

The Love Below

Happy-Go-Jacky News from the Class of '03 - The Update Issue

Townie Page **Luke Hasskamp**

There have been two big developments on campus recently. First, the College has decided to move ahead with the one-card system on campus. You may recall that this was a rather contentious issue while we were students. Evidently having three different cards for the dining halls, the copiers, and the laundry machines was too difficult for the kiddies these days, so they have moved everything over to one card. This means that if you lose your card, you are truly screwed. Also, now the money in your account to be used at the snack bar will be called Schillers instead of dollars. Say you order a grilled cheese and a BLT and fries, it would cost \$7 in the real world, but at Carleton, it now costs seven Schillers. I am not making this stuff up. This is my reality.

The second big development on campus was the decision to finally take down Twigonometry, the twig sculpture erected on the Bald Spot during the fall of our senior year to commemorate the inauguration of President Oden. Members of the Carleton community were encouraged to place good-bye notes on the structure. This is also known as littering. Seriously, what would I have to say to a structure of sticks? Thanks for the memories? You had me at hello? There was even an ice-cream party with remarks in honor of Twigonometry. And balloons for the children. It was a second occasion on which to litter.

In local news, you may be interested to know that the Dundas city council recently approved construction of a new water tower in the city. Also, all of the cows in Northfield are content.

515 days until our 5th reunion!

Now, at long last, are the much anticipated updates from all our classmates. Enjoy!

Seth Dolman - A little unusual for an American Studies major, I started medical school at Ohio State University in August. I had been living in Washington, DC with my girlfriend Valeria W. (Wellesley College '02) and former Carleton roommate Jonathan Young. Valeria and I are looking for a place in central Ohio (which works out well, because we're both originally from here). In Washington, I did a postbac premed program at American University and then worked as the volunteer coordinator for an after-school program for children in families affected by HIV and AIDS. I've also gotten involved in a few web projects. With fellow '03 Carls Peter Fehrs and Jesse Alter, I made www.fictionalpeople.com (which hasn't been attended to much lately). Also, on the activism front, I am blogging the postcards I send: sethpost.blogspot.com. Finally, I am helping Valeria with a project inspired by carlwiki.org; wellesleypedia.org. I'm pumped to be using Carleton's very own Gridley for my silly online distractions.

Loren Holmes - I just finished my first year of grad school at Ohio University. Studying photojournalism is a lot different from philosophy, but I like it. I'm constantly challenged by everyone around me, and in a very different way from how I was challenged at Carleton. Compared with philosophy, photojournalism is much more practical and speaks to a different audience. But I find that the skills I learned at Carleton come in handy every day. This summer I'm headed off to South Carolina to learn how to surf, Minneapolis to work on my thesis, Alaska to visit friends and family (and climb a mountain or two), and Scotland for a photojournalism field school. If you'll be in the Athens, Ohio area, look me up!

Karen Fischer - I graduated in June with a MS in Nutritional Sciences from the University of Washington. I moved to Madison in the fall to complete my dietetic internship at the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics to officially become a registered dietician.

Jeremy Hoehn - I've picked up my Master's and working towards my Ph.D. in math at the University of Oregon. I have a teaching fellowship and taught calculus over the summer. I'm also playing ultimate with a co-ed team out of Seattle.

Alice Fridman - I am finishing up the 2nd year of a PhD program in counseling psychology in Iowa City, have survived the recent tornado largely unscathed, and plan to have a mini-reunion with Kathy Foody.

Scott Christensen - I worked for the last three years as both an AmeriCorps and a staff employee at a youth center on the west side of St Paul. I'm currently making a living as a poker player, and played the Main Event of the World Series of Poker at the end of July. I also traveled to Chile with a buddy in October - my first trip overseas. And, oh yeah, I'm hopefully going to convince Jay Plasman (isn't it usually the other way around?) to make a rather extended road trip with me. Rundquist recently moved to Minneapolis and we're probably going to get a place together. Hope everyone is well!

James Phillips-Portillo - I've just finished the first year of my Ph.D. work in physiological sciences at the University of Arizona. I'm spending the summer in Woods Hole, Mass., at the Marine Biological Laboratory's Neural Systems and Behavior summer course. Yup, I'm still a nerd.

Jesse Alter - I have been living in London for the past year. One day I plan to be King, but for now working at a legal publishing firm seems to be a good way to pass the time.

