

Greetings, classmates!

Thanks to all who sent news in for this years' letter. As you think of things to include, please send me an email anytime throughout the year. Without further ado....

### UPDATES FROM THE CLASS OF 1986

*The information is directly as sent in from classmates...*



**Lana Siewert-Olson** – Ideal Printers was named one of Twin Cities Business – Family Businesses of the Year last year. Lana, Joan ('87) and their husbands now run the printing and mailing business 40 years after gen one started the company in 1979.

<http://tcbmag.com/honors/articles/2018/2018-minnesota-family-business-awards/ideal-printers>



**Joyce (Jacobson) Cole** – Job update. As of 9/2018, joined the State of MN as the enterprise Sr. Training and Talent Manager.

**Mark** and Liv (Abrahamson '85) **Rosin** celebrated the wedding of their oldest child, Seth to Molly Sands on Oct. 13, 2018. Their daughter, Aeli ('2012) walked the couple's Puggle Bull down the aisle. Mark and Liv still live in Shoreview, Minnesota. Mark is still enjoying his career at Boston Scientific and watching Ben (High School sophomore) play a lot of baseball. Liv has taught English classes at Mounds View HS since September 1993 and is always happy to talk about Concordia to anyone willing to listen.



**Ann (Schomburg) Sneider** – Alex and I are still in Owatonna, MN, working at the Mayo Health System clinic. We have one kiddo at home figuring out life and another living in Michigan, applying to Physician Assistant schools. This last year we took photography treks to Kenya and Tuscany, both of which had wonderful people and gorgeous scenery, but totally different cuisine and danger levels. Living with baboons and elephants right outside your tent really adds some spice to life.



**Rachel (Pederson) Gerhartz** – Gregg and Rachel Gerhartz moved to the Pequot Lakes area in 2017. Rachel is teaching Kindergarten at Eagle View Elementary School, Pequot Lakes School District. Gregg is still a trooper with the MN State Patrol.



**Greg Gardner** – My wife, Irja, and I just moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado. I am teaching cyber security/computer courses and mentoring veterans who are transitioning out of the military and into civilian life. Our youngest son, Trevor, is serving in the Air Force in Germany and soon will transfer to Japan. We've enjoyed being in northern Colorado since last summer, close to where our grandchildren live.



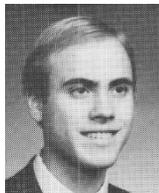
**Lisa (Swanson) West** –Excited to have another Cobber alum in the house - Connor is a 2019 grad! Keeping busy with work in L&D with Securian Financial, celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary this summer, and being a basketball Mom to 13-year old son, Thomas. We are looking forward to family time at the cabin this summer, and a family trip to Europe.



**Cindy (Eyer) Fenoglio** – As the years seem to pass by with accelerating speed, it is hard to believe we are soon to have all kids post high school. Scott graduated with an Aeronautical Engineering degree from Iowa State University last year and is enjoying his new career at Spirit Technologies in Wichita, KS. Sarah is excelling in the honors program at the University of Minnesota in Chemical Engineering with an internship to look forward to this summer at DOW in Michigan. Blake is graduating from Wayzata High School and pursuing a career in Commercial Aviation and Marketing at the University of North Dakota. We seem to be their location of choice for spring breaks and spur of the moment trips to get the much needed 'beach fix' (Rosarito, Mexico - just south of San Diego). John and I still travel to unusual places with a Bhutan, Bangladesh and the Taj Mahal on this year's docket, as well as a long awaited trip to Ireland and Scotland. Svalbard will be our destination above the Arctic Circle for our Scandinavian heritage fix. We appreciate life every day and enjoy the connections with classmates that have endured the test of time.



**Cheryl (Ruby) Biller** – I am still working in real estate in the Fargo Moorhead area. It isn't the crazy market it has been for the last few years but people are still coming and going from our community so work is good! I recently added a new volunteer title to my life – State Chapter Leader for Moms Demand Action ND. In that role, I work with volunteers across the state (and a little bit of western MN!) to advocate for common sense gun legislation, and elected leaders who will do the same. As an area steeped in the tradition of hunting, guns are an inherent part of our culture. Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense In America is supportive of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, and people's right to hunt. We also think that common sense gun laws are compatible with responsible gun ownership.



