

# NEWSLETTER

August, 2000

Greetings from Northfield! We have had such an eventful year that we decided it was high time to revive our departmental newsletter, which last saw the light of day in November, 1983. Back then we had recently moved into beautifully renovated offices on the third floor of Old Main, and the three of us (Lloyd Gunderson, Jim May, Anne Groton) shared a trusty IBM Selectric II typewriter. 17 years later, we are still in the same suite of offices, with the same old typewriter, but we now spend our lives glued to the keyboards of Macintosh computers and entangled in electronic webs undreamed of in 1983.

Lloyd has retired from teaching but stays busy as General Manager of Grossman Chevrolet in Burnsville, MN, and as the proud grandfather of six. He and Connie will be celebrating the marriage of their youngest son in September. Steve Reece, Lloyd's successor at St. Olaf, is now a tenured associate professor and will be enjoying a sabbatical leave in 2000-01 while Jim May completes his final year as Associate Dean for Humanities and teaches in the Great Conversation program. Replacing Steve and Jim will be Gwen Compton-Engle, St. Olaf '92, now beginning her fourth year at St. Olaf as an invaluable fill-in, and Kent Gregory, Washington & Lee '92, who has been teaching at Baylor and Tulane while finishing his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. Working with them will be the department matriarch, Anne Groton, who is gearing up to direct her 12th Latin play at St. Olaf next spring.

## Highlights of 1999-2000

1. The senior class included 7 Classics majors (Melissa Brand, Michelle Domondon, Anders Hendrickson, Toni Melaas, Paul Moran, Kate Poland, Andrew Strong), 2 Greek majors, (Joanna Hawkins, Lane Keister), 3 Ancient Studies majors (Andrea Hedding, Heather Langenfeld, Matthew Peterson), 3 Medieval Studies majors (Martha Beck, Robert Bursiel, Hadley Johnson). Of these 15 students, 1 won a Fulbright Scholarship, 2 were nominated for Rhodes Scholarships, and 10 were elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Three of the Classics majors (Anders, Paul, and Michelle) were wooed by prestigious graduate programs in Classics and eventually decided to attend U. of Michigan, U. of Virginia, and Bryn Mawr College, respectively.

2. This year we initiated 13 students into Eta Sigma Phi, the national Classics honor society. In the Eta Sigma Phi contests for 1999, St. Olaf students won 7 of the 23 prizes: Jeremiah Harrelson '99 took 2nd in Advanced Latin; Paul Moran '00 took 2nd in Advanced Greek and 3rd in Intermediate Latin; Matthew Steenberg '01 took 1st in Intermediate Classical Greek and 1st in Koine Greek; Kristie Kiesel '01 took 2nd in Latin Prose Composition; Christopher Brav '02 received Honorable Mention in Intermediate Latin. On Feb. 17 Matthew Steenberg was featured by *USA Today* as one of 20 students on the All-USA College Academic First Team.

3. Course enrollments remained strong across the board: Beginning Latin (53 in Semester I, 35 in Semester II); Beginning Greek (20 in Semester I, 15 in Semester II); Intermediate Latin (31); Intermediate Greek (10); Medieval Latin (7); New Testament Greek (7); Latin Lyric Poetry (7); Latin Satire (8); Greek Historians (6); Homer (9); Greek and Roman Myth (27); Classical Studies in Greece (29); Singers of Tales (21); Golden Age of Greece (30).

4. In October we hosted a lecture at St. Olaf by Prof. Peter Green (U. of Iowa) on "Alexander's Alexandria." In February we co-sponsored (along with Carleton's Dept. of Classical Languages) a talk at Carleton by Prof. Jeffrey Henderson (Boston U.) on "Lost Ladies: Women in the Fragments of Old Comedy." In March Prof. Cecil Wooten (UNC-Chapel Hill) spoke here on "Noon Becomes Night: Petronius and Cultural Turbulence." We held our annual Christmas caroling party in December, our annual Bacchanalia (picnic supper) in May.

5. During Fall Break three St. Olaf Classics majors spent a day at Rochester Mayo High School, speaking to Latin classes and demonstrating how to run a Latin Quiz Bowl. In the spring we devised two contests for Latin students in Minnesota secondary schools, with \$200 in prize money supplied by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. An ad (in Latin) for feta cheese won the advertisement contest, and a Pyramus & Thisbe video (in Latin), modeled on *The Blair Witch Project*, won the myth-based skit contest.

