

NEWSLETTER

Department of Scandinavian Studies

University of Wisconsin–Madison

As this newsletter is being mailed out, students are writing final essays and preparing for exams, while faculty and staff are getting ready for busy weeks of grading.

A highlight of the semester has been the fact that the Department has been given authorization to advertise for an assistant professor of Norwegian. We are deeply grateful to Karl Scholz, Dean of Letters and Science, and Susan Zaeske, Associate Dean of Arts and Humanities, for their hard work and efforts to make this possible. The start date will be the fall of 2015. We have finalized the position vacancy listing, which requires a Ph.D. or equivalent in the study of the literature and cultures of Norway. We expect the candidate to possess near-native fluency in Norwegian. The candidate will be expected to teach and advise undergraduate and graduate students in Scandinavian literature and culture and Norwegian language, conduct scholarly research in his/her area of expertise, and perform university and community service as appropriate. We have begun advertising the position and expect to finalize the search in the fall of 2014.

I also have sad news, however. Professor Emeritus Richard (Dick) Vowles passed away on December 19, 2013. This newsletter includes a memorial article about Dick's interesting life and achievements. A memorial party was held on March 28, 2014, at Capital Lakes in Madison, where Dick spent his last years. Guests were treated to Scandinavian delicacies (smoked salmon, pickled herring, etc.), while one of Dick's favorite jazz bands (Ladies Can Swing) played.

For more news from the Department, please read the following pages.

SPRING 2014

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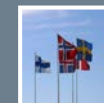
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In Memoriam: Professor Richard “Dick” Vowles (1917-2013)



Dick Vowles died December 19, 2013 a dark cold time when Scandinavianists find each other for food, drink, song, and story. He was 96. A Madisionian for more than 50 years, Dick was a faculty member in Scandinavian Studies from 1960-1985, and thereafter a regular at the department’s annual winter gløgg parties where his genial, inquisitive, witty, and generous presence will be missed.

An internationally respected Strindberg scholar, editor of a 16 volume Nordic Translation Series for UW, Dick was lauded by Chancellor Irving Shain in a 1985 letter conferring emeritus status, for his “consistently high quality teaching,” achievement as a “twice distinguished Fulbright scholar,” “administrative and leadership roles,” and “spirit and energy.” Dick replied cheekily that he had provided his department with a copy to be used, “with a little editing, as my obituary when the time comes.”

Critical of Shain’s authoritarian style, including the diminishment of faculty governance and the revocation of the Teaching Assistants’ Association’s collective bargaining rights, he added some nose-thumbing sentiments: “I served for nine years on the Humanities Divisional Committee, with the intent of giving it some kind of integrity and autonomous authority . . . I will still think of myself, albeit with difficulty, as a part of the University of Wisconsin.”

The last document in Dick’s departmental file—a letter handwritten on August 4, 2008—begins with “I treasure the Scandinavian newsletter, it’s my lifeline”; and closes with hopes that the “Scandinavian star” will not be “lost from the campus firmament.” Reminiscences figure in-between, among them: “When the students were on strike over the Vietnam War & for better fringe benefits for TAs, the Scandinavian Dept., in good liberal Scandinavian tradition, were on the side of the students and refused to punish them gradewise, which offended the dean, who wanted to punish us . . .” He added that, “I have always been pro-student and,” with a few exceptions, “anti-dean.”

An irrepressibly egalitarian humanist, Dick was born in Fargo, North Dakota, the only child of Guy and Ella (Beckman) Vowles. In 1925, when he was eight, the family moved to North Carolina, where Guy Vowles joined the Davidson College faculty as a professor of German. Dick earned a B.S. in biochemistry from Davidson in 1938. Ranging from the sciences to the humanities, he took graduate courses at nearby University of North Carolina, 1938-39, and at the University of Stockholm, 1939-40, before earning an M.A. in English from Yale in 1942. From 1941-44, during World War II, he worked as a chemical engineer and for the War Department, then served as a Vice Consul in Gothenburg, Sweden, 1945-46.

