

St. Olaf College Department of Classics NEWSLETTER

July, 2005

As you can tell from the smiling faces below, the 77th National Convention of Eta Sigma Phi, held at St. Olaf College, April 15-17, 2005, was a weekend to remember.



Stephanie Walker, Lauren Gioe, Karin Gilje, Mike Dow, Emelie Heltsley, and Krista Apland greet our guests with Minnesota niceness.

CONVENTION: More than 100 members of the Classics honor society, from as far away as Massachusetts and Texas, came to Northfield for the convention. Under the leadership of National President Stephanie Walker '05, and with the help of 23 recent initiates, the veteran members of the chapter did an impressive job of running all the events. Along with an encore performance of the Latin play, Jim May gave his ever-popular trireme lecture, Steve Reece supervised Olympic Games in the Tostrud Center, and Gerry Hoekstra's Early Music Singers and Collegium Musicum presented a concert of 16th-century songs and instrumental pieces. St. Olaf President Chris Thomforde spoke at the opening-night "make your own sundae" reception.

It had been exactly 20 years since St. Olaf last hosted an Eta Sigma Phi convention. Margaret Emond Kirkegaard, who had chaired the convention committee back in 1985 (when Ansis Viksnins was the national vice-president), generously donated money to help pay for this year's convention. Thank you, Margaret! In another fitting twist of fate, the winning bid for next year's convention was submitted by the chapter at Virginia Tech, whose faculty advisor is none other than St. Olaf alumnus Terry Papillon.

GRADUATES: The Class of 2005 included 8 majors in Classics (Kathleen Ess [ΦBK], Andrea Gatzke [departmental Latin tutor in 2004-05; graduated with distinction in ancient history], Seth Heringer, Joshua Langhorst, Evan Meyer, Mark Royer, Christopher Schifani [ΦBK; graduated with distinction in Classics; his honors paper was entitled “Plato in the World: A Translation of Selected Platonic Epistles with Commentary and Notes”], Stephanie Walker [ΦBK; departmental Latin tutor in 2003-04; student speaker at Commencement]) and 1 major in Greek (Valerie Veo [departmental Greek tutor in 2004-05]).

Also among the graduates in May were 5 majors in Ancient Studies (Austin Bentley, Marghet Hager, Majda Haznadar, Jessica Overbeck, Eric Reitz) and 2 majors in Medieval Studies (Alison Klawiter, Brigit McGuire [ΦBK]). Congratulations to all of you!

PRIZES: St. Olaf students once again did well in the Eta Sigma Phi translation exams. This year Kirstine Wynn took 2nd in Latin Prose Composition; Jennifer Starkey took 2nd in Advanced Latin; Elizabeth Beerman took 2nd in Koine Greek; and Alaina Burkard received honorable mention in Intermediate Latin. St. Olaf has had at least one winner every year since 1980, so all the other schools are gunning for us, hoping to end our streak!

In the Groton Greek Contest (translating a passage from Xenophon), 1st prize went to Kathleen Ess, 2nd to Christopher Schifani, and 3rd to Mark Royer. In the Loomis Latin Contest (translating a passage from Cyriac of Ancona), 1st prize went to Jennifer Starkey, 2nd to Christopher Schifani, and 3rd to Elizabeth Beerman. We continue to be grateful to the Loomis family for making these annual prizes in Latin possible.

Kathleen Ess, who intends to enter the postbaccalaureate program in Classics at UNC-Chapel Hill, and Chris Schifani received Awards for Outstanding Accomplishment in Classical Studies from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS).

LATIN PLAY: A 23-member cast directed by Anne Groton performed Plautus' *Curculio* 7 times, at 6 different schools, in 3 days (Mar. 10-12). This was St. Olaf's 14th production of an ancient Roman comedy. We have become a force for ecumenism in Minnesota: students from ELCA, Missouri Synod, and Catholic schools, from non-denominational Christian academies, from private, public, and charter schools, all come together to watch the show in the same gym!



GUESTS: In September, Medieval Studies co-sponsored a guest lecture, “Casting Our Own Shadows: Recreating the Pilgrimage to Santiago,” by Scott Montgomery and Alice Bauer. In January Christopher Brunelle persuaded Charles Martin, a prize-winning poet and translator of ancient Latin poetry, to fly from New York to Minnesota to give a public lecture called “Ovid in Exile: The Solution to a Mystery?”, supported by St. Olaf’s Leraas Occasional Lecture Fund. While he was on campus, he also visited Chris’s interim course on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.

