



Pennsylvania

Classical Association

Newsletter

THE PENNSYLVANIA CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION

Department of Classics

Duquesne University

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Spring

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Salvete omnes!

I have followed a long road throughout these past months with family emergencies and a husband whose unit was activated to begin training for a 14-month deployment to Iraq which began in January. I did *not* send him off with the traditional Spartan saying, "Come back with your shield – or on it" but rather wished him a safe journey and quick return – preferably in one piece!

There are a few announcements in this newsletter courtesy of fellow colleagues and a few reviews of various programs aired on the Discover Channel this past spring and earlier this winter.

As always, I am begging for submissions – any teachers out there finding creative ways to tackle and teach complex Latin or Greek grammatical concepts? Any fun activities you're using to break up the occasional tediousness of translation? I learned recently that Pennsylvania public schools are increasing the number of Latin classes taught, and I'm proud to announce that the high school at which I teach – Pennridge High School – is currently running 4 Latin I classes, 3 Latin II classes, 2 Latin III classes, and 1 Latin IV class. We're still going strong!

For those of us interested in all things classical, are there recent scholarly works that would increase our knowledge of a particular aspect of the classics? What are your opinions on the recent explosion of Hollywood movies with a classical bent: *Troy* or *Alexander*?? Do they have any merit? Are they purely Hollywood creations?

Finally, I pose a question to our readers: If you've ever been asked your profession and you respond that you teach Greek or Latin or are involved in classical research, do you ever get the response: "But I thought that Latin was a dead language!" or "Who needs to learn Greek or Latin – aren't those classes a waste of time?" I'm amazed by the number of people I've met in the last 5 years that I've taught Latin who are astounded when I tell them the subject I teach. I find myself defending my chosen subject by reminding these people that Latin helps to build vocabulary and explain (sometimes) the intricacies and complexities of the English language – its grammatical structure and history. I remind people that much of our government and military strategy come (perhaps somewhat indirectly) from Greek and Roman culture. I'm curious - how do *you* respond?

And now on to the rest... Have a wonderful spring and summer!

Joanna Rouse

Editor

WYOMING COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

“Democracy: From Athens to America” Summer Teachers Institute

June 19 – 24, Powell, Wyoming

Program Overview

Wyoming council for the Humanities announces its sixth summer institute, “Democracy: From Athens to America” in Powell, Wyoming. Meeting collaboratively in daily seminars and mini-courses, participants will explore the nature of Athenian democracy and its evolution in the Constitution of the United States.

A faculty of four with expertise in political science, ancient history, art and classical studies will give public lectures and lead mini-courses and a seminar based on Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* and Plato’s *Apology*. Course topics are the workings of Athenian democracy, both ancient and modern views of the regime, and the archaeology of the city of Athens.

Public lectures will include the social history of Athens and the nature of its democracy, how Athenian democracy is shaped in American democracy, the U.S. Constitution and the art and archaeology of Athens.

The institute is funded in part by the NEH *We the People* program and by the Jackson Community Foundation.

The Setting

The institute offers secondary school and community college teachers as well as members of the general public an opportunity to study in depth and learn with colleagues in an informal setting at Northwest College in Powell, Wyoming, an hour and a half from Yellowstone National Park.

Institute Faculty

Gregg Cawley, Professor of Political Science, the University of Wyoming; Philip Holt, Associate Professor of Modern and Classical Languages, the University of Wyoming; Susann Lusnia, Assistant Professor of Classical Studies, Tulane University; and Jennifer Roberts, Professor and Director, Program in Ancient History, City University of New York Graduate Center.

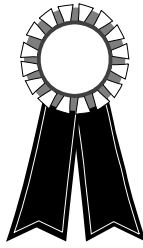
Additional Information

For additional information and an application form, visit www.uwyo.edu/wch or contact the Wyoming Council for the Humanities, 1315 Lewis St., Laramie, WY 82072. Email: WYCH@uwyo.edu
Phone: 307-721-9243

Or Contact:

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Awards and Accolades



Zee Ann Poerio, third grade teacher at St. Louise de Marillac School received the Harlan J. Berk Award for Teacher Excellence through Ancient Coins for Education at the American Numismatic Association's World's Fair of Money at the David Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh on Thursday, August 19th, thereby joining Cathy Scaife, an instructor for the ANA's "Coins in the Classroom" program and high school Latin teacher as a recipient. Harlan J. Berk, donor of the prizes for this honor, presented the award himself in the company of Ms. Poerio's family, students, ACE Director Scott Uhrick, and ANA Executive Director Chris Cipoletti.

Ancient Coins for Education (ACE), is a national, non-profit organization that furnishes genuine ancient Roman coins to classrooms for an attribution program that aims to help fill the void left by the current general sparseness of Classical history studies in schools. ACE began when a few members of an

on-line ancient coin discussion group had the idea to try to advance the appreciation of things Classical by providing coins and related curriculum materials for classroom use. Souzana Steverding of ACE reports that the program has grown steadily since its inception in 2001 and now has over 100 schools and educational establishments participating nationwide and in Canada. ACE sponsors essay and other contests throughout the year on Roman history and culture for which winning students receive high quality ancient coins as prizes. Two of Ms. Poerio's students were recognized this year, Joanna Weiss winning first place in the national "Design a Roman Coin Contest," and Mia Gilardi being recognized for becoming the youngest student ever to attribute her own coin in the ACE program.