Ruth Curry - I've been living in New York City and working in book publishing since graduation, most recently as an assistant editor at Hyperion Books. New York was great, but in June I made a complete 180 and moved to a tiny port town called Lyttelton in New Zealand on the South Island near Christchurch. Globe-trotting Carls are welcome to stop in for a pint.

Heather Purdy - Since graduating, I went to Northwestern University and received a master's degree in transportation planning. I moved out to Seattle last year and now work for an engineering consulting firm.

Heather Davenport - I am a third year law student at Baylor University, and I will graduate in February. This summer I worked in Houston and went home to Allentown, PA. In August 2005, I traveled to Crawford, Texas (about 20 minutes from Waco) to see the anti-war demonstrators. Cindy Sheehan had left the day before, but there were still a lot of protesters there, and a few counter-protesters. I also spent spring break last year in Seattle, Washington, visiting Erica Cope and her two cats.

Suzanne Schaffer - After three fantastic years of working at Minnesota Public Radio in St. Paul, I started graduate school in July. I moved to Syracuse, NY to get a master's in Arts Journalism. I loved living in the Twin Cities and reunited with a lot of Carleton friends and made many new ones (and adopted a cat named Tasha). My masters program is only a year long so I hope to move back to Minnesota to be an ace cub radio reporter next year, but first I hope to do quite a bit of globe-trotting. If you're anywhere near central New York or Montreal, my first exploration destination, please look me up!

Heidi Spoelhof - I'm a fourth year dental student at the University of MN, graduating in spring of 2007. I did a spring break medical-dental mission in Cubulco, Guatemala.

Jen Lasley - I am currently getting my Master's of Public Health at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health. This summer I went to Kenya as a CDC intern and to Mali to conduct research for my thesis.

Jason Oswald - The weather is hot here in Chattanooga, Tennessee - the young hipsters like to call it Chattavegas - and my first year of teaching has concluded. I write this in the comfort of my too-cooled apartment that rests atop the campus of The Baylor School looking over the Tennessee River. Staring down at the water, I can't help but reflect about the ways in which life is so much like the river. A few days before finals week begins here, the school takes all of the graduating seniors into the Appalachian woods near the wild Chattooga river for eight days, and I was fortunate enough to be allowed to participate in the event - eight full days of hiking, climbing, rafting, canoeing, community service, and other woody stuff. While the activities are the focus, those things just kept the kids busy while they forged and tempered relationships that could last forever, including the one with the natural world. I was happy to act as a facilitator for that process and was both amused and amazed to see it happen to even the most resistant kids - they couldn't help but be swept away by it. And in my current serenity I prepare for the frenzy that lies just around the bend. For the fourth straight year, I will spend my entire summer in Maine working at a summer camp. The camp celebrates its 100th summer this year, and while the turns may have altered somewhat during that time, the basic course remains the same. And much like the capstone experience I just finished with Baylor's seniors, I will likely spend eight days this summer canoeing on the Allagash Wilderness Waterway with the camp's oldest campers helping to facilitate their capstone experience. After that, I'll have a few days to clean up, and then return to Chattavegas to begin the meetings that represent the headwaters of the coming school year, the mouth of which will likely empty, again, somewhere in Appalachia. I hope to see rivers other than the Tennessee, Chattooga, and Allagash in the coming months. I have aspirations dirtying the pages of my freshly renewed passport with gaudy stamps, as well as making it to Minnesota again, and hopefully out to the Left Coast a few times. It would be fantastic to see any of you and, of course, you are always welcome to stop by sunny Chattanooga- though don't be surprised if you don't see snow on the ground (not a single sticking bit for a whole year!).

Tim O'Connell - I've been in Electrical Engineering grad school at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana since August 2003. My research focuses on electric motor analysis and design. I hope to have my PhD at the end of 2007. Then I'd like to go to work for a big company in an energy-related field -- windmill technology, hybrid electric vehicles, motor and generator design, etc. Professorship isn't in the cards for me in the near future, but maybe sometime down the road. I'm also playing on and captaining a men's league soccer team made up of grad students and undergrads. We've won the league twice since I've been here. We also won the U of I intramural championship in 2004 out of a pool of 33 teams. In personal news, I'm getting married in September 2007 in Bloomington, IL. I hope to finish my degree shortly after that so that I'm not a poor married man for very long. I guess that's about it.

Piper Below & Logan Schutts - I am at school at the University of Chicago finishing up my first year of their Human Genetics PhD program. Logan is still pursuing music and is currently in a samba band, a funk band, is wrapping up projects in California, and is teaching both private lessons on the kit and group lessons at the Old Town School of Folk Music! He's been keeping really busy with it all.