SADNESS: Nicholas M. Harter '06, of Hopkins, Minnesota, was killed in a scuba-diving accident in the Mississippi River on November 21, 2004. A double major in Ancient Studies and English, he loved Latin and was an enthusiastic member of Eta Sigma Phi. At the close of his memorial service, a chime engraved with his name was added to the St. Olaf Memorial Tower.

Faculty News

In last year’s newsletter we announced that, during Semester II of 2004-05, Paul Moran (St. Olaf '00) would be substituting for Steve Reece, who had won a Faculty Development Grant releasing him from teaching in the spring. That arrangement worked well: it was a pleasure to have Paul, Jenny (Benson '00), and one-year-old Evan in residence, and Steve enjoyed his four months of research and writing. The Morans have now returned to Charlottesville, where Paul will complete his dissertation while Jenny finishes her seminary studies.



Last fall, when twice the usual number of students signed up for Beginning Greek, we were given permission to hire Tarik Wareh (A.B., Harvard; M.A., Ph.D., Berkeley), who had just moved to Northfield to do research while his wife Pattie taught English at Carleton. Later, when St. Olaf needed an extra interim course, Anne Groton volunteered to teach one, and we were allowed to hire Tarik to teach her Advanced Greek course in the spring--a win-win situation! On June 8 Pattie gave birth to a son, Faiz. The family has now moved to Schenectady, where both Tarik and Pattie will be teaching at Union College.

Thank you, Paul and Tarik, for being such supportive colleagues and such valuable additions to our department this year!

GROWTH: After decades of teaching overloads, we have been rewarded by an increase in FTE from 3.0 to 3.5; in other words, we are now a 3.5-person, 21-course department. Next year Tim Howe of the History Department will teach the Classics interim in Greece (this year’s course--dubbed “Greece with Reece”--was as popular as ever); another History Department member, medievalist David Perry, will teach our on-campus interim (“The Fall of the Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity”). Heather Woods, a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, will teach our first-ever 3rd section of Beginning Latin. Steve and Chris will teach fulltime; Anne will have one course off for running CAMWS; Jim will fill in for her by teaching one section of Beginning Greek on top of his Provost duties.

MEETINGS: All of the St. Olaf Classics faculty attended the Classical Association of Minnesota Annual Meeting, held in Minneapolis on Oct. 30. Anne, Jim, and Tarik also attended the American Philological Association Annual Meeting in Boston, Jan. 6-9, and, together with Steve, Paul, and Tim, the CAMWS Annual Meeting in Madison, Mar. 30-Apr. 2. Steve gave a paper there; Anne, Tim, Jim, Steve, and Tarik chaired sessions; and Jim wore a plastic cheesehead while orating in Latin at the formal banquet! Anne and her administrative assistant Sue Newland were relieved that the first CAMWS meeting they had to manage went smoothly.

SCHOLARSHIP: Steve has a chapter called “Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: From Oral Performance to Written Text” in *Unbinding Proteus: New Directions in Oral Theory* (Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 2005); Chris has a chapter called “Ovid's Satirical Remedies” in *Gendered Dynamics in Latin Love Poetry* (Johns Hopkins, 2005). Anne's article on “Facing the Facts about Teaching Latin” appeared in *Syllecta Classica* 15 (2004). In March, Jim served as outside evaluator of the honors program at the University of the South (Sewanee, Tennessee).



Juice for the victors
at the softball game



An ancient piñata
at the convention



“I speak the words of...Ovid?”
at the Eta Sigma Phi initiation

FUNDS: Heidi Fisher '85, now an acquisitions librarian at Princeton University, was inspired by last summer's newsletter to set up a memorial for her father, David A. Fisher, an outstanding linguist and high-school Russian teacher. Money sent to the Advancement Office at St. Olaf in his name will be put into the Eta Sigma Phi account and used to buy books for the Classics Department's reference library. We are grateful to Heidi and to all those who have been kind enough to contribute to one of our Classics endowment funds:

The Grimsrud Endowment supports an annual scholarship for a student majoring in Latin or in Classics with a Latin emphasis (based on financial need and scholastic achievement). This year the Grimsrud Scholarship was held by Kendra Olson '06. Karen and George Grimsrud also dropped off several boxes of used Classics books last fall and allowed us to sell them to students as a fund-raiser for Eta Sigma Phi. Many thanks!

The Scarseth Endowment supports an annual scholarship for a student majoring in Classics, Greek, or Latin (based on good citizenship, financial need, and scholastic ability). In 2004-05 the scholarship was held by Evan Meyer '05.

The Groton and Loomis Endowments support annual prizes in Greek and Latin.

VISITS: Please visit our website (www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics/) or, better yet, visit us in person in Old Main 32. We love seeing alumni and meeting their families, so bring the kids!