**Mark and Cheryl (Roskopf) Astrup** reside in Cold Spring, MN. Mark serves as a solo pastor at Peace Lutheran Church and Cheryl works as a para and braille transcriber at Cold Spring Elementary. Our children, Adam, 20, is finishing his 2nd year at Northern Colorado University pursuing a jazz studies major and our daughter, Rachel, 25, is a 4th grade teacher at Five Hawks Elementary School in Prior Lake, MN. Mark and Cheryl really like spending time at nearby papal institutions, St. John's University and College of St. Benedict, especially swimming early morning laps in their pools. Although we are Cobbers through and through we admit that Bennies and Johnnies make good neighbors and friends.



**Jill Sailer** – I still work for West River Health Services in Hettinger, ND and I play the piano and organ for the Hettinger Lutheran Church. I've done some exciting projects outside of work that I will share with you. Last spring, I played the piano for the Missoula Children's Theater when they worked with our grade school children. In the fall, I joined a ladies water aerobics class and I just finished a three month yoga class. Today, I accompanied our high school kids when they were at an all-day vocal festival with other high schools. Everyone can

be involved in something at all times. That's the beauty of living in a small town. Have a nice day classmates!

**Joe Savageau** – Going on my 23 year at Cloverdale Foods as VP of Sales for a \$100M Company covering 29 states. I have 6 Kids 31, 30, 29, 27, 26 and 16. Four great grandkids with two more coming this summer, daughter getting married this July. Taking a vacation to the Canadian Rockies this summer in Banff and Jasper where will do some hiking and white water rafting.



**Christopher Carlson** – I enjoy helping my parents, ages 94 and 98 continue living at home. Have been involved with our church prayer ministry. Our son David has been on staff with the Marine Reach YWAM base in New Zealand; we took a trip there to visit him and see the country — beautiful!



**Deanna Edwards** – My family and I are adjusting to the loss of Don Edwards, who was my father. He decided to pursue Hospice care March 2, 2019, and told us on Sunday March 3<sup>rd</sup> he was ready to die.



**Shekinah Samaya-Thomas** – After spending a couple of decades battling some significant life-threatening health conditions, Shekinah Samaya-Thomas (aka Joan Granander) spent the past 2 years successfully healing and is in better health than she's been most of her life! She feels GREAT, and in December 2018 she and her husband Chris embarked on a celebratory adventure to fulfill lifelong dreams. While also celebrating their "double anniversary" of 5 years married and 10 together, they traveled for the 1st time to Florida's Walt Disney World, the place where "magical adventures happen and dreams come true!". After 12 glorious days in Orlando, they boarded "The Vollendam" - a Holland America Cruise Ship - in Ft. Lauderdale, spending 17 days and 16 nights sailing to and through the Panama Canal. They celebrated Christmas, New Years, & their wedding anniversary on the seas, exploring multiple South and Central American destinations throughout the journey. This was a truly a life-time "dream come true" for them both, and more exciting than words can ever express! Upon returning the USA in Jan. 2019, they spent a couple days with friends from Concordia days in San Diego before returning home to Oakland. Shekinah continues her work as an Adult Education Instructor at Hayward Adult School, working with students from around the world on career and work skill development along with supporting second language English learners as they adjust to new lives in the USA. In Feb. Chris began a new position as part of the security team at the Jewish Community Center in San Francisco. They both continue to dream big and think about what big adventures will call to them next! Anyone wanting to stay more connected can find both of them on Facebook.



**Kristin (Overby) McWeeny** – My husband Chris and I continue serving at the Minneapolis home office of the World Mission Prayer League and I substitute teach 1-2 days per week. We are about to enter a new phase of life as our son Timothy (age 20) marries this June. God is good!



**Cara Larson Pester** – My daughter Riley Pester will be attending Concordia as a freshman this fall majoring in Vocal Music Performance/Education. She will graduate from Burnsville Senior High School on June 7th.



**Paula Johnson** – Moved back to the Twin Cities after living in Dallas for the past 10 years. Good to be close to family again and connect with old friends, Cobbers, and Oak Grove Grovers. Still working for Aon plc (24 years) as an HR Advisor. Ready for another amazing Minnesota summer!



**Kathy Freije** – I am still at Thomson Reuters in Eagan, MN. I recently took on the position of Director, US Commentary - Editorial for which I oversee a large team of attorney editors working on US legal products. Keeping the Cobber network strong, I now report to another Cobber alum!!



**Michelle (Kunz) Schwarz** – I begin my 18th year as a Payroll Clerk for Bismarck Public Schools. In other news, the legacy continues. My daughter Melinda will be graduating from Concordia in May with a degree in nursing. Our family will be attending this joyous event in a month!



