place, and they are on the verge of doing some incredible things,” Katis said.

"I am very excited to have been offered the opportunity to serve as the interim assistant athletic director," Bevevino said. "I believe that my experiences in athletics and administration have prepared me well for the new challenges I will face. I look forward to working with Dr. Snodgrass, as well as the coaches who have been my colleagues. Together, we can all continue to propel our Golden Eagles in a positive direction."

CLARION UNIVERSITY SPORTS HALL OF FAME DINNER



Clarion University honored the six newest members of its Sports Hall of Fame April 29, recognizing the group in front of friends and family at Eagle Commons on campus.

Bob Beatty ('80), Bernie Carpenter ('80), Frank Edgar ('05), Jim Koontz ('79), Bill May ('68) and Melissa (Yearous) O'Neil ('01) were all recognized for the honor they brought to Clarion University in their times in the Blue & Gold.

"The group that is assembled around me tonight will not just live on the walls of Tippin Gymnasium, but in the hearts and minds of everyone here for what they mean to Clarion University," said athletic director Dave Katis.

After enthusiastic greetings from retired sports information director Rich

Herman and university President Dr. Karen Whitney, the Hall of Fame Class of 2016 was introduced individually by master of ceremonies Barry McCauliff. First on the docket was Beatty, the first of a pair of two-sport athletes that ranked among the best quarterbacks in the football program's history.

"My favorite thing about playing here is, quite simply, we won. We were winners," Beatty said. "You guys made me a winner. I can really say that 33-8-1, winning with my teammates, was really the most wonderful thing."

Another football player followed Beatty, his teammate Carpenter. The hard-nosed defensive lineman/linebacker said the greatest things he had accomplished in his life were the relationships he forged.

"Don't trust life with your assets," said

Carpenter. "They're not in your pocket or in the bank or a balance sheet. My family and my friends are my assets. They're my balance sheet."

Edgar was the next to take the podium. He said that despite all the amazing places he's seen as a result of his professional success as a mixed martial artist, there's a place at Clarion that sticks out to him above all.

"Clarion definitely molded me into who I am today, especially that wrestling room," said Edgar. "Wrestling is a sport that will teach you things that other sports can't. I'm a fighter, and that room taught me to be a fighter."

Koontz stepped up to bat next and remarked on the amazing opportunities his time at Clarion



afforded him. A four-year starter on the baseball team, Koontz had the choice of a lifetime upon graduation ... a privilege he attributes to his time at Clarion.

"When I graduated Clarion I had a job offer in Chicago, and two weeks later I was drafted into Major League Baseball. Those are good problems to have," Koontz said, laughing. "None of it would have been possible without Clarion University. I want to say thank you to all the faculty and staff."

A three-time PSAC champion in golf, Bill May was the athlete longest removed from his time at Clarion, having graduated nearly 50 years ago in 1968. However, he was pleased to remark that some things

never quite change.

"When I returned 50 years later, I saw the same friendliness I saw when I decided to come here," May said.

Rounding out the group was O'Neil, who was overcome with emotion as she acknowledged the role her friends and family played in her success at Clarion. O'Neil's father passed away not long after she received word of her Hall of Fame honor, with the basketball and track star showing the importance of family in her life.

