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the

Second Messenger

St. Olaf College Biology Alumni Newsletter

Your gift, Your way

Gifts to the St. Olaf Fund are used to support financial aid for current students, strengthen academic programs all over campus, and enrich life for those who live and work on the Hill. But did you know that you can designate your philanthropic support to a specific program or department? (May we suggest the Biology Department?) That's right! You can make your annual gift to the St. Olaf Fund and show the world how much you love biology at St. Olaf. These are the resources that provide for the extra things like paying for students' travel to conferences and consortiums and annual events like the Biology Senior Banquet. Will you visit stolaf.edu/giving and designate your gift to the "Biology Department?" And if you are celebrating a reunion this year, your gift will be counted in your class gift as well! Thank you for your consideration.



Summer is in full bloom at St. Olaf College!

We know how to do winter around here, it's true. And just as true: we really know how to take advantage of summer! The campus has settled into its summer routines accompanied by blooming flowers and gardens beginning to burst with their produce. The Biology Department has its own quiet hum of summer course work and research, with faculty and staff squeezing in every drop of summer sun possible. Our hope is that you are doing the same and that this summer edition of The Second Messenger finds you well.

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Doctor or Makeup Artist?

Elena Miller ('14) initially planned on med school, but lost her passion for it. She took 2½ years off to work a bit and found a love for makeup, embracing her creative side. She is now attending the Vancouver Film School in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada for their one-year program, "Makeup Design for Film & Television"...one of the most prestigious programs of its kind in the world. "Human anatomy and physiology was my favorite course at St. Olaf, followed closely by biomedical ethics," says Elena. "I am loving how my anatomy and physiology background has helped with my makeup skills; I couldn't do this without having gone to St. Olaf. I wasn't meant to be a doctor. It was definitely a roundabout way of figuring this out but I'm so glad I did. Maybe someday I'll work on a show about doctors, but that's about as close as I want to get to med school."

Berries, anyone?

The Twin Cities are getting an influx of local fruit thanks to an Ole! Andy Petran ('09) has opened an organic strawberry farm in Northfield using techniques he helped develop during his PhD research at the University of Minnesota. The practices allow an extended production window; while most local strawberries are only available from June until early July, Andy can harvest from July until November, effectively quadrupling the local season. Look for strawberries from Andy's farm, Twin Cities Berry Company, at co-ops throughout the Twin Cities. Supplies are limited during this first year, so make sure to follow the Twin City Berry Company Facebook page or instagram (@twincitiesberry) to stay updated with the delivery schedule!



Andy Petran ('09) has opened an organic strawberry farm in Northfield applying techniques he helped develop during his PhD research at the U of MN



Dr. Marie (Bak) Walker



Dr. Ari Carlson



Dr. Tamara Roque



Dr. Alexandra Ripperger

Four original Pre-Vet Club members are Veterinarians 8 years later!

In October 2010, three students gathered in a small meeting room in Regents Hall for the first ever meeting of the St. Olaf Pre-Veterinary Club. Our shared passion for animals and science helped the club blossom, sending now dozens of students to veterinary school. This year, eight years later, the original club saw four alumna graduate with their Doctorates in Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. Marie (Bak) Walker ('14) received her DVM from Colorado State University and will begin a career in small animal general practice in Denver, CO. Dr. Ari Carlson ('13) received her DVM from the University of Minnesota and will be interning at Ocean State Veterinary Specialists in Rhode Island. Dr. Tamara Roque ('14) received her DVM from Oklahoma State University and will return

home to Hastings, MN to work in a small animal and exotics private practice. Dr. Alexandra Ripperger ('14) received her DVM from the University of Minnesota and will be practicing small animal general medicine in the West Loop neighborhood of Chicago.

“During those many Pre-Vet Club meetings, we truly – however wrongly – believed that we knew what we were getting into. Our strong backgrounds in biology, the critical thinking skills we gained from the liberal arts and the constant support from our undergraduate faculty carried us as we continued our education past St. Olaf. It's taken years of blood, sweat, tears and a lot of animal poop, but we made it,” says Marie.



St. Olaf Pre-Veterinary Club original members

Top row: Reid Nordstrom ('15), **Dr. Ari Carlson** ('13), **Dr. Alex Ripperger** ('14), Dr. Paige Holum DVM ('12), Dr. Hannah Cunningham PhD ('12), Meagan Shade, Geoff Geini ('15, current vet student at University of Wisconsin), Hannah Springer Borning ('14),

Bottom row: Hilary Boyce ('12), **Dr. Marie Bak Walker** ('14), Taylor Hermundson ('15, current vet student at U of M), **Dr. Tamara Roque** ('14)

Ole Biology Alumni Updates

Trevor Keyler ('07)

I just graduated from the University of MN with a PhD in integrated biosciences. I will start as a visiting assistant professor in the department of biology at the college of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University in the fall. (My 1.5 year old son, Everett is also in the photo.)



Erick Marigi ('14)

I recently graduated medical school at the University of Minnesota! I am excited to be placed at the Mayo Clinic department of Orthopedic Surgery.

Rachael (Price) Seddighzadeh ('10)

This summer has been very busy for me! I graduated from Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine on May 19th. My husband and I were married in Carrollton, TX on May 26th. We honeymooned in Italy and moved to New Jersey in June. I start my residency training in General Surgery at Hackensack Meridian Health Palisades on July 1st. I was also notified that soon I will be a published author in the Journal of Palliative Medicine! It has been a very exciting time in my life and I look forward to all the adventures to come!

