

War and Peace

Katherine Abell '11, Kelsey Menninga '10, Amanda Wright '09, and Ben McNeill '09 are traveling to Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, and Hiroshima to research the narratives of war and peace. Their research project, "National Memories in Action: Peace and Nationalist Museums in Japan," inspired by an Asian Conversations Interim course, will be funded by an ASIANetwork grant and supervised by Assistant Professor of Political Science Kathy Tegtmeier Pak. The four will present their research at the 2010 ASIANetwork Conference.



Regenerative Research

"Earthworms have a remarkable ability to regenerate following injury," says biology major Rachel Kneeland '09. Anyone who has pulled apart an earthworm knows that it is capable of growing back its lost "tail," making it the perfect animal for regenerative research. Kneeland's earthworm research suggests that microglia, a type of immune cell in the nervous system, may play a role in central nervous system regeneration. Kneeland says "a better understanding of the beneficial role of microglia in the earthworm nervous system could provide information for the field of regenerative medicine."



Ole Athletics Winter 2008–09 Highlights

Men's Basketball: St. Olaf finished 10–15 overall and 7–13 in MIAC play, led by a host of first-years, including leading scorer Bobby Fong '12, who earned all-rookie and all-conference honorable mention honors.

Women's Basketball: The Ole women completed their season at 4–21 overall.

Men's Hockey: St. Olaf (16–7–3) completed its best season in school history, winning the MIAC's regular season title by seven points before falling in the MIAC playoffs semifinals. Sean Goldsworthy '94 was named the league's coach of the year and led his team to the first MIAC regular season title since the 1938–39 season. Under Goldsworthy the Oles have made five MIAC playoff appearances in the last six seasons and have a 63–49–20 (.563) record overall.

Women's Hockey:

The St. Olaf women's team (9–14–4) finished its season on a high note, advancing to the MIAC playoff semifinals. The team stopped a six-game losing streak with a sweep in the final regular season weekend to make the tournament.



Dylan Mueller '09 was named MIAC men's hockey player of the year.

Men's Swimming and Diving: St. Olaf won its 25th MIAC championship title followed by a fourth-place team finish at the NCAAs, matching the best finish in school history. The team was led by nineteen-time All-American Nelson Westby '09, who collected his third straight 200 individual medley title, won the 200 breaststroke, and swam on three All-American relays at the NCAAs. Co-head coaches Dave and Bob Hauck '87 were named the national coaches of the year.

Women's Swimming and Diving: St. Olaf was fourth at the MIACs in February. The team was paced by Alli Beardsley '11, who won the 200 individual medley, and Lauren Snyder '12, who won the 50 and 200 freestyles and qualified for the NCAA Championships. The Oles also picked up a win in the 800 freestyle relay with Beardsley, Jamie Fredeen '10, Katie Kubat '12, and Snyder.

Skiing, Alpine Men and Women: The St. Olaf men's alpine team finished seventh at the U.S. Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association Championships (USCSA). The St. Olaf women's alpine team finished ninth at the USCSA Championships. The alpine teams combined with the men's and women's nordic ski teams to win the association's President's Award.

Skiing, Nordic Men and Women: The St. Olaf men's nordic team finished second at the USCSA Championships. The St. Olaf women finished third. Caitlin Marine '10, Sarah Fleming '12, and Shaina Short '09 took first in the 3 x 5K relay with a time of 58:24.1.

Men's Indoor Track and Field: The St. Olaf men's indoor track and field team had wins in two events and was fourth at the MIAC Championships in March. The distance medley relay team (Brian Burseth '09, David Green '09, Isaac Tut '11, and Ben Wilson '11) took the MIAC indoor title with a time of 10:36.17.

Women's Indoor Track and Field: St. Olaf was ninth at the MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championships in March, helped by junior pole-vaulter Amie Fillmore, who finished fifteenth at the NCAAs.

Wrestling: St. Olaf went 0–9 in dual meets and finished thirteenth of fifteen at the NCAA Great Lakes Regional.

St. Olaf Honors Its Retiring Faculty Members

The four faculty who are retiring this year have served St. Olaf College for a combined total of 165 years and have touched the lives of thousands of students in countless ways.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BILL KELLEY

Lynn Steen · PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

By Suzy Frisch

Lynn Steen has worked his entire career to make mathematics fascinating and not something to be feared. During a forty-four-year career at St. Olaf, Steen applied that passion for mathematics in varied ways, from helping the college bolster its math department to shaping the way teachers approach math education for all ages.

