

Hello Augustana Class of '96!

Snuggle into a cozy spot and get ready for one of the best class updates in years! I am happy to announce that Dayna Groskreutz has very generously signed on as a co-class agent! She has done a fantastic job of gathering updates via a new Augie Class of '96 Facebook Messenger group chat. If you have not yet seen it or know of someone from our class who has not seen it, please pass on the news. It's FULL of great news about our fellow classmates (and the list is growing!) SO FUN to hear from so many of you. Thank you, Dayna, for creating the list and gathering so much great info. for this class letter. Let's keep the momentum going!

I will keep this portion of this letter short, but here are a few important notes from campus:

- This fall, we welcomed more than 2,000 students from 33 states and 32 countries and welcomed one of the largest first year student classes in Augustana's history - the third year in a row to top 400!
- [U.S. News](#) ranked Augustana #3 among "Best Regional Colleges" and #2 among "Best Value Schools" in the Midwest. [Money](#) ranked Augustana among the nation's best colleges for education quality, affordability and outcomes.
- Augustana and the Center for Western Studies will host the [Boe Forum on Public Affairs featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning authors Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein](#) on March 19, 2019 at 7:30 p.m. in the Elmen Center.
- The Vikings baseball team won the College World Series in June securing the fourth National Championship in Vikings athletics history!
- In January 2019, the Augustana band will be in [China](#) for its fifth tour in the country.
- Students continue to engage in scientific and medical research in every department across campus and at labs and centers throughout the globe through our Undergraduate Summer Research Program. Coming up Saturday, April 6th- students from each division will present their research findings at the [Arthur Olsen Student Research Symposium](#). Would love to see you there!
- Augustana will launch its 3rd Annual [Giving Day](#) on Syttende Mai this year inviting friends, alumni, parents, students and employees to "Give Like a Viking" on May 17th, 2019.
- Augustana announced its [strategic vision](#) for the future of the institution following unanimous approval by the [Board of Trustees](#). Cited by the board as bold and inspiring, the vision is comprised of a number of aspirational goals that will expand educational opportunities over the next twelve years to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population in the form of new academic programs and real-world research, learning and leadership opportunities.
- Save the date - we will celebrate [Viking Days](#) Oct. 11-13th, 2019!

Blessings to you, classmates! -- Cari

(Dayna) I was out walking my dog near my home a couple of years ago when a car pulled over, and someone yelled out my name. It was Cari Skogberg Eastman! I hadn't seen her in 20 years, and she had just moved into the neighborhood. When I talked to her, it felt like the years had never passed, and we were back on campus.

This event got me thinking...we have all done a lot of things and been a lot of different places, but there are always those shared years of college. We maybe didn't know it at the time, but we were building lifelong friendships. I think that is why when I see someone from Augustana, it warms my heart. I feel gratitude to everyone who shared that experience with me.

Cari has done our class letter for years, and she asked me to help out. I accepted because 1) after 23 years she could maybe use some respite and 2) what a great way to give back to my classmates in some way.

I wanted to reach out to as many people as possible, so I tried to connect on Facebook Messenger with a group chat. If you missed out, please message me or one of your classmates, and we will add you to the group. Here are the highlights...As Chad Grev said, "The class of 96 is going to rock the next issue of the Augustana Today!" -- Dayna

CLASS OF 1996 UPDATES...

Betsy Becker:

Hi all! How fun. We're living in St Joseph, MI where I'm a pediatric nurse practitioner. My husband Aaron & I have been married forever (or for 18 yrs 😊). Our son is 16 & our daughter will be 14 next month. We also have dogs. Big, slobbery dogs.

Sarah Bles Kenward:

My husband, Noel, and I have been married for 18 years. We have a 15-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son. I am an Occupational Therapist for the school district in Mankato, MN.

Lorena Blum:

This year will be our 25th anniversary but we are not that OLD! Nor are we old enough to have 21,20,18,16, and almost 14 year old children but we have settled in the cozy town of Huron SD and I teach k-12 vocal and general music at James Valley Christian School and am also worship leader at Bethesda Church and Jeremy runs our business called Auto Body Clinic. Our oldest Jonathon lives in Huron and is a worship leader at a local church (not the same one..ha ha) and Miranda is a sophomore at USF and the other three daughters are senior, sophomore and 8th grade....we do music, art, drama, all sports except baseball and have a miniature schnauzer named Jackson!

Kevin Carlson:

Ande (Schjodt) and I have been married for 22 years. We still live in Sioux Falls with our 3 kids. Mikayla (18) will be heading to St Olaf next year, Zac (16) is a sophomore, and Kyan (12) is in 7th grade. Shocker: they are all into music. Ande works as an RN in Sanford's Acute Care system. She also plays horn in the SD and Sioux City Symphonies and teaches horn at Augie, Dordt College (IA), and Northwestern College (IA). I am a senior mortgage banker with Plains Commerce Bank and am the visual designer for the Sioux Falls Lincoln Marching Band.