Fortuitously rejected by the newly-formed CIA, Dick returned to literary studies, acquiring a Ph.D. in English from Yale in 1950, while teaching, 1948-1960, at a succession of universities, including Southwestern University in Memphis, Queens University in NYC, and the University of Florida, along with a 1955-56 stint as a Fulbright fellow in Copenhagen. After joining the UW Scandinavian Studies faculty, Dick was a Strindberg fellow in Stockholm (1973), a Norwegian government fellow (1978), and a visiting professor at NYU, the University of Helsinki, and Stockholm University.

Steeped in literary studies, Dick was also passionate about film, introducing his students to the works of Ingmar Bergman, running a Scandinavian film festival in Door County in 1975, and presiding over the Santa Fe Scandinavian Film Festival in 1984. A musician and singer, with a

Birgit Baldwin Professor Jim Leary Presents the Shared History of Musical Traditions in Wisconsin

On Thursday, January 30, current Birgit Baldwin Professor Jim Leary gave a talk entitled: "How 'Kväsarvalsen' Became 'The Shanty Boy Tune': Musical Creolization in Wisconsin Lumber Camps." The Birgit Baldwin Professorship in Scandinavian Literatures and Languages is named after Birgit Baldwin, a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at Yale University, who was killed by a drunk driver in 1988. Baldwin was bilingual in Danish and English and her areas of expertise included German, French and Scandinavian Literatures. At the time of her death, she was writing her dissertation, entitled "Novels of Novels: Irony as a Theory of Narrative in *La Chartreuse de Parme* and Wilhelm Meisters *Wunderjahre*".

Her family created the professorship for the Department of Scandinavian Studies in the hope to further scholarship in the field she held so dear and would have been able to actively advance, had her life not so tragically ended. The professorship is designated to a professor, who has "achieved significant accomplishments in his/her own publications and

research, and who is an inspiring and conscientious teacher." As the current Birgit Baldwin Professor, Jim Leary presented some of the work he conducted while receiving the funds associated with the professorship.

Jim presented on the exchanges of musical songs during the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Northern and Central Wisconsin logging industry. During this time there were immigrant populations from Scandinavia, other parts of Europe, and from the eastern United States, who lived and worked in close proximity to one another. Although many spoke English, very few spoke immigrant languages other than their own; they did, however, spend free time together and as evidenced by the creation of "The Shanty Boy Tune," they enjoyed and borrowed melodies from each other.



"Kväsarvalsen," a folksong, has been traced as far back as Charles Artur Högsted, who first heard it in the Swedish district of Hälsingland in the late 19th century. It came to the US and was one of the melodies, which acquired an English language version, but kept its original tune. The lyrics of the new English

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In Memoriam: Professor Dick Vowles cont.

lifelong interest in jazz, he became "thoroughly indoctrinated" in blues while in Sweden in the 1940s: "One of my chief informants was Nils Åke Nilsson, head of the University of Stockholm Russian Studies Program. Then, in the 1960s, in a household in Bromm, the three teenage girls, who were playing Memphis Slim, Bessie Smith, and the two Sonny Boy Williamsons all day long, taught me about the blues." Through his retirement years, Dick enjoyed "fifteen jazz cruises with the S/S Norway, a piece of Norway floating in the Caribbean" that united Scandinavians with "the world's top jazz musicians, from Cab Calloway to Gary Burton." Fittingly, Dick's last manuscript, "American Jazz and The Blues in Scandinavia," interweaves his memories with legendary accounts of expatriate musicians, including Kansas City's Ben Webster, "buried in Assistens Kirkegaard in central Copenhagen. To this day jazz aficionados grab a couple of Tuborgs and drink a toast to Ben at his graveside."

Dick Vowles' joie de vivre matched that of the swinging saxophonist he so admired. We raise our glasses and our thoughts to him.

Birgit Baldwin Professor Jim Leary cont.



creolized version were not a translated version of the Swedish original; they described the unique aspects and folk-life of lumberjacks throughout North and Central Wisconsin.

