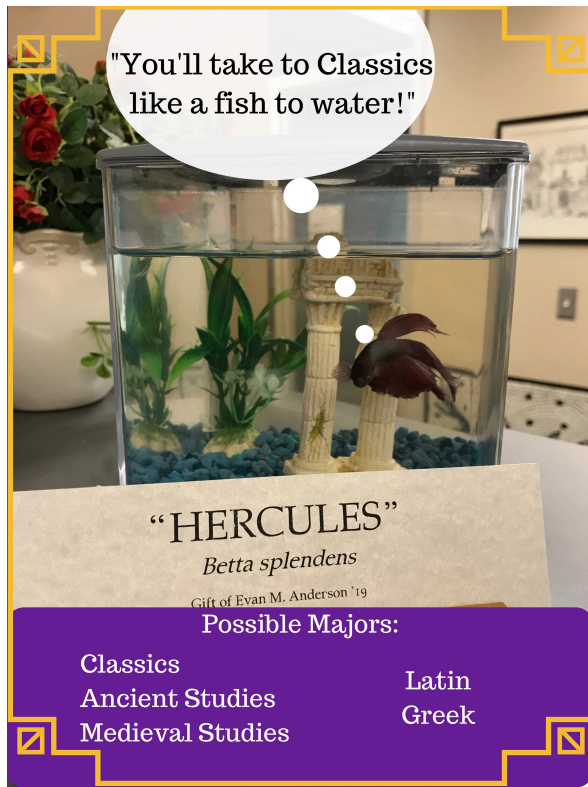


Classics Newsletter – St. Olaf College
July, 2019



Not every department has its own fish, but this year we did! Hercules, a gift from Evan Anderson '19, spent the year on top of the filing cabinet, delighting passersby. Sadly, he did not survive his move to the Government, Foundation, and Corporate Relations Office, where he was to spend the summer. *O piscis, tibi terra levis sit.*

In 2018-19 we had eight senior majors (5 Classics, 1 Greek, 1 Latin, 1 Latin Education). The photo shows Emma dePaulo Reid celebrating with the Classics faculty on Commencement Day. Devin Ames earned distinction with his paper on “Implications of the ‘We’-



Passages in Acts”; he will attend Luther Seminary in the fall. Alex Cavender, who kept our Eta Sigma Phi winning streak alive with his third-place finish in Koine Greek, will begin graduate school in theology at Notre Dame; Mary Landis Gaston will do the same at Duke Divinity School. Sophie Rossiter will be a college counselor in Thessaloniki. Joseph Spellman will teach English in Mississippi through Teach for America. Emy Bess will be a student teacher in Latin at Eagle Ridge Academy.

On the weekend of March 22-24 St. Olaf hosted the national convention of Eta Sigma Phi; alumni will recall that we did this back in 1985 and 2005, too. To help us run the event, 20 of our students obligingly postponed their departure for spring break. Most of our 90 guests stayed in Northfield’s newly opened Fairfield Inn. St. Olaf faculty and students took turns shuttling attendees to/from the airport and campus. Joseph Spellman, *megas prytanis*, presided over the business meetings. Professors gave talks on everything from papyri to PIE (Proto-Indo-European language). Even Jim May emerged from retirement to deliver his legendary lecture on the Greek trireme; at the banquet he was honored with a lifetime achievement award.



Buoyed by our success with the convention, we have decided to host a Classics Festival similar to the one we hosted five years ago. We are expecting 600 high-school Latin students and their teachers on October 9.

It has been a year of innovative pedagogy: students in Steve Reece’s Advanced Greek course, for example, wrote and performed a Socratic dialogue on St. Olaf’s General Education curriculum. During “Stoic Week” students in two of our courses attempted to live in line with Stoic principles. Hilary Boussein experimented with “slow teaching” methodology in her Vergil course. In Kyle Helms’s Dawn of Democracy course students played a role-immersion game set in Athens in 403 BCE. Students in his Advanced Latin course took part in Northfield civic life to experience the public service that Cicero calls for in *De re publica*. Kyle is conducting research this summer with Libby Barth '21 and JuliAnne Rach '20. They have recently returned from two intensive weeks in Pompeii, where they worked long hours, collaborating with students and faculty from other schools, to document more than 100 wall-inscriptions for the Ancient Graffiti Project.