Gina (Christensen) Pifer

I got married, finished my EdD, and am now teaching in the University of Missouri's School of Health Professions in The Occupational Therapy department.

Tanya Engbers Brazones:

I am currently the Director of Special Education at Sioux Falls Christian High School. I am also the High School Learning Center teacher. My husband Steve and I have 2 sons ages 14 and 12.

Michelle Fritz Hoier:

I've been married to Patrick for 20 years and we have 5 children. . Megan (20) Ethan (18), Nicholas (16) Erin (15) & Sabrina (11) Currently we are living in Sioux Falls where I am a 5th grade classroom teacher. Life has been a crazy adventure & we are enjoying every moment! As of this writing I am dreaming of moving to a condo on the beach and leaving this dreaded cold weather behind! 🍌

Carol Gifford-Goh:

I'm working as a Chaplain at Chiliwack Alliance Church in British Columbia. My husband Andrew and I have 3 sons ages 14, 13, and 11.

Jenny Gors Hodges:

I live in Pierre, SD with my husband Jeff (married 18 years) and our three boys. William is 16 and sophomore in high school. Arthur is 13 and in eighth grade (already taller than his parents). Peter is a 7 year old and he is a character. I teach 10th grade English/Speech and Theater classes plus directing plays. I love my job!

Chad Grev:

I live in Sioux Falls with my wife Rebecca (Aden, Augie '99) and son Jody. Jody is six, in kindergarten, and just lost his first tooth. I'm a pilot for a charter company and grateful to have a flying job where I am home in my own bed nearly every night. Now let me take this chance to tell you all about an exciting opportunity in the family of Amway....

Dayna Groskreutz:

I returned to Sioux Falls with my husband about 6 years ago. We have been married almost 14 years and have daughters that are 12, 9, and 5, three cats and a dog who watches out for his girls. I am a pulmonary and critical care medicine physician and Dave is a physician administrator at Avera.

Corey Halstenson:

After 20 years in banking I decided it was time to wrk for myself, starting a new career in Real Estate with Hegg Realtors in Sioux Falls. So look me up if you are buying or selling in the area, I'd love to help! Other than that. 3 busy kids that I chase around, Berkley (15 - Fr.) Taylor (12 - 6th Grade), and Dylan (9 - 3rd grade). All in the Harrisburg Schools.

Amy Harty Fritz:

My husband, Brian & I live in Blaine, Minnesota & have been married for 21 years! We have 2 boys, Sam is a senior in high school & will be heading to St. John's University to play football in

the fall! Jacob is a sophomore at Spring Lake Park high school. Both boys play football, hockey & baseball! Brian is a branch manager for AMEC home loans & I work at Ameriprise financial & am a realtor!

Stacy Heinitz Scholten:

Kelly and I have been married for 22 years and have 3 amazing boys 20,17,14. Zach is a sophomore at Augie and plays basketball 🏀! Thomas and Sam are at Brandon High School. I remain a RN at Sanford Health in Sioux Falls in the Ambulatory Surgical Center and Kelly is at Augie coaching football 🏈. We spend most of our time watching our boys play football, basketball, and baseball. We love every minute!

Karen Jacobsen Perry:

Mike and I have been married 21 yrs and have lived in Rockford, IL since 2008. I work as a Labor and Delivery nurse at Mercyhealth and currently am the Maternal Transport Coordinator. Our children are 18,14 & 3. We love to travel! Don't be surprised if we ask to stay in your guest room now that we know where you all live!

Michelle Klungseth:

Hi Everyone! Scott ('95) and I have been married 21 yrs and have 4 boys. 18, 16, 14, & 12 yrs old. Our Senior will be heading to off School of Mines this fall. The other 3 keep us busy each sports season along with some band, choir, drama, ect... We have 2 cats and a 8mo old lab/springer mix. I continue to work at Avera McKennan in labor and delivery. Scott is a professor at DSU in Madison and director of Community Education (Beresford). We do a lot of driving to get work but love living in Beresford! We enjoy traveling and try to get somewhere warm when the winter cold sets in. (spring come soon!)

Pete Knapp:

My wife Kimberly and I moved to Elk River, MN a year and a half ago. We have two daughters (12,10) and a Springer Spaniel that keeps us on our toes. I work in IT for a startup company called MOBE. I also have the honor of serving on the Augie Alumni Council. If you have questions or comments about what's happening on campus, please feel free to message me. It's a great day to be a Viking!

Matthew Kullbom:

My wife Marlene and I live in Summerset, SD. Married 17 yrs. Talan is 12 and Mikayla is 15 both active in soccer. We own a car dealership in Rapid, Summit Automotive Group for 11 years and The Pit Stop (gas station) for 9 yrs. Enjoying life outdoors in the Black Hills!

Janelle Lee Kruger:

We are living in Mason City, IA where I am a plant manager for KraftHeinz. My husband Pat and I have 3 boys- ages 15,13,11 so we are on the go with all sorts of sports and school activities.