Drew Ayers - I'm living in Austin, TX, attending the University of Texas, and working on my MA in Media/Film Studies. I'm kept myself busy this summer by learning French and doing research in cognitive approaches to film reception. If Northfield is a freezer, then Austin is an oven; everyday in June has been at least 90 degrees. My pale, upper-midwest body is no match for the Texas sun. God bless Texas and God bless air conditioning.

Eric Melhoff - I am currently in New York about to graduate from a Masters in Public Administration degree in Environmental Science and Policy from Columbia University. I will then be looking to find work hopefully in Emissions Trading here in New York or wherever a paycheck leads me.

Emily Nystrom, Amanda Hane, and Pam Ritger - We're living in Minneapolis and were recently part of a choreographed belly dancing recital. We've been taking lessons, and, though it's no Ebony, it is fun and a great workout. This fall we're planning to tie on our hip scarves again for some more lessons.

Tiffany Larsen - After spending the last three years touring Europe a few times, enjoying temporary jobs ranging from decorating x-mas trees to passing out candy bars on the slopes, being employed with a real job for a while in Boulder, Colorado, and recovering from a nasty snowboarding accident (and moving home with the parents for several months!), I have finally decided a higher degree is needed. This fall I joined the geology department at the University of Vermont in Burlington to work towards my master's degree. This summer I hung out with the 3 year old son of two former Carleton professors in Italy (i.e. babysitter!). Ciao ragazzi!!

Anne Sinclair - I have just completed my second week of training in El Salvador for service in the Peace Corps. I live with a wonderful family in the small town of San Cayetano near the volcano of Chinchontepeque. I'll be spending the next 2 plus years working with youth in El Salvador, but I will try my hardest to take a quick trip to the states for reunion.

Dan Brewer - Well, I'm working on my Ph.D. in Biochemistry at the University of Massachusetts, Medical in Worcester, MA. I'm starting my fourth year now, which is scary. Things never move as fast as one could hope. In theory, I'll be done in another two or three years. In other news, I've got a wonderful boyfriend who's going to be traveling with Up With People for six months, amazing friends, and am within driving distance of family again. I have to admit it's kind of scary to be actually on track for my life goals at the quarter century mark. Life is good, always too much to do, but I fit in fitness, friends, loved ones, and life goals, so I can't really complain!

Paul Rowe - I'm in math grad school at UPenn. I am starting to do research in the area of computer security. I spent a year in Chile which was amazing and I managed to visit my sister in the Peace Corps in Chad after meeting her in Ethiopia.

Catherine Mitchell - Graduated from the University of Virginia in May 2006, with a Master's degree in Art History, focusing on photography and modern art. In October I married fellow graduate student Daniel Barber, and we live in Charlottesville, Virginia.

JoAnna Josey - I am currently working as a goodwill ambassador aboard the Schooner Virginia as the Bos'un/3rd Mate which means that I am in charge of all the sails and rigging associated with the boat and stand as a watch office when the crew is broken into 3 watches. I both live and work on the 124ft boat with 8 other people traveling around to festivals and doing sail training. It was a bit strange for a while living in an area that is so hardcore Navy, but now we aren't spending nearly as much time in Norfolk so I get the break from military people. I am planning on getting my able-bodied seaman certification and my 100 ton near coastal captain's license this year. Sailing has pretty much taken over my life so anything that is going on in it is more than likely associated with it in some way. I will be in Virginia until December and then hope to get on a ship going south to once again avoid winter as much as possible.

Asa Swain - I'm very happy to announce that I just moved to Buffalo, New York, accepting a job as a GUI programmer for a company that makes database software for manufacturing companies. I spent a year after Carleton living in Minneapolis, and hope to slowly make my way westwards back towards the wonderful Twin Cities. In my free time I go to science fiction conventions, play Dungeons & Dragons, and contribute to "The Battle for Wesnoth" an open-source strategic computer game (www.wesnoth.org). Yes, I'm still a geek.

Erin Quigley - I'll be moved to Burlington, VT in August to start a masters degree in Natural Resources. My thesis will be about GIS mapping of land use and carbon sequestration in suburban areas. I hope they tell me what that means when I get there. Really though, it should be a great experience. Also, I spent this last summer doing archaeology in Range Creek Canyon, Utah, which was pretty awesome. Otherwise, I spend most of my time drinking gin and tonics and learning to play the fiddle.

Luke Hasskamp - I'm still in Northfield.