Steen, a professor of mathematics, most recently served as special assistant to the provost.

An outgrowth of his temporary stint as head of institutional research, the position had Steen coordinating internal research projects on behalf of St. Olaf's provost and associate deans.

Early in his career, Steen helped the college's mathematics department increase its number of math majors. Their tactic: put the best and most engaging instructors in the first courses students take, getting them excited about math. Then they might take another course, and then another, until they were so close to earning a math major that they inevitably finished the degree. Steen's efforts helped St. Olaf boost its math majors from 1 percent to 12 percent of graduates — one of the highest percentages in the country.

"People are always saying they aren't good at math, and that got me focused on teaching math and helping other organizations improve the teaching of math nationally," says Steen, who penned a ground-breaking report for the National Research Council on the

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challenges facing mathematics education in the United States. He has also written many *Encyclopedia Britannica* articles on topics in mathematics.

Steen's career carried him often to Washington, D.C., where he was deeply involved in national mathematics organizations. He held numerous leadership posts, including president of the Mathematical Association of America and director of the Math Sciences Education Board, a National Academy of Sciences entity that works on improving math education.

Two of Steen's major efforts involved encouraging national science journals and magazines to write more about mathematics. Recently, he devoted much effort — through writing, research, and his organizational work — to improving all students' quantitative literacy and building their competence in evidence-based reasoning.

Steen is grateful that St. Olaf gave him the freedom to work on a rich medley of projects on both local and national stages. "If I work on the same thing for too long, then I want to move onto something else," he explains. "So I'm pleased that I was able to do so many different things throughout my career. St. Olaf is a wonderful place to have a career like that."



Mary Steen · ASSOCIATE

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH

By Linnae Stole '10

Mary Steen still exchanges Christmas cards with a student who was in the first creative nonfiction class she taught at St. Olaf nearly forty-five years ago. It's just one of many relationships she's developed with students and colleagues in a career that, over time, has seen significant changes in the college and in the way society views literature.

Despite coming from a family of teachers, Steen didn't originally plan on becoming one herself. She first considered a career in music therapy, but introductory classes in psychology and music prompted her to change course. She told herself, "What you're really good at, what you really love, is English, so just major in it." After earning her bachelor's degree from Luther College, she went on to earn a master's degree in teaching from Harvard University and came to St. Olaf in 1965.

When Steen arrived on campus with her husband Lynn Steen, professor of mathematics and special assistant to the provost, the English faculty, like the rest of the faculty, was predominantly male. This resulted in a dramatically different style of discourse in the department, particularly in department meetings. "I can trace a change in department culture in the way things were discussed and handled when the balance of men and women became more even," she says.

The English major at St. Olaf has also changed during Steen's tenure. Until about fifteen years ago, the major focused on an historical approach to literature, defined as British and American literature. Today, the English major is "consciously focused on global literature in English, trying to be flexible while trying not to say that the only way to study literature is historical," explains Steen. "There are lots of different ways to approach literature, and we're trying to accommodate that."

Steen's primary focus over the years has been to teach writing courses, and her favorite class is creative nonfiction. "You can so clearly see students' progress from the beginning to the end of the semester," she says. "Each class becomes a community, a support group for writers. There's almost always a relaxed and good-humored atmosphere, and I generally get to know the students better than in other courses, both because of the smaller class size and because I know them through their writing as well as class."

She has also taught classes in fiction, science writing, and countless first-year writing courses. Aside from teaching, Steen has been an adviser for the *Manitou Messenger* and the *Quarry* (the annual literary magazine), and she has chaired the English department since 2004.

In addition to her interaction with students, Steen says her relationships with other faculty members have been an important part of her time at St. Olaf. Christmas parties and end-of-year picnics foster community, but more than that, says Steen, "good relations among English faculty develop over shared interests — not only teaching, but politics, fiction, small children, writing, handwork, film, baseball. I will miss standing in the doorways of various colleagues' offices exchanging reading recommendations."

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While she admits to being a little too busy at the moment to think much about her retirement plans, Steen expects that she and her husband will spend a significant amount of time in California, where her mother-in-law, two sisters, and the family of one of her daughters all live. She also hopes to do some volunteer work and find time to sort through a lifetime of family photographs.