Dave Livermore

I married Laura (Dvorak) '98. We have both been teaching at Forest Lake High School north of Minneapolis since then. We have four children ages 15, 14, 10, and 7. Laura and I spend time in our summers traveling, visiting family and leading missionary teams in Haiti. I have also been making acoustic guitars for ten years.

Karla Maday Giese:

Mike and I have been married 17 years and we have 4 children (Amelia, 13; Luke, 10; Eric, 8; and Kelsie, 5). We live in the suburbs north of Chicago. I work throughout the state as an Educational Advocate for families of deaf and hard of hearing children. I am currently pursuing my EdD in Special Education with an emphasis on deafness/early intervention from Illinois State University. I'm ABD (all but dissertation) and hope to wrap everything up by the end of summer!

Rachel Munson Person:

Mike Person ('97) and I have been married 21 years. We live in SF and Mike is a general surgeon / trauma surgeon. I worked as a nurse for 14 years and am a stay at home mom. We have 5 kids ~ Charis (27) is an OB/ GYN resident in Wichita. She plans to do a fellowship in Gynecological Oncology. Ethan (20) is a sophomore at Augie and is premed. Gabe (17) is a senior and headed to college soon. Elissa (13) is in 8th grade and Ariana (11) is in 6th grade! We have sports pretty much every night of the week so Mike and I are using our cheerleading skills from college well beyond our youth

Tereasa Payne:

I'm in NYC playing flute and world flutes with The Lion King on Broadway. Loving it!! Married to another musician, Simon Hutchings, and we have two adorable dogs, Randal & Bentley!

Ellen Penrod:

I'm the Executive Director of the American Lung Association in Colorado. Happy to talk about vaping with any of you. I'm happily divorced, living in the mountains with my three kids 16, 13 and 7.

Jason Pentico:

Jason (96') and Anne (Weiland-97') Pentico. We live in Pella, IA. Married for 21 years. Two children-Kellen is 9 and Corynn is 4. Anne is an elementary school counselor at Cornell Elementary in the Saydel school district (Des Moines). Jason is co-director of bands at Pella Community High School. We also have a new black Labrador puppy named Scout.

Mike Perry

I am currently serving as Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for Rockford University where I am also an Associate Professor of English.

[@Karen Jacobsen Perry](#) and I have been married now for 21 plus years. We have two boys, Caleb (18) and Julian (14) and a daughter Zoey, who is 3. We just wanted to put off the empty nest syndrome a bit longer 🙄. We have lived in Rockford IL for over ten years now and we love it here. All my family is in Sioux Falls so we get back there frequently. My son was even accepted into Augie but he is leaning toward Augustana College in Illinois just south of us. He also has three other schools he likes. The coming months will tell. And we also have a 110 pound mastiff puppy. KD Perry, just so I can say I am hanging out on the couch with KD Perry. Enjoying reading all of these updates!

Jennifer Raditz Liu:

I currently teaching 6th - 8th grade English and 8th grade history at a Lutheran School in Glendale, CA. We are living with my in-laws because we are looking at moving back to the Midwest to be closer to my mom who is not in the best of health. My husband Joseph is a violin maker working part time at a shop in Glendale and part time on his own. We have 2 children Sophia (9) and Sean (3). We did have 2 cats and 1 dog but had to give them away when we moved. Miss them lots! Great to read what everyone's been up to!

Andrew Rahn

I worked on the sidelines of the super bowl last weekend! Just goes to show you never know where a liberal arts education will take you!

Chris Skaar:

@Stephanie Wolbrink and I have been married for 20 years and we have a 16 year-old daughter who's into cello, loves animals and will be getting her driver's license soon and a 14-year old son who is into soccer and playing Fortnite. Steph is a CRNA at a local hospital and I'm a network engineer at the University of IL.

Paula Stahl:

Brian and I have been married 13 years. We have one daughter Jordynne who is 11. I am the manager of the Intensive Care Unit at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis Oregon.

Steven Stokes:

Live in Denver, work for a city government planning festivals and event. Been married to my wife Shoshanna for 8 years. She is a psychic intuitive and owns her own coaching business. If in Denver let me know. It would be good to connect stories with folks in person.

Wendy Strehlow Gustafson:

JD and I have been married for 10 years, and have 2 rambunctious boys who are 5 and 7. I work as an RN in the NICU at Maple Grove hospital. We live in Rockford, MN (Which seems really crazy after living in Texas for 8 years. I am not loving the cold!)

Erika Syverson Drisbow:

I have been working at Sanford Health in Sioux Falls as an RN since college. Currently work in the outpatient anticoagulant clinic. My husband, John, and I have been married for 21 years and have 3 girls- 17, 14, & 9. We also have 2 golden retrievers & a cat so the house is full!

Julie Voelker-Morris:

I've been promoted to Senior Instructor II in the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon. We also have 2 slobbery dogs, 2 kids, ages 12 & 15, and have been married 17 years.