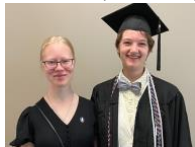


Classics Newsletter – St. Olaf College
July, 2025



It was a memorable year for our local chapter of Eta Sigma Phi, the Classics honor society. On the Ides of March, for the 4th time in the past 40 years, we hosted the national convention. In this photo the holder of the shield is Abby Velazquez '25, prytanis of Delta Chi. To Abby's left is Violet Ecklund-Johnson '26, who has been elected national prytanis for 2025-26. At the banquet St. Olaf President Susan Singer spoke, and Steve Reece received a lifetime achievement award.

We had 13 senior majors this year: 2 Classics, 3 Greek, 1 Latin, 1 Latin + Ancient Studies, 5 Ancient Studies, and 1 Medieval Studies. Every single one of them had a second (or third!) major in another field. Lucia Iurino



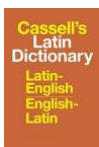
earned distinction in Classics with her paper "Playing Hunters: Hunting Metaphors in Plato." Two of the students will attend graduate school in Scotland: Anna

Shapovalova (at left in photo with Lucia), MLitt in Medieval Studies at the U. of St. Andrews; Roger Quant (pictured with his mom, Elizabeth Land '96), MSc in Human Osteoarchaeology at the U. of Edinburgh.



The Groton & Loomis endowments provided prize money for our Greek/Latin translation contests and funded four \$500 summer-project awards (three for the Antiochia ad Cragum dig in Gazipaşa, Turkey, one for the Santa Susana dig in Redondo, Portugal) plus a high-need scholarship for one student, covering the full program fee for Classical Studies in Italy next January.

In addition, we received such generous donations via Annual Giving (from Lisa Paulson Bauch '88, Jeremiah Harrelson '99, Kurt Anderson, et al.) that we were able to buy a textbook or a dictionary for every student in Intermediate Greek, Intermediate Latin, New Testament Greek, Greek Drama, Vergil, and Latin Historians. What a pleasure!



In the fall we co-sponsored with the Great Conversation program (now called Enduring Questions) "The Blues of Achilles," an adaptation of Homer's *Iliad* by Chicago-based singer/songwriter Joe Goodkin (who has a B.A. in Classics from UW Madison). His performance on Wed., Oct. 30, was a big hit. It had been ten years since his last visit to Northfield, when he had presented "Joe's Odyssey."



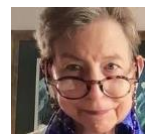
29 students (selected from 79 applicants) spent January in Greece with Anne Groton. At the site of the battle of Marathon, they let their imaginations run wild!



The 8th Annual James M. May Lecture in Classics, "*Ben-Hur*: Avatar of American Popular Consumer Culture," was delivered by Jon Solomon (U. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), on Tues., Apr. 22. Prof. Solomon has known Jim May since their time together as graduate students at UNC Chapel Hill. His lecture—a real blockbuster—was attended by Charlie Bressman '79 and Cynthia Neubecker '78, who both came the



next evening to the Classics Conversation Table and kindly treated our students to pizza while discussing ancient



architecture, enneagrams, and life at St. Olaf in the 1970's. (Other speakers at the CCT this year included Erin Wiebe '18 and Margaret Emond Kirkegaard '85.)

Our next May Lecture will be delivered at 7 p.m. on Thur., Nov. 13, in Viking Theater. The speaker will be a distinguished Classics alumnus (and veteran of our 2001 Latin play): the Rt. Rev. Irenei (Matthew Steenberg '01), Bishop of London and Western Europe for the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR). If you can't be here in person, why not watch the live stream?



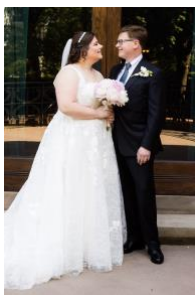


How much has Kyle Helms been enjoying his sabbatical? You can easily tell from these photos of him relaxing with Cherry Blossom and reliving his graduate-school days in Cincinnati in the company of wife Caitlin and kids Hattie, Phoebe, and Wally. After an inspiring trip to Lisbon, with stops

in Milan and Ravenna, to deliver a paper at a conference on Women and Writing in the Roman West, he found a study nook in the Luther Seminary Library in St. Paul, where he spends each day translating the medieval Latin biographies of Sts. Olaf, Eric, and Cnut for his book *Royal Martyrs of Scandinavia*. He looks forward to teaching Classical Studies in Italy again (for the 3rd time) in January.



We are delighted that Peter Moench '09 will be with us again next year. His teaching will be split between Classics and Enduring Questions (fitting for a Great Con alumnus). He has a book chapter "Bending Time: Divine Transcendence and Mortal Limits in Pindar's *Nemean 6*" coming out this fall. In the photo, taken by Peter's spouse Sarah on Father's Day, Felix and Sylvie are entranced by the St. Croix River in Stillwater, MN.



Congrats to Hilary Boussein '09 and Coulter George, who tied the knot on May 31 at the historic Dawes House in Evanston, IL. Hilary had expected to teach here next year, but love changed her mind! Instead, she will live with Coulter in Charlottesville, VA, and work on a book. Thank you, Hilary, for seven years of devoted service to your alma mater. All of us will miss you.

Filling in for Hilary will be Florencia Foxley, who is new to St. Olaf but not to Northfield: since earning her B.A. at Haverford, her M.A. at Notre Dame, and her Ph.D. at CU Boulder, she has taught at Carleton for a year and at Dartmouth for three. Her specialties are Greek poetry, drama, and social history; she has an English setter named Daphne. Welcome, Florencia!



And welcome back to versatile Kathryn Steed, who will be teaching a Latin course for us. Last year she started out with one course but ended up with three, when the college ran out of courses for the huge first-year class.



Retirees Jim and Donna May checked another item off their bucket list in March, when they flew to Egypt for a cruise along the Nile (see photo). They are gearing up to lead their next Alumni & Family Travel trip to Greece in the fall. When not globe-trotting, they are busy with everything from music, antique cars, and gala dinners to babysitting their five super-energetic grandchildren.

Retirees Steve and Rhonda Reece have been busy, too, driving through national parks and attending family gatherings. The photo shows them with son Taylor & wife Kayli, daughter Hannah & fiancé Lukas, and grandkids Ellie & Teddy in Sioux Falls, SD. Steve's new monograph, *Wordplay on Proper Names in Luke-Acts*, is due to be published in November by Brill (#197 in *Supplements to Novum Testamentum*); better order your copy soon!



The 5th edition of Anne Groton's *From Alpha to Omega* appeared in April with a snazzy purple cover. To the left, you see "Grot" and "May" having a reunion with Jay Norton '87 on the weekend of Christmas Fest.

Enrollments are strong, and there is great camaraderie in the department. Unfortunately, because of cuts, we have to teach our intermediate and advanced Greek courses as unpaid overloads. This stopgap works but is not sustainable. After our positive external review a year ago, we were optimistic about being approved to conduct a tenure-track search for Steve Reece's successor, but alas, for the third time, our request was denied. The number of tenure-track faculty in a 3-person department is now limited to two, so the only way for us to keep our three tenure lines is to find a donor who will endow the third position at a cost of \$2 million! Then Anne Groton can happily retire. Stay healthy, everyone; come visit us and our contented cows. And if by chance you know any billionaires partial to Classics, send them our way.

