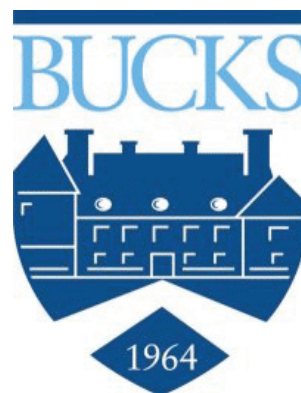


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Bucks Professor to Release New Book Next Year

DAKODA CARLSON

Centurioun Staff

Sarahlyn Bruck, a Bucks language & literature professor and writer, is preparing to publish her second book in her career.

Her first novel “Designer You,” published in 2018, won the 2019 Indie Star Book Award and was included in the 2018 “35 over 35” list the magazine “Bustle” publishes every year.

The writing process for her second book “Daytime Drama” started in the winter of 2017 and was followed by the first draft in 2018 which she spent time revising, and finally a book contract in the summer of 2019.

For her second book, Bruck was heavily inspired by the harsh Philadelphia winter of 2017. Being a California native and spending many years living in Hollywood before making the decision to move to Philadelphia in 2007, Bruck was missing the comparatively warm temperatures in Los Angeles.

“I was freezing, as usual. I love Philadelphia and don’t wish to return to California on a permanent basis, but on cold winter days I yearn for those warm LA January’s and Februarys,” Bruck recalled.

“So, I thought I’m a writer, why not write about Los Angeles?”

And so began the start of “Daytime Drama,” a book that follows the story of Calliope Hart, a soap

opera star by day and a “harried single mom by night,” set in none other than California.

The story is told through multiple perspectives, and explores the dynamics of family, love, career, and making it as an aging female star in Hollywood.

“When she finds out her show is about to be cancelled, she finds herself at a crossroads; fight to save the show and her 25-year run as a soap opera star, or risk everything to reinvent her career and personal identity,” said Bruck

Bruck explained that the writing process for this book proved to be “so much fun.” The process compared to her other works involved a lot of time researching the entertainment industry and soap operas specifically.

“I have such affection for all the characters and loved getting into their heads. It almost felt like an acting exercise,” said Bruck. “With this book, I wrote the ending early on and plotted pretty carefully to get to that ending.”

In addition to her outstanding career as a writer, Bruck is also an associate professor at Bucks, another demanding job outside of her writing career.

“Time is always going to be an issue,” Bruck said when explaining how she manages teaching and being a successful writer.

“But as an author, I do think I have the perfect job as a writing

professor. For one, my schedule is relatively flexible. Sure, I have days and times I need to be somewhere to teach. But a lot of my job is planning classes, creating content and reading and grading student writing,” said Bruck.

“My work as a writing professor also exists within the realm of my own writing,” said Bruck. “It’s not like I have to reset my brain every time I sit down to write after an 8-hour shift calculating people’s taxes or selling life insurance.”

Bruck said her writing and teaching is encouraged by the “incredibly supportive” department she works within at Buck.

“We all cheer on each other’s accomplishments, whether they’re research presentations, academic articles and books, poetry collections, or novels and memoirs that my fabulous colleagues produce. I feel really lucky,” said Bruck.

Like many writers, Bruck has struggled with writers block many times. Something that helps is taking a break.

“I get blocked all the time. Usually what helps is taking a break, going for a run or walking my dog. I think it’s the combination of fresh air and moving around that loosens my brain up a bit,” said Bruck.

Bruck also loves the craft of assembling words, which makes producing a completely new book



Courtesy of sarahlynbruck.com.

all the more exciting.

“Writing’s fun,” Bruck explained. “I’m always working on something. I actually feel like something’s ‘off’ if I’m not

working on a project. In a nutshell, I love to write!”

“Daytime Drama” is set to be released March 2, 2021.

The Perfect Club for Movie Enthusiasts

DEAN GUILIANO

Centurion Staff

As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on and classes remain mostly virtual, students at Bucks are looking for things to keep them occupied. Luckily for them, there is a club on the comeback that may interest the film geeks of the student body.

Sydney Brooks, a cinema/video production major in her second year at Bucks has revived the “Keeping It Reel” club to keep students connected during the semesters at home. Brooks shared the story behind her decision to bring back the club after a period of its inactivity and what the club aims to achieve amidst the chaos of COVID-19.

“I hadn’t joined any clubs in my first year at Bucks because of how busy I was. I also don’t have my license yet so I couldn’t go back and forth to campus whenever I wanted, so that made it more difficult. With everything being online this semester, I thought it would be a good idea to get more involved,” said Brooks.