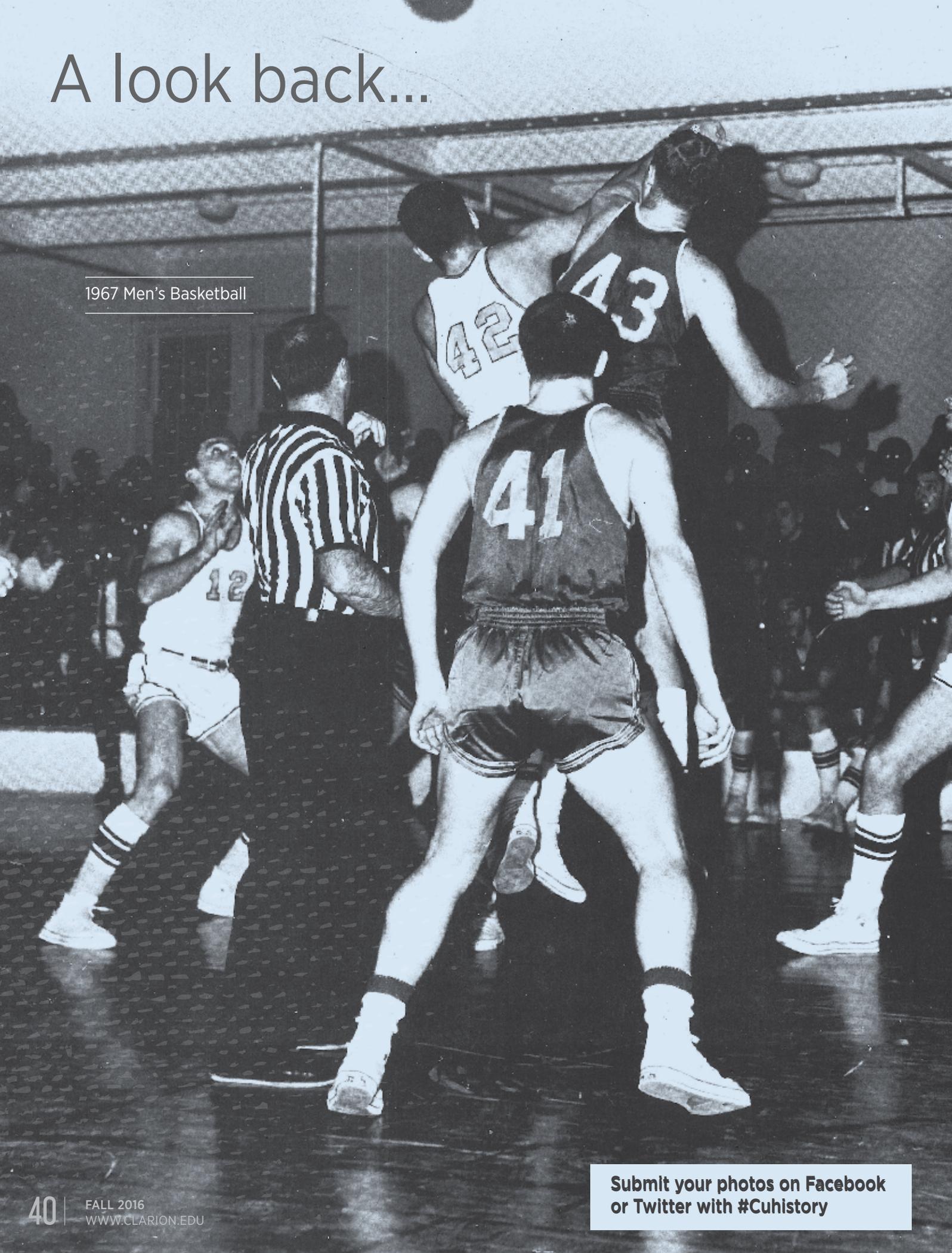
"I was a small town kid from Iowa that had family and friends from home come out to every game," O'Neil said. "I could never have done it without you."



Hall of Fame members clockwise from bottom left: Bob Beatty ('80), Bernie Carpenter ('80), Frank Edgar ('05), Jim Koontz ('79), Bill May ('68) and Melissa (Yearous) O'Neil ('01)

A look back...

1967 Men's Basketball



ALUMNI NOTES

SUMMER 2016

1976

Brad Washabaugh was recently promoted to vice president of facilities strategic services for RTI International, Research Triangle Park, N.C. He resides in Cary, N.C., with his wife, Linda. He has two children, Brooke and Brandon.

1977

Michael Korom is head football coach for Valley Forge Military Academy in the Downingtown Area School District, Exton. He resides in Exton with his wife, Virginia, and children, Michael and Nikolas.

1978

Caren (Sangston) Kulchock recently retired after 37 years as an elementary librarian for Central Greene School District. She resides in Morgantown, W.Va., with her husband, Gary. She has two children, Meghan and Bethany.

Margaret Shields recently retired as director of instructional technology from the Pittsburgh Public Schools. She resides in Pittsburgh.

1981

Melodie (Whitling M.S. '86) Curran recently retired after 35 years of teaching math in the Oil City Area School District. She resides in Knox. Melodie has a son, Ryan.

1982

Laura Janusik was recently promoted to professor of communication for Rockhurst University, Kansas City, Mo. Laura was also awarded the Listening Hall of Fame Award from the International Listening Association. She resides in Kansas City.