**Kelly (Engen) Yelle** – My daughter Debora Yelle is a freshman at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, my son Caleb is an 11th grader in Edgewood Senior High on Merritt Island. Will (my husband) and I work at Parrish Medical Center and have been there awhile. Caleb is enjoying Lacrosse which was not around when I was in school but appears to be growing rapidly across the US.



**Jeanie Collins** – Jeanie Roy Collins' rendition of the Scottish folksong "There'll Never Be Peace 'TIL Jamie Comes Hame" (c. 1716) will be played in the permanent exhibit of the Jacobite Room at the Edinburgh Castle Museum. I am so pumped! Cheers!



**Doug & Beth (Olson) Kovash** – Doug resigned from his Assistant Director position at Firehouse Ministries homeless shelter for men on May 1st to become the Director of Development for Athletics at Samford University in Birmingham, AL. on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Beth received her tenure as a Middle School ELA teacher at Hayden Middle School in Hayden, AL on May 17th. Our 3 children are doing well. Expecting our 2nd grandson on July 1st from our oldest daughter Jenna (30) and Brandon Harris. Our son Jordan (28) is getting married on October 5th. And, our youngest daughter Kayla (26) has become a traveling nurse (delivering babies) and currently lives and works outside of Charlotte in Kanapolis, NC. Beth and I had to return to Moorhead in February for a funeral. Experienced three blizzard like weather days while back home. There is a reason we moved south, have lived down here since 1990, and only return home in

the summer - unless there is a wedding or funeral. Despite the weather, had a great time catching up with great Cobber friends, teammates and coaches!!



**Wendy (Johnson) Malgouyres** Andre and I will celebrate 32 years of marriage in July. He continues his work as a school principal in Marseille until he retires after the next school year. I continue to teach English as a Second Language to 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders, along with organizing regular school trips to the UK, Ireland and student exchanges in the U.S.A. through my school, Sacre Coeur. I just got back recently from our traditional exchange trip to The Winsor School (all girls school) in Boston, and my students and I are preparing to soon welcome their “Winsor sisters” to beautiful Provence. I have organized exchange programs for over 30 years, bringing groups of 15 to 40 students at a time. It is just a drop in the bucket, but I sincerely feel that this “old-fashioned” method, with no financial interest involved, is one of the best ways to bring people from different parts of the world together. We’ve never been able to make it back to Concordia when Homecoming happens because of our jobs, but we come home to Fargo & the Twin Cities every summer, taking in Corn Feeds whenever we can. Our daughter, Lucy-Mei, is 17 and an avid equestrian and animal lover, and I love helping her with her horse and spending time with our two “retired” ponies. We thoroughly enjoy living in beautiful Aix-en-Provence, France, but are also thankful to be able to go back and forth to the U.S. as often as we do. Cobber friends are always welcome if they need someone to guide them while they are in our beautiful part of the world!



**Carrie (Johnson) Haug** – The biggest news in our household is we have a new college grad in the family! My stepdaughter, Abbie, graduated from St. Olaf in May.

## UPCOMING COBBER EVENTS

### Summer Sporting Events

- Cobber Night at the Minnesota United – Saturday, July 13: <https://bit.ly/2Lfuqxt>
- Cobber Night at the Fargo RedHawks – Tuesday, July 30: <https://bit.ly/2Y9gclx>
- Cobber Night at the Minnesota Twins – Thursday, August 8: <https://bit.ly/2IFYjFH>

### Summer Golf Tournaments

Register at [www.cord.edu/alumni](http://www.cord.edu/alumni)

- Baseball Golf Tourney – Monday, July 29
- Football Golf Tourney – Friday, Aug. 2
- Golf Team Golf Tourney – Monday, Aug. 26
- Wrestling Golf Tourney – Saturday, Sept. 14

Cobber Corn Feeds

Corn feeds are being held throughout the summer in Massachusetts, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Oregon, Montana, Arizona, California, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Washington, D.C., Idaho and Iowa. For details, go to [www.cord.edu/cornfeeds](http://www.cord.edu/cornfeeds).

#### Minnesota State Fair

Concordia will once again have a booth in the Education Building! Plan your visit, stop by and grab some new swag! Fair dates are Aug. 22-Labor Day.

#### Move-In Day

Help first-year students move into their residence halls and welcome them to Concordia. Register at <https://bit.ly/2ZJCHxS>

#### Family Weekend & Homecoming

Registration is open!

