



# German, Nordic, and Slavic

College of Letters and Science

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Scandinavian Studies Newsletter, Spring 2019 Volume xxii, Issue 2

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## A Message from the Program Chair, Kirsten Wolf

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**W**e hope this newsletter finds you well after what has been a challenging winter. Happy spring!

As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, we have now moved to an online version, but if you prefer to receive a hard copy, please contact the general office of the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic, and a hard copy will be mailed to you promptly.

What has probably been foremost on the minds of faculty and staff in the Nordic Unit this semester (other than teaching and research) is the annual conference of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS), which will take place May 2-4 at the Monona Terrace in the heart of downtown Madison. The conference theme is “Closing the Frontiers?” We believe that the theme is highly relevant when dealing with contemporary Scandinavia. Frontiers are borders—real and imagined, present and historical. Like the United States, Scandinavia is a place where previously open borders have started to close. “Closing the Frontiers?” raises the question of what and whom to include when talking about Scandinavia, not only today but also in the past. The question mark in the title of the conference is a sign of our interest in investigating all aspects of the theme. In conjunction with the conference, the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project is hosting a symposium (also at the Monona Terrace), which will include a full day of artist demonstrations on May 3. The symposium is free and open to the public.

You will find more details about the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project in this newsletter, which also includes information about, for example, our two visiting scholars and interviews with some of our alumni. We hope you’ll have a wonderful summer. You’ll hear from us again in the fall.

## In this issue...

Tobias Berglund, Hildeman Scholar

Elizabeth Peterson, Visiting Scholar

Jim Leary GRAMMY Nomination

Ronald Rosenberg Obituary

Graduation and Awards

The Ojibwe Winter Games

Notes from Our Alumni

Folk Art Symposium

## Scandinavian Studies Newsletter Committee

Marcus Cederström, Kirsten Wolf, Brett Mignin, Laura Moquin, Tristan Mueller-Vollmer, and Amber J. Rose.

## Visiting Scholars in Madison

### Tobias Berglund, Hildeman Scholar



Each year, the Swedish Fulbright Commission invites a US university to host a Hildeman Scholar. For the academic year 2018–19, this honor came to our department and we have had the good fortune of hosting Tobias Berglund as our Hildeman Scholar for the 2019 spring semester.

Tobias Berglund is based at the Department of History/ALM at Uppsala University. Here at Madison he is teaching a course called “Communities Transplanted? Nordic Migrations to North America. The course provides a basic historical overview of the political, economic, social, and cultural development of the Nordic region, the reasons for the massive exodus to North America, the establishment and development of a Nordic-American community and culture, and how these relate to the development and state of the Nordic societies themselves. In examining all aspects of the parallel development of the Nordic and Nordic-American communities/societies, the seminar seeks a tentative answer to the question of whether or not there

are such things as inherently “Nordic” values.

Tobias’s research deals with understanding issues related to Swedish and international migration policies and popular attitudes. This research has been focused on the period 1930–1946, during which Sweden went from being an emigrant country to being an immigrant country, along with experiencing an intense and nearly continual international crisis. Tobias has examined how Sweden moved from very harsh social policies in the mid-1930s and the early war years (1940–1943) to very generous policies during the last years of World War II and the years immediately after. In doing so, he has been able to show how this shift, besides responding to basic and obvious humanitarian considerations, was fundamentally driven by foreign policy concerns. The Swedish government, given its appeasement towards Germany early in the war, wished at almost any cost to avoid being seen as a quasi-ally to Nazi Germany in the post-war world. It thus regarded a generous refugee/immigrant policy as an effective measure in order to make the Western and Soviet governments more positively inclined towards Sweden.