1985

Rich Jones is employed by Bass Pro Shops. He resides in Niceville, Fla.

1987

Kimberly (Ettore) Hock is a vice president and unit manager for PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. Pittsburgh. She resides in Pittsburgh.

1990

Wendy (Wieland) Brassart is managing editor for N2Publishing. She manages two publications, Laurel View Living and Lincoln Hills Living. She resides in Trafford with her husband, Gary, and children, Evan and Elizabeth.

1992

Rev. Thomas Burke is a priest for the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh. He was recently named host of KQV Radio 1410 AM show "Education Plus."

Regina Robinson is a cataloging assistant for Cumberland County Library System, Carlisle. She resides in Carlisle.

Gregory Keeney is a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army. He illustrated the book, "Mark's Special Mission in Arlington National Cemetery," which won the history-military category in the international book award competition.

1993

Sharon (Grove) Johnson is a senior vice president and general counsel for CompuCom Systems, Inc., Dallas. She resides in Grapevine, Texas, with her husband, Tommy, and sons, Pierce and Knox.

1998

Jeff Levkulich is a reporter for WFTV, Orlando. He resides in Oviedo, Fla., with his wife, Jennifer, and children, Mason and Lily.

2003

Alaina Vehec is a director of digital sales for Sony Music Entertainment, Nashville. She resides in Nashville.

Anne Golden-Vasquez is a senior associate, media operations for Communications Media, Inc., King of Prussia. She has two children, Aven and Zara.

2004

Scott Kane is an advertising and design teacher for Steel Center for CTE. He resides in Canonsburg with his wife, Deborah, and children: Maiya, McKenna and Noah.

Jen Selinsky has over 11 years of professional library experience working in a public library. She has published over 100 books, primarily available through: Amazon, Lulu, B&N Nook, iTunes and Kobo. Her work has also been featured in many online and local publications such as The Courier-Journal, Explorer Magazine, Liphar Magazine, Indiana Libraries and Focus on Indiana Libraries. Jen lives in Sellersburg, Ind., with her husband, Travis.

George Rutherford is an executive director for Mountain Laurel Recovery Center, Westfield. He resides in Pittsburgh with his wife, Heidi, and children: Reilly, Liam and Moira.

2006

Chevonne (Bennett) Smith is a paralegal for Hibu, Inc. She resides in Philadelphia with her husband, Michael.

2007

Stacey Brownlie is an academic librarian for Off-Campus Library Services for the University College, University of Maine System. She resides in Lewiston, Maine, with her children, Gracie and Wade.

2008

Stevie Grabb is an inventory analyst for PPG. She resides in Pittsburgh with her son, Evan.

Christopher Goings is a senior major account executive for AvePoint Public Sector, Arlington, Va. He resides in Aldie, Va., with his wife, Amanda.

2009

Randy Seitz is president/CEO for Penn-Northwest Dev. Corp., Mercer. He resides in Franklin with his wife, Guadalupe, and children, Anthony and Deborah.

2010

Rich Eckert is an assistant vice president for Beardstown Savings Bank. He resides in Beardstown, Ill., with his wife Ashley.

Todd Knispel is employed with Neosho Community College. He resides in Chanute, Kansas.

2011

Amber (Alsop) Kimmel is head cheer and dance coach for Thiel College, Greenville. She resides in Fairmount City with her husband, John, and son, Nikko.

Diane (M.S. '12) Hahn is an adult services librarian for Warren Township Library branch of the Somerset County Library System of New Jersey. She resides in Washington, N.J.

2013

Sara Golembiewski is a senior account coordinator for ZOLL LifeVest, Pittsburgh. She resides in Pittsburgh.

Deborah Koehler is a library media specialist for Grey Nun Academy, Yardley. She resides in Yardley.

2014

Regina Robinson is a cataloging agent for Cumberland County Library System, Carlisle. She resides in Carlisle.

WE WANT TO *know about* YOU!

And so do your Clarion classmates. It's easy to share your latest personal milestones and professional accomplishments in the pages of Clarion University Magazine. Just send us a note!

