Greetings Class of ‘87! I hope you are doing well and loving life.

Once again, it has been good reconnecting with you through this annual class letter. A quick word of thanks to Joni & Chris Bonnell for sharing the duties of Class Agent.

Reading your updates, it has been intriguing to see how our individual paths have taken us to a wide range of places and callings as we build on our alma mater’s mission of “influencing the affairs of the world” as “thoughtful and informed men and women.”

You can send any future updates to me at pastormark@newulmtel.net. I look forward to hearing from you.

Enjoy this update.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Mark L. Johnson
Class Agent

CLASSMATE UPDATES

First, I would like to request your prayers for Margo (Redfield) Alseth who is in a memory care facility in Richfield, Minnesota. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's back in 2014. Please keep her and her entire family in your prayers. If you have any questions you can send them to Loren Alseth at lmalseth@comcast.net

Lisa Rost is teaching Kgn-2nd grade gifted students in Homewood, IL. She achieved National Board Certification in December 2018.

Gina Sandgren writes “Hi- My updates are… We sold our home in south Moorhead and are moving into a condo downtown Fargo. This Urban, diverse scene is definitely more my vibe than suburbia!!! I love being able to walk and bike to most places I want to go! My husband, Ross and I still own/operate our business, Vantage (a 3M paint protection and sales/marketing company), I teach meditation at Ecce Yoga downtown, my “church” is connecting Wednesdays with a tribe of amazing women who I consider my soul sisters….usually around a book discussion. I also spend time bringing awareness to some social causes I feel directly affect our community’s vitality: local grocery co-op, Turtle Mountain animal rescue, African Soul American Heart, local art and I am a facilitator for Narrative 4 (a story exchange model that cultivates empathy). My daughter Sommer recently moved back from Minneapolis and will be starting a job with RDO (using her Spanish degree-Yay!) and my son Devon will be a junior at Savannah College of Art & Design working on his film degree and currently writing a feature with Sundance in mind!

Hollie Holt-Woehl recently moved to Becker, MN (to purchase the family farm), she had a book published "They Don’t Come with Instructions" (check it out at www.phholtwoehl.com ), and she started a term call as Associate Pastor at South Santiago Lutheran Church, Clear Lake, MN She says it sounds more exotic than it is.
Michael Bouressa was selected to be one of the Grand Marshals for the 35th Annual Vikingland Band Festival in Alexandria this summer.

Mike Larsen shared this update: “I currently work as an Employee Assistance Program Coordinator (EAPC) in the United States Army Reserve at Ft. McCoy, WI. Completed a Master’s of Science in Human Services through Purdue University Global, back in July and am looking forward to using that knowledge to benefit people in need. Will be married 25 years already, this October to Susie Larsen (Hruby) a graduate of Moorhead State. Susie is employed as a Special Education Teacher in Arlington, MN. We have one son (Maxx) who turns 12 in August and will be entering the 6th grade. We reside in Mankato, MN, with future plans to locate to St. Peter, MN. Maxx enjoys waterparks the Science Museum, Susie enjoys reading and plays, and I enjoy snowboarding, and atv trail riding.”

Jill (Brand) Louters now has two students of her own attending Concordia! She is serving in her 8th year as superintendent at New Rockford-Sheyenne School District. She goes on to include, “In 2017 I completed my National Superintendent Credential and am currently completing my dissertation through St. Mary’s University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. I have four children, two of which currently attend Concordia. I have been appointed by the Governor to the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education and in my free time, judge horse shows!”

Mark Femrite is a district school administrator with the Westonka Public Schools; father of 4 kids in elementary and middle school. He’s also a traveling basketball fan.

David Hagen Sr. states, “I was an oddity to the class of 87. I was 53 years old when I graduated with a degree in Long Term Care Administration. For the next 10 years I was a licensed nursing home administrator. I retired at age 63 and for the next 12 years raised East Friesian Dairy Sheep and sold breeding stock. In 2012 we sold the farm and moved to Appleton, to be near our daughter and her husband, both of whom are in the medical field. My wife, Gerda (87) has had multiple surgeries and 7 strokes. She is now in an adult care facility. I’m now 85. We’ve been married for 66 years, have four children, nine grandchildren, and 13 great grandchildren. Most of my classmates are now attaining the age of 55. P. S. My youngest son, David Jr., graduated from Concordia in 1989.”

Kristin (Troff) Pavek wrote this update, “In June, my husband, John, and I spent 8 wonderful days in Greece, including in Athens and on the island of Milos. It was fantastic. While there, we attended a concert at a cultural festival in Athens and were sitting just 25 feet away from actor Tom Hanks and his wife Rita Wilson, and actress Nia Vardalos. Apparently, I need to travel to another country to see American celebrities.”

