

St. Olaf College Department of Classics

NEWSLETTER

July, 2001

Thank you for your encouraging responses to our first newsletter last summer. On the back page of this issue you will find a summary of the results of our alumni questionnaire.

Highlights of 2000-2001

This year's senior class included three Classics majors (Jenny Brown, Kristie Kiesel, Matt Steenberg), one Greek major (Adrienne Grzenda), one Latin major (Ed Kemp), four Ancient Studies majors (Jodie Crofts, Kevin Gentz, Nathanael Johnson, Dan Mays), and one Medieval Studies major (Lisa Pierce). In addition a 1995 graduate, Carrie Lawrence, returned to St. Olaf to finish her Ancient Studies major. Matt translated 2 Maccabees with introduction and notes to earn distinction in Classics. He and Adrienne were elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Next year Jenny will pursue an M.A.T. in Latin and Classical Humanities at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, while Matt, St. Olaf's first Marshall Scholar, studies patristics at Oxford.

In March we initiated 19 undergraduate and 2 honorary members into the national Classics honor society. Six students drove with Anne Groton to the Eta Sigma Phi convention, held at Monmouth College, March 30-April 1; Matt Steenberg (wearing yellow pompons in the photo below) was voted "best-dressed *vir*" at the Roman banquet.



Marquis Berrey, Jenny Brown, Matt Steenberg, Nina Alton, David Schiedler, Anne Groton, Peter Sprangers (clockwise) in their dinner attire at the Eta Sigma Phi convention

In the Eta Sigma Phi translation contests for 2001, St. Olaf students won 4 of the 24 prizes: Matt Steenberg took 2nd in Advanced Greek; Joe Amos took 2nd in Intermediate Koine Greek; Jenny Brown received Honorable Mention in Latin Prose Composition; Marquis Berrey received Honorable Mention in Intermediate Classical Greek.

On May 9 we held the first annual Loomis Latin Translation Contest; nine students took the hour-long test (translating a passage from Sallust). First prize (\$350) went to this year's departmental Latin tutor Jenny Brown, second prize (\$200) to Kristina (Nina) Alton, who will replace Jenny next year as departmental Latin tutor.

Nina Alton was also one of six undergraduates to be awarded a Manson A. Stewart Scholarship by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. Each winner receives \$1000 along with a year's membership in CAMWS and a year's subscription to *The Classical Journal*. The Stewart Scholarship competition began in 1995: Catherine Kusske '97 was a winner in 1996, Paul Moran '00 in 1999.

An 18-member student cast directed by Anne Groton had a merry time performing Plautus' *Pseudolus* at four nearby schools (Mpls. South H.S., Edina H.S., Schaeffer Academy, Gustavus Adolphus College) and twice at St. Olaf, April 26-28. On Feb. 22 we co-sponsored with Carleton a lecture at St. Olaf by Prof. Ralph Rosen (U. of Penn.) on "The Poetry of Mockery and Abuse in Ancient Greece." On May 10 Prof. Donald Lateiner (Ohio Wesleyan U.) spoke at St. Olaf on "Streetlife: Honor and Insult in Ancient Athens." We held our annual Christmas caroling party with the German Department in December, our Bacchanalia in May.



St. Olaf students visiting the ancient stadium at Olympia (photo by Paul Moran '00)

Courses

Course enrollments remained healthy this year: Beginning Latin (52 in Semester I, 41 in Semester II); Beginning Greek (24 in Sem. I, 20 in Sem. II); Intermediate Latin (39); Intermediate Greek (13); Vergil (7); New Testament Greek (13); Cicero (7); Greek Drama (5); Roman Historians (5); Greek Philosophy (4); Greek & Roman Myth (25); Fall of the Roman Empire (January course - 36); Classical Studies in Greece (30); Golden Age of Rome (31); Indep. Study in Latin (2); Indep. Research in Classics (2); Indep. Research in Greek (1).

Jim May was "psyched" by his first teaching experience in the Great Conversation program. In 2001-02 he, Sylvia Carullo, and Rick Fairbanks will continue with the second-year students as Anne Groton, Jonathan Hill, and Ed Langerak tackle a new batch of first-year Great Connors. To make this possible, Gwen Compton-Engle will stay on another year in the Classics Department--hooray! After accompanying Anne to Greece this past January as a mentee, Gwen has taken charge of the 2002 Classics interim abroad, already filled at 30 students.

Faculty Activities



Steve Reece, Gwen Compton-Engle, Anne Groton, Jim May - CAVE CANEM!

It was a pleasure to have Kent Gregory teaching with us this past year as Steve Reece's sabbatical-leave replacement. Kent's jolly personality and his fascination with Mardi Gras beads endeared him to all; we wish him well as he defends his dissertation at the University of Minnesota and rejoins the faculty at Tulane University.

