From the Former Director’s Desk

We decided to update the way we distribute our newsletter and move to an online format and this partly accounts for the lateness of this 2009-2010 edition. We also thought it would be good to have more input from alumni and former post-baccalaureates but coaxing contributions from former students gave me new insight into the relationship between Sisyphus and his rock. However, I am happy to say that six of our former students complied with the request to let us know what they have been up to since they graduated (See pp. 6-7).

The really outstanding news of 2009-2010 was the performance of three of our undergraduate students in the national Eta Sigma Phi translation exams. As readers of this newsletter will know, UC Davis has an excellent record of success in these exams, practically always placing first, second or third in at least one of the six exams. This year, we almost swept the board with Ilan Gonzalez-Hirshfeld placing first in Intermediate Greek and Advanced Latin and second in Latin Prose Composition, Zoe Stachel placing first in Advanced Greek and Celsiana Warwick placing first in Koine Greek and second in Intermediate Greek. Thus of the 18 first, second and third places in the six exams, our three students walked away with no less than seven, including FOUR FIRSTS. (For further details see http://www.ucdavis.edu/spotlight/0710/a_classics_education.html)

Congratulations to Ilan, Zoe and Celsiana for their splendid achievements! Warm thanks are also due to John Rundin for organizing and administering the exams. The faculty, too, can (and do) take pride in these students’ success as each one of us has taught at least one of these students and some have taught all three.

Given our extraordinary showing in the Greek exams, particular credit must go to Patricia Bulman, under whose tutelage all three students began their Greek studies here at Davis. It was therefore with great sadness that we learned this fall that Patricia will be retiring at the end of the quarter for health reasons. Patricia graduated with a PhD in Comparative Literature from UC Berkeley and joined the Comparative Literature program here in 1989. Most of her graduate work had been done in Classics, however, and a revised version of her dissertation — an impressive study on Pindar — was published by UC Press in 1992.

In the difficult days of 1993 (see History section of our website), Patricia started teaching some of our Greek courses. Her share in the teaching of our Greek and GE Classics courses gradually expanded until 2004, when her appointment was changed from Comparative Literature to full-time in Classics. This was a great boon for the Classics program, as it meant we were assured of an excellent teacher in all of our first-year Greek classes and, as an added bonus, the ability to teach more of our larger-enrollment courses, such as the etymology course, Classics 1, and the tragedy, comedy and epic courses, all of which Patricia taught frequently and with great success. This year’s Eta Sigma Phi results, in which three of her students placed first in one of the three Greek exams, is the best possible tribute to her outstanding ability as a talented and inspiring teacher. We will all, faculty and students alike, sorely miss her reassuring and friendly presence in Sproul, Olson and Wellman. We wish her a full and speedy recovery and look forward to seeing her once again on campus from time to time.

July 1, 2010 ushered in my own retirement. I joined the Classics Program in 1970 as an earnest young assistant professor (see photo on Page 2). There were only four faculty members back then with a teaching capacity of 20 courses and very few majors. I am happy to report that Classics now has six faculty with a teaching capacity of about 32 courses. Our majors now number about 40, which is extremely good for a program that requires of all its majors at least two years of an ancient language. The Dean has agreed to allow us to seek a replacement for Patricia Bulman and the appointment of Carey Seal last year was an

(Continued on Page 2)
A Note from the New Director

Let me echo David’s words of praise for Patricia Bulman, a beloved colleague sorely missed for her brilliant teaching, exemplary care for students, and elegant presence.

As for David Traill, his comments on his own retirement were characteristically modest. A UC Davis Classics professor since 1970, he brought international recognition to our campus through the stunning breadth of his scholarly detective work, uncovering the authorship and textual authority of Latin lyrics, ancient and medieval, and disclosing the exploits of Heinrich Schliemann as a notorious nineteenth-century smuggler of Mycenaean treasures. In the classroom David has been a pioneer in teaching large lecture courses like Greek and Roman mythology. His class on Pompeii explored new territory in teaching methods and technology – and led several students to become Classics majors. A master of Greek and Latin, David has especially been an inspired teacher of the languages and literatures. We are delighted that he has agreed to teach Greek Prose Composition for us in Spring 2011.