In his analysis and discussion with members of the department and university community, Jim traced the history of the song back to the logging industry of Sweden. He then showed how the original lyrics reflected a different story than what workers in Wisconsin experienced. Finally, he showed the ways in which such songs became a part of the Wisconsin and Midwestern identity in the form of musical acts and folkloric collections into the beginning and middle of the 20th century.

The larger project is “Folksongs of another America: Field Recordings from the Upper Midwest, 1937-1946,” to be published in January 2015 by the University of Wisconsin Press and Dust-to-Digital. Consisting of a book, five CDs, and a film/DVD, it focuses on 187 songs and tunes in more than 20 languages recorded in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota for the Archive of American Folksong at the Library of Congress by folklorists Sidney Robertson, Alan Lomax, and Helene Stratman-Thomas. The “foreign” language songs—which include Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Swedish performances—have been all but forgotten.

Undergraduate Journal Formalized

Last semester, we announced the formation of *The Cross Section: An Exploration of All Things Nordic*, a journal created by undergraduate students for undergraduate students featuring the work of undergraduate students. This semester, we are excited to announce that the inaugural journal will not only be available online, but will be printed and distributed at the end of the semester.

Brock McCord, Meg Radka, and Lauren Schwark have worked to solicit submissions, recruit editors and peer-reviewers amongst their classmates, organize training sessions, and handled the day-to-day challenges that come with starting a publication from scratch. Their work on the journal has demonstrated their independence and proactivity in creating a journal that the entire Department is proud of.

The journal is being produced in collaboration with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Brian Wiley, Visiting Professor of Graphic Design at Illinois will be working with a group of senior graphic design students to create an online version, as well as a print version. We are excited to be partnering with another university that has a strong Scandinavian Studies connection, while offering students hands-on experience that allows them to pursue their interests in Scandinavian Studies.

As higher education continues to change, we understand the need to become more multifaceted and offer our students a variety of opportunities, whether they are in the traditional classroom setting or outside with projects such as an undergraduate journal. Students working on this project are gaining valuable skills that can be applied to a variety of different environments, whether they put those skills to use in an academic setting here on campus or off campus as they begin their careers.

Be sure to look for the journal at the end of the semester. You can find out more about *The Cross Section* on the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/crosssectionjournal> or the Department’s Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ScandinavianStudiesUWMadison>

Swede Dreams are Made of This – Report from Umeå

As I collect my thoughts and prepare to write an account of my experiences as a student studying abroad in Umeå, I am coming to the realization that my semester here is almost precisely half over and I am baffled. When I reminisce about the bountiful trove of treasurable memories I have already collected here in Sweden, it proves indeed very hard to believe such little time has passed. Filled with fika, friends, and beautiful frozen nature, my day-to-day life as a student at Umeå University has rarely had a dull moment.

All things considered, my academic responsibilities have only fleetingly defined my experience as an exchange student. I have been working my way through a series of Swedish history courses I am currently wrapping up Milestones of Swedish History II before I will be moving onto Milestones III and subsequently IV. In between my once weekly seminars I attend an optional and ungraded Swedish conversational course intended for incoming students who desire to learn the language but already possess an “average” level of Swedish. With teachers who value an aggressive hands-on learning approach and classmates whose “average” far surpasses that of my own, the course has proven a quite difficult but invigorating experience. Some days our activities include simple unregulated conversational time while we fika, à la Samtalsbordet, but on occasions we must strain to be creative problem solvers as we fumble over vowel pronunciations while guessing letters during Swedish “Hang Man” or violently gesture our way through a “Catch Phrase” word that proves too difficult to describe through circumlocution.