Coins for Ms. Poerio's museum project were donated by numismatists from across the country including members of the American Numismatic Association in Colorado Springs and generous coin enthusiast, Harlan J. Berk, internationally respected numismatic scholar from Chicago.

Poerio's interest in ancient coins began when she was searching for ways to

introduce the study of Latin at the elementary school level. Poerio serves as Vice-Chair of the Excellence Through Classics board for the American Classical League and cites her favorite quote from Cicero: "What greater and better gift can we offer the republic than to teach and to instruct our youth." Poerio said she has found the "perfect gift - MONEY!" She explains, "Connecting ancient coins and Classics brings history, art, language, drama, music, math, and science together in an interesting and fun way. The idea of using a museum concept to teach really works, since it allows the children to see and touch actual pieces of the past. They become completely involved in the learning process."

ACE has found that the introduction of ancient coins and artifacts into history and Latin curricula makes history much more accessible to the students. The museum involved students from all levels. The 4th grade Latin club served as docents, and students played the bagpipes and the flute.

According to the ancient Roman historian Suetonius, both were instruments played by the infamous Emperor Nero. Activities also included a local high school student reading the story of Medusa, and an ancient pottery reproduction contest sponsored through the Museum. Local students videotaped and filmed the exhibits. ACE reports that four other schools in other areas of the U.S. and one in Canada are planning similar exhibits in the upcoming year, but Poerio still has "bragging rights" as the originator of the first ancient coin museum at the elementary school level in the United States.

The award this year was an ancient gold "Stater" coin of the infamous Brutus from the period of Civil War (44-42 BCE) that followed Julius Caesar's assassination. Minted in Callatis, Thrace, it weighs 8.23gm of gold as pure as the ancients could refine. The obverse bears the portrait of Alexander

III, "The Great" wearing the Horn of Ammon. The reverse features Athena enthroned and has a posthumous inscription in the name of Lysimachos of Thrace, one of Alexander's generals, among whom Alexander's empire was divided after his death.

This highly desirable coin award was donated and presented by Harlan J. Berk, internationally respected numismatic author, scholar and coin dealer from Chicago whom ACE wishes to thank for his continuing generosity and interest in our work. Mr. Berk has been a strong supporter, and his many generous contributions to ACE have been instrumental in helping the ACE program achieve the nationwide status it enjoys today.

Noteworthy

In 2004, more than 144,000 students participated in the 27th National Latin Exam

Of the states with the greatest number of students taking the 2004 exams, here are the top ten:

MA: 11,377

VA: 11,367
NY: 10,309
PA: 9,036
NJ: 8,443
TX: 8,219
OH: 7,725
CA: 6,468
CT: 5,500
GA: 4,583

However, Pennsylvania does not do as well as some other states in JCL membership in the year 2003-2004. Here are some figures:

PA 1898
CA 3358
FL 4823
MA 1908
NJ 3105
NC 2133
OH 2406
TN 2770
TX 5521
VA 6106

The states not mentioned had fewer JCL members than did PA. There were 51,548 JCL members in all.

In the year 2003-2004, there were 194 Latin teachers in PA who belonged to the ACL. There were only six other states that had more ACL members.

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Upcoming:

ACL Institute, June 2005 in Albuquerque, NM

SHARE THE "GIFT" OF TEACHING LATIN: PRESENT AT THE ACL

I had the opportunity to present at the American Classical League Summer Institute with Barbara Bell author of *Minimus*, at the University of Miami in Ohio. Our session was entitled "Fishing for Ideas Across the Pond: A Collaboration of Elementary Latin Projects.

Barbara shared her "mission" to promote Latin in the UK. She discussed the success of the Primary Latin Project, her texts, *Minimus* and *Minimus Secundus*, the Granny Latin program, teacher training days, her website, and the lunchtime Latin clubs that she developed.

I shared how I have been using *Minimus* and Barbara Bell's Primary Latin Project as inspiration to "fish" for more ideas in familiar waters in the US. I have been able to develop activities, lessons, workshops, a lunchtime Latin club, and even an Ancient Coin Museum. The museum was established with the help of Ancient Coins for Education, the American Numismatic Association, Harlan J. Berk, LTD., and numismatists across the country.

This workshop featured a PowerPoint presentation, interactive cross-curricular activities, question and answer session, video clips, handouts, websites, and an ancient coin museum exhibit.

I also presented another session, "Face the Music: Latin Carries a Tune Across the Curriculum." I met so many wonderful people and had a great time.

If other PCA members attended the ACL this year, I hope you will consider sharing your story and also invite you to consider presenting next year. AT the ACL, I was elected Vice-Chair of the Excellence Through Classics Board for elementary and middle school teachers.

