

St. Olaf College Department of Classics

NEWSLETTER

July, 2008

Our gigantic new neighbor, Regents Hall of Natural and Mathematical Sciences, is scheduled to be open for business on August 15, and Old Main feels tiny in comparison. Still, we should remember that not every good thing comes in jumbo size; many good things--like the Department of Classics--come in small packages. It has been a fine year for us and for St. Olaf, and we are already gearing up to greet the Class of 2012 this fall.

Eight **Classics majors** (Alaina Burkard [+ Biology], Michael Dow [+ French, Linguistic Studies], Michael Gulden [+ History], Kevin Moore, Kayla Rasmussen [+ History], Alexandra Sprano [+ Middle East Studies; Phi Beta Kappa; Fulbright to Turkey], Ann Stanton [+ Women's Studies], Erin VanBurkleo [+ History]) graduated in May, along with two **Ancient Studies majors** (Steve Alexander [+ Management Studies], Emily Holm [+ History, Linguistic Studies]). Kayla (pictured at right) was accepted into Penn State's graduate program in ancient history and received an Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Classical Studies. During the year she presented a paper, "Restoring the Wall: Death, Ritual, and Community in Book 23 of the *Iliad*," at a symposium for senior Classics majors at Carleton College and at an undergraduate research symposium at Davidson College. Stephanie McCarter traveled with her to North Carolina as a faculty mentor.



This year's **Groomis Summer Grant** (\$500) went to Adrienne Rowell (pictured at left), a sophomore history major considering a career in archaeology. She is participating in a dig sponsored by the Ecomuseum of Cape Cavalleria in Menorca, Spain, helping to excavate an ancient Roman town (Saninsera). Meanwhile three of our Classics majors are spending the summer here on campus, working with history professors Bob Entenmann and Laurel Carrington on Latin translation projects.

The 8th annual **Loomis Latin Translation Contest** and 7th annual **Groton Greek Translation Contest** were held on April 30; students were asked either to decipher one of Pliny's letters or to wrestle with a passage from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. In Latin our winners were Thomas Halvorsen (\$300), Sarah Adamson (\$200), and Hilary Boussein (\$100), with honorable mention to Alaina Burkard. In Greek our winners were Mike Gulden (\$300), Hilary Boussein (\$200), and Kevin Moore (\$100).

St. Olaf's chapter of **Eta Sigma Phi**, the Classics honor society, grew by 21 members this year. In the 2008 Eta Sigma Phi **Translation Contests**, St. Olaf tied with Hillsdale College for the most prizes: 1st in both Advanced Latin and Latin Prose Composition for Thomas Halvorsen (pictured at right), 2nd in Latin Prose Composition for Lisa York, 2nd in Intermediate Latin for Martin Shedd, and honorable mention in Intermediate Classical Greek for Kevin Moore. Martin attended the national convention held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and was able to accept his prize in person.



2008 was the inaugural year for **Groomis Interim Abroad Grants**, the brainchild of Ken and Kathy Loomis. Each of the four Classics majors who took the Classical Studies in Greece course during January, 2008, received \$500. Technically, the money is a “funded financial aid discount” rather than a grant, since there is no competition for it, but that did not seem to matter to our students: they were thrilled! We hope to be able to distribute in a similar way any extra earnings that accrue in the Groton and Loomis Endowments in future years. With soaring fuel costs and a strong Euro, the interim to Greece (currently \$5100) is no longer a cheap date!



Although it was supposed to be our off year for the **Latin play**, Anne Groton succumbed to the pleas of her dramatically inclined students and directed yet another production, this time Plautus' *Mostellaria* (“The Haunted House”), March 6-8. The 23-member cast, which included a chorus of singing bats, had fun performing for loud, rowdy audiences at Liberty Classical Academy (Maplewood), the College of St. Catherine, the University of Minnesota,



Gustavus Adolphus College, Mayo High School (Rochester), and Edina High School, then twice at St. Olaf. Shown in the photos are Simo (Mike Gulden), the arrogant slaves (Martin Shedd and Jason Chance, Tranio (Sarah Adamson), the *vespertiliones*, and Theopropides (Alan Stout).



We continue to hold a **Classics Conversation Table** on Monday evenings. In 2007-08 our guest speakers included three alumni (Amy Roos '94 [pictured at left], Holly Browkowski '07, and Scott Teece '02), each of whom received a \$50 honorarium, money for mileage, and a free dinner. If you are interested in being a speaker, just let us know; all you have to do is talk informally about the influence (good and/or bad!) that your experience as a Classics, Ancient Studies, or Medieval Studies major has had on your life after St. Olaf.

The Society of Ancient History and history professor Tim Howe invited **Carol Thomas** (pictured at right), Professor of History at the University of Washington, to visit St. Olaf on April 24 and lecture on “Globalism: From a Macedonian Perspective.” She was a good sport about having to eat Domino's pizza when a power outage shut down the cafeteria!



