Greetings from Oberlin! The year has passed quickly, and, like last year, has been quite eventful. We welcomed a new faculty member to our department, Kelcy Sagstetter, who has been with us for the 2014-15 academic year. Kelcy came to us from the University of Pennsylvania, where she wrote her dissertation on Solon and tyranny. She will tell you more about herself in our faculty update section. Kelcy has been wowing our students with Greek history and with a very exciting advanced Greek course on Cyrus the Great.

Kelcy joined us because Kirk, Chris, and TVN are all on partial or full leave. Kirk is enjoying a well-earned, yearlong sabbatical in an undisclosed location. Chris is working on a new project on Seneca (his book came out in May) this spring semester, and TVN was on leave in the fall, working on and completing his book on late Sophocles. We are not an idle bunch here in Classics! Please check out the faculty updates on the next page.

In spring 2014, the annual Bardic Reading wowed listeners with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The Classics alumni lecture was delivered by Chris Fracese, who spoke on the role of collaborative, online commentaries. Spring concluded with the annual Classics picnic and the awarding of numerous prizes. Despite the rain that forced us to call the croquet match (TVN was leading by a substantial margin, of course), we had an enjoyable time at Kirk’s house—photographic evidence is inside. Sunnier days arrived in time for graduation and our open house, which was attended by a substantial number of graduating seniors, their families, and alumni of previous years. Catch up on all the details inside.

The fall brought another academic year and a number of lectures and events. Nigel Nicholson, currently the academic dean at Reed College, lectured on Pindar and Greek medicine. The Oberlin-Wooster chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America brought in a Classics-related lecturer, Greg Aldrete, who spoke about the floods of the Tiber in Rome. Greg even brought a reconstructed suit of linen armor as a bonus (see the pictures). Chris and Kelcy, in connection with their respective courses on mythology and Greek history, led a trip to the Cleveland Museum of Art, which included an exciting scavenger hunt. We also hosted a career day for Classics to help our current students think about the wide range of careers that one can pursue with a Classics degree.

The major event for the fall was, as always, the Martin Lectures. During October, we hosted Richard Martin (no relation to Charles Bebe, by the way), who delivered a fascinating series on Homer, oral poetics, and multiple cultural traditions. There are more details in the feature article by Will Austin, current Latin and classical archaeology major.
DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

KAREN BARNES, departmental assistant, is keeping busy. She works with the Oberlin-in-London program, which is going strong; Gina Perez and Baron Pineda are there this spring with 21 Oberlin students. She’s also busy working on the “Tom Fest” in April. No exciting trips planned this year, other than a few visits to Texas to visit her daughter, Brooke, who moved in January from Lake Jackson to Victoria, where she is working at another Dow Chemical plant. Karen and her husband, Nelson, helped with the move in January (“that’s what we do as parents!”). Karen travels to Sylvania, Ohio, a few times a month to visit son Brad and family, including her grandchildren, now 6 and 1.

BEN LEE is finishing his third year as chair of the department and has enjoyed teaching Greek and Roman epic, Vergil, Herodotus, and Latin 102 this year. His family and three children are thriving, and he looks forward to continuing work on his commentary on Apuleius Metamorphoses Book 11 for the University of Michigan Press. He will miss TVN very much, but is consoled by the thought that Tom will not be moving far away. Ben would love to hear from any alumni: blee@oberlin.edu.