Most of all we cherish his great kindness and generosity as mentor and friend. David’s Classics colleagues are inaugurating an annual lecture in his honor, beginning this spring quarter. Please watch our website for details.

Emily Albu
A fearsome, bare-chested, and club-wielding Hercules (Giorgio Selvaggio), accompanied by his trusty friend Iolaus (Sam Warren) lead a motley band of monsters.

Bringing up the rear of the monsters are the UCD Classics faculty posing as Greek gods: (from left) Rex Stem as Ares (with son Henry as Cupid), Melissa Stem (who taught the epic course for us in Spring 2010) as Aphrodite, John Rundin (Dionysus), David Traill (Zeus), Carey Seal (Apollo). At far left the tawny mane of the dreaded Nemean Lion (Michelle Ross) can easily be discerned.

After the parade we posed for a photo on the steps of Death Star. Prof. Akihiko Watanabe (Hermes) can be seen between Ares and Apollo in the back row and Emily Albu in the front row (center-right) holding banner. Among the various characters appearing in the 12 Labors, are Atlas holding the world on his shoulder and the Stymphalian birds (in red).
In September, Alan and I spent two weeks with my daughter and friends in Istanbul (my favorite city in the world) and Athens (also quite fine!). Istanbul highlights included Hagia Sophia and the Basilica Cistern, the Bosphorus ferry and lunch in Asia, a Turkish bath and fresh cherry juice, the Alexander sarcophagus in the Archeological Museum, whirling Dervishes at the Ramadan festivities, riding in the Tunel to Pera district restaurants. Athens looked much more prosperous than in my student days, with few obvious signs of the looming financial disaster. We marveled at the restoration of the Parthenon, in progress, the spectacular new Acropolis Museum and the icons in the Byzantine Museum, the agora and the magnificent Apollo temple, Hadrian’s library and the treasures of the Archeological Museum, newly uncovered Roman baths, a lunch of divine mushroom risotto and terrace breakfasts overlooking the Acropolis. Side trips included a hydrofoil to Aegina and a cab ride to the lovely little monastery of Hosios Loukas, tucked in the mountains, and to Delphi, where friends took this photo.

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This summer I discovered the Mystery Spot. It’s a genuinely mysterious place in the hills above Santa Cruz where one’s perceptions of reality are about 17 degrees off of normal and you cannot really tell if you are leaning over or the world is (see attached photograph). And yet, the sensation was familiar, since for the whole last year my research has given me the same feeling. I have become obsessed with a little known author named Cornelius Nepos. He is the first true biographer from antiquity from whom we have surviving works. He lived through the revolutionary endings of the Roman Republic and was known to be friendly with Catullus and Cicero along the way.

I find that his short biographies of famous Greek and Carthaginian commanders reveal two simultaneous concepts:

1.) What the ideal commander should be like and
2.) Why, having failed to produce such leaders, the Roman Republic fell?

His works seem to me a fascinating intersection of historical setting, political thought, and literary biography. The rest of the scholarly world, however, almost entirely neglects him. The Oxford Classical Dictionary calls him an intellectual pygmy (really!). A book about the contents of his biographies has never been written in English. So am I the odd one for being the first to do so? Or is the rest of the world of Classical scholarship about 17 degrees off of normal? It’s a mystery to me. But the book will be finished soon.

After a three-year appointment in the province of Santa Barbara, I have returned to the fatherland of Davis to take the position of magistra for students of Greek and Latin. I want to say “salvete!” to all of you and to invite you to take my course on Greek and Roman Comedy in Winter Quarter, and on the Ancient Near East and Greece in Spring 2011.

I kicked off the summer of 2009 with a presentation on a late antique epigram collection in Tokyo, at the annual meeting of the Classical Society of Japan – where I was happy to get to know the small (when compared to the United States) but dedicated group of classicists in my native country.