Steve spent part of his sabbatical at the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington, DC, part of it on an archaeological tour of Israel, but most of it in his cubicle on the fifth floor of Rølvaag Library. While working on his monograph about pre-Homeric epic diction, he enjoyed being sidetracked by shorter projects such as an article on the Gabioi, a remote tribe mentioned by Aeschylus, an article on the use of epithets by the late epic poet Nonnus, an article on the history of the writing system in Cyprus, and (inspired by his stay on a moshav in the Arab village of Abu Ghosh) an article on the supposed distance of Emmaus from Jerusalem.

In March we celebrated the publication (by Oxford University Press) of Jim May and Jaap Wisse's annotated translation of Cicero's *On the Ideal Orator*; there has been no new English translation of this important work since 1942. A revised third edition of Anne Groton's *From Alpha to Omega: A Beginning Course in Classical Greek* (Focus Publishing) has just appeared, this time with a lemon-lime cover and (we hope!) no more typos. Gwen is studying costume and disguise in Greek drama; the journal *Hermes* will soon be publishing her note on the prologues of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and Euripides' *Cyclops*.

Professional meetings took us to far-flung locales this year: San Diego, Provo, and Athens (Georgia, not Greece!). Jim also spoke at the Popular Culture Association conference in Las Vegas and at a Communication colloquium at the University of Maryland and gave guest lectures at Florida State University and Wabash College.

Alumni Questionnaire Results

The 80 alumni (43 women, 37 men) who returned our questionnaire ranged from the Class of 1933 to the Class of 2000: 6 from the 1930's, 4 from the 1940's, 3 from the 1950's, 4 from the 1960's, 11 from the 1970's, 23 from the 1980's, 28 from the 1990's, 1 from 2000. Teaching was the career most often listed (several people listed more than one): K-12 teacher (20); college, university, or seminary professor (13: classics 6, religion/Biblical Greek 3, accounting 1, biology 1, law 1, nursing 1); pastor (12); librarian (8); physician (6); attorney (5); writer/editor (5); homemaker (5); nurse (4); computer programmer/database developer (3); insurance agent (2); missionary (2); financial controller (1); financial planner (1); grants administrator (1); educational consultant (1); international studies director (1); international business consultant (1); carpenter (1); graduate student (9). Many mentioned doing volunteer work in their community. Love of travel was another common theme: we heard from alumni in places as far away as Australia and Papua, New Guinea!

Nearly all who filled out the questionnaire expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their choice of major at St. Olaf and still see value in the study of ancient and medieval languages and culture: "has enriched my thinking and my life"; "is a solid background for any work or academic experience"; "it changes the way one looks at the world"; "serious studies mixed with fun"; "perfect major for someone hungry for knowledge." People recalled the rigor of their Latin and Greek courses with a mixture of terror ("I was eaten alive"), sense of accomplishment ("I was proud to have completed those difficult classes"), and even some lingering guilt ("I should have worked harder")! Other strengths: personalized instruction, dedication and enthusiasm of professors, camaraderie among students and faculty. Weaknesses: too much emphasis on the languages, not enough on history, art, archaeology; department too small; insufficient publicity of the program; inadequate advice on career options.

Selected comments: "I'm sure there have been extensive changes in 67 years!" "Several times I was told in job interviews that 'I was really curious to see what a Medieval Studies major looked like' (so my major helped me indirectly find jobs.)." "I can pronounce and spell words better than any other nurse I know." "The fact that much of my research over the last several years has concerned tattooing in the ancient world has, of course, nothing to do with St. Olaf."

Thank you all for your honest, funny, thoughtful, appreciative replies.

Philanthropy

If you are considering a donation to St. Olaf, you may wish to designate that the money go to one of these four recently established funds: Scarseth Endowment (from Margaret Scarseth '28) supports an annual scholarship (currently \$2000) for a Classics (Greek or Latin) major, based on good citizenship, need, and scholastic ability; Grimsrud Endowment (from Karen Silness Grimsrud '71) will support an annual scholarship for a Latin major, based on financial need and scholastic achievement; Loomis Endowment (from Kenneth and Kathleen Loomis and Steve Loomis '97) supports one or more annual prizes (up to \$400 each) in Latin; Groton Endowment will support one or more annual prizes (up to \$400 each) in Greek and defray the cost of special activities sponsored by the Classics Department.

The alumni section of our web page (www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/) needs your help; please send news to groton@stolaf.edu. Of course, we'd be even more delighted to see you and your families in person. Best wishes from all of us in Old Main 32!