KIRK ORMAND is on leave this year. Last spring he finally saw the first copies of his new book, the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women and Archaic Greece (Cambridge University Press); since then he has been working on several shorter projects, including coediting Ancient Sex: New Essays, which will be published by Ohio State University Press this summer. Former students of Kirk’s mythology class might be interested to know that he recently published an essay on the 1963 blockbuster film Jason and the Argonauts; a pdf can be found here: https://www.academia.edu/5944618/Medeas_Erotic_Text_in_Jason_and_the_Argonauts_1963_. While on leave, Kirk traveled to Strasbourg and Paris to give talks on Foucault and Hesiod, and to Berlin to work with David Halperin ’73 on another editing project. He also led an intrepid and energetic group of alumni around Greece and Crete, taking them to well-known sites such as Delphi, and to less-visited spots such as Perachora. Kirk had a great time, and the alumni seemed to like it, too. Take a look at Kirk’s feature in this issue of the newsletter. This spring he’ll be giving the keynote address at the Indiana Classical Conference, thanks to the kind invitation of Max Teitel-Paule ’06, and will travel a bit more in Europe. Kirk looks forward to returning to the classroom in the fall of 2015, when he’ll be teaching Elementary Greek and a new 300-level course, Images of Helen, designed to coordinate with the 2015 Martin Lectures.

This January, I embarked on a project with classical civilization major Julia Redden to try and locate our “lost” alumni. We hope to be able to send this newsletter to a broader population, so if you know any majors who have been out of touch but want to hear more Classics news and receive a paper copy of the newsletter, please have them write to me. I can be reached, as always, at Drew. Wilburn@oberlin.edu.

We are all looking forward to our celebration of Tom’s years of service to the institution, but also sad that he will be retiring. On April 18, the Classics department will host a small symposium titled “The Best of the Achaeans: A Symposium on Teaching Classics to Undergraduates in Honor of Thomas Van Nortwick.” A number of TVN’s former students—Sean Easton, Herica Valladares, Bronwen Wicckiser, Rob Hardy, Christopher Francese, Molly Pasco-Pranger, Lisl Walsh, and Maxwell Teitel-Paule—will participate in two roundtable discussions about topics that have been important parts of his teaching over the years. On Saturday night we will celebrate TVN’s retirement in high style, with a banquet in the Root Room. Due to concerns about animal welfare and the logistics of leading 100 bulls up the stairs in the Carnegie building, we have opted to cancel the hecatomb.

As always, we welcome you back in May for Commencement/Reunion Weekend. We always are delighted to see you!
KELCY SAGSTETTER very much enjoyed her first semester at Oberlin, teaching Ancient Greek History, Homer, and Xenophon. She’s already having fun teaching Roman Comedy and Cicero for the second semester, which has been a busy one. She’ll be processing the data she got from her research trip to Greece over winter term, where she and a colleague at the University of Arkansas spent time in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens obtaining 3-D images of damaged inscriptions, using both white-light scanning and a photography technique called reflectance transformation imaging. She’ll be working on processing the data and publishing an article based on her work. She will also be working on a book about Solon of Athens and archaic tyranny for the University of Michigan Press, while getting ready to start a tenure-track job in the history department of the United States Naval Academy in the fall of 2015.

After publication of his book, Senecan Tragedy and the Reception of Augustan Poetry, CHRIS TRINACTY delivered a paper on Seneca at the Trends in Classics Conference in Thessaloniki in May 2014. He began work on a commentary to Book 3 of Seneca’s Natural Questions and is currently coeditor of a special issue of the Classics journal Ramus, which deals with Senecan poetics. This year is also busy, with papers at the University of Toronto, Brown University, and the University of Heidelberg scheduled, as well as a tour of European libraries to collate manuscripts of the Natural Questions. Chris is currently on leave and has decided to take up conversational German and practice his ping-pong skills. One day, he may even be able to defeat Kirk at Tischtennis!

TOM VAN NORTWICK enjoyed his spring 2014 courses Greek and Roman Drama and The Iliad in advanced Greek. The former was just as much fun as it always is, and the latter was exciting since he had never taught The Iliad in an advanced Greek course. He has begun teaching his last semester at Oberlin with anticipation and a little dread. His book, Late Sophocles, was published recently by the University of Michigan Press, in time for his retirement celebration on April 18. He and Mary look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it to Oberlin to help say farewell after 41 years.