Visit www.clarion.edu/alumni-update

MARRIAGES



Michael Smith and **Chevonne ('06) Bennett**, May 9, 2015

Andy ('08) Keaton and **Michelle ('08) Schrader**, June 27, 2015

Jason Hoover and **Denise ('14) Martz**, Aug. 8, 2015

BIRTHS

Tom and **Brianne (O'Hara '01, M.S. '03) Brinkley**, a daughter, Campbell, March 4, 2015

Shane and **Kelly (Devlin '07) Harper**, a son, Jacob Michael, June 16, 2015

Kyle and **Megan (Odonish '13) Leichtenberger**, a son, Toby Robert, Aug. 9, 2015

Joseph ('05) and **Jessica (Wallace '03) Williamson**, a daughter, Wren Sophia-Grace, Sept. 19, 2015

Mark ('99) and Nikki **Watts**, a daughter, Quinn, Oct. 7, 2015

Justin and **Kristin (Kneib '03) Parmer**, a son, Jackson, Oct. 15, 2015

IN MEMORIAM

1940s

Wesley C. Freeburg ('43), April 3, 2016
Adele B. Fay ('43), April 6, 2016
Marjorie H. Freeburg ('44), Feb. 6, 2016
Marjorie O. Blewitt ('48), April 13, 2016

1950s

Leonard H. Marinaccio ('51), April 28, 2016
William F. Garber ('51), May 21, 2016
Robert J. Osterholm ('52), April 5, 2016

1960s

Robert E. Hess ('62), April 1, 2016
Robert A. Currie ('62), April 9, 2016
Robert V. Pearson ('62), April 9, 2016
Chester L. Uncapher ('65), June 1, 2016
Ernest R. Hand ('67), Feb. 23, 2016
Terry L. LaPorte ('67), April 16, 2016
Joseph R. Burgert ('67), June 25, 2016

1970s

John A. Novak ('70), April 13, 2016
James M. Hillard ('75), May 10, 2016
Barbara J. O'Neil ('79), June 17, 2016

1980s

Patrick R. Waters ('80), March 24, 2016
Lynn M. Kettering ('87), Feb. 29, 2016
Toni P. Olshan ('89), April 1, 2016

1990s

Debra L. Robertson ('91), April 24, 2016
Yvette M. Onwudiwe ('95), May 18, 2016

Friends

Jack Smith, March 29, 2016, retired faculty, education
Frances Ochs, April 17, 2016, retired staff
Sam Sanfilippo, April 23, 2016
Sylvan D. Walker, May 24, 2016, retired staff

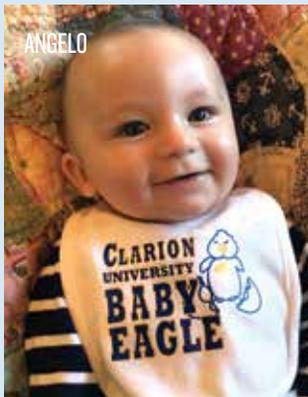
CLARION UNIVERSITY BABY EAGLE



Our gift to baby Eagles of Clarion alumni is a dashing new bib! To receive a bib, let us know about the new addition to your nest by emailing to alumni@clarion.edu:

- Parents' names
- Full address
- Graduation year of alumni
- Baby's name and gender
- Date of birth

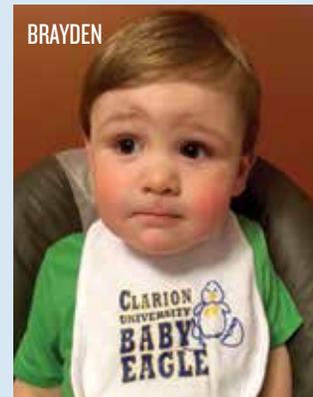
Once you receive your bib, take a picture of your Eaglet putting the bib to use, and email a high-resolution photo to us for inclusion in Clarion University Magazine.