Tobias’s other field of expertise is politics, state formation, and conflict in Scandinavia and the Baltic region from 1914 to the present. In 2017 he published a book on the Finnish Civil War of 1918, that has been overwhelmingly well-received and won high acclaim. It was awarded the 2018 H  ijer Prize by the Swedish Literary Society in Finland, one of Finland’s most prestigious literary and academic prizes. In continuing research on this project—to build a research matrix and new narrative on the 20th-century political development of the Nordic and Baltic region—he is currently working on a book on the Baltic States wars of independence in 1918–1920, due to be published in early 2021.

## Elizabeth Peterson, Visiting Scholar



In the fall of 2018, from October to December, the Nordic Unit hosted visiting scholar Elizabeth Peterson, associate professor at the University of Helsinki. A sociolinguist by training, Dr. Peterson has researched and published extensively on language and gender, language change, and attitudes towards different varieties of English. She came to the University of Wisconsin–Madison to continue her research into a Scandinavian heritage community in Utah, where she has been doing field work for several years.

For years, linguists have been interested in the concept of language maintenance and shift: what happens when a language dies or when people in a community stop using a heritage language, as when—for instance—Danish, Sweden, Norwegian, or Finnish become replaced by English? What remnants of a heritage language stay intact, and through what kinds of social networks do they persist? How are resulting American dialects shaped by the input languages?

These are the questions Liz focuses on in her research on Sanpete County in Utah: a unique,

isolated Mormon community where Danish and other Scandinavian languages used to be dominant but are no longer spoken. Liz asks: are they truly dead, or are they still there? Do we just need to know where to look for them? Through her fieldwork, Liz has indeed identified how traces of Danish still can be found in the Sanpete County community.

Liz's visit concluded with a well-attended lecture in the Madsen Reading Room, where she presented her research and asked for input to decode some of the Danish words and phrases she had recorded during her fieldwork. One highlight was—through collaborative effort—the partial identification of a traditional Danish folk tune. The lecture ended with a good and engaging discussion, and we all walked away knowing more about what happens when people stop using a heritage language.

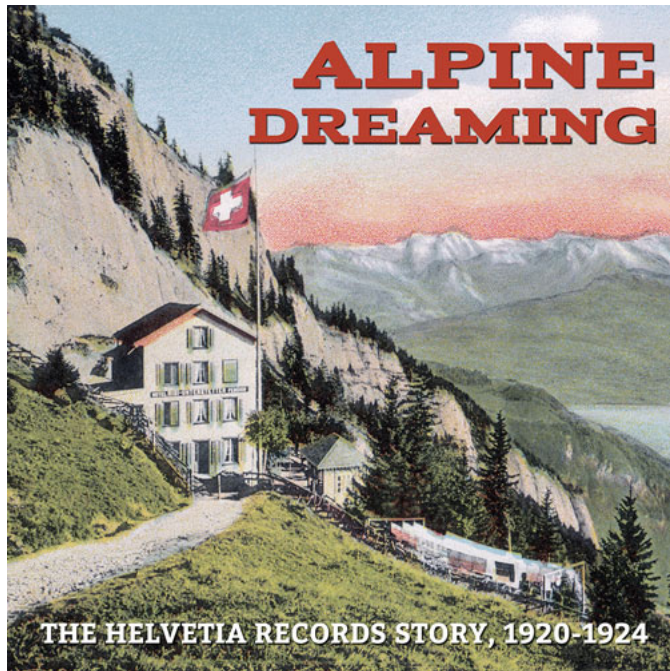
It was a true pleasure to have Dr. Peterson, or Liz—as she insisted we call her—in the department. She soon engaged all of us with her quick questions in the hallway that often turned into much longer, enjoyable exchanges of ideas. During her visit, many opportunities for collaboration and future projects between Liz and faculty, staff, and graduate students here at UW–Madison arose. It was great having her, and we hope that she will come back and visit. She is not only a phenomenal scholar, doing interesting and relevant work, but also an inspiring colleague to have around.

