OBERLIN CLASSICS

Newsletter of the Oberlin College Department of Classics
Oberlin, OH 44074

Number 16: 2008 into early 2009
Also online in color: http://new.oberlin.edu/classics

Editor: Thomas Van Nortwick

DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Tom Van Nortwick  Thomas.Van.Nortwick@oberlin.edu
Kirk Ormand  Kirk.Ormand@oberlin.edu
Ben Lee  Ben.Lee@oberlin.edu
Drew Wilburn  Drew Wilburn@oberlin.edu
Jim Helm (Emeritus)  JamesHelm@oberlin.net
Nate Greenberg (Emeritus)  Nate@oberlin.net
Karen Barnes (Administrative Assistant)  Karen.Barnes@oberlin.edu

Department phone: 440-775-8390; Fax: 440-775-8084
New website: http://new.oberlin.edu/classics

Ben Lee, Kirk Ormand, Drew Wilburn, Karen Barnes, Tom Van Nortwick
A Note from the Editor

Post-solstice greetings from Oberlin! I write in a (relatively) tranquil state of mind, as Kirk Ormand has returned from Athens and reassumed the position of chair of Classics. The department seems to have survived my ministrations as Acting Chair more or less intact. Indeed, 2007-08 was a good year for us in many ways. Jennifer Thomas was with us for the year, replacing Kirk, and did an excellent job. She has taken up a position as Visiting Assistant Professor of Classics at Grinnell for the year. We will miss her. This year produced another impressive group of senior majors. In May, 2008, we graduated 11 majors and two minors. The Bardic Reading in February featured the complete works of Aristophanes, and a thoroughly rambunctious time was had by all. We were delighted to see quite a few Classics alumni at Commencement (pictures below). Those of you who haven’t been back lately are missing a good party! Please come to visit soon.

But the most momentous event of the year was Nate Greenberg’s 80th birthday, on August 23rd! We are delighted to report that he is in excellent health, and remains a source of wisdom and good cheer. Happy Birthday, Nate!

Students

Eleven students graduated with majors in Classics this past May, plus two minors.

Classical Civilization:
Sarah Arriaga
Joshua Curtis
Karen Frenchu
Sarah Thompson

Greek:
Thomas Buck
Karen Frenchu
Neville McFerrin
Noah Mlotek

Latin:
Thomas Buck, minor
Julia Feldman
Thomas Leigh
Neville McFerrin
Rani Molla
Ian Page, minor
Alex Schecter

Tom Buck started the post-baccalaureate program in Classics at Penn this fall, and hopes to pursue further graduate work in the field. Josh Curtis will be in Korea for the next year on a Fulbright Fellowship, teaching English. Julia Feldman was awarded the Daedalus Fellowship at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a two-year position beginning on September 15 that involves the study of Robert Motherwell. She began the summer in an internship at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Karen Frenchu began this fall in the graduate program in Library Science at the University of Pittsburgh. She has written to say that her assault on the Classics Department there has already begun. Neville McFerrin entered the Ph.D program in Classical Archaeology at the University of Michigan this fall. Noah Mlotek will be teaching in the Baltimore area for the coming year, and plans to pursue graduate work in Classics in the near future. Rani Molla hopes to build on her sterling record as Editor in Chief of the Oberlin Review with more work in journalism. No definite news about plans from Tom Leigh, Ian Page, or Alex Schecter, but we will report whenever we hear.

Students Rob Hardy (1986) and Clara Shaw Hardy (1983). Clara was this year’s Distinguished Alumna Speaker.
Prizes

The Frew Prize went to Noah Mlotek, for excellent work in Greek. Classics Alumni Prizes were awarded to Thomas Buck, for excellence in Greek, Karen Frenchu for excellence in Greek, Neville McFerrin, for excellence of Greek and Latin, and Julia Feldman, for excellence in Latin. The Swearingen Prize, awarded to the junior who demonstrates the greatest aptitude for teaching Latin on the secondary school level, was awarded to Kathleen (Ploy) Keener. The Gilbert Lawall Prize, awarded to the junior who demonstrates the greatest aptitude for teaching Greek on the secondary school level, was awarded to Emelio DiSabato. The Matthew Smith Prize was given to Shoshana Silverman, to support her attendance at the Classics Advanced Semester Program in Athens, and to Emelio DiSabato, to support his attendance at the Intercollegiate Center of Classical Studies in Rome. Book Prizes, for outstanding work in the first of Greek and Latin, were awarded to Sarah Hoffman (Greek) and Polly Gibson (Latin).