“My major is cinema/video production, so joining a movie

club was at the very top of my list. When I looked, I saw one called ‘Keeping It Reel’ and I requested to join. I didn’t see any other information about what the club was doing currently so I sent an email to the club advisor, Sarah Jakub. Sarah led me to Carol Brandt who explained to me that the club wasn’t active this year since the students before must’ve graduated or moved on. She said if I was really interested, I could take it over,” said Brooks.

Brooks also shared her initial

hesitation to taking over the club.

“I wasn’t too sure about it at first because I’m naturally a very shy person but Carol and Sarah were so helpful at leading me through the process of updating the club constitution and coming up with ideas for Zoom meetings.”

When asked about the general club activities, Brooks said, “We currently meet every other week and usually try to stick to a certain theme or genre. I don’t require that everyone watches the same film because it can be hard to do

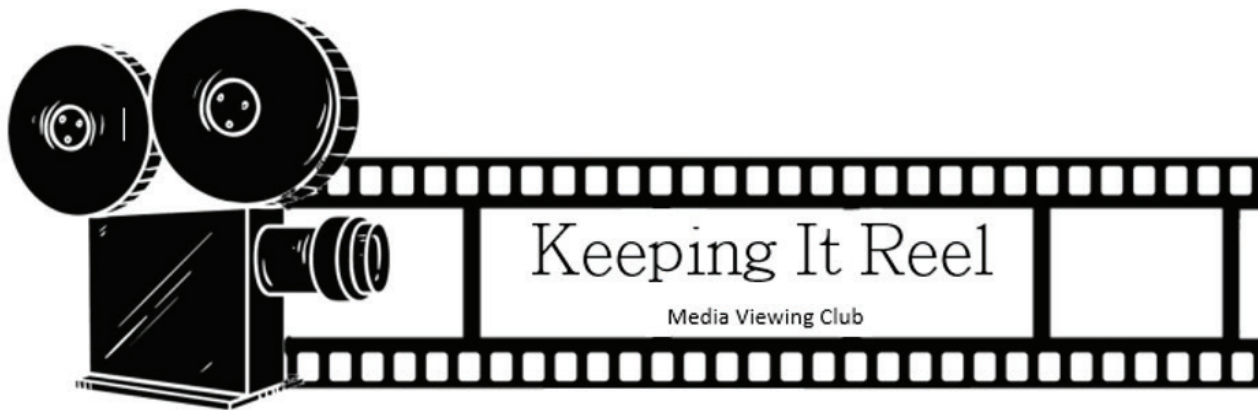
that with us all being at home. It’s really just a fun way to socialize and talk about movies, even if we’re all coming from different majors. It’s great to hear everyone’s opinions as well as getting some good recommendations. I’ve been talking to our members about possibly continuing to meet over the winter break since it’s so easy to join a Zoom call.”

Zoom has not only been making classes at Bucks possible, but now clubs are able to meet and connect with other students despite the

very obvious setback posed by the pandemic. Students are still able to interact with one another and make the most of their college experience with technology given the circumstances.

If you are a student who enjoys film studies, critiquing, or just simply enjoy watching movies, “Keeping It Reel” may just be the club for you. For more information on the club, contact Sydney Brooks at brookss75818@live.bucks.edu.

Courtesy of Bucks’ Website.



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School Lane Charter in Bensalem Goes Hybrid



Courtesy of School Lane Charter Twitter

Letters to the editor:

Email your letters to : Buckscenturion@gmail.com

Letters should be limited to 500 words. They will be edited for spelling, space and malicious or libelous statements. Letters must be the original work of the writer and must be signed. For identification purposes, letters must include the writer’s full name and telephone number.

GENE THORNTON
Centurion Staff

School Lane Charter in Bensalem welcomed back students to its two campuses on a hybrid schedule that started Nov. 30. That is, for those who felt comfortable returning to school amidst a global pandemic.

Surveys were sent out to parents that resulted in a near-even divide between those eager to have their child return, and those reluctant that preferred to remain with full-time online learning until the time a COVID-19 vaccine is available.

During the School Board’s meeting Oct. 22, CEO Karen Schade told those logged into the virtual zoom meeting that the survey results were key to being confident to reopen safely while following CDC and Bucks County

Health Department guidelines.

“For us to be able to properly social distance in the classrooms, we needed nearly half of our students to continue with remote learning,” Schade said.

Both K-6 students at the Bristol Pike campus, and 7-12 at the Street Road IB campus ended last school year with remote learning that began in April per Gov. Tom Wolf’s mandate to close schools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

“It’s been long enough,” said Alexis Junez, mother of a seventh grader. “She has loved this school and all of her teachers since kindergarten. She has always been enthusiastic about going to school and has always excelled academically and socially. Now it’s her bedroom and a computer screen. I worry about her mental health. She needs to be back in a classroom. She is no longer enthusiastic, and I can tell the joy has left her.”