Mark Brouwer wrote, “My wife Charlene Brouwer (Charlene Toutge, class of 86) had been living in Chicago, IL, where I’d been the pastor of Loop Church. In December of 2018 we moved to Princeton, MN, where I’m now the pastor of Bethel Church.” On another note, Mark published a book (in November 2018) with Mission House Publishing, called “Leaving Your Mark Without Losing Your Mind: Overcoming 7 obstacles to the important work of your life.” Check it out on www.amazon.com
Campus Update

Concordia Language Villages

- Summer 2018 was a busy one for Concordia Language Villages. We had over 4700 villagers and families from all over the world attend immersion programs at our Turtle River Lake sites just north of Bemidji and at other leased camps in northern Minnesota. This strong enrollment demonstrates the value families are placing on world language and culture education.

- Thanks to a generous gift of $5 million from the Simone Corporation and its CEO Kenny Park, we will soon begin the first phase of construction of Sup sogŭi Hosu, the Korean Language Village, on Turtle River Lake. The first Village to be built was Skogfjorden, the Norwegian Language Village, and that happened 50 years ago this summer. A special event to commemorate this milestone will be held on July 13. Sjölunden the Swedish Language Village, celebrates its 45th summer with a midsommar event on August 3. International Days are July 5 and August 9 where we will also celebrate 50 years of offering four-week high school credit sessions.

Music

- Dr. René Clausen announced that he will retire following the 2019-20 academic year, concluding his service as professor of music and conductor of The Concordia Choir. Clausen is a leader in choral music as both a conductor and a composer. He is the 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 including “MEMORIAL” and “Crying for a Dream” for the American Choral Directors Association. Clausen was also commissioned by Concordia to create a major work in observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The work is titled “The Passion of Jesus Christ” and premiered at Orchestra Hall in 2017. President William Craft noted in an announcement to the Concordia community that throughout his work at the college 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 completed a highly successful tour through the Pacific Northwest in March. The tour featured concerts in Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The Choir also had engagements with ten high school choirs, as well as 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. Work is now being done to plan the Choir’s 2020 tour to the Southeast United States. Updates and more information can be found at www.TheConcordiaChoir.org.

- The Concordia Orchestra completed a very successful fall domestic tour with performances in Appleton, Wausau and Chippewa Falls in Wisconsin and Roseville, Sartell and Brainerd in Minnesota. Repertoire included Symphony No. 3 by Florence Price, Scheherazade by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Concerto for Trombone by Jim
Pugh, which featured Concordia Professor of Low Brass Dr. Nathaniel Dickey on trombone. Also joining the tour was guest conductor Christoph Rehli-Fankhauser, professor of conducting at the Lucerne University of Music in Switzerland.

- The Concordia Band was invited to perform at both the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Music Educators Association Conference in Bismarck. In addition, the band was also invited to be the featured collegiate band at the Westman Honour Band concert at Brandon University in Brandon, Manitoba. As part of their annual domestic tour, the band performed a joint concert with the Encore Wind Ensemble in St. Paul, MN as well as concerts in St. Anthony Village, Albany and Staples-Motley, all in Minnesota. The band is in the beginning stages of planning their international tour to Spain in May of 2020.

**Cobber Athletics**

- In the spring of 2018, Concordia had only one team – women’s basketball – with a female head coach. Fast forward one year, and with the hiring of new volleyball head coach Faith Dooley, the Cobbers now have 5 additional female head coaches mentoring student/athletes. Dooley, who was an All-American at the University of North Dakota, joins women’s golf head coach Kari Weidner-Ceniceros, Maureen Greiner of women’s hockey, Rebecca O’Shurak from women’s soccer and NDSU All-American Laura Januszewski who coaches both the men’s and women’s cross country teams. The rise of female head coaches was recognized by University of Minnesota’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport in their 2018-19 coaching report card that cited Concordia as the top college in the MIAC for the increase in female head coaches over the past year.

- Concordia men’s track and field junior Matt Bye, Moorhead, won the heptathlon at this winter’s MIAC Indoor Championship Meet and went on to finish 11th in the event at the NCAA National Indoor Meet held 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**

- Concordia added two critical new leaders in the Career Center this year. Kris Olson joined the College as the new Director of the Career Center in October 2018. Jill Wenger, a Barnesville native, was hired in the role of Assistant Director of the Career Center in March 2019.
Kris began her career in Higher Education spent several years in Higher Education at NDSU and Concordia before making a career switch. She began working for Cargill, Inc as a Corporate Training Consultant, Training Curriculum Specialist, a Member of a Global Realignment Team, and a Recruiting Manager. Following her time at Cargill, Kris founded her own consulting business. Kris is an experienced professional with over 30 years of progressive experience in Higher Education, Corporate Business and Consulting.

Jill is an experienced professional with progressive experience within the City of Moorhead ranging from City Clerk, Assistant City Manager, and most recently, Human Resource Director. Jill brings great insight into public service, the local Fargo-Moorhead area, the Restorative Justice process, and recruitment best practices.