LINNAE STOLE '10 is an English major and a student reporter for the St. Olaf marketing and communications office.

Martha Wallace '75 · PROFESSOR OF MATHEMATICS

By Suzy Frisch

For Martha Wallace, there is nothing quite as satisfying as seeing the look on students' faces after everything clicks and they solve a math problem. Whether it's a struggling student who has a breakthrough or an advanced undergrad who leaps to the next level, Wallace truly enjoys teaching them problem-solving. And that's one of the biggest things she'll miss after retiring from a thirty-two-year career as a mathematics professor.

"My overall philosophy has been that teaching is not telling, that teaching is really enabling learning," says Wallace, a professor of mathematics and the Kenneth Bjork Distinguished Professor. "We want students to understand that they can figure out how to do something themselves when they understand the mathematics behind it. Teaching is more about finding ways to make students realize their own potential than it is about impressing them with the teacher's knowledge."

"Teaching is not telling, teaching is enabling learning." — MARTHA WALLACE

Wallace had an unconventional education, beginning her undergraduate years at the University of Minnesota and then taking nine years off to marry and begin raising three children. She completed her undergraduate degree at St. Olaf in 1975 and soon started a master's and Ph.D. program in mathematics education back at the University of Minnesota. While pursuing her doctorate, Wallace also directed the St. Olaf Academic Support Center and taught mathematics and mathematics education courses.

Wallace says this alternative path helped her relate to the struggles of students and she feels it made her a better teacher. Ultimately, she decided that her first love was teaching, so she moved into the Department of Mathematics full-time, teaching college mathematics and passing on the tricks of the trade to future middle and high school math teachers. It's a dual role Wallace favored, considering it part of her mission to shape the way schools teach mathematics.

In the summer, Wallace led teacher workshops and often partnered with a school district to help teachers apply changes in mathematics to the classroom. She also held many leadership roles, serving as president of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics and on the boards of several state and national mathematics education organizations.

During retirement Wallace plans to visit her far-flung children and four grandchildren. She also wants to tutor students in math and work with high-achieving elementary and high school students. She's just not quite ready to let go of teaching. "It's been a hard, hard decision for me to retire," she says. "St. Olaf is a special place, and I'm going to miss the students a lot."

SUZY FRISCH is a Twin Cities-based writer.



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Gene Bakko · PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY AND CURATOR OF THE ST. OLAF NATURAL LANDS

By Carole Leigh Engblom

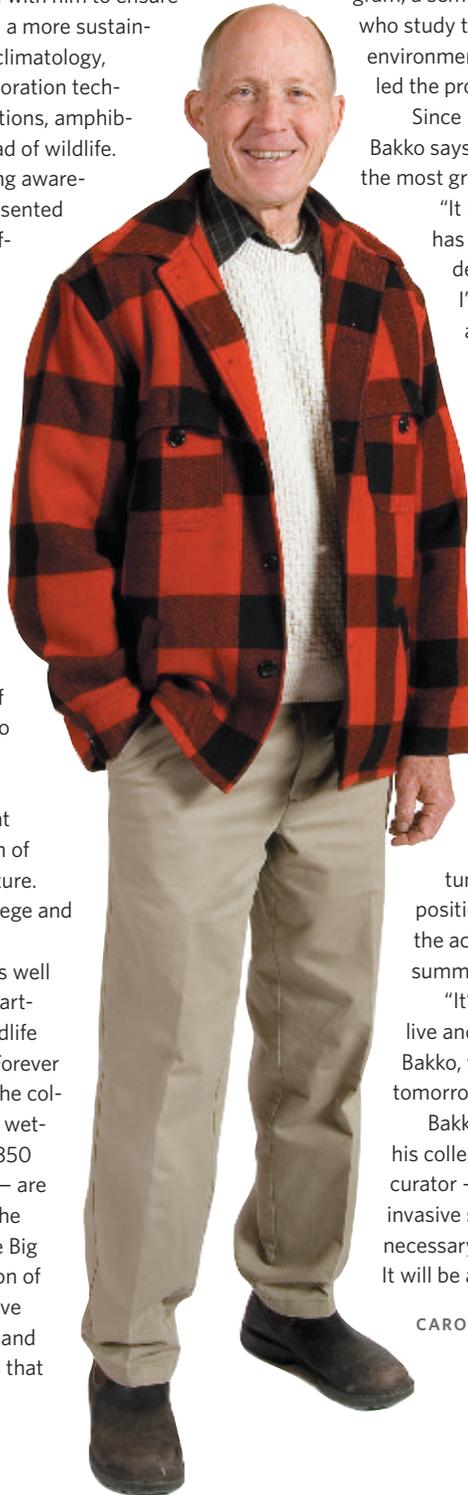
When Gene Bakko joined the St. Olaf biology faculty in 1966, he didn't anticipate the many rewards that lay ahead. "If I could have written out my life plan after college, it wouldn't have been nearly as fun," he says.