- Family Weekend: Sept. 20-22: [www.cord.edu/familyweekend](http://www.cord.edu/familyweekend)
- Homecoming: Oct. 10-13: [www.cord.edu/homecoming](http://www.cord.edu/homecoming)

#### UPDATES FROM THE COLLEGE – SUMMER 2019

##### Concordia Language Villages

- Summer 2018 was a busy one. Over 4,700 villagers and families from all over the world attended immersion programs at the Turtle River Lake sites just north of Bemidji, and at other leased camps in northern Minnesota.
- Thanks to a \$5 million gift from the Simone Corporation and its CEO Kenny Park, work will soon begin on the first phase of construction of *Sup sogŭi Hosu*, the Korean Language Village, on Turtle River Lake. The first Village, *Skogfjorden*, the Norwegian Language Village, was built 50 years ago; *Sjölunden* the Swedish Language Village, was built 45 years ago.

##### Music

- Dr. René Clausen will retire following the 2019-20 academic year, as professor of music, conductor of The Concordia Choir, and artistic director of the Concordia Christmas concerts. In addition to composing arrangements and original pieces for Concordia ensembles, he has written dozens of commissioned compositions for the American Choral Directors Association, and was commissioned by Concordia to create a work in observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Concordia President William Craft said Clausen has lived the mission of The Concordia Choir “to uphold a sacred choral tradition through the uncompromising and unrelenting collaborative pursuit of musical integrity and spiritual expression.”
- The Concordia Choir toured through the Pacific Northwest. The tour featured concerts in Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota, along with engagements with 10 high school choirs, The Choir of the West at Pacific Lutheran University, and a collaboration concert with The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists at the Ordway in St. Paul. In 2020, the choir will tour the Southeast United States. For more information, go to [www.TheConcordiaChoir.org](http://www.TheConcordiaChoir.org).
- The Concordia Orchestra toured through Wisconsin and Minnesota. Repertoire included *Symphony No. 3* by Florence Price, *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and *Concerto for Trombone* by Jim Pugh. Also joining the tour was guest conductor Christoph Rehli-Fankhauser, professor of conducting at the Lucerne University of Music in Switzerland.

- The Concordia Band performed at the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Music Educators Association Conference in Bismarck. The band was the featured collegiate band at the Westman Honour Band concert at Brandon University in Manitoba. As part of their annual domestic tour, the band performed a joint concert with the Encore Wind Ensemble in St. Paul, Minn., as well as concerts in St. Anthony Village, Albany and Staples-Motley. In 2020, the band will tour Spain.

#### Cobber Athletics

- In the last year, four female head coaches have been hired, bringing the total to five – Faith Dooley, volleyball (an All-American at the University of North Dakota); Kari Weidner-Ceniceros, women’s golf; Maureen Greiner, women’s hockey; Rebecca O’Shurak, women’s soccer; and NDSU All-American Laura Januszewski, men’s and women’s cross-country teams. Concordia was cited as the top college in the MIAC for its increase in female head coaches over the past year by the University of Minnesota’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport.
- Concordia men’s track and field junior Matt Bye, Moorhead, won the heptathlon at last winter’s MIAC Indoor Championship Meet, and went on to finish 11th at the NCAA National Indoor Meet in Boston, Mass. Bye won the MIAC title with the second highest point total in school history.
- The Cobber men’s hockey team earned its seventh consecutive berth in the MIAC playoffs this season. Concordia finished conference play with nine league wins, which was the most since the 2013 season. Sophomore forward Tyler Bossert, Fargo, led the MIAC in scoring, and went on to earn All-American Second Team honors to become the ninth All-American in program history.

#### New Hires

- Kris Olson was named director of the Career Center. Kris has over 30 years’ experience in higher education, corporate business and consulting.
- Jill Wenger was hired as assistant director of the Career Center. Jill was most recently human resource director at the City of Moorhead.
- Katie Nystuen was named health services coordinator this year. In this role, Katie will guide students regarding their health care needs, and connect them to health care providers in Fargo-Moorhead. (Though direct care is not the focus of the Health Services Office, staff can assist with triage and referrals when urgent situations arise.)
- Dallas Fossum joined as director of facilities management. His work experience includes renovations, new constructions and deferred maintenance.
- Dr. Jill Abbott was named deputy to the president. Dr. Abbott holds a bachelor’s degree in literature/language arts education, a master’s in counseling and human resource development, and a doctorate in educational administration. She was most recently associate vice president of academics at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Abbott will serve as a member of the college cabinet, and a liaison to the board of regents.