David Liebenson ('12)

After graduating from St Olaf in 2012 and working in a Neuroscience lab focusing on Multiple Sclerosis for 4 years, I am now teaching

Elizabeth Erickson ('98)

I am a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force, and I have just completed residency training in General Preventive Medicine, which included completion of a Masters of Public Health degree with Global Health concentration, at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) in Bethesda, Maryland. (This was a second residency; I am also a Family Physician.) This July, I will begin working at the Center for Global Health Engagement, which is a part of USU. Attached is a photo of me speaking at the World Congress on Military Medicine in New Delhi, India in November of 2017. I was definitely thinking of my St. Olaf days when I was there for that conference because it was 20 years after I had been in India for the Biology in South India program, and I had attended a medical conference on HIV/AIDS during that experience. So it was a little bit surreal to be back there 20 years later for another medical conference.



Krista Ehlert ('11)

I accepted a tenure-track position with South Dakota State University where I will be an Assistant Professor/Range Management State Specialist. I'm looking forward to working with ranchers, from an ecological perspective, to find ways to sustain South Dakota ranching.

Karl Olsen ('89)

I have been in a busy Ophthalmology practice (Eye Center of Northern Colorado), in Fort Collins, Colorado for the past 19 years, specializing in Cataract and Refractive surgery. I don't have any new publications although I am Principle Investigator for numerous Phase 3 clinical studies relating to cataract surgery. I was elected in 2017 to a National Boarder OOSS (Outpatient Ophthalmic Surgery center Society). Life is good!

"Updates" continued on p. 6

Tree Hugger in a Tie

My career and wind energy business (www.prewind.com) was founded in the 1990's to help slow climate change. We are the guys and gals figuring out where to put new wind farms for low cost renewable electricity.

"But don't those things kill birds" is the most common reaction I get from people that learn what I do for a living. Some people take the view that if a wind turbine might kill an animal, then it's bad for the environment and should therefore be banned.

This begs the question: how do we plan these wind farms anyway? First and foremost, we kick off an array of studies to define the prospective new wind farm sites. With help from firms like Westwood, Tetrattech, and others we dig in pretty deep for evidence of sensitive species/communities/habitats. Early coordination with USFW and state agencies enables good planning so that we don't miss anything. In the end, if we all determine that we can build a wind energy project without threatening the local environment, then we proceed with construction. When complete, the wind turbines that we build will generate enough energy in just the first few months to offset their own carbon/energy footprint, thereafter supplying decades of clean, renewable electricity. For more background on environment & wind energy: <https://www.ucsusa.org/clean-energy/renewable-energy/environmental-impacts-wind-power#.Wz59B8ln2Ea>

I think that it comes down to viewing our earth's atmosphere—or "Gaia" as it's sometimes called—as another important "habitat" that needs protection on top of the diversity of local habitats within it. I joke that "we are on a mission to save the earth...but without wrecking the neighborhood."

Just one final hopeful note—new renewable energy supply has contributed to flattening CO₂ emission levels. In short, world economies are growing, but CO₂ emissions remained same in 2014-2016. For more background on flattening CO₂ emissions: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/global-carbon-emissions-level-off-even-as-economy-grows/>



Paul White
'86 BA Biology, '92 MS Conservation Biology
President, PRC Wind

Congratulations to the Class of 2018!

The Biology Department congratulates the 100 students awarded their degree in Biology this May and proudly welcomes them as Alumni. Well done, Class of 2018!

Fram! Fram!



“Updates” cont. from p. 4

Amber Koehler ('12)



My Biology degree from St. Olaf laid the foundation for me to pursue my Master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies. I have worked as a Physician Assistant in Hospital-Based Hematology at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN for almost three years now, and during that time I have had the opportunity to care for a variety of patients with hematologic malignancies. My Biology degree equipped me with the knowledge to understand the latest bench research in this field and apply it to our patient population. My role has afforded me the opportunity to actively participate in a variety of clinical trials including caring for Mayo Clinic's very first CAR-T patient. I have also been fortunate enough to teach at local NPPA graduate programs and precept NPPA students completing clinical rotations in Hospital Hematology. I am also utilizing my passion for education that was cultivated in pursuit of my Biology degree at St. Olaf in serving as a course director for an annual Mayo Clinic CME conference for NPPAs working in Hematology, Oncology, and Blood and Marrow Transplant that attracted an international audience at our first meeting in 2017. I have now been appointed to Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. I am grateful for the foundation my Biology degree from St. Olaf provided and look forward to what the future holds!

We've Migrated to Google Groups!



St. Olaf College has migrated its email groups out of the “alias” format and into Google Groups. For now, the biggest way this will impact you is that when you request that your email address be updated, we have to first delete you as a member, and then add you as a new member. This will generate a “Welcome Message.” We wanted to be sure you are aware of this process to avoid any confusion over receiving this welcome message. We are still working on familiarizing ourselves with this new format. Our hope is that the process becomes more stream-lined...look for further updates in the Winter edition of the newsletter!



“Like” us on Facebook to see the latest happenings in the Biology Department. Search “St. Olaf Biology” to find us.

Contact us:

1520 St Olaf Av, Northfield, MN 55057 ♦ (507) 786-3100 ♦ towler2@stolaf.edu