Faculty News

Tom Van Nortwick is delighted to welcome Kirk Ormand back as chair, after serving as acting chair for 2007-08. He enjoyed teaching as usual. It was a special treat to be able to offer, in conjunction with Joseph Farrell’s Martin Lectures, an advanced Latin course on the last six books of the Aeneid, a part of the poem he has never been able to teach before. The students were excellent, and the text, of course, was superb. He has two new books appearing. This summer, Imagining Men: Ideals of Masculinity in Ancient Greek Culture was published by Praeger, and in January 2009, The Unknown Odysseus: Alternate Worlds in Homer’s Odyssey came out with the University of Michigan press.

Kirk Ormand reports that rumors of his expatriation to Greece were greatly exaggerated; he has returned to Oberlin, the pleasures of teaching, and the somewhat less pronounced pleasures of being Chair. His time in Greece was fairly productive: his book, Controlling Desires: Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome is now out from Praeger press, and he has two articles forthcoming in collected volumes. The long-awaited magnum opus on the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women is still not, as we say, in written form. In other developments, Kirk did get to visit several spots he’d never seen in Greece, including the fabulous sanctuary island of Delos and the beautiful town of Ioannina in the Epiros region. He is developing an interest in later (post-classical) Greece, and also hopes to invent a new course soon dealing with the material culture of prehistoric Greece.

A shot from Acrocorinth, spring
Ben Lee

Ben Lee returned from leave and sprang right back into teaching, offering, among other things, the Latin Novel in the fall and the ever-popular Greek and Roman Myth course in the spring. We were happy to see the publication of Ben’s “The Moods of Representation: The Rhetoric of Subjectivity in Tibullus,” in *Elegy and Narrativity*, ed. P. Salzman-Mitchell (Ohio State University Press) this winter. Ben is now at work on his next major project, a text and commentary of book 11 of Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*. He is also co-organizing an international conference on Apuleius and North African Latin, which is tentatively scheduled to take place at Oberlin in the spring of 2010.

Drew Wilburn

Drew Wilburn started the year off well, happy that the recently released *Rome*, season 2, from HBO, could provide important visual aids for the History of Rome. Also in the spring semester, Drew was thrilled to incorporate the study of a newly rediscovered papyrus (P. Oberlin 1) into his advanced Greek course on Lysias and Thucydides. Thanks to a grant from the Friends of the Library, Drew and the class (Tom Buck, Ploy Keener, Noah Mlotek, Oliver Pechenik, and Shoshana Silverman) read that the papyrus listed names and professions! In other teaching news, Drew added a new course, the Ancient City, on the archaeology of Athens, Rome and Pompeii during the fall.

Over the summer, Drew completed a chapter for the forthcoming Brill Guide to Ancient Magic and joined Art Professor Susan Kane for a week at the Sangro Valley Field Project. The Cooper Faculty Research Fund, a generous gift of alumnus Tom Cooper, allowed him to travel over the Alps and into Germania. While there, he researched magical figurines, visited museums and sites, and paid his respects at the Teutoburg Forest, site of the disastrous defeat of P. Quinctilius Varus and his three legions in 9 CE.

Lectures

Winkler Lecture

Oberlin hosts each fall a lecture by the winner of the John J. Winkler Memorial Prize, given to the undergraduate or graduate student who writes the best essay in a “risky or marginal area of Classics.” This prize, established in 1991 to honor the memory of John Winkler, a brilliantly inventive scholar in Classics, is administered by Kirk Ormand, who himself the first winner of the prize while a graduate student at Stanford. This year’s lecturer was Alex Dressler, a Ph.D candidate at the University of Washington. He spoke on “Queen Bess and Plane Trees: Platonism and Feminism in Achilles’ Tatius’ Leucippe and Clitophon,” on Sept. 18.

Distinguished Oberlin Alumni in Classics:

We have begun a yearly lecture series that features Oberlin Classics Alumni/ae. This year, Clara Shaw Hardy, Latin ’83, delivered a lecture titled “Who’s Hecuba to Us? The Trojan Women in Performance, Ancient and Modern,” on Oct. 10.

Other invited Lecturers:

April was a busy month for us, with three invited lectures:

Edward Bispham, Oxford University, “The Hellenistic of Death in Central Appennine Italy,” April 14.