DREW WILBURN is keeping busy at work and with the kiddos at home. He delivered lectures for the Archaeological Institute of America in New Orleans and Nashville. In April 2014, Drew gave an invited keynote lecture at Princeton on ritual practice in domestic cult as part of a symposium on religion and domestic space. Over the summer, he continued working on a digital reconstruction of the ancient site of Karanis. This project had previously involved Ryan Reynolds ’14 and now has a larger team that includes Classics majors Miranda Rutherford and Olivia Fountain. When complete, the project will allow access to digital maps and plans of the site as well as records of the more than 30,000 artifacts and papyri excavated by the University of Michigan between 1924 and 1935. He hopes to go live with a beta-version of the Karanis website soon! Drew was named the Irwin E. Houck Associate Professor of the Humanities, which was a very exciting and unexpected honor. He will hold the professorship for six years. In the fall, he took over as secretary/treasurer of the Oberlin-Wooster AIA chapter and chair of archaeological studies at Oberlin, both of which involve more meetings and paperwork than his named professorship. On the home front, the excitement continues. Patrick, who many of you may remember as a rosy-cheeked, active cherub, started kindergarten, and Claire is now 2. A recent visitor to our home commented that she has the same mischievous look as her brother!
Oberlin was once again honored to receive four lectures from the redoubtable Richard Martin in October. In addition to offering the wonderfully delivered lectures, Professor Martin spent dinner and lunch with my peers and me. His willingness to engage with students and his eagerness to learn as much as he could about Oberlin was clearly evident and inspiring.

As the name of the lecture series indicates, Professor Martin started with Homer in the ancient world and proceeded to take the audience on a journey to find Homer in places ranging from modern Crete to Mali. His talks opened with an impressively cogent and concise summary of the history of Homeric scholarship, dealing with the age-old question of who Homer really was. He proceeded to compare his remaining research to the acid used in photo etching to draw out the image from a metal plate. In other words, Professor Martin used the modern examples of oral poetry to highlight certain aspects of Homeric poetry ranging from the idea of a single genius poet to the themes of coming-of-age that permeate the oral tradition. As evidence for the links between the ancient and modern traditions, Professor Martin had us working with primary texts from the areas of interest along with videos that he recorded himself of a modern Cretan oral poet in the midst of a recitation.

Professor Martin was not solely limited to Craig Lecture Hall, however. He sat in on Classics courses on epic and mythology. I was fortunate enough to hear his thoughts on various renditions of Little Red Riding Hood in mythology class. Overall, as a classics major who has studied The Odyssey and The Iliad intensely, it was comforting to hear a scholar as esteemed as Professor Martin discuss the various places where one can find Homer and show that the poet, regardless of who he or she was, is very much alive today.
As the bus came down the mountains into the Eurotas river valley, I scanned the heavy gloom that covered the Taygetos range to the west of modern Sparta. It didn’t look good. Rain, and lots of it, seemed to be in the forecast, and that was going to make it difficult to enjoy the activity that we had scheduled for the day, a walking tour of the medieval Greek town of Mystra, one of the last holdouts of the Byzantine empire, known in its day as “little Constantinople.”

And boy was I right: by the time we were through Sparta and headed up the foothills to Mystra, it was coming down in sheets. Besides the cold, I knew that the 15th-century cobblestone streets, once slick with rain, would be a serious challenge for our group of Oberlin alumni, whom I had the great pleasure of accompanying on a weeklong tour of Greek archaeological sites. So, we did what we could: ducked into a cafe and had espressos and honey-soaked pastries, hoping the weather would improve. When it didn’t, I was impressed for the 50th time by the perseverance of this stalwart group of 17 (plus our extraordinary assistant Meena Ghaziasgar from the alumni office, Liz from IDS Tours, and Marina, our Greek site guide). Umbrellas came out, and we sloshed through rain, mud, and treacherous footing to see three of the famous surviving churches, plus ruins of private homes, the despot’s palace, and the spectacular views of the valley below. Once we’d seen what we could of the site—everyone cheerful despite the weather—and had lunch in nearby Parori, I led a few hearty souls partway up the Parori gorge. They didn’t want to stop; the rain had ended, and I think if we hadn’t been on a schedule, I might have never persuaded the most enthusiastic members not to hike all the way to the top.