## GRAMMY Nomination for Professor Jim Leary

Professor Emeritus James P. Leary found himself back in Los Angeles, California, in February, this time with his entire family at his side. For the second time in three years, Jim was nominated for a GRAMMY in the category of Best Album Notes for *Alpine Dreaming: The Helvetia Records Story, 1920–1924*. Produced and distributed by Archeophone Records,



*Alpine Dreaming* tells the story of Helvetia, a record label launched by Ferdinand Ingold in 1920. Ingold, a Swiss immigrant, settled in Monroe, Wisconsin, where he would eventually produce eighteen records—thirty-six sides—of Swiss, German, and Tyrolean tunes and songs. Featuring a variety of performers, from instrumental combos to vocal quartets to yodelers from across the country, Helvetia Records celebrated the musical heritage



of Ingold's homeland. Jim, along with GNS graduate students Joel Kaipainen and Matthew Greene, who worked to translate song lyrics to English, collaborated with the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures; the Mills Music Library; and the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic, on sixty pages of liner notes featuring the history of the label, biographies of the performers, and beautiful images that tell one part of the immigrant history and heritage of the Swiss migrants who came to the United States.

Unfortunately, Jim left LA without a gilded gramophone, but, he says, "Although I didn't win, it's gratifying that historic recordings made by immigrants to the Upper Midwest are at last getting national recognition."



Source: Getty Images North America

Next up for Jim? Another project with Archeophone Records featuring recordings made by immigrants to the Midwest. As part of the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project, Jim is getting the gang together again to tell the amazing story of a small record label in Chicago known as Wallin's Svenska Records. Stay tuned. But in the meantime, check out *Alpine Dreaming: The Helvetia Records Story, 1920–1924* at [www.archeophone.com](http://www.archeophone.com).

## Scandinavian Studies T-Shirts

Interested in a Scandinavian Studies t-shirt? The Nordic Graduate Student Association (NGSA) is giving out t-shirts as thanks for any donation of \$20 or more. T-shirts are available in black, blue, and red from S to XXL. Email Mirva Johnson at [mjohnson52@wisc.edu](mailto:mjohnson52@wisc.edu) for more information. All donations go to the NGSA and support graduate students in their research, teaching, and professional development.

## Ronald Rosenberg (1950–2018)

It is with sadness that we report that Ronald Rosenberg passed away on December 29, 2018, at the age of 68. After the death of his partner, Joseph Lotz, and his retirement from their successful business in Los Angeles, Ron moved first to Eau Claire, where he was born and raised, and then to Madison. Ron had many interests, including pipe organs and crossword puzzles, but his true passion was the Romanov Dynasty of Imperial Russia and the language and culture of Viking-era Iceland.

As a retiree, Ron took advantage of the opportunity to audit courses offered by UW-Madison. For many years, he took courses on Old Norse, medieval Scandinavian literature, and the Vikings—topics to which he had been introduced while studying at St. Olaf College. He contributed greatly to class discussions and generously bought and shared books with his fellow students. Ron's long-term goal was to produce a definitive edition of the Old Norse-Icelandic *Tale of Auðun of the West Fjords*. Alas, he never finished his research project.

Ron was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer in late fall 2018. He then donated many of his books; some of his expensive and valuable books within the field of Old Norse have found a new home in the Madsen Reading Room. Other books were donated to Memorial Library at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

We will miss Ronald's contributions to the department, his passion for the Nordic countries, and his presence here on the 13th floor of Van Hise.

In recognition of the good times he had and the friendships he made in the Nordic Unit, Ron asked that memorials be sent to the Nordic Graduate Student Association.