Board member Bharvin Patel, the lone member opposed to re-opening, indicated that the timing of returning students into the buildings is a realistic risk.

“Not only do we have COVID,

it’s flu season, and the holidays are coming. I’m sure families will be gathering indoors for different celebrations like Thanksgiving and Christmas. It may be better bringing them back in January, after the holidays,” Patel said.

The hybrid model will have students in the buildings four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays will be an anytime learning day from home with no live instruction, and students must complete assignments. Full time online learning will still be available for students not returning.

When students return, it will look and feel much different than what they’ve been accustomed to. Adherence to strict safety protocols will be a daily routine beginning with students and staff wearing a mask at all times and frequent hand washing.

In classrooms, students’ desks will be spaced six feet apart from one other and face forward. Teachers will not be permitted to go to a student’s desk for assistance always maintaining a six-foot distance.

Hallways will be divided by a rope to enforce single-file social

distancing. While in the cafeteria, students will sit two per table facing forward and may not speak to one another, however, cell phones will be permitted to “chat” with friends. Lockers will not be used and congregating in the hallways is prohibited.

“I do want to go back, but not like that,” said seventh grade student Peyton Geisler after playing in her last soccer game of the season. “That’s like worse than being at home.”

“Let’s just try it for now and see how it goes,” her father Pat Geisler said as he reassuringly patted her back. “I definitely want her and her sister to go back... they have to.”

Peyton’s mother Gina Geisler agreed. “I’m fortunate to be able to work from home and be with girls, but I think they really need to get back in school. Just getting out of the house and being around friends while learning is better than staying home,” Gina said.

COVID-19 cases are surging throughout Bucks County, averaging 66 new cases per day which is double from the previous two weeks. Hospitalizations and death rates however remain low accord-

ing to the Bucks County Health Department’s website.

“That’s an excellent sign,” Health Director David Damsker stated. “Despite seeing some cases in teachers and students, reopened schools themselves are not contributing to levels of community spread.”

With ever-evolving COVID-19 cases and CDC guidelines, many teachers are reasonably concerned to return to face-face instruction. Seventh and eighth grade teacher Jessie Peterson would like nothing more than to be with her students in a classroom, but there is still concern.

“I have been impressed from the start of the pandemic with how well our administration has handled it,” Peterson said. “They keep us up to date with recommendations and case numbers. I think they are doing their best to think of every scenario and have a plan for each.”

“I guess you could say I’m cautiously optimistic about students returning to school without a vaccine. For some students it’s really needed as remote learning is not working. For the majority of students it has worked out well, but for others not at all. I want them all here in the building and cannot wait for a vaccine for that to happen,” said Peterson.

Kate Pascucci, a mother of a sixth and seventh grader is also waiting for a vaccine before she will send her girls back.

“The communication this year compared to last year when all this first happened has been incredible. They are there to answer any question you have about what’s going on,” Pascucci said. “I’m just waiting on science to find a vaccine, that’s probably the only thing that would make me feel right sending them back.”

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Local News

Elcon Recycling Services Will Not Come to Fairless Hills

ERIN DUNKLEY
Centurion Staff

After nearly 5 years of contentious opposition from Fairless Hills residents, township supervisors and environmental groups, the decision made in July by Elcon Recycling Services to formally withdraw their proposal for a pharmaceutical waste treatment plant had the area breathing a collective sigh of relief.

The company, who only had their application approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) in July of 2018, was planning to construct and operate a hazardous waste treatment and storage facility at the Keystone Industrial Port Complex, site of the former U.S. Steel Fairless Works (Steel Mill), in Falls Township. The initial proposal included the construction of the facility on 23 acres at the site, with a seven-foot high retaining wall, around the perimeter.

Elcon faced an uphill battle even before the start. For years, rumors and speculation had swirled around neighboring communities regarding this project. And the immediate consensus among everyone was that this company would have a harmful environmental and safety impact on the region.

Opposition first started in the way of old fashioned, door-to-door campaigning of area residents informing neighborhoods of the planned project, pamphlets mailed out periodically, and no Elcon signs posted on front lawns throughout Morrisville, Falls Township and Tullytown, as well as areas in Burlington, NJ.

Erin Higgins, a 10-year resident of Fairless Hills, said, “I was concerned then with not only the increase in the amount of traffic we would all be seeing, but

more so with what toxic materials, would’ve been transported coming and going on a daily basis through our neighborhoods.”

As a mom of two young children, Higgins cited that the potentially harmful environmental aspects of this project as her major concern.

Representatives from the Delaware River Keeper Network, a non-profit organization created in 1988, who advocate for clean air and water, voiced their concerns to the township. They sent multiple letters highlighting the detrimental environmental impact that a facility like this would have, especially being built so close to the Delaware River, which provides the water source for millions of people in the surrounding areas.