In brief, this group of alumni, ranging in age from mid-40s to mid-80s was energetic beyond my wildest expectations and a delight to travel with. Every day they met the bus with enthusiasm and curiosity, and every day we tromped through another site or two, and a museum, had some lunch, and then met and talked about everything from the modern Greek state to life back home over ouzo, mezedes, and retsina. In truth, we had good luck with weather—only one day on the mainland was truly miserable, and one day on the “extension” to Crete. We had bright, sunny days in Athens, at Delphi, and at some lesser-known sites like the temple of Hera Akraia at Perachora. Everywhere we went, I was peppered with good-natured questions about ancient Greek culture, art, architecture, politics, sex, and history, not to mention modern Greek food, economy, politics, art, and...well, everything. Even after an extraordinarily long day, I was joined by six people in climbing the 1,000-plus steps to the (closed and locked) entrance of the Palamidi fortress in Nauplio, just to see the spectacular sunset from the heights.

In other words, we had a great time. I was lucky to get to spend nearly 10 days with a remarkable group of Obies (I joined the smaller group who did the extra three days on Crete). Their energy and incorrigible love of bad jokes—Tom W., I mean you—confirmed what I’ve always suspected about Oberlin graduates: their circumstances may change, they certainly gain experience over time, but they never lose that Oberlin spark. It was a terrific trip; time to start planning the next one.
Owen Cramer ’62 writes: “Since I’m not packing for New Orleans and the 2015 SCS/AIA meeting (first ever for the Society for Classical Studies, Philological no more)—I got the flu *before* rather than *at* this year—I’ll send you an annual update. My most tangible classical achievement in 2014 was getting tenure in my department [at Colorado College] for Sanjaya Thakur, who didn’t go to Oberlin but who is a wonderful colleague nonetheless. That makes three of us with tenure. Years ago Nate told me that being a one-person department, as I was then, was a young man’s job, and sure enough, as an old man I now have colleagues! I’m in my 50th year at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, where (without my help) we elected a forcibly retired Navy chaplain who exercises demons and believes he’s under murderous attack from the LGBT community to the state legislature, and lately arrested a candidate for mayor who was running around town with an AR-15 threatening a significant other; *with* my help we also elected a music teacher to replace the gun-rights advocate who had wormed his way into the state senate last year in a disorderly recall. So politics here is interesting, and I’m still knocking on doors. I had an especially lively Homer class in September with students rapping and picking and singing and acting out; one of them was the child of two former students. At Colorado College I’m also on the Faculty Executive Committee, which does, among other things, promotion and tenure reviews (I recuse myself re: Classics). And I sing in the choir, Schubert’s lovely late Mass in A-flat. Becky ’62 and I were able to see all of our grandchildren in 2014, at spring break and again for a week in July in Oregon, and seriatim before and after Christmas in Oregon and California. There’s a lot to love about these eight young people: the oldest, headed to Williams College in 2015, is an athlete and community-builder; the youngest, 2, is just learning to ski. In between are an assiduous reader and disability advocate; a 12-year-old proto-engineer; two 10-year olds, both in Eugene, playing violin, running, and playing soccer; an 8-year-old literary-musical type; and a big, gentle 7-year-old peacemaker negotiating three cultures (Quaker, Mexican, and African-American) outside of Philadelphia.”

Robert Crawford ’74 writes: “I am still an independent writer, mostly case studies for international organizations, based in the French Alps; the last few years, I have been doing a lot of work on development economics in Africa. Our biggest news is that my daughter, Olivia, is *reading* archaeology as an undergraduate at Cambridge U. She’s not specializing in the classical era, but will perhaps do the Medieval Ages or the early Christian era. We spent Christmas in Britain with Dana Facaros, whom I met at Oberlin, and her family.”