Steven Ellis, University of Cincinnati, “Social Patterns in the Pompeian Urban Fabric,” April 15.

Matthew McGowan, Fordham University, “Tibullus and Horace’s Sermones,” April 22.

Martin Classical Lectures:

This year’s Martin Classical Lecturer was Joseph Farrell, Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He delivered four lectures on the topic of “Juno’s Aeneid: Narrative, Metapoetics, Dissent,” February 25-29, 2008. Farrell is the 71st lecturer in the series. The Martin Lectures, which began in 1925, is one of the two most prestigious Classical lectureships in the world, most often compared to the Sather Lectures at Berkeley. There are 37 published volumes of the lectures, the first 30 by Harvard University Press, the last 8 by Princeton University Press. Julia Haig Gaisser’s *Transformations of Apuleius* was published last year.
Alumni News

We were delighted to hear from Charles Lind (Latin ’69), who wrote on the occasion of his emertization: “Tom—it is always a pleasure to receive the Classics Newsletter, stripped down or otherwise. It is also nice to see an upswing in the numbers of classics majors. I was becoming alarmed that my classics profs were becoming “emeritus” one by one—Nate and James—or REALLY emeritus—Charles T. Murphy—and then I found myself emeritus!! After many good years as clinical coordinator for the anesthesia department at Metroheal, I retired, only to get restless and rehired to work random weeks. Works for me. Anyhow, say hello to Nate and all the best to the department.”

Margo Freistadt (Classical Civ. ’78), another old friend we haven’t heard from in a while, wrote in July: “Question: Is the Classics Department still doing that read-an-epic-all-night thing that was going on for a while? If so, what’s the epic for this year and is the date set yet? My daughter, who I had thought was in about fourth grade, is suddenly a senior in high school and is looking at colleges. So, it’s dawning on me that I haven’t been to Oberlin since I graduated in 1978, and it’s about time I had a visit. The epic-reading was always in the back of my mind as the thing I would go back there for. Any news on that front??” Tom Van Nortwick wrote back, noting that he and Margo had arrived at Oberlin the same year, and reminiscing about her and Willa Shalit in Latin 101: “What a treat it will be to see you again. I was just telling my wife stories about you and Willa Shalit in the back row of Latin 101, talking, talking, talking.” To which: “Willa & I weren’t that bad, were we? I just remember being so wowed that I could actually take Latin. I had wanted to take Latin since I was in about seventh grade and had never been at a school where it was offered. So, being 18, if I finally got the class I had been craving for years, yeah, I probably would have chatted with my friends all the way through it. My main memory from that class was us asking you how do you say “yes” in Latin, and you were sort of stumped. You said that “certa” (sp?), was probably what they said, which meant “certainly” or something like that, but that, you know, really, that hadn’t come up before in your studies...” That’ll teach Tom to bring up past memories...We very much hope to see Margo and her daughter here this year!

Diane Sorrell (Latin ‘79) wrote an ObieGram to Tom Van Nortwick, and this good update in reply to his e-mail: “Greetings from Nashville! I was surprised and delighted to hear from you; I’ve never sent one of those Obiegrams or contributed to the Classics Newsletter (which I already receive in hard copy, but thanks for asking) because I never really knew what to say. I so loved my years at Oberlin and want to thank you again for contributing so richly to my education there. I have particularly fond memories of the Propertius course which I took with you and two other students and always appreciated how friendly, kind, and helpful you were outside of class. Here is a very brief summary of what I’ve been up to since graduating in ’79. I headed off to U. Chicago for the doctoral program in Classical Philology, spent three years there completing the MA work in both Greek and Latin and establishing candidacy for the PhD work. One of my advisors there, Ralph Johnson, suggested that I take one or two years off before moving to the next stage of work. He thought I seemed tired (true) and would find teaching at a prep school and making some money a way to recharge. Being the clueless young woman that I was, I started applying for jobs late (Ralph gave me the name of an agency in June), but did interview for and receive a job in early August in Connecticut. I was such a disaster (typical young Turk syndrome) that I decided within a few months that if I weren’t fired I would spend another year there and make it better. I also gained some perspective on what a dreadful environment Chicago was; I couldn’t really see that when I was right there. Well, by my second year of teaching, I realized that I was able to have a sort of fun with the students (e.g. translating The Flintstones and Batman TV theme songs into Latin) that wasn’t...
possible with older students and I became hooked on teaching at the secondary level. I considered returning to graduate school elsewhere, but just lost interest in it. I am still teaching high school Latin. I moved down to Nashville from Concord, MA in 2000; still not quite sure why. But life has worked out in this world. A good number of my students have continued their study of Classics in college and a few have even majored in Classics, which makes me very happy indeed. Other than that I have dogs, continue my study of music (one of the reasons I went to Oberlin in the first place), and do lots of gardening (addiction to roses; does Betty Ford have a program for that yet?). Because our school graduations conflict with Oberlin reunions, I haven’t made it back there. But if I do, I will let you know in advance. It would be wonderful to stop in and say hello. Thank you for your very kind note. My best to you and the rest of the department. And a big congratulations on the expansion of the program - vivat res publica! Best Wishes, Diane”