Brendan O'Connell - I'm chilling in Chicago, playing music and adjusting to life in the US. After two years abroad in Asia and South America, I returned to play in a funk and soul band in Chicago called Eli Jones & The Bare Bones. We released our first CD last May.

Molly Janis - Since Carleton, Molly Janis has split her time between Washington, DC and Chile, South America. A year ago, she returned from teaching English in Vina del Mar, Chile, which she used as a jumping-off point for travels to the north and south of Chile, as well as to Brazil and Argentina. Since then she's been keeping up her Spanish on various trips to California and by harassing unsuspecting Latinos on the DC Metrorail. Her life in DC is considerably less exciting than it was in South America. She works as an environmental scientist for a consulting firm called Tetra Tech in suburban Virginia but still lives in Washington. As a native to the area, she is disturbed by the number of Carls around town but still manages to join them for backyard barbeques and beer. In 2007, she hopes to begin graduate school somewhere on the west coast.

Hannah Chapin - Two years ago I took up the oh-so-glamorous life of a graduate student in cell biology. I do enjoy the work, but am also loving the new trails to hike and cultural goings-on to enjoy with new, and old, friends here in New Haven (Connecticut).

Brian Joyce - After a brief stint in Minneapolis after graduation, I moved back to my hometown of Chicago and am now living mere blocks from Wrigley Field. In addition to enjoying the city life, I've been splitting my time between a job in medical research (among other things), and preparing to apply to business school- I'm shooting to rejoin the academic world in the fall of '07, so with any luck I'll be able to report a successful first year when I'm at reunion in 2008. My job is ok- it usually leaves me with enough free time that I don't feel really stressed out, and in the past two years I've been named as a co-author on a good 5-6 published papers in the field of Orthopedics. While I'm not super-interested in orthopedics itself, I am learning quite a bit about a great many things (I'm now an amateur webmaster because of everything I've had to learn), and some of the projects are kinda nifty (by 2007 my name should be one of very many co-authors on what they hope will be a massive textbook on the Anterior Cruciate Ligament. Other than that, I try to stay in touch with a few other co-conspirators from the class of 2003, and am generally enjoying myself. Any of you Carls out there ever feel like hanging out as you pass through our fair city, feel free to drop me a line!

Sarah Schultz Gibbons - Last May, I graduated from the Graduate School for Social Work and Social Research at Bryn Mawr College with a Master's in Social Service and a Master's in Law and Social Policy. In September, I married my long-time partner of eight years, Bud Gibbons. Currently, I am working in public affairs at the Family Planning Council, a large non-profit in Philadelphia.

David Kornmeier - So late in my senior year when I got back from China (SARS-free), I took one of those job aptitude tests so I could figure out what to do with the rest of my life. I was a psychology major, so I knew all the reasons the test should not work, but took it anyway. The three choices that came up after this 2-3 hour survey were: actor, psychologist and real estate broker. Perhaps it was fate, but I got a flyer in the mail from a commercial buildings firm in Manhattan the next day. I called the only alumna from Carleton who graduated within the past 15 years, lived in NYC and worked for a real estate company. Five months later, after an arduous interview process, and a few hirings and firings, I ended up moving in with my Grandmother in New Jersey to save on rent while I worked buildings in the Big City. I have pretty much been doing this job thing ever since, and it has been going really well, although being on full commission is really nerve-wracking at first. I have taken a few three week trips to Peru, Egypt, Israel, Maryland, Jordan and China, since that is usually the most contiguous time I can take without significantly hurting my business. I have been dating a lovely girl named Alison for a year and a half or so and I bought a couple apartments. I guess I am still getting used to the city and have a love/hate relationship with it. New York is dirty, difficult, stressful and crowded, but exciting, interesting, complex and adventurous. At some point, I will probably move back into my Grandmother's nice suburban house in New Jersey...ok I never left.

James Backlund - I'm living in San Francisco, and I work in a family foundation in Palo Alto, call the Goodstein Foundation. Our interests are local to the Silicon Valley area, and our work focuses on somewhat on senior services, on student support through all levels of education, on building scholarships/endowments in our local community colleges, and on art and education for the younger ones.

Teague Lyons - For a couple years I did political/communications work for the union that represents mechanics at Northwest Airlines, which was quite an education. Now I've just finished my first year of studying for a Master's in Public Policy at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore; I like it. I interned at the Government Accountability Office (aka GAO) in DC over the summer.