In the ensuing academic year I taught the Designated Emphasis seminar, Mythology, Latin Composition and Petronius. The experience of teaching subjects ranging from Homer and the Olympian gods to the decadence of Neronian Rome was thoroughly enjoyable. In between teaching, my old Ph.D. dissertation on masculinities in the ancient Greek novel (which I am revising as a monograph) also managed to catch up with me sometimes.

The summer of 2010 proved to be a little busy with travels. The season started with another stay in Japan and attendance at the Japan Comparative Literature Association annual meeting, which I found to be very lively and engaging. I also did some research to prepare for presentations to be given later in the summer. These were in somewhat diverse places, namely Rome and Kentucky. But they were both done in Latin to Latin-speaking audiences – which numbered a few hundred in Rome, and about seventy in Lexington, Kentucky (which by the way was formerly known as “Athens of the West” – thus perhaps it was appropriate that I should pair it with Rome).

In both places I spoke about Latin writings produced by Japanese people in the last few centuries, of which I am finding more as time goes on.
Laughing (?) under layers of lava

I am now beginning my sixth year teaching at UC Davis. The more I work at Davis, the more I like Davis and admire its talented students. I continue to be the faculty advisor for Eta Sigma Phi, the national classics honorary association, which initiated eighteen new members at Davis this June. I was particularly pleased when UC Davis students won four out of six top places in the Eta Sigma Phi translation exams last winter. I am also pleased to have joined the Board of Directors for the California Classics Association-North. I hope to work on issues related to credentialing Latin K-12 Teachers. I continue also to place interns in Latin K-12 classrooms so that they can experience the realities of teaching Latin at the pre-collegiate level and to hold annual informative panels at which Davis classics students meet K-12 Latin teachers. After three years of study, my Japanese is slowly improving. I have been told by a Japanese friend that my accent “is not nearly as bad as it used to be,” and Japanese people no longer stare at me blankly when I try to speak but rather understand and respond appropriately. This summer, I fulfilled a dream of mine since childhood, when the dinosaur picture-books I treasured always featured a volcano or two. I visited the active volcanoes on the island of Hawaii. I got to see lava flowing into the ocean and magma glowing in volcanic craters. It was awesome.

Photo: September 18, 2010, on the island of Hawaii, approximately one mile from the site where Mt. Kilauea is currently pouring lava into the ocean. I am standing in the field of hardened lava from a flow that destroyed most of the town of Kalapana in 1990.

JOHN RUNDIN

CAREY SEAL

With Seneca in Berlin

I joined the faculty at UC Davis in 2009, and I have rapidly become acclimated to life in the California sun and in the equally warm and congenial atmosphere of the Classics Program. My teaching in the 2009-2010 academic year included an upper-level Greek course on Plato’s Euthyphro, a course on Socrates and his Athenian milieu, with readings in English translation, and the third quarter of the introductory Greek sequence. I was also lucky enough to read some of Plato’s Protagoras with a small group of advanced Greek students.

To my delight, most survivors of the third-quarter Greek class are pressing on this fall with me, and Xenophon and the Ten Thousand, in Greek 100N. I am also teaching Caesar in Latin 100N, and in the spring will offer an upper-level Latin course on Ovid’s Metamorphoses and a lecture course on women in classical antiquity.

On the research front, I am at work on making a book out of my dissertation, Philosophy and Community in Seneca’s Prose.

DAVID TRAILL

In the summer of 2009 I spent a pleasant month in Europe, visiting family in Scotland, touring Northern Ireland, participating in a medieval conference in Leeds, and vacationing with German friends in Mecklenburg. I was particularly impressed with the progress that has been made in bringing that part of Germany out of the drabness that was the reality of East Germany. Mecklenburg is delightfully rural with hundreds of lakes, and boasts an amazing number of villages with churches built as early as the 12th and 13th centuries. It is also Schliemann country and my host was the former director of the Schliemann museum in Ankershagen (located in the house where the archaeologist grew up); so we visited many of the places associated with Schliemann’s childhood, even swimming in an idyllic lake, where he once swam.