Bakko confesses that for more than forty years he had his dream job. Countless St. Olaf students have explored the complex relationships between humankind and nature in Bakko's courses in animal physiology, vertebrate and conservation biology, winter ecology, and environmental studies. His students have studied the impact of agriculture and chemicals on soil and water quality, and have worked with him to ensure that all St. Olaf tillable acres are farmed in a more sustainable manner. Together they have studied climatology, bluebird reproduction, plant diversity, restoration techniques, and documented waterfowl migrations, amphibian chorusing, and the activities of a myriad of wildlife.

In the early 1980s, Bakko had a growing awareness that science majors were underrepresented in the semester-long International and Off-Campus Studies programs. So, in 1984, with the help of International Studies director Lee Swan, he developed the *Biology in South India* program, an independent study opportunity for eight to ten biology, environmental science, and pre-med students.

"The impetus behind starting *Biology in South India* was to provide a semester-long study abroad program that had science in it," says Bakko. The independent projects that Bakko set up are still thriving today: students complete a cultural course and two independent research projects in rural areas of South India, focusing on projects related to forest ecology, water quality, and wildlife management; leprosy; rural health care, "well-baby" clinics and social development programs for women; bee-keeping (a form of food production); and sustainable agriculture.

Since 1992, with support from the college and the generous financial support of alumni Don Nelson '50 and Paul Egeland '65 — as well as grants and subsidies from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever — Bakko has overseen the restoration of the college's native prairie, hardwood forest, and wetlands. The St. Olaf natural lands — some 350 acres surrounding the 300-acre campus — are the college's largest classroom and lie in the deciduous forest biome on what was once Big Woods habitat. In order to restore a portion of the Big Woods, Bakko and his students have planted more than 40,000 tree seedlings and nursery stock, including hundreds of trees that have expanded Norway Valley.



Bakko believes an area that loses its biodiversity becomes less stable as species diminish in variety and quantity. "People tend to equate progress with development," he commented. "They see in the rising buildings more business and a thriving economy. However, the wilderness is also a vital part of not only our collective psyche, but also our economic well being. Everything we have and have accomplished has come from the wilderness. If we lose that, we are learning that our quality of life is diminished both emotionally and economically."

In 1996, Bakko developed the *Environmental Science in Australia* program, a semester-long, faculty-led program for up to twenty-four students who study terrestrial ecology, marine biology, cultural anthropology, and environmental policy. "It's very experiential," says Bakko, who has twice led the program with his wife, Lois.

Since being named curator of the St. Olaf natural lands in 2001, Bakko says the work he has done on the natural lands has given him the most gratification.

"It is not just the work with the trees and critters and such, which has been rewarding, but it is seeing how the college and the student body have responded to it," he explains. "Over the years I've really appreciated the administration being open and receptive to the concept of the natural lands and giving me a chance to get it started. It's been a very cooperative atmosphere and an important part of its success."

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Of equal importance is his work with students. In the early 1990s he initiated the student naturalist position, giving biology or environmental studies students an opportunity to organize and lead special projects. In addition to this position, ten students work with him on the natural lands during the academic year and four students work full-time during the summer. Many have become his lifelong friends.

"It's fun and rewarding to work with good, solid people, and to live and work in this kind of environment is truly wonderful," says Bakko, whose thoughtful stewardship enables students of today and tomorrow to enjoy a special living legacy.

Bakko is now looking forward to a retirement that includes helping his colleague, biology professor Kathy Shea — who succeeds him as curator — by getting out on the natural lands and "pruning, controlling invasive species, doing some chain sawing and tractor mowing when necessary, monitoring the bluebird houses, and just being out there. It will be a part of my life until I can't do it anymore," he says. 🦋

CAROLE LEIGH ENGBLOM is editor of *St. Olaf Magazine*.