Sarah Lang - In August 2005 my husband Ross and I moved from Fort Rucker, Alabama to Fort Hood, Texas (Fort Hood is about 45 minutes north of Austin). Ross is an active-duty Blackhawk helicopter pilot with the 1st Cavalry Division based at Fort Hood. Beginning in September I'll be a grad student in Foreign Language Education at the University of Texas at Austin (Hook 'em Horns!) I'm studying to be a German teacher at the secondary level. If I can tolerate it, I'll continue on with the PhD to be able to teach at the collegiate level, but that seems like a lot of work right now. We'll have to see.

Eden Kaiser - I'm in Minneapolis, with about 98% of all other Carleton alumni. (We all still hang out, too--for real.) I'm working on a linguistics degree at the U of M, and I might graduate somewhere between next year and ten years from now.

Katie Lackritz - My life is scarily normal right now and I'm doing great. I am in my fourth year of medical school at UVM, I should be graduating in 2007 and I'm going into OB/GYN. A few days ago on a vacation in Newfoundland my boyfriend, Peter Dahl, and I got engaged!! He's a fellow UVM med student who just graduated and is going into Internal Medicine, Primary Care. We actually have a small Carleton connection as one of our first times hanging out we played frisbee. I can't wait to bring Peter to Carleton for a reunion and play frisbee with him on the Bald Spot or up on the fields. Other exciting events in my life include the recent stealing and then recovering of my little black Jetta, some Portland, Maine kids took it out and went grocery shopping and smoked some pot before the cops found my car and gave it back to me. They told me I could keep the groceries as everything in the car when it's recovered goes to the original owner. Technically they said I could have the pot that the kids left behind, but since I was talking to cops I said no thanks.

Damien Bickett - I am in school here in Berkeley, quite near to Rafert, and nearer to Nick, Andy and a few other Carleton folksies that impinge on my turf (Chief). Right now, I am trying to beat my matlab code into submission, trying to beat my leg into submission so it works when I run (GOP alumni game in limbo), extracting (with occasional success) large sums of money from Nick, and admiring the redwoods and sequoias. Also contemplating a few important end of the year exams, and hopefully that contemplation translates into something tasty.

Alex Starace - I began NYU's Museum Studies graduate program in the fall. In unrelated news, Professor Yeti, the glorious online e-zine, finished its two-and-a-half year run this past June.

Kate Coddington - Nathan Senner '04 and I spent a year traveling all over the Americas on the track of various bird species, highlights of which were a field expedition on Tierra del Fuego and another one doing helicopter surveys in the Canadian Arctic. After putting away the backpacks, we moved to my hometown, Eugene, Oregon. We are both enjoying the chance to spend time out west again. I do research for an economic consulting company that focuses on transportation and land use issues, and Nathan is writing papers, going to conferences, and doing more bird research. We got married in August, and are going to try to figure out a way to get back to South America as soon as we can.

Keith Wolter - Balls, balls, balls. Among certain other things.

Bryan Donald - Life is treating me well. I got married last May to Katie Lord (not a Carl) and have since enjoyed a great honeymoon in Italy. On the academic scene, I just graduated from the University of Michigan with a Master's in Biomedical Engineering and will move on to Medical School at the University of Minnesota this fall. So, I'm moving back to the motherland for the next few years.

Frances Veit - I finished up an awesome and well-paid (only one of those is true) year as a teaching assistant in Hamburg, Germany and escaped World Cup fever to get my act together in Minneapolis over the summer. I started a Master's program in Library and Information Science at UW-Madison in the fall.

Pamela Jacobson - I have been working at a graphic and exhibit design firm called C&G Partners as a content developer and researcher for on both on-going exhibitions and new business. My projects include Los Angeles' Griffith Observatory exhibition, graphics for the new Yankee Stadium and a hurricane evacuation brochure for New York's Office of Emergency Management. I am also the Director of Membership for a committee called the Young Associates, whose mission is to organize events, via the Chelsea Art Museum, geared towards exposing young professionals to the emerging arts community in New York City. I have also been spending a lot of time hanging out with the HUGE New York contingent of Carleton alum who have migrated towards New York.

Brian Schilmoeller - I'm now a Gopher as well as a Knight, having finished a master's of computer science last summer at the U of M. Tali Averbuch '02 and I are currently living in Cambridge, MA. I'm doing some software development and teaching, and generally enjoying a reprieve from academia.