William Johnson ’78 writes: “This fall I had the most fun I’ve had in years, as well as the most intellectually stimulating and emotionally involving semester of my career, as I taught at Duke’s new campus in China, Duke Kunshan University, near Shanghai. It is, to say the least, a rare event in the life of an academic to be one of the inaugural faculty members at a new University, and in this case I also was asked to serve as the inaugural chair of faculty. As such, I co-wrote the foundational documents for faculty governance (for example). The picture [at left] is of me being interviewed by the TV news after the convocation in August (for more on that, see http://sites.duke.edu/wajblog/). The entire situation was beyond fascinating, from the class I taught on Greece and the [so-called] Origins of Western Culture, to the workshops we set up on China and Africa and on the Hong Kong protests, to the many new friends we made and the trips we took.”

Thomas Gotvals ’80 writes: “Can’t say I’ve been a scholarly classi- cist since leaving Oberlin, but the styles of Helm, Van Nortwick, Greenberg, and the knowledge and thought they imparted have informed my work as a music teacher over the last 30-plus years. That includes a discussion in today’s music theory class about the Odyssey after we listened to Cream’s ‘Tales Of Brave Ulysses.’”

Rob Hardy ’83 writes: “In January 2014, I was one of three recipients of the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative “Making a Difference” Award for working with the Northfield Skateboard Coalition to get a skatepark built in Northfield. And my essay Out of Body: Reading Gender Through ‘Women’s Fiction’ was the most-read essay of 2014 in the online journal The Critical Flame. Finally, in late November, Clara and I travelled to Kyoto, where our younger son was on an off-campus studies program studying Zen Buddhism, and where the famous fall colors were at their peak.”

Deborah Fryer ’84 writes: “I’m still busy making educational films about important topics, like the environment, health, medicine, and how it’s all connected (www.lilafilms.com). Am also writing a memoir based on The Odyssey in some ways...did a winter-term project on Ulysses and The Odyssey with TVN years ago I’ve been ruminating on this idea ever since. Also teaching yoga and meditation, and doing wellness/life coaching, since, as above, it’s all connected. Please contact me for a free wellness consultation at the address above!”

Elizabeth Corey ’94 writes: “On April 1, 2014, we welcomed Margaret Grace Corey into the world (above). She’s our third child, who joins Anna Katherine, 10, and John, 7. All thanks to TVN’s introducing us in North Dining Hall back in 1991. We celebrated 20 years of marriage on December 31, 2014. David has just had a book published by SUNY Press, The Sophists in Plato’s Dialogues, at http://www.sunypress.edu/p-6044-the-sophists-in-platos-dialogue.aspx.”
NANCY WEISSMAN GALLER ’95 writes: “I continue to live in Palmdale, Calif., with my husband, Bruce, and our two children, Anneliese, 10, and Benjamin, 7. I am still teaching high school history. We just added the newest member of our family, Biscuit, who is, of course, a dog.

AUSTIN “CHAD” HILL ’03 writes: “TVN just asked politely, again, on FB for alumni updates. I’m not usually such a big fan of sending information about myself for this kind of thing, but I am a big fan of TVN, so: I got my PhD in anthropological archaeology (focusing on Near Eastern prehistory and zooarchaeology) at the University of Connecticut in 2011. While I am still looking for a permanent position, I am currently a senior research fellow at the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Berlin before heading back into the field for several projects in Israel, Jordan, and Qatar.”

MOLLY SAMUEL ’04 writes: “I moved to Atlanta at the end of 2014 to work as a reporter at WABE, the NPR station here. I mostly report on science and the environment. That’s after many years in San Francisco, where I was a science producer and reporter at KQED. I saw fellow-Greek major Tessa Shanks last fall, when almost- Classics-major Matico Josephson got married in Berkeley. And I was happy to see TVN at commencement last spring, when one of my sisters graduated. TVN is a legend in my family; two or three (sorry, I lost count) of my younger siblings took intro classics classes with him. And I know he’s trying to retire and all, but my youngest sister just got accepted early decision, so I’m hoping he’ll consider sticking around another semester!”

