Steve Sallstrom ('81)

It is nice to hear from Carleton! I'm happy to provide a few comments on my career path for your newsletter.

I graduated from Carleton on 1981 with a Math degree. I also took the physics and chemistry classes recommended for a 3-2 program in engineering. The language requirement slowed me down, so I stayed at Carleton the full four years. I was a 4 year starter on the football team (captain senior year), a 4 year member of chamber singers (32 voice mixed chorus, we did serious music in the fall and winter, and then a Gilbert and Sullivan musical in the spring), and a singing Knight for three years (yes, I knew Dacie Moses, and sang at her funeral). I also did a two person opera in the round theatre and bass solos for the full choir concerts of the Messiah. Can you tell I liked Carleton?

After graduating, I went to the University of Minnesota for an Agricultural Engineering degree - basically mechanical engineering with a food production focus. I found I needed so many background engineering classes that I could not go directly to a masters program but rather did the undergrad degree in 5 terms. In 1983, I accepted a job from Case as a design engineer working on agricultural tractors. After four years I moved back to the Twin Cities to work for Toro as an engineer on turf care equipment. In the meantime I married Brenda Bouley - class of 1982 - and started a family. My daughter, Anna, graduated from Carleton in 2009 with a Computer Science degree. She is currently working for General Mills. It was great talking to Russ Petricka at her graduation. My son, Duncan, is a senior at Wayzata and will be applying to Carleton very soon; he is interested in economics.

I have held a variety of engineering, project leader, and manager roles at Toro over the past 24 years. My math background has always served me well with problem solving and geometrical visualization skills - 3 dimensional modeling was particularly fun. I've learned a lot about new product development and how manufacturing and tooling work. Today I basically am a middle manager, handling budgets and coaching a staff of 20 while trying to improve our departmental processes and meet the needs of our internal customers.

My advice? The details of any particular class will fade in your memory, but the general patterns of thought you learn at Carleton will be with you forever. Explore a variety of topics to learn what really interest you, and think about where they can lead. And get involved with people, both in formal groups and informally. Almost any career you choose will lead to working with peers and/or managing activities through others.