After several meetings held between area residents and officials with the DEP, on Tuesday, April 30, 2019, the first public town hall meeting regarding the proposal, took place at Pennsbury High School. There were over 500 people in attendance, in the standing room only crowd, while the local police had to turn people away at the door.

It was at this three-hour meeting that the Falls Township Board of Supervisors listened to the proposal by Elcon representatives and nearly an hour and half of public comments. Chairman of the Board, Jeffrey Dence, stated, “We voted unanimously against the Elcon proposal that evening, but we had to look it objectively.”

While environmental and resident concerns were at the forefront of the objections, Dence also noted that the actual site location simply wasn’t the right spot and had also taken issue with the aggressive time frame for construction of the plant.

The DEP had hosted a meeting



Courtesy of Tom Sofield at LevittownNow.com

on March 5, 2019, at the Sheraton Hotel in Langhorne to hear public comments about the project. Sarah Krusen, a 13-year resident of Fairless Hills, was in attendance that night and continued to follow all subsequent meetings regarding this issue.

Krusen said she was quite pleased when she heard that the board had officially voted against the proposal.

“I had been anxiously awaiting the outcome of that night, as I had been invested in the campaign against this project from the beginning, and was really concerned what the next steps would’ve been had the board voted in favor,” said Krusen.

When asked if there had been any pushback against the board regarding their decision, Dence stated, “There had been quite a lot of negative comments against the board posted on several social

media platforms, prior to that meeting at Pennsbury.”

However, Dence added, “The community turnout that night, was a clear indicator to us, that those false rumors and negative comments, were nothing more than that.”

In June 2019, Elcon appealed the decision by the Falls Township Board of Supervisors. With the application formerly stuck in the appeals process for several more months, the company could not have predicted what would have happened next.

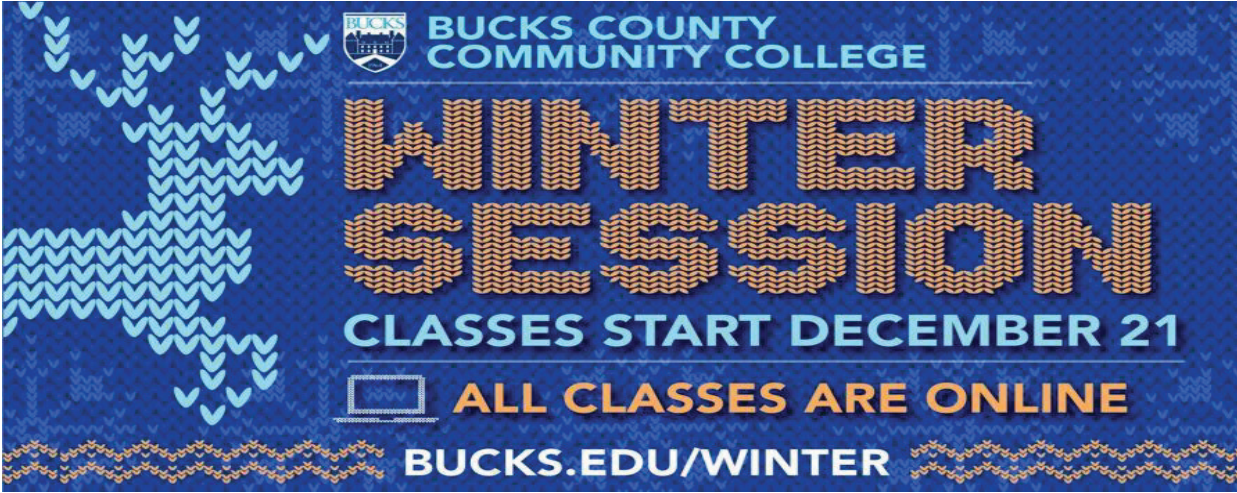
In Feb. 2020, the coronavirus outbreak had reached the United States, and was then exploding into a pandemic, affecting citizens, businesses and economies worldwide.

How large of a role this COVID-19 crisis played in their final decision was unclear. On July 23, the DEP received a

letter from the law offices of Fox Rothschild, LLP, on behalf of their client, Mr. Zvi Elgat, CEO of Elcon Recycling Services, LLC, requesting the official withdrawal of their permit application.

Elgat stated in the letter, “The current business climate, including the impacts of COVID-19, has forced Elcon to re-evaluate its plans for expanding its hazardous waste treatment business into the United States.”

Elgat added, “It is entirely possible that Elcon will seek to expand its treatment business into the U.S at some point in the future, especially if the U.S increases pharmaceutical manufacturing in response to COVID-19, with the corresponding need to increase the capacity for treating the liquid hazardous waste that is generated.”



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