ANGELO
Angelo Jackson Cammisa, son of **Tim ('01)** and Heather **Cammisa**, born Jan. 4, 2016



BENJAMIN
Benjamin Thomas Linamen, son of **Robert ('12)** and Elizabeth **Linamen**, born March 17, 2016



BRAYDEN
Brayden James White, son of Brian and **Lindsay (Hirsch '07)** White, born Feb. 12, 2014



ELLIOTT
Elliot Allan Kress, son of **Evelyn Allan ('04)** and William Kress, born Aug. 29, 2015



EVAN
Evan Thomas Grabb, son of **Stevie Grabb ('08)**, born Feb. 14, 2016



JOSHUA
Joshua Blaine York, son of **Jennifer (Pavlik '07)** and Kevin York, born Aug. 13, 2015



KILEY
Kiley Hilliard, daughter of **Courtney Hughes ('13)** and **Thomas Hilliard**, born Aug. 13, 2015



KOEN
Koen Jay Weibel, son of **Chris Weibel ('98)** and **Shinrika Hudson ('04)**, born March 11, 2016



CALLA
Calla Marybelle Reynolds, daughter of **Adam ('15)** and **Milea ('15) Reynolds**, born May 18, 2016



NORA
Nora Elizabeth Seaman, daughter of **Nicole (Solano '04)** and **Geoff Seaman**, born Feb. 19, 2016



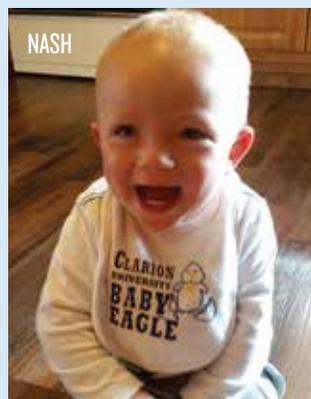
EASTON
Easton Jones, son of **Elizabeth ('09)** and **Brandon Jones**, born Feb. 21, 2016



SAMUEL
Samuel James DePew, son of **Mike ('04)** and **Jamie (Burgun '04) DePew**, born July 13, 2015



VALOR
Robert Valor Campbell, son of **Bobby** and **Lisa (Bria '04) Campbell**, born July 2, 2015

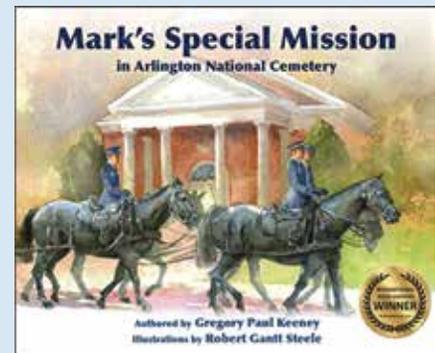


NASH
Nash Daniels, son of **Shane ('12)** and **Holly (Davis '12) Daniels**, born Dec. 27, 2014



LIVIA
Livia Maria Simmons, daughter of **Calvin** and **Heather (Endler '06) Simmons**, born Jan. 24, 2016

KEENEY *writes* AWARD-WINNING BOOK



Lt. Col. Gregory Keeney's illustrated book, "Mark's Special Mission in Arlington National Cemetery," won the 2016 International Book Award in the history-military category.

"Mark's Special Mission in Arlington National Cemetery" epitomizes the character and compassion of the United States in its commitment to honor the soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen who have given the final full measure in service to our nation.

Keeney graduated from Clarion in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He has served in our nation's military for over two decades with combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, and is a veteran of Desert Shield/Storm. He has previously published articles for professional journals, newspapers, and has contributed to The Saturday Evening Post.

Keeney and his wife, Kelly (Day '92), have three sons: Jacob, Braden and Karsten.



UPWARD BOUND

Now in its 38th year, Clarion's Upward Bound program continues the tradition of providing local high school students with year-round academic enrichment activities, both at Clarion and their home school districts.

Upward Bound is one of eight federal TRIO Programs providing outreach and student services to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. The U.S. Department of Education invites institutions of higher education, public and private agencies and organizations, including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth and secondary schools, to compete for five-year educational grants.

A team of Clarion University leaders educate and encourage students to enhance their academic skills, while providing them the motivation necessary

Chayanne Christo, Austin Barger and Taylor Pennington, all graduates of Allegheny-Clarion Valley High School, are Upward Bound bridge students. Their job is to assist the program director and staff, sit on the advisory council and share their input about the overall program and Summer Academy. Bridge students have attended at least one year of Upward Bound in high school, have graduated and will start college in the fall.

for success throughout their high school and college careers, as well as in their everyday lives.

Upward Bound is designed for selected high school students (grades 9 through 12) who have met eligibility criteria established by the U.S. Department of Education and who attend these high schools in western Pennsylvania: Allegheny-Clarion Valley, Farrell, Oil City, Punxsutawney, Redbank Valley, Sharon and Union.