Noah Mackert - Life after college has turned out to be fantastic. In the first months, though, it was so hard that I was forced to die and be reborn. That's what it felt like, to move to New York and begin teaching middle school in the South Bronx. It was shocking. But I've gotten good enough at teaching, now, that every day in the classroom feels fresh and exciting. My students are so sincere, they rejuvenate me daily. I think it's because of them that I left my Derrida Reader in the recycling bin of my first New York apartment and left in its place a copy of "Where the Wild Things Are," the one my mom gave me.

Nina Current - I won 3rd place in a Jack & Jill swing dance contest in August at Wicked Lindy Weekend (a weekend of Lindy Hop classes) in Boston, MA. I was partnered with Benoit LaForest, a swing dancer from Montreal, Quebec. Cash prize was \$50 each! A note about my dancing history: I've been dancing for about 4.5 years now, and I got my start during my junior year at Carleton. I dance about 4 times a week, I'm in a performance group in Boston, and I teach private swing lessons on the side.

Sam McWilliams - I've been working in a pre-clinical pharmacology lab at McLean Hospital, just outside of Boston, studying drug abuse and neuropathic pain. Until recently I had the pleasure of working with my housemate Cara Sylvester. In August entered a DPT/PhD program at Wash-U School of Medicine in Saint Louis (with my future housemate Alison Gilmore).

Joel Schlosser - Mired in the pursuit of a PhD in Political Theory at Duke University, I have managed to escape a few summers to Berkeley to study Greek and Latin, and most recently to Aix-en-Provence, France, to drink wine and speak French with the locals. This upcoming year I will take preliminary exams and start working on my dissertation, which is tentatively on hope and political theory in Greek political thought (especially Euripides, Thucydides, and Plato) and contemporary thinkers (Beckett, Bloch, Arendt).

Andrew Schroeder - I pass the day hours saving babies at University Hospital in Madison. At night I run naked (almost) through the streets.

Karen Fricke - I lived in Eastern KY this summer working for YouthWorks, a youth ministry and missions organization. It's humbling and incredible. Plus, y'all has become a part of my vocabulary. In the spring, I finished my master's degree in Christian Thought, studying church history and systematic theology, and got to write a thesis on urban churches' responses to HIV/AIDS in their communities. When I get home to Chicago, I'm not sure what's in store, but it will be something with urban ministry and/or community development.

Sarah Mazur - I just moved to Washington, DC and started a job with the US Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation. I recently graduated from Duke with a Master of Environmental Management and a Master of Public Policy. In the coming weeks I look forward to meeting new people, exploring DC, and carving out my niche!

Rachel Kirby - I received a Master of Arts degree in Linguistics from UW Madison in December 2004. I moved to Milwaukee, WI in the fall of 2005. I am now working for Foley & Lardner, a national corporate law firm, in the Loss Prevention Department.

Suzanne Stock - I'm in dental school at the University of Iowa. Call me if you need a filling or a tooth pulled.

Alex Masulis - Greetings from Kyrdyzistan! Although still unrecognized by the international community, this tiny nation tucked away in the Tien Shan mountain range is what I've called home for almost two years now. I'm still not used to the shadeless desert heat, but the friendliness of the locals and yes*the financial opportunities*have kept me more than happy in this barren hinterland. Who would've thought an English major would be so successful as a so-called "black-market" arms dealer!? I guess I never considered the profession during my time at Carleton, but once I arrived here (ostensibly to teach) the huge caches of weapons left in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse beckoned to me with a far brighter light than the cracked chalkboard of my assigned classroom. But hey, it's not just about gun-running here*the theater's great too! (Just kidding, of course. Public entertainment of any kind is strictly banned in Kyrdyzistan.) Our classmate Jay Plasman had planned on visiting me in January, when the cool winter breezes off the Kyzyl-Suu make my gardens almost bearable to walk through, and I have no doubt we would have spent many nights sipping toloz nectar and sharing memories from our college days had he made it here. Sadly, Jay's caravan was hijacked by tribeless warlords during the difficult border crossing from Kazakhstan, and his whereabouts at this point are unknown. But apart from that incident and the unforgivable pilfering of my favorite date palm, life in Kyrdyzistan has given me nothing to complain about. Between my plentiful clients, even more plentiful wives (I'm joking! I only have three!), and the duplicities of the international arms trade, I'm busier than I ever was during finals. In fact, I could almost see myself settling down here for the long haul, finding myself a fourth wife who can actually bear sons, and retiring in a few years. But this missive is growing unbearably long, so I'll sign off here. I hope everyone is half as rich as I am, and I want you all to know that there's always a cool bed and ample supply of toloz nectar awaiting you if you're ever in the neighborhood. Brik B'rin!