- Katie Nystuen was hired as our Health Services Coordinator this year. Part of her role is to guide students in making choices regarding their healthcare needs, and connecting them to the many quality providers in our community. Though direct care is not the focus of the Health Services Office, she is First Aid, CPR and AED certified, and can assist with triage and referral to an appropriate medical facility should an urgent situation arise, as can our Public Safety Office. One of her goals is to be more proactive and holistic regarding health and wellness programming on campus.

- Dallas Fossum joined Concordia as the new Director for Facilities Management in March. Dallas is an experienced director of facilities management and has, with his teams, completed more than $50 million in renovations, new constructions, infrastructure, and deferred maintenance.

- Dr. Jill Abbott has been appointed Deputy to the President at Concordia College, effective June 3, 2019. 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 currently serves as the associate vice president of academics at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Dr. Abbott will serve as a member of the college cabinet and will continue the good work of her predecessor Tracey Moorhead as liaison to our Board of Regents. As Deputy to the President, she will work with me to ensure the fulfillment of the new college plan following its affirmation by the Board of Regents, to represent the college in building strong local and regional partnerships for mutual success, and to position Concordia as mission driven institution of national significance.

Other News

- Concordia’s outstanding tradition of preparing students for medical school is now available to those who have completed an undergraduate degree. This intensive, 1 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. Our program is ideal for career changers, and individuals deciding later in their academic journey, to pursue a career in medicine.

- 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 United States 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 has a new home in the Normandy. The beautifully renovated space is open and light making for an inviting space for students. The center includes academic support, Orientation and First-Year Transition Programming, the Peer Mentor program, and the Diversity Coordinator for Student Support Services.

- More than 300 students presented their posters or spoke at concurrent sessions during Concordia’s 2019 Celebration of Student Scholarship (COSS) on April 10. Some students participated in multiple presentations. 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 Krys Strand, director of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity and coordinator of the Celebration of Student Scholarship.

- A dinner was held April 4 to celebrate the naming of Dr. Dan Biebighauser as holder of The Sigurd and Pauline Prestegaard Mundhjeld Endowed Chair of Mathematics. Biebighauser is a 2002 graduate of Concordia and joined the faculty in 2006. The holder of the Mundhjeld chair is to be a person who has provided exemplary service in teaching and scholarship in the field of mathematics and who is known and respected in the field. All of the past holders of the Mundhjeld Endowed Chair were present. Past holders include Dr. Bill Tomhave, Dr. James L. Forde, Dr. Alexander Sze and Dr. Gerald A. Heuer ’51.

Alumni Awards:

The National Alumni Board voted on the 2019 Alumni Achievement, Sent Forth and Called to Serve Awards. To learn more about each award, visit www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/.

2019 Alumni Achievement Award Recipients

- Dr. Paul Brandvik ’59, professor emeritus of music at Bemidji State University, served as director of choral activities for 31 years. Brandvik 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, is professor emeritus of General Internal Medicine and served as director, Office of Consultation and Research in Medical Education at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. She spent her entire career at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine where she has greatly influenced the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.

- Dr. Thomas Samuelson ’81, a board-certified ophthalmologist, is a founding partner and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants, P.A., Minneapolis.
He’s also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota and on the faculty of Hennepin County Medical Center. He has received several awards and has been named to America’s Top Doctors each year since 2002. He has written numerous articles and given more than 600 presentations around the world.

- A 1977 Concordia graduate, the Rev. Ann Svennungsen is the bishop of the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod, the first female bishop to serve in any of the ELCA’s six Minnesota synods. She served as a parish pastor prior to serving as president and CEO of The Fund for Theological Education and then as president of Texas Lutheran University. Svennungsen, a well-respected theologian and speaker, is published in numerous journals, and is invited to lecture, preach, and provide keynote and commencement addresses.

2019 Sent Forth Recipients

- Betsy Grams ’98, co-founder and executive director of Cycle Health, is a 1998 Concordia graduate. CycleHealth was founded in 2014 to equip kids to power their own wellness. CycleHealth’s programs are based on adventure and self-directed goal attainment, and are prescribed by pediatricians in more than 50 Twin Cities clinics through an innovative platform called Sweat Rx.

- Matthew Culloton ’98, Matthew Culloton, founding Artistic Director of The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists, is a 1998 Concordia graduate and earned a master’s and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota. He is Choirmaster at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minn., an adjunct faculty member at the University of Saint Thomas and composer. Culloton received the VocalEssence/ACDA of Minnesota Creative Programming Award (2003) and MN ACDA Outstanding Young Choral Conductor of the Year Award (2004).

Fundraising Update

Concordia continues to benefit from fundraising success due to generous supporters in each class. In recent years, our alma mater has exceeded fundraising goals and created new opportunities for students.

This past year, out of 431 potential donors, 74 of our classmates gave $30,902.35. That’s a participation rate of 17.17% with giving since our graduation totaling $772,019.49.

Thank you!