A highlight of the year was, of course, the Third Annual James M. May Endowed Lecture in Classics. Gwendolyn Compton-Engle '92, Professor of Classics



at John Carroll University, gave a fascinating talk on “Foundling Plots in Greek Drama” (you can watch the archived stream on the St. Olaf website). The pre-lecture buffet dinner for 40 Classics alumni and faculty was such fun that Jim and Donna May have requested that we have one every year, not just when the speaker is an Ole. So be prepared to receive an invitation again next year, once we know the date. We are thrilled that John Miller, Professor of Classics at the University of Virginia, has agreed to give the May Lecture in 2020.

Another talented alumna, Julia Kelto Lillis '04, happened to be teaching at Luther College this year as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion. She was kind enough to come to St. Olaf, accompanied by husband Jason and baby Zoe, and speak on the intriguing topic “No Male and Female? The Fluidity of Gender in Classical and Early Christian Texts”; she also discussed Paul and Thecla with the New Testament Greek class.



But not all of this year’s speakers were Oles. We learned about “Caesar and the Battle of Alesia” from Prof. John Bonin, U.S. Army War College, and about “Sardis: Capital of Lydia, Birthplace of Coinage” from Prof. William Bruce, Gustavus Adolphus College. Guests at our Classics Conversation Table ranged from Nicole Taynton, Latin teacher at Shattuck-St. Mary’s School, to Jeremiah Harrelson '99, who brought his family along to present the Fourth Annual Alec Award to winners Devin Ames and Mary Landis Gaston.

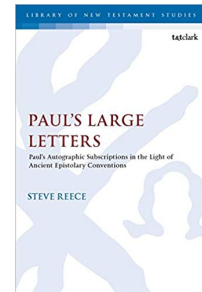
Classical Studies in Greece was offered again this year for the 42nd time. Anne Groton and her 30 students stayed healthy and happy in the midst of snowstorms (not shown in the photo, which is from Methoni). Classical Studies in Italy, taught by Kyle Helms, will be offered for the 3rd time next year. The course broke St. Olaf’s record for number of applicants: 97! It was hard to say no to 67 students. Thanks to donors Ken and Kathy Loomis and Greg Randall '96 and Toni Wilkes, we were able to award two full scholarships, based on merit and high financial need.



Our usual Eta Sigma Phi activities—Greek vs. Latin softball game, Olympics, caroling, initiation, lamb roast (Jason Tan '22 and Devin Campos '22 display tiropita in the photo), and Bacchanalia—continued unabated. Earnings in the Groton, Loomis, and May Lecture Endowments funded five summer projects: four students will be digging at Antiochia ad Cragum in Turkey with Tim Howe; the fifth will be learning Old Norse. Annual Fund gifts made it possible for us to do previously unimaginable things, like covering the membership fees for all 20 of our Eta Sigma Phi initiates so that none of them would be forced to decline the invitation simply because of the cost.



Jim May’s *How to Win an Argument* (Princeton, 2016) has been translated into German! Steve Reece’s *Paul’s Large Letters* (T&T Clark, 2017) is now out in paperback. Anne Groton, Hilary Bouxsein, and Kyle Helms attended the annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West & South in Lincoln, Nebraska, where Hilary and Kyle delivered papers, Anne and Kyle presided over sessions, and Anne, as President-Elect, was forced to sit at the head table during the banquet. Kyle is CAMWS V-P for MN.



Next year Steve Reece will be on leave in the fall, and Anne Groton on sabbatical in the spring. Four of their courses will be covered by Hilary Bouxsein, who will be busy with the second year of Great Con as well; the other two courses will be taught by Kathryn Steed (see photo), who lives in Northfield with her husband Jesse and their two boys. A specialist in Roman history, she earned her B.A. at Kalamazoo and her Ph.D. at Michigan; she previously taught at Reed and at Carleton. We are glad that she is willing to shift her allegiance to St. Olaf!



And now for the obligatory baby pictures. Born during the past 12 months are Charlotte Marie May (left), daughter of Sheila and Mike May, and Sage Pacific Branz (right), grand-niece of Anne Groton. They keep us smiling, no matter how ancient we are, or how challenging the world is. As always, we would love to hear from you and see your own photos.

