

## St. Olaf College Department of Classics

# NEWSLETTER

July, 2009



It may have rained on our softball game (see photo), but, as always, good spirits prevailed in the Department of Classics. In a time of financial crisis St. Olaf has reacted calmly and is now faring better than many other colleges that depend heavily on their endowments or are less accustomed than we are to frugality. We continue to have wonderful students, whose dedication, intelligence, and sense of humor make it a delight to come to work each day.

In the **Class of 2009** four students majored in Classics (Sarah Adamson [+ pre-med], Hilary Boussein [+ Philosophy], Peter Moench [+ English honors], Jeffrey Schneider), one in Latin (Eric Larson [+ Philosophy & Linguistic Studies]), one in Latin Education (Cory Holec), one in Latin and Ancient Studies (Nathan O'Keefe [+ History]), two in Ancient Studies (Alexandra Carrier [+ History] and Christopher Hanley [+ Religion & Middle East Studies]), and three in Medieval Studies (Julia Demakis [+ Environmental Studies], Sydney Freedman [+ Music], Cheng Vang). Sarah, Hilary, Peter, Jeffrey, and Chris were elected to **Phi Beta Kappa**. As you can see, the talents of this group ranged all over the map!



**Hilary Boussein** (left) will enter the Ph.D. program in Classics at the University of Virginia this fall. In the Eta Sigma Phi translation contests she earned two prizes, extending St. Olaf's 30-year winning streak.



**Cory Holec** (right), who graduated with a K-12 teaching license, has been hired to teach Latin at a middle school in Norfolk, Virginia.

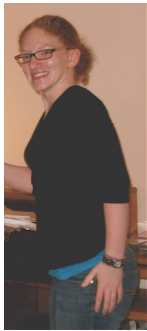


**Nathan O'Keefe** (left), Hilary Boussein, and Cory Holec each received an Award for Outstanding Accomplishment in Classical Studies from the Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS).



**Sydney Freedman** (right) is bound for Ireland, where she will pursue an M.A. in medieval music at the University of Limerick.

Twelve St. Olaf students were initiated into the Classics honor society this year. Funds from our endowments enabled Thomas Halvorsen (right) to attend the **Eta Sigma Phi Convention** at Rhodes College in Memphis, where he was elected **Megas Hyparchos** (National Vice-President) for 2009-10. Thomas also took first place in the **9th Annual Loomis Latin Contest**, a repeat of his victory in 2008. This year's sight-translation passage was a poem in hexameters by Marbod of Rennes. Hilary Boussein and Jennifer Easler tied for second, and Martin Shedd took third. The text for the **8th Annual Groton Greek Contest** was an elegy by the Spartan poet Tyrtaeus; Hilary Boussein, Peter Moench, and David Estle finished first, second, and third, respectively.

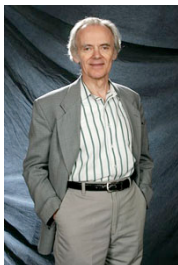


The winner of this year's **Groomis (Groton/Loomis) Grant** for a Classics-related summer project was first-year student Elizabeth Creager (left), who is considering a Latin Education major and requested support to attend the American Classical League's Institute. We were also able to give a **financial aid discount** to each of our six majors (Will Erickson, Thomas Halvorsen, and Stuart Nelson [Classics], Justin Luthey and Conner Westby [Ancient Studies], Katherine Crawford [Medieval Studies]) who participated in the 2009 **Classical Studies in Greece** course, and to provide a summer job for David Estle '10, who is creating a Latin glossary for Jim May's *Cicero Reader* (Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2011).

The **Grimsrud Scholarship** was held this year by Cory Holec, the **Scarseth Scholarship** by Jeffrey Schneider.



**Classics Conversation Tables** continued on Monday evenings with informal talks by five alumni: Kendra Olson '06 (left), who teaches Latin and dance at Shattuck-St. Mary's School, pastor John Voelker '82 (shown greeting Caesar at the Roman wall in London), graduate students Valerie Veo '05 and Kathleen Ess '05, graphic artist Heather Langenfeld Mackenzie '00 (visit her website at [www.skymackenzie.com](http://www.skymackenzie.com)). If you are interested in being one of our speakers, please let us know; the pay is not much (\$50 honorarium plus mileage), but you do receive a free dinner and heaps of appreciation from students and faculty.



In September the Classics Department co-sponsored a Leraas Lecture by **Edward McCrorie** (left) from Providence College, whose translation of Homer's *Odyssey* was being used in our Greek & Roman Myth course and in the Great Conversation program. In April we joined forces with History Department colleague Tim Howe to host **Philip de Souza** (right) from University College Dublin, who lectured on ancient piracy.



**Latin Play:** This was an off year for the Latin play, but the next production (Plautus' *Aulularia*) is coming up sooner than usual: Friday-Saturday, October 2-3, 8:00 p.m., Fosnes Hall. Before the performances at St. Olaf, the troupe will go on tour to several schools in SE Minnesota.

