

St. Olaf College Department of Classics

NEWSLETTER

July, 2006

“Summertime, and the living is...noisy!” as a steam shovel digs a road behind Old Main, leading to the construction site for St. Olaf's new Science Center. While that project charges full speed ahead, here is a tranquil look back at the school-year just past.



On a 98-degree Commencement Day, Lauren Gioe, David Varvel, and Curt Frank are still smiling.

GRADUATES: We had 8 majors in Classics (Keeley Esterhay, Joseph Fricke, Curtis Frank, Lauren Gioe, Kendra Olson, David Varvel, Kirstine Wynn, and Jason Zencka), 1 in Latin (David Hansen), 3 in Ancient Studies (Stephanie Anderson [Phi Beta Kappa], Krista Apland, and Karri Whipple), and 2 in Medieval Studies (Elizabeth Pearce and Bryan Stevenson).

Keeley, Kendra, and Kirstine received Awards for Outstanding Accomplishment in Classical Studies from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS). Keeley plans to pursue an M.A. in Latin at the University of Georgia after graduate work in Medieval Studies at Central European University in Budapest. Kendra has accepted a position teaching Latin, dance, and history at Shattuck-St. Mary's School in Faribault, MN. Kirstine will attend graduate school in Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas.



Keeley Esterhay



Kendra Olson



Kirstine Wynn

The other graduates' plans range from spending a year in England with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program (Lauren) to teaching English in China via WorldTeach (David) to working for AmeriCorps VISTA in the Twin Cities (Elizabeth). Stephanie will enter the master's program in Museum Studies at George Washington University.

AWARDS: In the 2006 national Eta Sigma Phi Translation Contests, Jennifer Starkey '07 (pictured below in a moment of hysteria produced by the antics of Chris Brunelle) kept St. Olaf's 25-year winning streak alive by coming in first out of 64 contestants in Advanced Latin.



To leave no doubt about her being a marvel, Jennifer also won 1st prize in the 6th annual Loomis Latin Contest and 1st prize in the 5th annual Groton Greek Contest. WOW!!!

Other winners in the Loomis Latin competition (translating a passage from Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*) were Elizabeth Beerman '07 (2nd) and Kirstine Wynn '06 (3rd); other winners in the Groton Greek competition (translating a passage from Plato's *Phaedo*) were Alaina Burkard '08 (2nd), and Elizabeth Beerman (3rd).

For the first time ever, we awarded two “Groomis Grants” (\$500 each), funded from earnings of the Groton and Loomis endowments. Students were invited to submit proposals for Classics-related projects to be undertaken this summer. The two winners were Michael Gulden '08 and Emily Holm '08. Mike is now enrolled in the University of Utah's Archaeological Field School, while Emily participates in the Intensive Latin Workshop at the University of California-Berkeley. We hope to be able to offer these grants annually.

ETA SIGMA PHI: St. Olaf's chapter of Eta Sigma Phi, the national Classics honor society, had a fun-filled year, beginning with an “Alpha Party” (including root beer floats) and a Classics sports extravaganza (softball and ultimate frisbee, pitting the Hellenists against the Latinists). There followed Eleusinian Mysteries at Halloween time, Latin and Greek Christmas caroling in December, movie nights (*Jason and the Argonauts* and *Gladiator*), the initiation of 21 new members, and the umpteenth-annual Bacchanalia, held at the Reeces' house in May.

In the spring we also revived our dormant Classics Conversation Tables (Mondays, 6-7 p.m.) and decided to experiment with a series of alumni speakers. Thanks to the Loomis family, we were able to offer a \$50 honorarium, mileage reimbursement, and a free dinner in Stav to each of these six Oles: Elizabeth Land Quant '96, Peter Hansen '97, Christopher Smith '82, Justin Stets '85, Jill Schwendeman '84, and Tad Johnson '92 (great job, all of you!). This proved to be an inspired idea, and our students are eager to hear from more alums in the future.

GUEST LECTURES: Thomas G. Palaima, Professor of Classics and Director of the Program in Aegean Scripts and Prehistory at the University of Texas-Austin, gave a Phi Beta Kappa Fellows Lecture (“Truth and Fiction in War Literature: Does It Matter Now? Did It Ever Matter?”) in March. His talk was co-sponsored by the Dept. of Classics and St. Olaf's chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, with additional funding from the Humanities Faculty and the Loomis family.





In April we teamed up with the Dept. of History and the Society of Ancient History (a newly founded student group at St. Olaf), to co-sponsor a guest lecture (“Alexander the Great: Images in Modern Culture, Film and Politics”) by Eugene N. Borza, Professor Emeritus of Ancient History at Penn State.