Students visit Clarion one day each month, October through March, to hear from faculty and community leaders about their experiences while in college and as a member of the workforce.

Students are counseled about standardized testing, their educational options and overcoming adversity to succeed in college and in life.

"Academic advising, career exploration, assistance with college

and financial aid applications, visits to post-secondary education institutions and cultural and social opportunities – these are all invaluable pieces of information that students take away from the whole Upward Bound experience," said Rhonda McMillen-Toth, director of the Upward Bound program,

Upward Bound participants may apply for a six-week Summer Academy to experience on-campus living, including staying in residence halls, eating in dining facilities and taking classes in university classrooms while in the structured, supervised and safe environment of Clarion University.

These activities prepare the students for their next year's high school or college academic schedule and allow time to explore various career, college and financial resources to plan for their future.



COURAGEOUS *endeavors*

SAM ALSAIHATI

“
YOU NEVER
FEEL LIKE YOU
DON'T BELONG.
EVERYBODY
IS FRIENDLY,
EVERYBODY
CARES ABOUT
EVERYBODY.”

It's daunting for any student to leave the comforts of home and go off to college, but when that home is in another country, on another continent, it's downright scary.

Sam Alsaihati did just that three years ago when he decided to leave his home in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, to pursue a degree in economics at Clarion University.

A friend of his who was a student here praised the university's programs and lured him with the shopping opportunities at Walmart and Aldi.

Alsaihati previously had lived away from home – in Canada for two years to study English – but he still was apprehensive.

“I'm going to be alone again, without family,” he said, remembering his thoughts at the time.

Although he misses his family, it didn't take long for him to realize that at Clarion, he isn't alone.

“Due to visa issues, I arrived a little late,” Alsaihati said. “I showed up on the second day of my management class. The girl behind me was Jillian. She asked me if I did my homework, even though I didn't know her, and she helped me do it before class started.”

Now, Jillian is one of his many friends on campus.

“I love lots of friends. Everybody knows me, now,” he said. “I love how the professors are very helpful and so are classmates; you never feel like you don't belong. Everybody is friendly, everybody cares about everybody.”

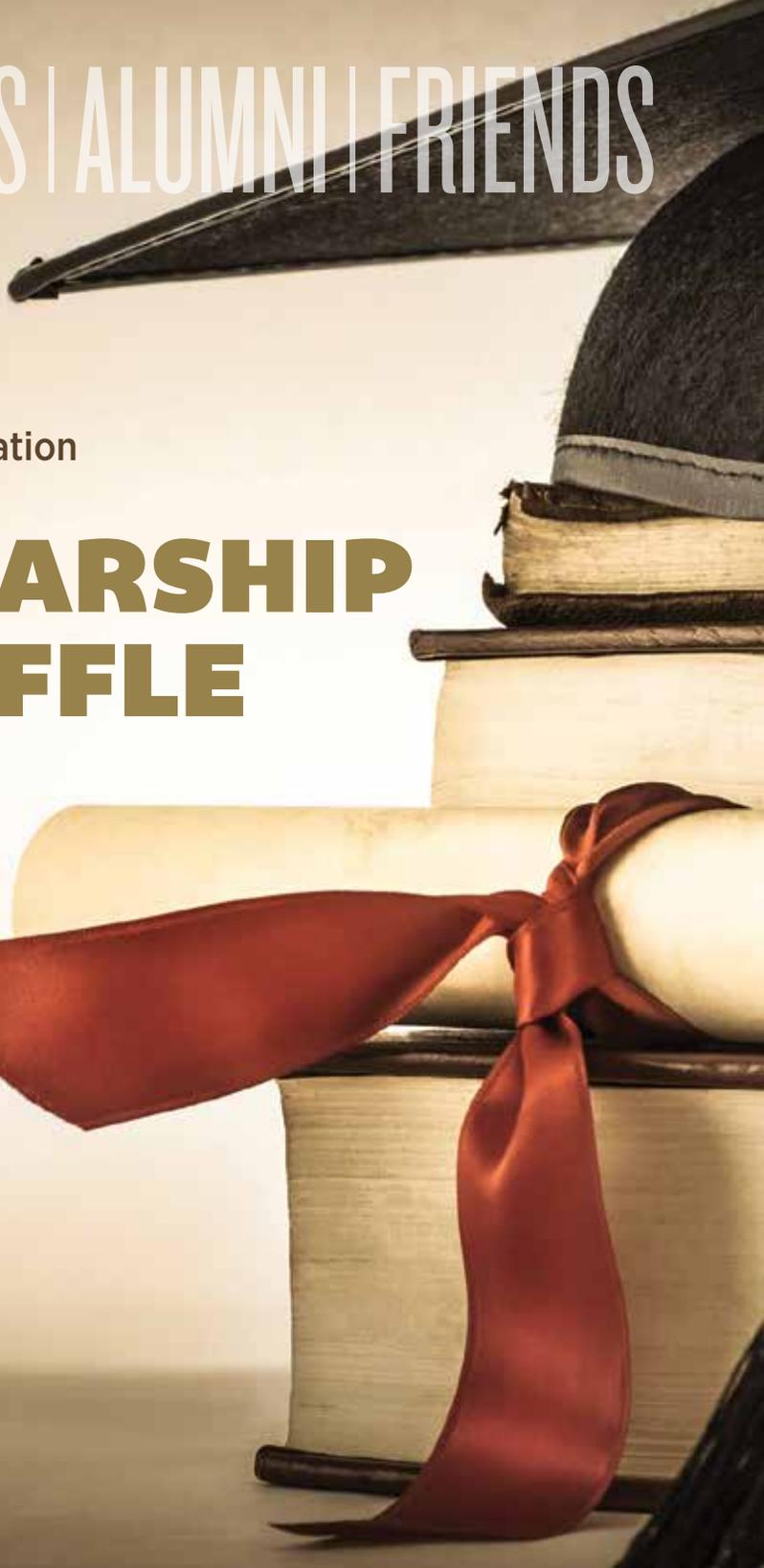
Alsaihati said he likes studying with people from different cultures, because he sees it as a learning opportunity.