What a pleasure to hear from Diane after all this time!

Ellen Bauerle (Greek ‘80) has returned to the University of Michigan Press as editor of the Classical Studies list (and I’m sure other areas, however unimportant…). This is good news for the profession, since Ellen was instrumental in the publication of many excellent titles in the early 1990’s, before taking a break from publishing. Her return is especially happy news for Tom Van Nortwick and Drew Wilburn, who are publishing books with Michigan in the near future.

Andrew Butterfield (Greek ‘82) wrote with Aristophanic news: “I thought I should share this with you. Our old house came with a large play house out back that was built in 1917. (It looks sort of like a congregational church without a steeple and actually has an antique bowling alley in it. It is a hoot.) Well, we found a new use for it today. We lent it to a youth theater group so that they could rehearse Aristophanes The Frogs which they are putting on next week. I still draw on my classical training all the time. For the Poussin article in the New York Review this spring I read a lot of Virgil—even struggling through many key passages in Latin— as well as Theocritus and Hesiod.” Tom and Mary Van Nortwick had the pleasure of seeing him in NYC a couple of years ago.

Clara Hardy (Latin ‘83) returned from her year’s research leave with a book manuscript, an interdisciplinary study of the year 415 B.C.E. in Athens. Tom Van Nortwick got to read a draft, to his great pleasure and profit. We await the book’s publication with eager anticipation. Clara and her husband, Rob Hardy (Latin ‘86) were back for Commencement, both looking great.

Rachel Seidman (Greek ‘88) was back for Commencement. Tom Van Nortwick had a good visit with her over coffee, and heard all about the good work she is doing as Associate Director of the Program on History, Public Policy & Social Change, part of the Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke.

Emily Stone (Latin ‘90) wrote with an update, including her newest gig: “How’s tricks? I just wanted to send you an update on my current stitch. Since last we’ve spoken, I’ve gone to grad school, gotten an MFA in fiction, lived in Bali, and now have my own show on ivillage NBC. The final info is why I am writing to you. I thought you might like to check out my show. one million people watch it. literally. and now you can too. go to video.ivillage.com (no www) and all will be revealed.” Tom Van Nortwick is hoping for a guest spot soon.

Tofa Borregaard (Arch. Studies ‘98) sent a welcome update in June: “I’m excavating in Cusco, Peru, at the moment. And I thought that for those of you not regularly on livejournal, I’d let you know I am posting pictures of the excavation and my trip at the NCEFG’s blog: http://ncefg.livejournal.com/ The NCEFG is my Experimental Archaeology project http://www. NCEFG.org I am also writing about the excavation in my personal journal which is locked unless you have a livejournal account, but if you would like to receive an email of the text just let me know.”

Rebecca Gershowitz Coolong (Classical Civ. ‘99) was married April 13, 2008 to Robert Coolong. Here’s more from her on the wedding: “The wedding was fantastic! It was April 13, 2008 (the day before my 30th birthday! I was going to be in my 20’s when I got married!). We got married at the Candlewood Inn in Brookfield Connecticut. My husband’s name is Robert Coolong and I am now Mrs. Rebecca Coolong (what a pain to do the name change!). We are living in Wales MA where he builds circuit boards and I am the Elementary Director for the Springfield JCC. Hmm, a couple of Obies were there. My Sister Elissa Gershowitz (‘98) was my matron of honor, Heather VanAelst(‘00) was a bridesmaid, and Mathias Wegener (‘99) was a guest.” Happy news!
Jacob Feeley (Latin ‘00) wrote in April to arrange a campus meeting for one of his students who is applying to Oberlin. He is working at a Jewish High School in Westchester teaching Latin and Hebrew. He and Elana Bailes (Greek ‘00), are married and live in New York.