Tom and Gene both led class discussions and met with St. Olaf students informally while they were on campus.

FACULTY: With 7 professors teaching for the Classics Department this year, our students were treated to a variety of personalities. We enjoyed having Heather Woods, a Classics graduate student at the U. of Minnesota, with us during the fall, making it possible for us to offer a first-ever third section of Beginning Latin, and we appreciated the willingness of two colleagues from the History Department, David Perry (who is finishing his Ph.D. in medieval history at the U. of Minnesota) and Tim Howe (who has already put St. Olaf's ancient history program on the map after just three years here), to teach our Classics interim courses. David taught “The Fall of the Roman Empire” while Tim expertly guided 30 Oles around Greece.

We are delighted that Mark Gustafson (St. Olaf '74) will be teaching for us in '06-'07. His position is a combination of courses from Chris Brunelle (who will be teaching in the Great Conversation program next year) and Anne Groton (who has course release time because of her administrative duties for CAMWS). Jim May, though still full-time as Provost & Dean, will teach one course for us as an overload so that we can offer 20 courses, not just 19.

“Gus” was a tenured professor and department chair at Calvin College before moving to Minnesota 18 months ago so that his wife, Sarah Campbell, could accept a call to be Lead Minister at Mayflower UCC in Minneapolis. The older of their two daughters will be a sophomore at Carleton next year, but Gus has already made an appearance at the Bacchanalia (see photo with Steve Reece at right) to prove that he belongs on this side of the river and meets the department's standards for humor and quirkiness--and yes, it's true that his specialty is ancient tattooing!



Steve Reece wowed everyone with the 23rd Annual Mellby Lecture (“Homer, Jesus and Bass Fishing in Minnesota”) at St. Olaf on October 27. *Classical Considerations: Useful Wisdom from Greece and Rome* (Bolchazy-Carducci, 2006) includes reflective essays by Steve and by Anne Groton. Chris Brunelle's article on “Teaching Eco's *Baudolino* in a Medieval Latin Class” was published in *Classical Journal* 101.3 (2006). Jim May's review of *Cicero the Advocate* (J. Powell and J. Paterson, eds.) appeared in *Classical Review* 56 (2006); his review of E. Fantham's *The Roman World of Cicero's De Oratore* is forthcoming in *Classical World* 99.4 (2006).

TRAVEL: Montréal was the site for this year's meeting (Jan. 5-8) of the American Philological Association. Steve Reece gave a paper ("Where is Homeric Nisa?"), Chris Brunelle played the role of pseudo-Hercules in a performance of *Thespis* (Gilbert & Sullivan/Jones), Jim May attended meetings of the APA Board of Directors, and Anne Groton slipped a lot in the snow!



At the CAMWS meeting in Gainesville (Apr. 5-8), papers were presented by Tim Howe ("Jason, Delphi, and Pastoralism: Animal Wealth and Display in Ancient Greece"), Steve Reece ("The *Iliadic* 'Bridges of War'"), and Heather Woods ("Dialogue of the Prostitutes?: The Speaker of Juvenal's 9th Satire"). Jim May wore a Gator hat for his Latin oration. This was the second CAMWS meeting run by Anne and her assistant Sue Newland.



NEW ARRIVALS: Serena Zabin and Chris Brunelle are the proud parents of Sebastian David and Leo Solomon, born on May 31; they join Big Brother Julian, age 3. Congratulations!



Sebastian and Leo take twin naps.

STATUS QUO: These are happy, prosperous days for the Classics Department and for the Ancient Studies and Medieval Studies Programs at St. Olaf. This past spring we had double-digit enrollments in all four of our intermediate and advanced Latin and Greek courses--the first time any of us could remember that happening. We count our lucky stars every day.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES: Should the spirit move you to want to contribute to an existing Classics endowment fund, you have four options. The Grimsrud Endowment supports an annual scholarship for a student majoring in Latin or in Classics with a Latin emphasis (based on financial need and scholastic achievement). This year the Grimsrud Scholarship was held by Kendra Olson '06. The Scarseth Endowment supports an annual scholarship for a student majoring in Classics, Greek, or Latin (based on good citizenship, financial need, and scholastic ability). This year's recipient was Jason Zencka '06. The Groton and Loomis Endowments support annual prizes in Greek and Latin as well as Groomis grants for summer projects.

INVITATION: Don't let the construction of the Science Center deter you from visiting us in Old Main 32. You may have to climb over a barricade or leap across a trench to reach us, and the closest parking spot may be a half-mile away, but we'll be waiting here for you. Meanwhile you can check on what we're up to via our website: <http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/>.