**Traditions:** Early in the year Eta Sigma Phi and the Society of Ancient History co-sponsored the **3rd Annual St. Olaf Olympics**. In the photo (right) Hesiod (Eric Erfanian), Indiana Jones (Paul Adler), and the Persian Sibyl (Anna Johnson) compete for best costume; Hesiod won. After Christmas caroling in Latin, Greek, and German, watching movies, and cavorting at the Bacchanalia, our students ended the year with a Classics t-shirt contest; Justin Luthey '11 created the winning design. Sorry, there are no extras left--we sold them all!



At the **CAMWS Annual Meeting** in Minneapolis in April, Tim Howe and Steve Reece chaired sessions, Chris Brunelle and Mary McMenemy gave papers, and Jim May sang “Old Man River” in Latin at the banquet, with Donna coaching him (left). Anne Groton ran the meeting, aided



by her faithful administrative assistant Sue Newland; the photo (right) shows the two of them engaged in raffling off free books.

**Jim May** continues to do a great job as Provost and to teach one course for us every fall. He had time after Commencement this year to travel to Greece with son Mike and show other professors how to lead study tours. **Anne Groton** is still chairing the department; this past year she was an outside evaluator for Hampden-Sydney College and gave a guest talk on Menander at Denison University. She and our Greek guide Stella Galani had fun leading 30 students through Greece in January, though the striking farmers blocking the roads with their John Deere tractors made driving around Mt. Olympus more challenging than usual! While Anne was away, Jim and Steve Reece attended the American Philological Association's Annual Meeting in Philadelphia and interviewed job candidates. Jim is now the APA's Vice President for Professional Matters.



The big news from **Steve Reece** is that his long-awaited monograph, *Homer's Winged Words: The Evolution of Early Greek Epic Diction in the Light of Oral Theory*, has just been published by Brill. The price is a bit steep at \$241, but it's worth every penny! In honor of this major achievement, the whole family went fishing with Steve on a houseboat in the boundary waters. The photo of Steve, Hannah (PLU '12), Taylor (St. Olaf '09), and Rhonda was taken by Taylor's fiancée Kayli Henry. Steve has already plunged into another scholarly project on classical allusions in the New Testament. In 2008-09

he helped the Mathematics Department hire a professor, served on the Faculty Governance Committee, and learned how to be Faculty Observer to the Board of Regents.

**Chris Brunelle** is halfway through his second round of teaching in the Great Conversation program, halfway through his term as Treasurer of the Classical Association of Minnesota, and a third of the way through his stint on the APA Development Committee. His new translation of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* into limericks wowed the Great Con students when he read it aloud to them in January. He is still the Director of Music at Northfield's First United Church of Christ and in high demand as a pianist for student recitals. In the photo we see Chris experiencing nature with his wife Serena Zabin, a newly tenured history professor at Carleton College, Julian (age 6), Leo and Sebastian (age 3), and Portia, the ageless canine.



Here on the steps of Old Main is **Mary McMenemy**, holding a replica of a famous mosaic from Pompeii. Mary enjoyed her year at St. Olaf and has agreed to stay on this fall to teach three more courses for us. At a meeting of the Language and Literature Group she gave an interesting talk on “Hermes' Résumé: Divine Roles in Aristophanes' *Wealth*.” During January she took her class of first-year students on a tour of the underworld (“Ghosts, Funerals, and Ferryman: Death among the Ancient Greeks”). When not working on her book about Hermes or composing interactive

fiction on her MacPro, she can be found zooming around town on her bike.

Beginning a two-year teaching appointment at St. Olaf this fall will be **C. Michael (Mike) Sampson**, a native of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and an avid hockey and soccer fan (see photo for proof). He recently completed his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan with a dissertation on the concept of *themis* in Sophocles. Mike has two forthcoming articles, one on Archilochus' fable of the fox and the eagle, the other on Aristotle's *Poetics*. He has just finished co-editing a monograph on a group of Michigan papyri containing previously unknown fragments of Greek lyric poetry, written in the language and style of Euripides. Pretty exciting stuff!



Congratulations to **Tim Howe** who earned tenure and promotion this year and published not just one but two books, *Pastoral Politics: Animals, Agriculture, and Society in Ancient Greece* and a co-edited Festschrift for Eugene Borza (Regina, 2008). **Kira Robison**, a graduate student in History at the University of Minnesota, will replace Tim during his sabbatical in 2009-10.

Please send news for our website ([www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics](http://www.stolaf.edu/depts/classics)) or drop by whenever you find yourself in Northfield. We have rearranged the office furniture just for you! Donations to any of our endowment funds (Scarseth, Grimsrud, Loomis, Groton) are always welcome. Many thanks!