“Maybe they can learn that just because I'm Saudi Arabian doesn't mean I'm evil, or what the media shows people. People are all the same. Just because a person who is Saudi or Mexican is doing something, doesn't mean I'm doing the same thing.”

Aside from being homesick for his family, he also misses kabsa, a chicken dish with Arabian spices that his mother makes. He is enjoying American food, though, particularly the food at Daddy's on Main Street.

When he isn't studying, Alsaihati works in the International Programs Office on campus. He also enjoys playing video games, weightlifting and hiking at Cook Forest.

PARENTS | STUDENTS | ALUMNI | FRIENDS



Clarion Students' Association
Eagle Ambassadors in partnership
with Clarion University Alumni Association

2016 SCHOLARSHIP TUITION RAFFLE

The first place winner of this raffle is entitled to award a current student with a scholarship in the amount of \$5,200 for cost of tuition in Spring 2017. This scholarship will be directly payable to Clarion University.

The second and third place winners are entitled to award current Clarion University students with book scholarships redeemable at the Clarion University Book Stores for the Spring 2017 semester.

No cash value. All proceeds from the raffle help support ongoing programming to increase Clarion University's recruitment and retention efforts.

1 ticket for \$20
3 tickets for \$50

To purchase tickets,
call Alumni Relations
at 814-393-2572.

Drawing 4 p.m. on October 1, 2016
at the Homecoming football game

First Place: **\$5,200 Tuition Scholarship**
Second Place: **\$500 Book Scholarship**
Third Place: **\$300 Book Scholarship**

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CLARION UNIVERSITY
2016

HOMECOMING

HOMECOMING WEEKEND
SEPT. 30 AND OCT. 1, 2016

CLARION.EDU/ALUMNI

— HIGHLIGHTS —

FRIDAY, SEPT. 30 – MEET THE CUAA BOARD MEMBERS, HOMECOMING HEADQUARTERS
SATURDAY, OCT. 1 – ALUMNI ASSOCIATION PARADE RECEPTION, AUTUMN LEAF FESTIVAL PARADE,
EAGLE ENDZONE ALUMNI PARTY

For more information and schedule of events, visit www.clarion.edu/homecoming.
For questions regarding homecoming weekend, call the Alumni Relations Office at 814-393-2572.