Anne Grenon Cherniak (Classical Civ. ‘00) sent a good update from Chicagoland: “Wow - the semester flew by and now I’m gearing up for the semester break. Things have been busy but I’ve really felt like I accomplished a lot this year. I haven’t filled you in and found out what was going on in a while so I thought I’d catch up. Here’s my good news - I’m going to be chair of the Library Technical Assistant (LTA) department at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, IL starting in Fall 2008. I can’t wait! I’ll be teaching, advising students, hiring part-time faculty, managing the curriculum, marketing the program, networking throughout the County to increase awareness, holding recruitment events, developing an assessment plan, working on an articulation agreement with the state of Illinois, and much more! It’s an interesting hybrid position - 60/40 - I’ll still be doing 6-8 hours on the reference desk but will spend the rest of my time working on the program. It’s a great opportunity to network, promote a program and group of students who really deserve attention, and gain experience in administration/management/advise-ment. It’s very exciting - I’m working with the current chair in the Spring so I can smoothly move into the role. And of course I get to do what I love - teach. Jon is in the midst of interviews for medical school - he has three so far: Rush University (Chicago), University of Illinois at Chicago, and

Chlöe Liotta-Jones (2006)

Brown University. We’re still waiting to hear from eight more schools but I’m very proud of him. In fact, we should hear from Rush in the next two weeks or so on whether he will be admitted - his other scheduled interviews aren’t until late January. Our cat and dog are enjoying alternately chewing pine needles and staring at the lights on our first real Christmas tree. Life is good :)

Chad Hill (Classical Civ. ‘03) was here for Commencement. He was looking great and continues to work as an archaeologist.

Elena Krell (Greek ‘03) is moving to Evanston, IL, to begin a PH.D program in comparative literature. She has been living in the Bay Area since graduating, and has sung in many operas there. Now that she’s closer, we’ll hope for a visit.

Lisl Walsh (Latin ‘03) was here for Commencement. She is working on her Ph.D dissertation in Classics at USC. We loved seeing her after too long.

Patrick Schwemmer (Greek & Latin ‘04) has finished a Masters in Japanese at Yale, and is off to Japan again. He wrote a postcard to us, and then this in reply to an e-mail from Tom Van Nortwick: “It’s great to hear from you, too, Tom--sounds like your work is moving along and the Classics department is ever expanding. I’m off to Japan this Thursday, so I’m enjoying the packing experience. One gets to re-evaluate one’s material footprint and unload ballast. I’m overdue for an Oberlin visit; I hope I’ll come by next summer on my way to start the PhD. And if you happen by Tokyo in the coming year, I’ve just secured a nice apartment in Yokohama near a park and a zoo…”

Samantha Grace (Greek ‘05) is beginning a Master’s program in Anthropology at the University of Arizona this fall. Soon she’ll be teaching undergraduates. Lucky for them!
Ian Pocock (Latin minor ‘05) has moved from St. Louis to San Francisco. He wrote us a fine New Year’s update: “I’ve been living and working in San Francisco: enjoying the weather, hanging out with Obies, and taking a trip down to L.A. to see my parents fairly often (a totally manageable drive). Reality looms as this New Year begins, and while returning to St. Louis next Fall is still a possibility, I’ve also been looking at options for continuing education out here. SF State has an interesting MBA program which is similar to the Planning concentrations I was looking at last year: an MBA in Sustainable Business Practice. I think this might be an even better direction for me, as the work I’ve been doing in St. Louis has been tied to non-profits and “green industry” startups. So I’ve started an application with SFSU, and now I’m studying for the GMAT (argh... another standardized test). All in all, it’s good to be back in California and near my family again. I hope you had a great holiday season and wish you and your family all the best in 2008.”

Lindsay Baruffa (Classical Civ. ‘06) continues working toward her law degree at Case. We were delighted to see her here for a couple of lectures last year.

Georgia Blume (Latin ‘06) wrote an ObieGram to us this April: “It has been too long. I hope everyone is doing well and your new students are as fantastic as the graduating class of 2006. I have been well, living in New York City with my Oberlin-alum roommate and boyfriend. I’m on my second year of a two-year analyst program at Bank of America. Mainly I’ve been doing a lot of macroeconomic analysis of emerging markets like China and Brazil, and I’m thinking of applying to a think tank such as the Council on Foreign Relations, or a policy analysis position next year. From Allison Choat (Latin ‘07—for more on whom, see below) comes this report: “Krishni [Burns] (Latin ‘06) is doing well at graduate school there. She lives in an apartment that makes my Boston home look like a broom closet! When she is not translating Greek, she is playing with her two cats (her cat Felix, and my cat Trova, whom she adopted this year), and watching The West Wing.”

