

St. Olaf College Department of Classics

NEWSLETTER

July, 2003

The 2002-03 academic year got off to a rousing start when the whole Classics faculty, along with spouses, children, and retiree Lloyd Gunderson, led St. Olaf's Homecoming Parade in Jim May's antique fire truck. Many other adventures followed!



Highlights of 2002-2003

Among the graduates of 2003 were three Classics majors (Joseph Amos, Sarah Beaver, Marquis Berrey), two Latin majors (Nathan Olawsky, Peter Sprangers), two Ancient Studies majors (Esther Lee, P J Rossiter), and one Medieval Studies major (Stephanie Wyman). Joe, Sarah, Marquis, and Stephanie earned membership in Phi Beta Kappa. Marquis wrote an honors thesis on Solon and graduated with distinction; he will enter the Ph.D. program in Classics at the University of Texas after a year of graduate study at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

This was the year for our 13th biennial production of an ancient Roman comedy. A cast of 19 students went on the road to perform Plautus' *Rudens* ("The Rope") at five schools in southeastern Minnesota. Our 28-hour, 250-mile tour was followed by two standing-room-only performances at St. Olaf, March 14-15. Nearly 1000 people saw the show! Thanks to the Loomis family, who donated money this year specifically for the Latin play, we were able to buy three new tripod projection screens to hold up our bedsheet backdrops.

At the end of March, Esther Lee '03 and Anne Groton became unofficial "Sooners" when they attended the national convention of Eta Sigma Phi (Classics honor society), held in Norman, Oklahoma. Back on campus, 17 enthusiastic new members were initiated into the Delta Chi chapter. In the national translation contests for 2003, St. Olaf students won four of the 25 prizes: Marquis Berrey '03 took 2nd in Advanced Classical Greek; Keeley Esterhay '06 took 1st in Intermediate Latin and 2nd in Latin Prose Composition; Kathleen Burt '04 received honorable mention in Latin Prose Composition.

In April we held the third annual competition for the Loomis Award in Latin and the second annual competition for the Groton Award in Greek. Nine students took the Latin exam (translating a passage from Livy); eight took the Greek exam (translating a passage from Epictetus). Winners in the Latin contest were Christopher Schifani '05, Marquis Berrey '03, Katharine Monson '04, and Keeley Esterhay '06, in the Greek contest Hilary Lehmann '04, Marquis Berrey '03, Julia Kelto '04, and Sarah Beaver '03.

Other events: in October, Prof. Christopher Faraone (U. of Chicago) gave a talk on "Female Stereotypes in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*"; in February, Prof. Daniel Hooley (U. of Missouri-Columbia) spoke to our advanced Latin class and then lectured on "Dryden's Original Sin: Misreading Classical Satire." Besides Christmas caroling, the spring Bacchanalia, and a game of "Classical Ultimate Frisbee" behind Old Main, students rose early to converse in Latin with Chris Brunelle at his *ientaculum Latinum* ("Latin breakfast") on Friday mornings.



Ultimate Frisbee players take time out for a team photo.

Courses

Almost all of our classes were packed this year: we taught a total of 423 students in Latin, Greek, and Classics. Everyone seemed happy with our decision to allow twice the usual number of students in Greek & Roman Myth and the Golden Age of Rome, and Chris Brunelle did an expert job managing those large classes (55-60 students in each). Jon Bruss was similarly adept at keeping the 25 students in Beginning Greek motivated and committed.

We continue to face the "problem" of too many students taking Intermediate Latin. This past year, it was only Jim May's willingness to teach a Latin course on top of his full-time duties as Provost that enabled us to offer two sections of Latin 231. Not only are more students enrolling in Beginning Latin (we began with 70 last fall), but more of them (40+) are surviving into the third semester; in addition, we are attracting more students who have studied Latin in high school and who arrive here ready to take Intermediate Latin and begin Greek.

The Classics interim to Greece, offered for the 29th time, went off without a hitch; the popularity of the course gave Anne Groton the luxury of choosing the best qualified 30 applicants from a pool of 50. Once in Greece, however, we discovered that nearly every major museum had been closed for renovation because of the Summer 2004 Olympics in Athens. That situation prompted us to cancel next year's interim; some of the students who might have gone with us have the option of going instead with Jim May and Rick Fairbanks, who will be offering a special, one-time Great Conversation course in Greece and Italy next January.

Speaking of the Great Conversation, Anne Groton enjoyed teaching the last two courses in that five-course sequence, along with Jonathan Hill (English) and Ed Langerak (Philosophy); Steve Reece flourished in the first year of the program, teaching with Jolene Barjasteh (French) and Doug Schuurman (Religion). The Latin play cast included several Great Con students



Shipwrecked maidens meet the priestess of Venus in Plautus' Rudens.

Professional Activities

Last summer Jim and Donna May paid a visit to northern Greece and the Ionian islands with their 8th group of adult learners. In late August Jon Bruss flew to Groningen, Netherlands, to participate in a workshop on Hellenistic poetry. Europe proved so alluring that he returned in late November to give invited lectures in Würzburg and Münster, Germany.

Back in Minnesota, Chris Brunelle, Jon Bruss, Anne Groton, Jim May, and Steve Reece all attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of Minnesota (CAM) in St. Paul on October 26. Anne (President) and Jon (Treasurer) will finish their terms this fall. Four of us made it to the annual meeting of the American Philological Association (APA) in New Orleans, January 3-6, 2003. While Steve helped the St. Olaf History Department interview candidates for a tenure-track position in ancient history, Anne presided over a panel on the comedy of Menander, Jim gave a talk on the use of Ciceronian scholarship in the classroom, and Jon presented a paper on ancient Greek epigrams that commemorate those lost at sea.

On April 3-6, Jim and Anne attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West & South (CAMWS) in Lexington, KY. As the banquet orator, Jim wowed everyone with his rendition of "My Old Kentucky Home" in Latin. Anne chaired a session on Plautus and was elected Secretary-Treasurer; her five-year term begins on May 1, 2004, by which time St. Olaf College will have become the new headquarters of CAMWS.

The year's major scholarly accomplishment was the publication of Brill's *Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric*, a handsome, 632-page hardback edited by Jim. Meanwhile three articles by Jon on Greek epigrams (in *Mnemosyne*, *Classical Journal*, and *Classical Philology*), one by Chris on Ovid (in *Helios*), and one by Steve on the Mycenaean bath (in *Mnemosyne*) have appeared in print--with more to come!



Late-breaking news: Julian Arthur Brunelle, son of Chris Brunelle and Serena Zabin, was born at 12:15 a.m. on July 8. His long fingers portend greatness. Congratulations!

Departmental Self-Study

We are in the process of evaluating our Classics program. If you missed the chance to fill out the questionnaire we mailed to alumni three years ago, we invite you to send us (by Sept. 1) answers to the questions listed below. You may prefer to download a copy of the questionnaire from our web site: <http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/>. Many thanks for your input!

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, Ancient Studies, Medieval Studies)? Would you still recommend the major to a student? Why or why not?	
Other comments:	

It's a treat to hear from alumni, so please continue to send your news to Dept. of Classics, St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN 55057-1574, or to groton@stolaf.edu