#### Other News

- Concordia’s tradition of preparing students for medical school is now available to those who have completed an undergraduate degree. This intensive, one-year program is designed for highly motivated individuals with excellent academic records who have earned a bachelor’s degree from an accredited four-year institution, but lack most or all of the prerequisite science courses needed for admission to medical school. The program is ideal for those changing careers, and those deciding to pursue a career in medicine later in their academic journey.

- Concordia sent 12 members to the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) at the University of Alabama, where 60 colleges and universities from across the U.S. competed for top honors. Concordia was one of only a few smaller colleges that placed in the top 15, which is dominated by larger research institutions.
- The Center for Student Success moved into newly renovated space in the Normandy Center. The center houses staff and programming focused on academic support, orientation, first-year transition programming, Peer Mentor program and diversity.
- Over 300 students presented posters and/or spoke during Concordia's 2019 Celebration of Student Scholarship (COSS). New at this year's COSS was an art display with printmaking pieces and two sessions presented in Spanish. "Our goal is to keep building on the diversity of research," says Kryss Strand, director of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity.
- A dinner was held to celebrate the naming of Dr. Dan Biebighauser as The Sigurd and Pauline Prestegaard Mundhjeld Endowed Chair of Mathematics. Biebighauser is a 2002 graduate of Concordia who joined the faculty in 2006. Chairs are people who have provided exemplary service in teaching and scholarship in the field of mathematics, and are known and respected in the field. All past chairs were present – Dr. Bill Tomhave, Dr. James L. Forde, Dr. Alexander Sze and Dr. Gerald A. Heuer '51.

## **ALUMNI AWARDS**

Concordia's National Alumni Board named the following award recipients. To learn more, go to [www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/](http://www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/).

### 2019 Alumni Achievement Award Recipients

- Dr. Paul Brandvik '59, professor emeritus of music, Bemidji State University, served as director of choral activities for 31 years. Brandvik has received several awards, guest conducted more than 100 festivals and workshops in 16 states and abroad, and composed, edited or arranged more than 50 works.
- Dr. Kristi Ferguson '71, professor emeritus of general internal medicine and former director, Office of Consultation and Research in Medical Education, University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. She spent her entire career at Carver College where she greatly influenced the development, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum.
- Dr. Thomas Samuelson '81, ophthalmologist, founding partner and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants, P.A., Minneapolis. He's an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota, and is on the faculty of Hennepin County Medical Center. Samuelson has received several awards, been named to America's Top Doctors each year since 2002, written numerous articles and given over 600 presentations around the world.
- Rev. Ann Svennungsen '77, bishop of the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod, is the first female bishop to serve in an ELCA Minnesota synod. She served as a parish pastor, president and CEO of The Fund for Theological Education and president of Texas Lutheran University. Svennungsen, a well-respected theologian and speaker, has been published in numerous journals, and lectures, preaches and provides keynote and commencement addresses.

### 2019 Sent Forth Recipients

- Betsy Grams '98, is co-founder and executive director of CycleHealth. Grams founded the company in 2014 to equip kids to power their wellness. CycleHealth's programs are based on adventure and

self-directed goal attainment; programs are prescribed by pediatricians in 50+ Twin Cities clinics through Sweat Rx.

- Matthew Culloton '98, is founding artistic director of The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists, choirmaster at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minn., an adjunct faculty member at the University of Saint Thomas and a composer. Culloton received the VocalEssence/ACDA of Minnesota Creative Programming Award (2003) and MN ACDA Outstanding Young Choral Conductor of the Year Award (2004). Culloton earned a master's and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota.

### **COBBERS FOR COBBERS**

Thank you, classmates, for the financial contributions you've made to Concordia! If you have the opportunity to give in the coming year, please consider Concordia. Here are the stats for the class of 1986:

- # of donors – 80
- # of potential donors – 504
- \$ given last year -- \$74,102
- \$ given since we graduated -- \$879,990

Also, please encourage the young people in your life to check out Concordia. Why Concordia?

- More than 93 percent of Cobbers continue their education or have jobs within nine months of graduation.
- More than 99 percent of Concordia students are awarded financial aid, with an average of \$29,000 in assistance.

All my best!  
Soli Deo Gloria,

Carrie (Johnson) Haug  
carrie\_haug@yahoo.com