My first official duty is to recruit presenters for elementary and middle

school topics. There are so many talented PCA members with great ideas, I hope you will consider presenting at the ACL next year. I personally would love to see presentations specifically on GREEK at the elementary.

Also, there has been a lot of talk on LatinTeach about Conversational Latin, and TPR activities, so there is interest in those topics as well.

Please let me know if you have a topic that you would like to present or if you know of someone else who might be interested in speaking.

We need to get children interested in classics at the elementary level. Once they are hooked, they will continue their studies in high school, college, and beyond...perhaps they will even chose to become classics teachers. (See National Latin Teacher Recruitment Week.)

Gratias tibi ago.
Zee Ann Poerio

Vice-Chair, Excellence Through Classics
American Classical League

What's new on the shelves?

***Pompeii: A Novel* by Robert Harris**

From Publishers Weekly

An upstanding Roman engineer rushes to repair an aqueduct in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius, which, in A.D. 79, is nearing eruption. Young Marcus Attilius Primus becomes the aquarius of the great Aqua Augusta when its former chief engineer disappears after 20 years on the job. When water flow to the coastal town of Misenum is interrupted, Attilius convinces the admiral of the Roman fleet-the scholar Pliny the Elder-to give him a fast ship to Pompeii, where he finds the source of the problem in a burst

sluiceway. Lively writing, convincing but economical period details and plenty of intrigue keep the pace quick, as Attilius meets Corelia, the defiant daughter of a vile real estate speculator, who supplies him with documents implicating her father and Attilius's predecessor in a water embezzlement scheme. Attilius has bigger worries, though: a climb up Vesuvius reveals that an eruption is imminent. Before he can warn anyone, he's ambushed by the double-crossing foreman of his team, Corvax, and a furious chase ensues. As the volcano spews hot ash, Attilius fights his way back to Pompeii in an attempt to rescue Corelia. Attilius, while possessed of certain modern attitudes and a respect for empirical observation, is no anachronism. He even sends Corelia back to her cruel father at one point, advising her to accept her fate as a woman. Harris's volcanology is well researched, and the plot, while decidedly secondary to the expertly rendered historic spectacle, keeps this impressive novel moving along toward its exciting finale. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Both my students and I enjoyed this book which provided an interesting historical interpretation of the events 3 days leading to the massive eruption that destroyed so much. I appreciated the accuracy and detail that Harris had researched quite meticulously.

Alexander of Macedon 356-323 B.C.: A Historical Biography by Peter Green

From Amazon.com

There's no shortage of biographies available on Alexander the Great, but Peter Green's *Alexander of Macedon* is one of the finest. The prose is crisp and clear, and within a few pages readers become absorbed in the world that made Alexander, and then the story of how Alexander remade it. Green writes, "Alexander's true genius was as a field-commander: perhaps, taken all in all, the most incomparable general the world has ever seen. His gift for speed, improvisation, variety of strategy; his cool-headedness in a crisis; his ability to extract himself from the most impossible situations; his mastery of terrain; his psychological ability to penetrate the enemy's intentions--all these qualities place him at the very head of the Great Captains of history."

Kudos to the Discovery Channel's '04 series: *Bloody Rome Week* and this year's *Pompeii: The Last Day*.

While remembering that I teach high school to students with gnat-like attention spans, I have thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed the recent creations by the Discovery Channel – and the majority of my students have also enjoyed learning a bit about Roman culture and, more recently, the 79 A.D. Vesuvian eruption that destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Pompeii: The Last Day

Where do you run when the sky is falling? The documentary, using eyewitness accounts, reenactments, archaeological investigations and awesome CGI follows Pompeian citizens – gladiators, soldiers, slaves, ordinary people – as they awake to the day of disaster and live or die during the horrific eruption. I thought the 1 hr 40 minute show fascinating, especially having just visited Pompeii last summer.

As a bonus, visit the Discovery Channel's website for additional activities associated with the show.

Colosseum: The Gladiator's Story

This 50-minute DVD based on actual events traces the life of Verus, a slave who becomes a gladiator. The forensic, archaeological evidence used to create this story and the CGI used to recreate dramatic fight scenes that highlighted the brutality of the era I found were more believable and breathtaking than the Russell Crow movie *Gladiator* and provided a wonderful inspiration to my Latin II students as they chose their military/ gladiator history topics to explore.

Unsolved History: The Roman Colosseum

In this interesting documentary, historians used archaeological, forensic, photographic, and artifact examination to reconstruct historical events and answer puzzling questions – like whether the Colosseum was really flooded for a mock naval battle or whether the Naumachia saw thousands fight to the death merely to entertain the emperor. I thought the historians and engineers quite credibly separated fact from fiction while

analyzing the events that occurred in this blood sport arena. And of course my high school students, especially the young men, found it amazing and both this and the gladiator documentaries fostered some very thought-provoking discussion and launched several graduation projects about related topics.