Jennie Chiko (Latin ‘06) and Arthur Jones (Greek and Latin ‘06) were married this June in Illinois. They were here for Commencement, looking wonderful showing no pre-wedding jitters. Arthur continues in the Ph.D program in Classics at Penn, and Jennie is teaching in the Philadelphia area. We understand that Ethan Witkowsky (Greek ‘06) officiated the ceremony. He is in seminary in New York City, and stopped by for a welcome visit this spring.

Brian Coover (Greek ‘06) sent us a welcome update in late May: “It’s been two years since I’ve had any contact with the Oberlin faculty. This is mostly because there’s been nothing of interest to report. Nonetheless, I regret not having kept in touch with the professors that guided me through the most exciting and rewarding phase of my education. That being said, I’d like to take this opportunity to fill you in on my recent career developments. After I graduated, I decided
to try to start a rock band with another Oberlin graduate in Chicago. The plans never really materialized, and when my partner in crime left for grad school, I was left to half-heartedly explore other music-related options. I sat and thought for a long time about what I was going to do, earning my keep as a waiter, doorman, and tech support rep. About two months ago I started mulling over the idea of joining the Armed Forces. I have a tradition of military service in my family, and always wanted to do at least a short term of service. One day I decided to drop by a recruiter’s office to see what my options were. I considered seeking a commission as an officer, but when I heard about the Special Forces enlistment option, I became very inspired. My test scores and background qualified me to enlist in this program, where I’ll have the chance to attend the Special Forces Selection School. The wash-out rate is very high, but giving it a shot is most of the appeal for me. If I get through two years of rigorous training, I’ll get a post as a Green Beret, and serve for three years. After that, the GI Bill, College Fund, and my signing bonuses will make it relatively easy to pursue further education. But regardless of the monetary incentives, I feel that the experience of getting through the Special Forces will be invaluable in whatever career I decide to pursue. I’ve been officially sworn in, and will be leaving for Fort Benning, GA on July 2nd of this year. Thank you all for enriching my college experience. The benefits of a classical education will follow me wherever I go.” Brian will be in our thoughts.

Chloë Liotta-Jones (Latin ‘06 & Classical Civ. ‘06) was here for Commencement, bringing with her largess in the form of a fabulous cake. She continues in pursuit of her Master’s in Library Science at Queens University in New York.

Max Teitel-Paule (Latin ‘06) was also here for Commencement. He has finished his second year in the Ph.D program in Classics at Ohio State. We can report that the Classics Department Pepperidge Farm Cookie Fund he generously established last year has already brought joy and in some cases a hallucinatory sugar high to many students and faculty.