Large amounts of my social life and greater cultural experiences have been informed by my participation in Umeå University’s Buddy Program, an organization that encourages networking between fellow international students and orchestrates memorable Swedish adventures. Curling with Parisians, throwin’ back steins of *Norrlands Guld* with Germans, and Nordic folk dancing with South Koreans has transcended my cultural enlightenment to a truly global scale. That is not to say I have not also forayed into the dark depths of the glacial chasms that are Swedish social life, because as the only hamburger (American) in a dorm full of meatballs (Swedes) I have had no other choice. Although initially cold and quiet, my native neighbors have warmed up to me over time to the point where we enjoy communal Sunday fika and participate in various fitness classes together at nearby IKSU one of the largest sports facilities of its kind in Europe. Our relationships have proven mutually educational as we often help each other understand idioms, expressions, and the veracity of stereotypes from each respective culture. For example, did you know they don’t use *Kalles Kaviar* as toothpaste, despite what the tubular packaging would make you believe??

Looking to the future proves bittersweet. On the horizon I have plans for a week-long journey to nearby Norway where, along with a diverse selection of international friends, I will explore fjords along the Norwegian Sea coast and mountains of the arctic wilderness. I anticipate it to be yet another of the seemingly infinite enriching experiences of my regrettably finite time studying abroad.

- Ben Pflughoeft



Veera Yliniemi – Visiting Finnish Fulbright Teacher



For a number of years, the Department has been fortunate to host a Fulbright Scholar from Finland. This year Veera Yliniemi was selected as UW-Madison's Fulbright Instructor of Finnish. Veera is currently working on her Master's Degree at the University of Helsinki. At Helsinki, Veera concentrates on Finnish language and literature and pedagogical studies (which can be understood as the equivalent to a United States teacher's license). Veera has a minor in Portuguese and has resided in both Brazil and Portugal. While studying in Portugal, she was introduced to teaching Finnish as a foreign language. Having an interest in an international career, this experience triggered Veera's interest in teaching Finnish abroad. When she saw the Fulbright announcement for an instructor position at one of four US universities, she thought, "This is perfect!" Veera pursued this position because it allowed her the chance to put to

practice what she has been learning for the past years at her University, the opportunity to experience a new culture, and a chance to use English.

At UW, Veera teaches first- and second-semester Finnish. This is an intensive Finnish language course that meets four times a week. Veera has taken advantage of the vibrant Finnish community in and around Madison by incorporating Finnish cultural events into her curriculum. Some of these events include a Kardemimmit concert (a popular Finnish folk music group), lunch with the visitors from Sibelius Akedemi and attending their concert, watching Finnish movies (*Rare Exports* was quite the hit!), as well as informal café conversation hours. Veera has enjoyed her time teaching Finnish as a foreign language, explaining that she has learned so much teaching Finnish as a foreign language as opposed to teaching Finnish to native speakers. Her UW students have forced her to think differently about her own language, and she has gotten a unique glimpse of Finnish from an outsider perspective. Her class consists of a small but motivated group of students. Veera is impressed with how they are all so interested in the Finnish language and how they are such active, enthusiastic, and involved students.

There were four possible placement locations for the Fulbright position and Veera is happy to have been placed in Madison because, according to Veera, it is "my kind of place." Upon arrival last summer, Veera took full advantage of the outdoor opportunities in Madison – particularly learning to sail on Lake Mendota and hiking in Wisconsin's state parks. Additionally, she's happy to have access to organic and vegetarian food and to live in a community that values recycling, has a variety of cafes and restaurants, and fun second-hand stores. Veera has also prioritized experiencing a "different kind" of America than is often depicted in Finland. During school breaks, Veera has traveled all over the United States, including: New Orleans, Northern California, Seattle, Portland, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, Austin, and she hopes also to see the Grand Canyon and Southern California. The department has certainly benefitted from Veera's teaching expertise, her incredible knowledge of the Finnish language, and her positive and caring attitude. Please, if you haven't already, take the opportunity to say hello to Veera before she leaves on June 15th!