In October students from Eta Sigma Phi and the Society of Ancient History engaged in combat on the Skoglund athletic fields during the **2nd Annual St. Olaf Olympics**. Dignified judges, three of whom (Tim Howe, Chris Brunelle, Mark Gustafson) are shown below, presided over the fray. Calmer events (e.g., caroling, viewing films, picnicking) filled the rest of the year.



In November two students who plan to become Latin teachers accompanied Classics faculty to the annual meeting of the Classical Association of Minnesota, held at the University of St. Thomas. While there, Chris Brunelle was elected CAM Treasurer. Although we were dreading the re-accreditation process for our **Minnesota licensure program**, we managed to get through it relatively painlessly. Cory Holec '09 will be student teaching at Mayo High School in the fall. Jessica (Overbeck) Bergeron '05 should be certified by the end of this summer.



At the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South in Tucson, **Tim Howe** gave a paper (“Athens, Alexander and the Adriatic: Insurgence in the Age of Empire”), **Anne Groton** and **Jim May** chaired sessions, and Jim (left) sang the Arizona Wildcat fight song in Latin at the banquet. This was the 4th CAMWS meeting



that Anne (right) has organized with the aid of her assistant, Sue Newland.

Anne is still chairing the St. Olaf Classics Department; she was an outside evaluator for Connecticut College's Classics Department last fall. Jim is still Provost and Dean of the College, but he has had enough spare time this year to give invited lectures (on Cicero of course) in Oslo and Athens. He and Donna have just returned from leading their 11th Study Travel program in Greece and Turkey. After thirty years as “Queen of the Guides,” **Dora Spahi** has retired, and the responsibility for guiding St. Olaf groups around Greece has passed to **Stella Galani**; she did a “stellar” job for Tim Howe and the 30 students in Classics 251 this past January.

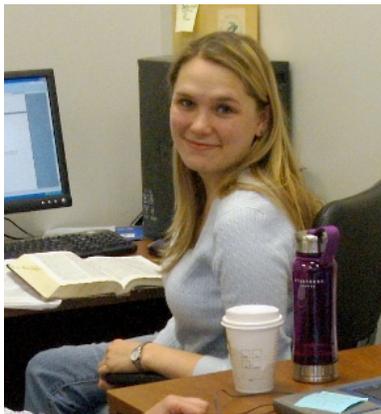


Steve Reece has been enjoying his sabbatical year. In the middle of it he was promoted to the exalted rank of Full Professor. Congratulations! To celebrate this milestone, he and Rhonda traveled to Alaska and did some fishing (see the incriminating photo). He is now riding his bike in Ann Arbor while participating in an NEH Summer Seminar on “Homer's Readers, Ancient and Modern” at the University of Michigan. When he returns to Northfield, he will face a fresh challenge: serving as Faculty Observer to the Board of Regents.

Chris Brunelle has had a marvelous time teaching in the Great Conversation program and eagerly awaits the next batch of Connors arriving this fall. He has just finished his term as Secretary of St. Olaf's Phi Beta Kappa chapter. The new exercises that he composed with his curriculum development grant were tested in Latin 111 and 112 this year; they greatly enhance the pedagogical value of *Wheelock's Latin*. Son Julian (age five), pictured at right, likes apples; his twin brothers, Leo and Sebastian (age two), share his love of organic animal crackers.



Mark Gustafson, a mainstay of our department for the past two years, is leaving St. Olaf to teach at the University of Minnesota, his graduate-school alma mater. Since he and his family live in Minneapolis, it will be a much shorter, cheaper commute. Best wishes, Mark!



It has been a delight to have **Stephanie McCarter** (pictured at left) with us this year. She and her fiancé Daniel Holmes, also a professor of Classics but a native of Australia, not Tennessee, were married on May 31; they are now headed to the University of the South in Sewanee, TN, where both have been hired for tenure-track positions. As soon as they are allowed to move into their new house, they will begin their dream jobs. Bon voyage!

For 2008-09 we welcome to our department **Mary McMenemy**. No stranger to Northfield, she taught at Carleton in the spring term of 2007 before moving to Ohio State University for a year.

The picture (right) shows her when she gave a talk on the oracle of Trophonios for St. Olaf's Classics Conversation Table. Her specialties are Greek drama, myth, and ancient religion. She is a computer expert as well, having grown up in a family that offers online courses in Latin and Greek. Her B.A. is from Swarthmore, her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

Next year's entering class is larger than expected, so we are bracing ourselves and hoping that we will have enough room in our three sections of Beginning Latin and two sections of Beginning Greek for all the wanna-be Latin and Greek students. Yes, it is exciting to have so many “customers”!

We are always in search of alumni news for our website, so please send us some (www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics) or come visit us on the third floor of Old Main. Better hurry: while our students never age, the rest of us are growing more ancient with each passing year!