Michael Berkowitz (Greek & Latin ‘07) has produced a CD of his singing and songwriting, “a song for every station.” He was here on February 25 to celebrate at the Cat in the Cream. As the 25th was the opening night of this year’s Martin Lectures, Michael was good enough to schedule his event late enough so as not to drain off all of our audience. It was wonderful to see him, and we can recommend the CD. For more info on Michael’s music (and Michael):
michael@songsaboutsnow.com
http://www.myspace.com/michaelberkowitz
http://www.songsaboutsnow.com
Allison Choat (Latin ‘07) was here for Commencement, and to prepare us, sent this excellent update from Boston in February: “I was wandering around the web at work today (how alliterative) and found myself consumed by the Charybdis of the Oberlin classics homepage, which has prompted me to write this e-mail to you to tell you how I’ve been and to see how you are doing. As you may have surmised from the subject line of this e-mail, I am now living and working in and around Boston, Massachusetts. I got my current job by answering an unlikely ad on Craig’s List: “Eccentric CEO seeks Amanuensis (Knowledge of Classics Preferred).” Of course, I e-mailed right away - even though it was late at night. To my surprise, I got a response immediately: “You’re much younger than the other candidates we are considering, but I have a weakness for Oberlin and music/theater. And you can spell ‘amanuensis.’ Are you free on Monday?” And that (along with a grueling series of interviews) was how my knowledge of classics and opera directing got me a job at Binnacle, a financial services company in Harvard Square. Here, I’m in charge of booking client and consultant travel and arranging special events that range from company meetings to client birthday parties. It’s a job that sometimes big and sometimes quite sleepy, but I very much enjoy my co-workers and I often find myself having fun. When I’m not busy with travel and special events, I am still making time for opera - I have already successfully closed two productions (both as set designer) in the New England area this year. In November, I worked on Rigoletto with Commonwealth Opera, and I just finished a production of Don Giovanni with Boston Opera Collaborative. Next up is the world premiere of No Exit, a new opera by Andrew Vores, with Guerilla Opera, a new company for whom I am production-designer-in-residence. Other Oberlin alumni abound in the Boston area - Dan Rodriguez is out and about in Boston, working as a freelance pianist and music director at-large for several Boston-area theater companies. His production of The Mystery of Edwin Drood at SpeakEasy Stage Company was recently very well-reviewed, and I believe he is planning on joining the Reagle Players for another season as music director this summer. Recently he, Steven Bagley (Oberlin ‘06 - English) and I took off to the wilds of Buffalo to visit Krishni, who is doing well at graduate school there. She lives in an apartment that makes my Boston home look like a broom closet! When she is not translating Greek, she is playing with her two cats (her cat Felix, and my cat Trova, whom she adopted this year), and watching The West Wing. Though life in Boston is definitely fulfilling, I find myself missing the academic stimulation that was so ready at-hand at Oberlin. I’m not ready to head off to grad school just yet (for one thing, I have no idea what I’d study), but I am wondering if I should take some night classes just to keep my brain active. I miss translating in the seminar room - and now, with a nip of false warmth in the air, I miss the explosive beauty of Oberlin’s Spring, the classics picnic, and the company of my teachers and friends.” After this wonderful message, we were happy to be able to see Allison in the flesh in May. Sarah Dunn (Latin ‘07) was here for Commencement, and looking well. She has recently moved to Brooklyn, and is working in environmentally sustainable design. Danny Kane (Greek & Latin ‘07) was here for Commencement. He continues to teach Latin on Staten Island (a little rhyme from TVN there...). A more
recent report, however, has him considering a move to Brooklyn. The blonde wig, about which we reported in the last Newsletter, was nowhere in evidence.  

Anna Leinberger (Greek & Latin ‘07) has been living and working in New York City for the past year. Now, she has launched forth on a fabulous new adventure, teaching Latin at a private school in Jordan! Here’s the URL for the school’s website: http://www.kingsacademy.edu.jo/Public/main_English.aspx?Lang=3&Page_Id=548  

We await more news!  

Ben Reitz (Greek ‘07) sent this fine update from China in July: “Hello from China! I hope things in Oberlin are going well. I wanted to let you know what I have been up to during the past year. I have been living in China for a year now in the Shanxi province at Shanxi Agricultural University. My first year of teaching English was a rewarding and a growing experience. I’m looking forward to my next year of teaching and living in Shanxi. I teach 14 hours a week, which leaves me with plenty of time for studying Chinese and socializing with my Chinese friends. The city I live in is called Taigu, and there are only a handful of foreigners who live here. This year there were only six foreigners (all English teachers) who lived in the city. This gives me a lot of opportunities to practice speaking Chinese every day. This summer I am going to the Czech republic to meet up with my girlfriend for a month in Litomysl, a small city in the hills east of Prague. She is going there to participate in a violin conference for 3 weeks. Although I am thoroughly enjoying studying Chinese, I find myself missing Ancient Greek. I hope that in the future I can return to the Classics!”  

Dan Rodriguez (Greek ‘07) was here for Commencement. He is freelance pianist and music director at-large for several Boston-area theater companies. His production of The Mystery of Edwin Drood at SpeakEasy Stage Company was recently very well-reviewed, and he is planning on joining the Reagle Players for another season as music director this summer.
CLASSICS ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

[Fall 2006]

If you haven’t yet responded to our plea for information about what you have been doing since you left Oberlin, please tell us about yourself (further schooling, career developments, family details, news of other Oberlin Classics graduates and reflections on your Oberlin education, etc.) Include your photo for our photograph album. Please correct your Name and Mailing Address below and return to the Editor:

Thomas Van Nortwick, Department of Classics, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH 44074 — Many thanks!

Check, if applicable: [ ] Please don’t forward this news to the Alumni Magazine.

E-Mail address: ____________________________________________________________

My news is (feel free to attach another sheet):