## Congratulations to Our Graduates

### Ph.D.

David Natvig

### M.A.

Hayden Godfrey  
Mirva Johnson  
Johanna Weissing

### Majors

Rebecca Andersen  
Sara Branson  
Brittany Dunnum  
Jenna Gustafson  
Liel Hagen  
Rebecca Risner  
Madicyn Veith

### Certificates

Audrey Jacobsen  
Sarah Larson  
Collin Ludwig  
Wesley McMillan  
Pavel Petukho  
Lydia Taylor



Photo by Bryce Richter /UW-Madison

## Graduate Student Awards

**Colin Gioia Connors**, UW-Madison Community-Partnership Award, “Indigenous Sustainabilities: Health, Culture, and Environment in Waaswaaganing (Lac du Flambeau, WI)” • Vera Cronor Grant for Conference Travel

**Hayden Godfrey**, Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS) Fellowship • Svenska Institutet Conference Travel Funds

**Bailey Green**, Travel Grant from Madison Torske Klubben

**Mirva Johnson**, HEX Public Humanities Exchange Grant • Wisconsin Idea Award • Vera Cronor Grant for Conference Travel • Department of Scandinavian Studies Travel Grant

**Laura Moquin**, Department of Scandinavian Studies Department Travel Grant • Vera Cronor Grant for Conference Travel • UW-Madison Graduate School Conference Presentation Fund

**Tristan Matthias Mueller-Vollmer**, Vera Cronor Grant for Conference Travel

**Amber J. Rose**, Vera Cronor Grant for Conference Travel

**Richelle Wilson**, University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Letters and Science Online Instruction Certificate • Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study Aurora Borealis Prize Nomination for Best Paper Presentation (“IKEA as Utopian Imaginary”)



## Ojibwe Winter Games

On February 1, founder of the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe Winter Games Wayne Valliere visited campus to present and host the Winter Games for students. Valliere, an Ojibwe language instructor at the Lac du Flambeau Public School, started the Games in 2012 to bring back traditional Native winter sports that were discouraged by pressures to assimilate or outright banned by missionaries in his community. Some sports had not been played for over 175 years.

Valliere and his apprentices Lawrence Mann (Lac du Flambeau Public School) and Iris Carufel (UW Stevens Point) were honored last June with a Community-University Partnership Award from the University of Wisconsin–Madison for an ongoing seven-year partnership with folklorists affiliated with the Nordic Unit: Professor Thomas A. DuBois, graduate student Colin Connors, and former graduate students Dr. Tim Frandy and Dr. Marcus Cederström. Nordic Unit folklorists aid the cultural revitalization work of Valliere and others through ethnographic documentation, promotion, and grant-writing, and in doing so learn valuable skills that enable them to work as public folklorists among many communities.

Reforms led by educators like Valliere at the Lac du Flambeau school to integrate Ojibwe culture and Indigenous pedagogies into the school curriculum have vastly improved academic performance and high school graduation rates. Now, games like snow snake, the hoop and spear game, and lacrosse are once again common knowledge in



the community, Valliere said in an interview earlier this fall. “We were able to put culture into our public schools, and what happened was our kids began to see themselves in their school,” he said. “They began to take ownership of their school, and education became more important.”

Over 300 university students and Native community members attended Valliere’s talk and the Winter Games at DeJope Residence Hall. One student commented after learning to play the snow snake game: “I think it’s really important because it’s a really big part of Wisconsin’s history. Getting out and interacting with different cultures is an important part of being a more culturally aware and responsive person.” This year is the second time Valliere has brought the Winter Games to the UW-Madison. Professor DuBois hopes that the Games will become a regular biannual event on campus and a way that the University can support the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. “Article 31 specifically identifies sport and traditional games as part of the cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and develop,” he said. “Bringing the Games to Madison is one way the tribe exercises those rights.”

## Notes from Our Alumni

### Olivia Lasky



Olivia Lasky completed her M.A. degree in Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison in May of 2013 with a focus on Sámi language and culture and Arctic Indigenous language policies. Afterwards, she spent a month on a Sámi-run farm in northern Norway and then three months in Alaska working as a commercial fisherman. She then moved back to San Francisco and began a career in marketing by working for start-ups, and eventually Microsoft. It wasn't long, though, before she was drawn back to Norway!

