

Class of 1996

Summer 2013 Class Agent Letter

July 2013

Happy Summer, Class of 1996!

OK – so let me begin by saying I struggled all week to get this letter written. I listened for good stories, inspirational quotes, captivating news headlines... anything to provide an interesting subject for my note to all of you. In spite of my best efforts, nothing earth-shaking or incredibly inspirational struck me. Finally, at the point of tears today, I complained to my husband that I had nothing worthy of writing about. I spend most hours of most of my days chasing a two and four-year-old, listening to their corny, nonsensical jokes, transporting them to Bible School or swim lessons, discussing the latest episodes of Wild Kratts and doing other motherly activities that seem very insignificant outside of our small circle.

That's when he reminded me that I should write about what matters to me most – which happens to be chasing a two and four-year-old, listening to their corny, nonsensical jokes, transporting them to Bible School.... You get the picture. It's so tough to admit it when he's right.

The truth is, that is what matters most to me in this chapter of life. When I decided to stay at home with our girls for these fleeting years of toddlerhood, I knew it would be a very different daily routine than previous chapters when I traveled abroad, taught what I loved teaching, etc. And there are days when I long to participate in more adult conversations that don't have to do with potty training or choosing preschools – days when I feel like what I do does not matter so much in the whole scheme of things. Then, I take a deep breath and an honest look around me and realize that in this time and place, this is my most important work.

I spoke with a classmate not so long ago who is doing amazing things in both big and small ways in her community. When asked why she has not written in with an update, she replied that she didn't have anything worthy of writing in about. Knowing all the people she has touched through her work, I nearly fell over.

If you take anything away from this class letter, I hope you will remember two things. The first is that what you does matter, whether it is what you envisioned yourself doing at this stage of life or not. God gifted you with abilities that are unique to you, and the ways you use those gifts is a blessing to those around you. I pray you will both recognize those gifts and feel the joy of offering them through your work or family life to make a positive impact on the world.

Classmates, I am always awed not only but what you are all doing, but by who you are. I feel so blessed to have

been part of a very special four years of my life with you, whether I knew you well or not. Our shared time together at Augie is such a unique and special connection. Thank you for all you have shared with me – including the inspiring stories of your families, your jobs, and your future plans!

The second point of this letter is that you do not need to have earned a Nobel Prize (or Pulitzer Prize or anything remotely similar) to write in with an update. Nor do you need to have been recently married or have had a child. Your classmates are eager to know how you are, where you are, and celebrate your place in life with you – whatever that may be. I hope you will be willing to [share your news](#) – big and small – with those who also shared four special years with you. You might be surprised at the number of people who are thrilled to hear about where life has taken you, and the number of classmates who have similar experiences to share.

So while it would be a whole lot more exciting to be able to write about some foreign adventure or huge promotion, my promotions these days come in the form of celebrating Mataya sleeping in her “big girl” bed all night or Abby learning to snap her fingers! I love my job, and will surely look back some day and be reminded that this mattered to more than just Scott and me. And while I’m at it, I’ll enjoy every minute of being where I’m supposed to be at this moment. I hope you will, too.

Blessings to you, classmates. YOU DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Cari

Here are a few important things to share about what is and has been going on at Augustana:

Augustana welcomed the Class of 2013 to the ranks of Augustana Alumni. 413 new graduates celebrated their hard work and accomplishments at [Commencement](#), held in the Elmen Center on campus. The event marked the first time since 1949 that Commencement has been held on campus.

Augie's [website](#) is a great place to learn more about the festivities that day. You can watch videos of the ceremony's speakers, including Dr. Peter Schotten, professor of Government and International Affairs and Social Science Division chair, and Molly Kokesh '13, a German and Government/International Affairs major, Political Philosophy minor, and Civitas honors student from Scotland, S.D. There are also dozens of photos of the celebration. Go to www.augie.edu/commencement to see for yourself!

Each summer, the Alumni Office is busy preparing for our annual homecoming celebration. This year's [Viking Days](#) will be like never before! A special highlight of the weekend will be the [All-Class Reunion](#) and [Viking Varieties](#) event taking place on Saturday, Oct. 19 at the Washington Pavilion. The reunion classes will be recognized at the event, but ALL alumni are invited to attend the celebration! We all have friends who were a year ahead or a year behind us

at Augie – this will be a great chance to catch up with ALL of our Augie friends! This signature event begins at 6 p.m.

In addition to the All-Class Reunion Event, we are also celebrating the 60th anniversary of Viking Varieties by holding one performance at 8 p.m. in the Mary Sommervold Great Hall at the Washington Pavilion. Even though this is not a milestone reunion year for our class, I hope you will think about joining us for this amazing and fun event.

Looking for all of the information about Viking Days 2013? Head to the website: www.augie.edu/vikingdays.
[Registration](#) for Viking Days opens on July 1.

And remember, one of the best ways to show your Augie pride is by giving back to our alma mater. The end of Augustana's fiscal year is July 31. It's easy to make a gift - you can even do so [online](#). So, put on those Viking horns and [make your gift today!](#)

Class Notes

2/21/2013-7/2/2013

Stelter, Kristi - Posted 6/27/2013 10:15:16 AM - Careers

Kristi Stelter is employed at Wells Fargo Education Financial Services and also teaches private piano lessons in Sioux Falls. In addition, she is the music coordinator at Westside Lutheran Church, a new mission congregation of the SD ELCA Synod. Kristi earned a Master's Degree in Christian Leadership from Sioux Falls Seminary.

Brazones (Engbers), Tanya - Posted 6/19/2013 5:12:17 PM - Careers

Tanya Brazones is the director of kids ministry at Calvary Church in Minneapolis, Minn.

Groskreutz, Dayna - Posted 6/12/2013 10:29:56 AM - Births and Adoptions

Clara Joy Basel was born May 24, 2013 in Sioux Falls, SD. She was welcomed by Mom (Dayna Groskreutz), Dad (David Basel), and sisters Hannah (6) and Elsa (3).