This past year I taught Classics 2, Herodotus, Greek tragedy and Medieval Latin and supervised a couple of graduate students working on their DE research papers — a pleasant, if at times hectic, year on which to end forty years of teaching at Davis. This summer I was again in Europe, where I met up with old friends at a high school reunion in the town where I grew up and did some touring and visiting friends in Scotland and England. The weather was delightful — even in Scotland. My trip ended with a wonderful week in Paris, culminating in a reunion dinner with a couple of friends from grad student days in Berkeley.

My colleagues gave me a wonderful retirement gift — a big High Def TV and blue-ray DVD player, both of which I am much enjoying — thinking (and perhaps hoping?) that that would terminate my association with the Classics program. Alas, I am still wandering the halls of Sproul to the astonishment and consternation of practically everyone in the building, thoroughly enjoying my retirement.
Alumni News

From CHRIS ECKERMAN (Class of '00)

After graduating from Davis in 2000, I entered grad school in Classics at UCLA. Los Angeles was a big change from Davis, but I adjusted well and even became something of an urbanite. While in grad school I had the chance to live in Athens for a year at the American School of Classical Studies and tour around Greece for a year on the American School's dime. I also spent a fair amount of time in Germany. Most recently, I have taken up a job as an assistant professor of Classics at the University of Oregon. I love Eugene and find that it's really similar to Davis in many respects. I had a chance to travel to Spain and Greece this summer and I offer this somewhat clichéd picture of me with the Athenian acropolis in the background. I hope to visit Davis again in the not too distant future and if there are any students at Davis who would be interested in chatting Classics with me, please contact me (eckerman@uoregon.edu).

From VALERIE KOMOR (Class of '80)

After graduating in June 2000, I took a well-earned holiday to Greece. This initially planned 15-day holiday turned out to be a permanent relocation to Europe. Having moved to London I completed a B.Sc. in Biochemistry and then moved on to medical school in China's Shansi Province in great numbers in the late 19th century. From there I went to the Rockefeller Archive Center (which holds the first three generations of Rockefeller family papers) and then to the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. By this time, I was living in New York City. From 2000 to 2003, I headed the department of Prints, Photographs, and Architectural Collections at the New-York Historical Society.

In 2003, I was asked to establish the first-ever corporate archives for the Associated Press (AP). It has been the most exciting work I have ever done as an archivist, since it has involved creating a full-fledged archival program from scratch. Nothing like it has ever existed at AP before. You can imagine my delight, one day in November 2003, when we actually found the core of the archives inside a storage vault in the bowels of 50 Rockefeller Plaza. I knew they had to be around there somewhere. Since then, we have gone on to collect records from the far-flung bureaus, conduct oral history interviews with long-serving staff, install archival exhibits, create publications, host lectures, process and preserve collections, and in short, continuously knit together the extended AP family by celebrating its illustrious past. In 2006, we told the AP that it was two years older than it had always thought, founded in 1846, not in 1848. Unlike most of us, AP reacted happily to the news of its greater age.

From TAKI SOFOS (Class of '00)

After graduating from Davis in 2000, I entered grad school in Classics at UCLA. Los Angeles was a big change from Davis, but I adjusted well and even became something of an urbanite. While in grad school I had the chance to live in Athens for a year at the American School of Classical Studies and tour around Greece for a year on the American School's dime. I also spent a fair amount of time in Germany. Most recently, I have taken up a job as an assistant professor of Classics at the University of Oregon. I love Eugene and find that it's really similar to Davis in many respects. I had a chance to travel to Spain and Greece this summer and I offer this somewhat clichéd picture of me with the Athenian acropolis in the background. I hope to visit Davis again in the not too distant future and if there are any students at Davis who would be interested in chatting Classics with me, please contact me (eckerman@uoregon.edu).

After graduating from Davis in 2008, with a major in English and Classical Civilization (a new major back then), I went to Yale to do graduate work in Medieval Studies. After receiving the M.A. in 1981, I took a leave of absence and began working at Yale’s libraries. First, I worked in the Rare Books department of the Yale Center for British Art, where, among other duties, I made acid-free enclosures for fragile books, curated small exhibits, and cataloged auction catalogs.

