

**Classics Newsletter – St. Olaf College
June, 2018**

We had barely recovered from all the hoopla connected with Jim May's retirement (and yes, we do miss him!) when the 2017-18 school-year began. During the fall the selection committee for Jim's successor had the unenviable task of choosing, out of 193 impressive applicants, just three to be interviewed on campus. In the end we offered the position to Kyle Helms, who, much to our delight, said yes. He and his wife Caitlin, a pediatric nurse, along with their two young daughters, Hattie and Phoebe, will move to Minnesota in July.



Kyle has a Ph.D. from the U. of Cincinnati, M.A. from the U. of Iowa, and B.A. (in Classics and Philosophy) from the U. of Florida. His field is the social and cultural history of communication in the Greco-Roman world. He specializes in rhetoric, epigraphy, papyrology, and digital humanities. Currently he is a team leader with the Ancient Graffiti Project, editing inscriptions from Herculaneum and Pompeii. He has taught at Creighton U. and the U. of Puget Sound.

In February Chris Brunelle told us the sad news that he would be resigning. We will miss his dynamic presence around the office, and we wish him well in his new job as Associate Director of Alumni Relations at Carleton College, his alma mater. Hilary Bouxsein '09, who has been a wonderful colleague this year, has agreed to remain at St. Olaf for two more years and cover the courses that Chris had been scheduled to teach.

2017-18 was Steve Reece's final year as Boldt Chair. He organized two stellar lecture series (study of material culture in the humanities, history of the book) that attracted 1000 attendees from the college and wider community. The last Boldt speaker, Prof. Gregory Crane (Tufts University, Editor-in-Chief of the Perseus Project), also delivered the 2018 James M. May Lecture in



Classics, "Philology and the Future of Work." We have decided that, in odd-numbered years, the lecturer will be a St. Olaf graduate, and all of our alumni will be invited to a festive dinner beforehand. It is our pleasure to announce that next year's May Lecture will be given

by Gwendolyn Compton-Engle '92 (Prof. of Classics, John Carroll U.) on Thursday, April 25. Save the date!

Our senior majors (two in Classics, two in Ancient Studies, three in Medieval Studies) were full of talent. Erin Wiebe was elected to Phi Beta Kappa; Jakob Janssen (see photo) earned distinction in Medieval Studies; Chaz Mayo directed Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*; Herman Hannan will begin the Classics Ph.D. program at Indiana University this fall. In the photo below, Herman and his fiancée Grace Gresham join arms with the four Classics professors (Brunelle, Reece, Groton, and Bouxsein) on Commencement Day.



At our 4th annual Ancient & Medieval Studies Research Symposium (with pizza) in May, each senior summarized a paper s/he had written during the year.

Steve Reece just finished teaching the two-year Great Conversation cycle; Hilary Bouxsein, once a Conner herself, will begin teaching in the program next year. Her Golden Age of Greece course in the spring filled up right away, as did Anne Groton's Ancient Comedy interim, and Chris Brunelle's newly designed "Gender and Sexuality in the Ancient World" course. Chris linked his Medieval Latin course with a similar one being taught at Carleton; Prof. Dennis Trout (U. of Missouri) gave a talk ("Pictures with Words: Reading the Apse Mosaic of St. Agnese") for both classes.

Classical Studies in Italy, first taught in 2016, was again a big success. The 30 students were accompanied by Steve and Rhonda Reece; great tour guides helped them appreciate the wonders of Etruria, Rome, and the Bay of Naples. Anne Groton will lead Classical Studies in Greece in 2019. Many thanks to Ken and Kathy Loomis for their scholarship, awarded yearly to a deserving student who could not otherwise afford the Classics interim abroad.





As usual, we began the year with a softball game, in which the Greek students crushed the Latin students. Being Oles, however, the two teams were still friendly enough to pose together afterwards (see photo above).

It was not business as usual in March, however, when Anne Groton directed her first-ever St. Olaf Greek play, Menander's *Dyskolos* ("The Crabby Man"). The valiant cast survived a two-day, 372-mile tour to five schools and two colleges before the two performances on campus. If you need any proof that crustacean puns can be funny, just request a (free) copy of the DVD.



Other special events included our 2nd annual "Classics Night" at Greenvale Park Elementary School, Olympic Games, Latin/Greek caroling, the spring lamb roast (to which a few students from Gustavus Adolphus College dared to come), and of course the Bacchanalia.



In April, Jeremiah Harrelson '99 and his family presented the 3rd annual Alec Award, in memory of Alec Johnson '97, to Dylan Walker '18 (see photo). Annual Fund gifts went to defray the cost of poet Sarah Ruden's visit to campus, a lecture on "Christ the Surgeon: Science and Spirituality in Medieval Medical Drawings" by Prof. Karl Whittington (Ohio State U.), a talk by Prof. Will Bruce (Gustavus) on the archaeological dig at Sardis, and a chat with Lisa-Anne Paulson Bauch '88 at the Classics Conversation Table. With St. Olaf's Society for Ancient History, we also co-sponsored a lecture on "Alexander and Bagoas: the 'Unmanly' Ruler?" by Prof. Elizabeth Baynham (U. of Newcastle, Australia).

After paying for six of our students to travel to the Eta Sigma Phi national convention in Ann Arbor last year, Greg Randall '96 and spouse Toni Wilkes outdid their previous generosity and paid for eight of our students to attend this year's convention in Carlisle, PA. Joseph Spellman '19 (the only one not wearing a purple tee in the photo) was elected national president for 2018-19.



Since next year's convention will take place at St. Olaf (Mar. 22-24), getting there should not be a problem!

This year we had 8 students (a record number) request support for a summer project. One planned to attend a conference, the rest to study archaeology at Tel Megiddo in Israel or Antiochia ad Cragum in Turkey. Through the kindness of Pamela Severson Vaughn '71 (Prof. Emerita of Classics, San Francisco State U.) and Terry Papillon '80 (Dean, Prof. of Classics, Sewanee), we were able to award \$1000 grants to the four students who are declared majors and \$500 grants to the four non-majors. The Groton/Loomis endowments funded prizes for our Greek/Latin translation contests as well as a \$350 tuition discount for each of the six declared majors who were runners-up for the Loomis Scholarship. We are so grateful to all of our donors!



We have just enough space left to welcome the two new grandbabies in our department: Ellie Reece (at left, daughter of Taylor and Kayli); Beckett May (at right, son of Mike and Sheila). We will do our best to keep Classics alive at St. Olaf until both of them are old enough to enroll. Please stay in touch; we love to brag about you! Χαίρε! *Valē!*