Two years ago, Olivia moved to Oslo to work as a Senior Digital Strategist at a digital marketing agency. She manages Facebook and Google advertising campaigns for a wide variety of Scandinavian clients. She has also been translating ever since she completed her M.A. She started out with smaller technical projects and legal documents, but has since expanded to literary translation. Her first fully translated book, *Inside an Honor Killing* by Lene Wold, published in Norwegian as *Ære være mine døtre*, is an intense non-fiction

account of honor killings in Jordan, that came out in April with Greystone Books. She is also working on a novel by Sámi author Sigbjørn Skåden.

Olivia credits her M.A. in Scandinavian Studies for opening up opportunities to live and work in Norway, and to translate a variety of different works. She says whether or not you end up working directly with your major, “graduate school teaches skills like critical thinking, argumentation, and how to deal with big egos. You can leverage these skills for the rest of your life! I think a lot of employers also like to see that you’ve studied something you’re passionate about.”

### David Natvig



This summer, David Natvig (Ph.D. 2018) will move to Norway, where he will be a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the University of Oslo. His two-year research program there will focus on bilingualism and language contact among heritage Norwegian speakers in the United States. “I’m really looking forward to living in Norway again,” David says, “but the thought of managing all the moving pieces of a two-year research project feels a little overwhelming at times.”



This past year, David has been an assistant visiting professor of Norwegian at St. Olaf College in Minnesota, and he will miss “seeing students develop an interest in a topic or field that they may not have thought much about before.” But, he says, “I’ve found that students really value the first-hand experiences and insights” that come from living in Norway, as he will again for his postdoctoral studies.

As exciting as his upcoming move is, David says he misses the community at Madison, both in the department and the Teaching Assistants Association, the oldest graduate student-worker union in the country. David urges current graduate students to collaborate with students in different disciplines: “There’s a lot of energy in graduate school put towards mastering discipline-specific jargon and conventions, which of course is valuable and necessary, but,” he notes, “once you start applying for academic or nonacademic jobs or grants you’ll be communicating to very different audiences.” Interdisciplinary work, he stresses—or joining a community beyond the department, such as a labor union like the TAA—“is a great way to develop those skills.”

### **Samantha Brown**



Samantha Ruth Brown (M.A. 2016) is currently the Partnerships and Content Officer at the American Refugee Committee in Minneapolis.

She works on issues of food security and agricultural projects, drawing directly on her graduate research into migration, refugees, and food, but also assists on projects supporting LGBTQI refugees and the city’s homeless population. “Skills I developed in graduate school,” Samantha says, “have been invaluable in my current work—not only because of the topics like refugees and migration, but ethnographic training informs the way I interview clients and the intensive writing and research experience allows me to write proposals and submit IRBs.”

Samantha intends to continue her work with refugees and is planning to enter a Ph.D. program where she can focus on migrant communities in Scandinavia. “The Scandinavian countries play an outsized role in the refugee and humanitarian sphere,” and, she notes, “my background in Scandinavian studies positions me well for our organization’s gradual expansion into Northern Europe.”

Asked about her Madison experiences, Samantha confesses that she misses the community here and “the ‘crunchier’ parts of Madison, like how people won’t judge me for pulling out my Birkenstocks in March.” She urges graduate students to take time for themselves: “Someone once told me that graduate school is a test of how well you deal with perpetually being behind, which is very true... So don’t forget to live, to go to tango lessons or film screenings or whatever fulfills you.” Most importantly, perhaps, she reminds us to foster friendships and community saying, “Join the TAA, go to departmental happy hours, and make friends outside of the department and university.”

**Continue to the next page for more updates from our alumni!**

## Lauren Poyer



Lauren Poyer (M.A. 2016, Ph.D. x2021) recently accepted a full-time position as a Lecturer of Scandinavian Studies in the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. But before starting the new position in Seattle, Lauren had a busy summer. “My spouse and I made the four-day drive from Madison to Seattle last July in a U-Haul truck with our cat, Garfield, sandwiched between us,” Lauren says. Following a successful (and cat-friendly) trip to Seattle, Lauren spent the month of August in Iceland traveling, conducting research, and presenting at the International Saga Conference in Reykjavík. She also successfully completed her preliminary exams and has been working on her dissertation from afar with the help of the research library at the University of Washington.