Then, I moved to Sterling Library's Bibliography Department where I was a bibliographic assistant. I left New Haven in 1987 to take a Fulbright Fellowship to Naples, Italy. It was a remarkable year, something the Italians call a “punto di riferimento,” (a turning or reference point.). Back home, I decided to get the library degree at the University of Texas at Austin in preparation for becoming an archivist. Archival work seemed to be much more fun than putting books on shelves. My first job was at Oberlin College, which has rich collections on the early education of women, temperance, abolition, and China missionaries, who went from Oberlin to
Alumni News

I have had an eventful two years since completing the post-baccalaureate program at UC Davis. In the summer of 2009, I married my longtime girlfriend, Torrie. This past spring, I received my MA in Classics from Tufts University. While I was completing my degree at Tufts, I had the opportunity to work on the Greek and Latin Treebank Projects for the Perseus Project. In addition, I gain some lecturing and teaching experience while serving as a TA in multiple courses. I am currently preparing to move to Florida where I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Classics at the University of Florida. My major research interests are epic poetry, particularly Homer, and Archaic Greek poetry. During fall 2010, I will be teaching an introductory Latin course while taking graduate courses at UF.

From JENNIFER LaFLEUR (Post-Bac grad, ’08)

Jennifer is entering her third year of graduate school in Classics at the University of Virginia. She is joined there by her very patient partner, Scott, and their two fabulous cats. It’s a beautiful campus, and a supportive department — a lot of work, and a lot of fun! Her first two years were eventful — including a paper presentation at the 2009 meeting of CAMWS in Minneapolis—and went by incredibly quickly. She received her M.A. last spring, with her examinations focused on Greek and an M.A. project on gnomic statements in Herodotus Book 1. This will be her last year of coursework, a fact which brings with it a sense of great accomplishment but also a tinge of sadness. New developments for the coming year include a spot on the CAMWS Graduate Student Issues Committee and election as one of two department Tribunes — liaisons between the Classics graduate students and faculty. But the best part of her job is still teaching, and this year she will help her second year Latin class read Caesar, Ovid, Cicero, and Catullus.

There have been some adjustments involved in moving so far from California, which had always been home. Mostly, it’s the humidity in the summer, which is every bit as bad as they say! It has two wonderful benefits, though: fireflies (which they call lightning bugs here) and summer thunderstorms, which roll in, burst open, and disappear, often in a matter of a few impressive minutes. Still, cooler temperatures — and fall foliage — will be lovely.

From BILL SMITH (Post-Bac grad, ’08)

I have had an eventful two years since completing the post-baccalaureate program at UC Davis. In the summer of 2009, I married my longtime girlfriend, Torrie. This past spring, I received my MA in Classics from Tufts University. While I was completing my degree at Tufts, I had the opportunity to work on the Greek and Latin Treebank Projects for the Perseus Project. In addition, I

Post-Baccalaureate News

The Post-Bac certificate program is designed to strengthen students’ knowledge of Latin, Greek, and other subjects as needed, so that they can become competitive candidates for graduate school. In 2010, four of our post-bacs completed the requirements for the certificate. Three of them — Aleda Krill, Andrew Mills and Elizabeth Janda — have already been admitted to graduate programs in Classics of their choice and are pleased with their success. Genevieve Burns has chosen to defer her applications. We are also happy to report that Christopher Klammt, who received his certificate in 2009, has been admitted to the History Ph.D. program at UCLA. As regards the 2010-11 crop of post-bacs, we are very happy that Aerynn Dighton will be continuing in the post-bac program. We are also very pleased to see four of our own undergraduates joining the program this year: Jennifer Devereaux, Laura Hutchinson, Giorgio Selvaggio and Andrea Wheeler. Finally, we are delighted to have three newcomers to the campus, one from nearby (Mara Anne Chambers from Woodland), one from further afield (Jason Osequada from Berkeley) and one from the East Coast (Nathan Hill from New York). We look forward to working with them to place them in graduate programs that meet their needs.