6. In December, 1999, Kenneth and Kathleen Loomis, parents of Steve Loomis '95, presented us with a wonderful gift: they established the Loomis Endowed Academic Awards in Latin and Mathematics. The spendable income from their fund will go to support an annual prize in Latin and another in mathematics. Spurred on by their generosity, Anne Groton decided to set up, at the same time, the Groton Endowment for Classics, to support an annual prize in Greek and to help pay for other activities of the department.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank publicly not only the Loomis family but also our earlier benefactors, Sy and Karen Iffert, parents of Jena Iffert '98, whose anonymous donation to the Delta Chi chapter of Eta Sigma Phi in 1997-98 made possible a number of Classics Conversation Tables and other extracurricular events for our students that year.

## Faculty Activities

Gwen Compton-Engle, Anne Groton, Jim May, and Steve Reece all attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of Minnesota held at Macalester College in October (Steve's term as President ended, Gwen's as Treasurer began) and the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South held in Knoxville in April (Jim's term as Past President ended, Anne's as Northern Plains Vice-President did not). Gwen, Anne, and Jim also attended the annual meeting of the American Philological Association held in Dallas in December; Jim is now Director of the Classics Advisory Service, Anne a member of the Education Committee.

Steve was named one of eleven Summer Scholars at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, DC, and is there now, doing non-stop research for his book on junctural metanalysis in Homeric Greek. He recently had two articles on word etymologies in Homer published in *Glotta* and *Classical World*. Not to be outdone, Gwen recently had two articles on Aristophanes published in *Classical Journal* and *Classical Philology*, along with a book review.

Jim May and Jakob Wisse's annotated English translation of Cicero's *On the Ideal Orator* will be published soon by Oxford University Press. Meanwhile Jim is editing Volume I (*Oratory and Rhetoric*) of E. J. Brill's series of companion guides to Cicero. *38 Latin Stories*, which Jim co-authored with Anne Groton 15 years ago, continues to be used as a supplement to *Wheelock's Latin*, now in its sixth edition. The third edition of Anne's *From Alpha to Omega: A Beginning Course in Classical Greek* has just appeared, sporting a new blue cover.

## International Studies

Begun by Lloyd Gunderson back in 1973, Classical Studies in Greece (originally including Rome) is St. Olaf's longest-running interim abroad. Jim May taught the course again in January, 2000, with the indomitable Dora Spachi as guide and the incomparable Dimitri Cocconi as travel agent. In addition, every other summer Jim leads a St. Olaf study/travel trip to Greece; this year the group island-hopped around the northern Aegean, and the men were permitted to visit two of the monasteries on Mt. Athos while the women waved at them from a boat!

## Keeping in Touch

The Department of Classics now has its own web page ([www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/](http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/)), which includes a section for alumni news. If you would like to send us a blurb about yourself and/or a photo for the web page, please do! Our address is Dept. of Classics, St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN 55057-1098. We would be even happier to see and talk with you in person, should your travels ever bring you back to campus.

# ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

This brief questionnaire asks you to reflect on the value of your major in Classics, Latin, Latin Education, Greek, Ancient Studies, or Medieval Studies. Up to now, we have assessed the quality of our program mainly on the basis of exit interviews with our graduating seniors; this is the first time we have attempted to survey all of our living alumni. We would be grateful if you would comment on the strengths and weaknesses of our program and tell us, honestly, how useful (or not) your studies at St. Olaf have proven to be over the years. Thank you very much!

Name:

Year of graduation from St. Olaf:

Major(s) at St. Olaf:

Further education after graduation from St. Olaf:

Occupation(s):

What do you perceive to be the main strengths and the main weaknesses of the Classics program (or the Ancient Studies or Medieval Studies program) at St. Olaf?

What role, if any, have classical (or medieval) studies continued to play in your life?

In retrospect are you glad that you majored in Classics (or Greek, Latin, Latin Education, Ancient Studies, Medieval Studies)? Would you still recommend the major to a student? Why or why not?

Other comments:

Please return by Sept. 30 to Dept. of Classics, St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN 55057-1098. An e-version is available on our web page ([www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/](http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/)).