Once back in Seattle, teaching and course preparation began in earnest. Lauren is teaching the department’s Norwegian language series, as well as several topics courses in medieval Scandinavian literature and culture. One of those courses included Scandinavian Mythology, which Lauren developed and has now offered twice—once each in the fall and winter quarters. This spring, she is teaching Sagas of the Vikings for the first time. In the future, Lauren plans to develop and teach

more medieval classes including a course on Vikings in Popular Culture and an Old Norse language class.

Lauren says that “The Scandinavian Studies Department here at Washington has been incredibly welcoming and supportive. I have been invited to guest lecture in a variety of courses as the department’s resident medievalist, including a talk on medieval manuscript culture in the department’s introductory course, SCAND 100, and a talk on love and marriage as described in the Sagas of the Icelanders in Masterpieces of Scandinavian Literature.”

## Randolph Ford



Randolph Ford received his B.A. and M.A. in Scandinavian Studies from UW-Madison in 2010. Upon graduation, he proceeded to New York University’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, where he completed his Ph.D. in May of 2016. In the fall of 2016, he came to Notre Dame as a postdoc, and since the fall of 2018, he has been a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Classics, where he teaches Latin and Classics in Translation courses. His favorite courses to teach are “Barbarians, the Church, and the Fall of Rome” and “Perilous Frontiers of Rome and China,” which he designed himself. He adds: “I especially

enjoy discussing with students the ways in which myths and narratives about the ancient world have been created and appropriated for political purposes in the modern period, as well as how our understanding of the ancient past continues to impinge upon the present, for good or for bad.”

Studying under the direction of Kirsten Wolf provided him with a critical and rigorous approach to the study of premodern languages and texts, which he has since been able to apply to traditions outside of medieval Scandinavia. According to Randolph, “Working as a TA for courses taught by Scott Mellor was the best possible preparation and instruction for teaching large lecture courses.” He is now completing the final revisions on a manuscript that will be published at the end of the year by Cambridge University Press. The book is titled *Rome, China, and the Barbarians: Historiography and the Transformation of Empires*, and is a comparative study of Greco-Roman and Chinese ethnographic traditions and analysis of the political implications of ethnographic discourse in Roman Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China.

## **Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Art in the Upper Midwest’s Show of Hands: Art in Education**

In conjunction with the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study’s annual conference, the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project will be bringing Nordic and Nordic-American folk artists, scholars, and community members together for a symposium on Nordic traditional arts May 2-4, 2019. Following last year’s successful World Record Symposium, which focused on Nordic and Nordic-American music in the Upper Midwest, the 2019 event will focus on material folk arts in the region.

The symposium will include a full day of artist demonstrations on Friday, May 3, as well as artist presentation panels covering topics such as apprenticeships, sustaining traditions, and folks arts in education.



Photo by Johanna Weissing

The symposium will feature thirteen different artists, including: Valorie Arrowsmith (weaving), Rose Arrowsmith DeCoux (storytelling), Tara Austin (rosemaling), Else Bigton (woodcarving), Torben Jarlstrøm Clausen (paper cutting), Kathryn Hartman (knitting), Andrea Herkert (rosemaling), Allen Holzhueter (knitting), Annikki Marttila (weaving), Phillip Odden (woodcarving), Pekka Olsen (woodcarving), Fredrik Prost (drum making), and Auður Björt Skúladóttir (knitting).

All events are free and open to the public and will be held at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison, Wisconsin. The event is generously sponsored by the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project, Wisconsin Teachers of Local Culture, Mills Music Library, the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic, the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, and the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study.



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<https://www.supportuw.org/?s=Scandinavian+studies>

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