The Department Congratulates Graduates of 2013–2014

Graduate Students

Jackson Crawford, PhD Scandinavian Studies (Philology)

Anna Rue, PhD Scandinavian Studies (Folklore)

Marit Barvke, MA Scandinavian Studies (Area Studies)

Tim Cochrane, MA Scandinavian Studies (Literature)

Undergraduate Students

Anneli Eddy, BA International Studies, Scandinavian Studies, and Spanish, Certificate in European Studies

Emma Erickson, BA in Scandinavian Studies

Emily Jorgenson, BA Economics, International Studies, and Scandinavian Studies

Alexander Potts, BA in Comparative Literature and Scandinavian Studies

Hannah Somers, BA in Political Science and Scandinavian Studies, Certificates in Environmental Studies and European Studies

Brittany Varano, BA in Comm Sciences & Disorders and Scandinavian Studies

Awards

Susanne Arthur, Vera Croner Travel Award

Marit Barvke, Torske Klubben Travel Scholarship and Vera Croner Travel Award

Samantha Brown, FLAS and Scan | Design

Marcus Cederström, American Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship, AFS Boreal Prize, SASS Aurora Borealis Prize, SASS Society of Historians of Scandinavia Prize, Vera Croner Travel Award

Colin Connors, Vera Croner Travel Award, eTexts: Adopt, Remix, Create Grant

Katrina Johnson, Sons of Norway Fellowship

Paul Natiw, Vera Croner Travel Award

David Natvig, Vera Croner Travel Award

John Prusynski, Mellon Fellowship

Amber Rose, Vera Croner Travel Award

Jason Schroeder, Vera Croner Travel Award

Forthcoming Translation of the *Legendary Saga of King Olaf Haraldsson*

In the 1990s, Paul Schach, Professor at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and his student Joyce Scholz—who began taking class with Schach in her 60s—collaborated on a translation of *Helgisaga Óláfs konungs Haraldssonar* (*The Legendary Saga of King Olaf Haraldsson*). The translation was never published. John Karl Scholz, Dean of the College of Letters & Science at the UW-Madison, provided Kirsten Wolf with a copy of his mother's translation, which Ph.D. Candidate Susanne Arthur and Professor Kirsten Wolf have now edited and prepared for publication. The book has just gone to press and will soon be available in the department's WITS II series. This will be the first English translation of the *Legendary Saga of King Olaf Haraldsson*. The volume, furthermore, includes a translation of the fragments of the *Elsta saga Óláfs helga* (*Oldest Saga of Olaf the Saint*), also undertaken by Paul Schach and Joyce Scholz.

DEPARTMENT OF
SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES
UW-MADISON

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Madison, WI 53706 USA

Nonprofit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 658 Madison, WI

Edited by Kirsten Wolf, Jim Leary, Susanne Arthur, Marit Barkve, Marcus Cederström, Kenneth Lull, and Todd Michelson-Ambelang

Scandinavian Retreat

On the weekend of February 21-23 several members of the department—professors, graduate students, and undergraduates—represented UW-Madison at the annual Scandinavian Studies retreat at Beaver Creek Reserve in Fall Creek, Wisconsin. Students piled into vans Friday afternoon headed for a fun weekend of activities with fellow Scandinavian Studies students from around the Midwest. Heavier-than-normal snow made the trip take a bit longer but everyone arrived safe and sound. At Beaver Creek representatives of our department joined students and faculty from UW-Eau Claire, Minnesota State University, University of Minnesota, St. Olaf College, and Gustavus Adolphus College as well as attendees from Concordia College.

As always, the retreat paired recreation with education. Students participated in woodcarving, weaving, kick-sledding and axe-throwing, where UW-Madison took first place! We are pleased to report that UW-Madison students represented the new undergraduate journal *The Cross Section*, presented by senior editors Brock McCord, Meghan Radka, and Lauren Schwark. Each year the retreat provides a unique opportunity for students to network and experience wonderful cultural products of Scandinavia. If you missed out this year don't fret, you can always join us next year and meet Scandinavianists from neighboring institutions and the community. Thanks again to Norden folk for doing such a fantastic job organizing this event and to our drivers and students who faced the perils of winter to deliver a grand showing of the department.