

St. Olaf College Department of Classics

NEWSLETTER

July, 2002

It has been another exciting year for the Department of Classics, culminating in the appointment of our very own Jim May as provost and dean of St. Olaf College! Read on...

Highlights of 2001-2002

The Class of 2002 included 3 Classics majors (Kristina [Nina] Alton, Mark Murakami, and Scott Teece), 7 Ancient Studies majors (David Beck, Adam Gatzke, Amanda Heinrichs, Melissa Jackson, Duong Phan, Scott Teece, Elizabeth Winter), and 2 Medieval Studies majors (Ashley Elston and Erin Lien). Nina, Mark, and Ashley were elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

In March we initiated 17 students into Eta Sigma Phi, the national Classics honor society. Three members (Marquis Berrey, Julia Kelto, David Schiedler) accompanied Anne Groton to the national convention, held in San Diego, April 12-14. In the Eta Sigma Phi national translation contests for 2002, St. Olaf students won two of the 22 prizes: Sarah Beaver finished first in Intermediate Koine Greek, Hilary Lehmann third in Intermediate Classical Greek.



Marquis Berrey, Hilary Lehmann, Joe Amos



Kathleen Burt, Sarah Beaver, Melissa Jackson

On April 26 we held the second annual competition for the Loomis Award in Latin and the first annual competition for the Groton Award in Greek. In the Latin contest (translating a passage from Sallust) first prize went to Lauren Christensen, second to Marquis Berrey, third to David Schiedler. In the Greek contest (translating a passage from Xenophon) first prize went to Marquis Berrey, second to Joseph Amos, third to Hilary Lehmann.

In the fall we co-sponsored two lectures at St. Olaf by Phi Beta Kappa Visiting Scholar Katherine Geffcken (Professor Emerita, Wellesley College): "The Janiculum Hill, Rome: Aqueducts, Villas, & Battlefield" and "Female Figures on Ancient Roman Coins." In the spring Keyne Cheshire (Assistant Professor, Carleton College) gave a talk at St. Olaf on "Heracles Devoured: Layers of Deceit in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*." We continued our tradition of Latin, Greek, and German Christmas caroling and held our spring Bacchanalia at Anne Groton's house.

Courses

A relatively low number of Classics majors in the senior class made our advanced Latin and Greek courses small this year, but enrollments otherwise remained strong: Beginning Latin had 52 students; Beginning Greek had 28; Intermediate Latin had 38; Intermediate Greek had 16. Even in the aftermath of September 11, our Classical Studies in Greece interim abroad course, taught by Gwen Compton-Engle (accompanied by her husband Tron), attracted 27 students and was a rousing success.



Gwen and Tron Compton-Engle amid the ruins of Olympia

Our semester-long Classics courses, Greek & Roman Myth, Golden Age of Greece, and Golden Age of Rome, continue to be very popular. Next year we plan to experiment with allowing a maximum of 60 rather than 30 students in each of them.



Steve Reece's Golden Age of Greece class (spring, 2002) admires a replica of a Mycenaean chariot built by two of the students.

Jim May and Anne Groton both had a happy time teaching in the Great Conversation program, Jim working with the sophomores, Anne with the first-year students. In 2002-03 Anne will continue to collaborate with Jonathan Hill (English) and Ed Langerak (Philosophy) in teaching the second year of the program as Steve Reece joins forces with Jolene Barjasteh (French) and Doug Schuurman (Religion) to teach the Great Con Class of '06.

New Faces in the Department

In March we were delighted to be able to hire our former student Jon Bruss (St. Olaf '89; M. Div., Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary; M.A., Ph.D., Minnesota), who has ten years of teaching experience at Bethany Lutheran College, to replace Jim May during his sabbatical (which has now been postponed so that Jim can serve as provost). Jon is an ordained pastor and the author of a workbook that accompanies Anne Groton's elementary Greek textbook. He will be moving to Northfield this summer with his wife Kristine, a Ph.D. candidate in communication studies, and their lively three-year-old daughter Ingrid.

Shortly after we hired Jon, Gwen Compton-Engle accepted an offer of a tenure-track job at John Carroll University in Cleveland (congratulations, Gwen--we'll miss you!), making it necessary for us to hire a second person, to teach the six courses left unstaffed by Anne's and Steve's teaching commitments in the Great Conversation. Once again, we were delighted to find an ideal candidate close at hand: Christopher Brunelle (Carleton '89; B.A., King's College, Cambridge; M.A., Ph.D., UNC-Chapel Hill) has five years of teaching experience at Vanderbilt and Gustavus; a singer, pianist, and actor, Chris is married to Serena Zabin, who teaches history at Carleton. They live, conveniently, in Northfield.



Jon, Kris, and Ingrid Bruss



Chris Brunelle

Then came the search for a new provost and dean for St. Olaf. On May 30 it was announced that Jim May had been selected; his term began two days later, on June 1. Despite the press of his new duties, he and his wife Donna were still allowed to leave the country and lead their eighth summer study/travel program, this time focusing on “ancient oracles and holy places” in northwestern Greece (June 16-July 5). In the midst of this whirlwind Jim could not resist buying a 1942 red fire engine that he thought the department could use in homecoming parades, decorated with a sign saying, “Get fired up for Classics!”

Professional Activities

On Oct. 27 Gwen, Jim, Steve, and Anne all attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of Minnesota (CAM) in St. Paul. Anne was elected to a two-year term as president, Gwen to a second term as treasurer. (When she moves to Ohio, Jon Bruss will replace her.) The four of us next went to the annual meeting of the American Philological Association (APA) in Philadelphia (Jan. 3-6), where Steve gave a crowd-pleasing paper on “The Linguistic History of the Mycenaean Bath.” On April 3-6 Jim and Anne attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West & South (CAMWS) in Austin, where Anne chaired a session on Aeschylus, and Jim, as the new *ovator* for CAMWS, delivered an eloquent speech in Latin at the banquet. Also this past spring Anne served as an outside evaluator for the Classical Studies Department at DePauw University, Jim for the Classics Department at Grinnell College.

When not traveling, teaching, or driving fire trucks, we were all busy with scholarship. In the past year Steve published two articles and had three more accepted for publication; Gwen published one article and is revising another; Jim has a new article out and a forthcoming book review; the volume of essays on Cicero that he is editing for Brill is nearly ready to go to press; Anne is in charge of a colloquium on Menander. Even our new hires are working like maniacs: Chris has two articles and two book reviews just out, and Jon has four articles forthcoming!



Anne Groton, Steve Reece, and Jim May on Commencement Day '02

When you next feel the urge to be generous, consider making a contribution to one of these four Classics-related funds at St. Olaf: the Loomis Endowment, supporting annual prizes in Latin; the Groton Endowment, supporting annual prizes in Greek; the Scarseth Endowment, supporting an annual scholarship for a Classics major, based on good citizenship, need, and scholastic ability; the Grimsrud Endowment, supporting an annual scholarship for a Latin major, based on financial need and scholastic achievement. Thank you!

On our web page (www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/) you can read the exciting news that Pamela L. (Severson) Vaughn, St. Olaf '71, now a Classics professor at San Francisco State University, is the winner of the APA's Excellence in the Teaching of the Classics Award for 2001. We would love to hear more about all of you, so please keep in touch. Best wishes from the Classics crew in Old Main 32--and from Jim May, temporarily exiled to the Dean's Office!