SAMANTHA GRACE ’05 writes: “I am a Greek major and my husband, Guille ’04 (Obie, not classics), and I just had a baby, whom we have named Apollo Francisco Masson Grace.”

SARAH KESSLER ’05 writes: “I started a new job as office manager for Fredrator Networks—they produce cartoons for Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, and YouTube. It is a pretty fun environment, and I am enjoying it so far. My desk is made out of Legos!”

SARAH DUNN ’06 lives in “glorious solitude” in Brooklyn, N.Y. She’s an assistant vice president for an international company that operates observation decks and is working to open a new one in Center City Philadelphia in the One Liberty Tower. She looks forward to seeing her classmates and friends at TVN’s retirement party in April.

MAXWELL TEITEL PAULE ’06 writes: I’m in my second year as an assistant professor of ancient and classical studies at Earlham College. I led students in a May-term trip around Greece this past summer. I went on a backpacking trip along the Camino de Santiago in northern Spain as part of a faculty workshop on place-based, transdisciplinary learning.

ALLISON CHOAT ’07 writes: “I am doing very well in Boston, despite being heavily snowed in! Professionally, I’m still combining travel- and event-planning with an active life on the Boston theater scene; currently, I’m working as a combat choreographer for Flat Earth Theatre’s Terra Nova and preparing to direct Kimberly Akimbo for Moonbox Productions, where I have been appointed associate artistic director. Last year I began an intensive 500-hour yoga teacher training program, which will conclude in December 2015; we’re beginning a unit on Sanskrit next month, so I’m hoping to brush up on my Latin and add another ancient language to the mix this winter. In the future, I’m looking forward to combining my passion for expressive movement and language in some yoga classes tailored for the unique needs of performing artists in New England. Personally, I just got back from short but blissful trip kayaking and hiking in Nicaragua, only to find myself surrounded by several feet of snow, and, of course, a victory for our noble Patriots. As always, I feel very lucky to be surrounded by, and supported by, my many dear friends from Oberlin Classics, especially the infamous Classics Hall. I miss you all very much and am hoping to see you in the spring.”

KAREN FRENCHU ’08 writes: “This year, I got the opportunity to relive a bit of the best winter term of all time when I met up with the Crete portion of Kirk’s Oberlin alumni tour. While there were no accented guidebook readings, we did get to learn about Minoans, Greek politics, and the best way to make tzatziki. Though, of course, it wasn’t quite the same without the purple hat or marauding undead Oberlin army, our food ordering has vastly improved since 2006. Next up: a winter-term reunion tour of Ga?

SARAH THOMPSON ’08 is in her third year at UC Davis pursuing a PhD in performance studies with designated emphases in classics and classical receptions and feminist theory and research. “As of December, I have passed my qualifying exams! Now to actually write the dissertation, which will be about adaptations of Euripides, feminist performance, and practices of close reading. I think that’s all the news that’s fit to print. Tell everyone hi for me!”
Thomas Van Nortwick—or TVN as he is known to generations of Obies—is the quintessential liberal arts professor. For the past 41 years, Tom has touched the lives of countless students who were, and are, in the words of one former student, “groping toward adulthood.” In courses such as The Meaning of Life, Tom has shown his students how the hero’s journey relates to their own lives as they wrestled with “the unnameable and the monstrous.”

For Tom’s students, the classics are the texts of now, and he continues to fill his 60-person classes to overflowing, with students lining the floor, preparing to embark on their own Odysseys. He has authored six books, including Somewhere I Have Never Traveled, and most recently, Late Sophocles.

To honor Tom, a scholarship fund is being established to provide educational opportunities to a deserving classics major. The TVN Scholarship Fund has already received a generous lead gift from Oberlin College Trustee Tom Cooper ’78. Cooper has also agreed to match every dollar raised, up to a maximum of $25,000.

Making your gift is easy. Simply visit our online giving page at www.oberlin.edu/donate and be sure to choose “Other” from the designation drop down menu. Next, enter “The TVN Scholarship Fund” in the instruction box provided.