



NEWSLETTER

Scandinavian Studies

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Message from our Program Chair

Professor Kirsten Wolf

Here is wishing friends and alumni of Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison a pleasant summer.

With this newsletter, we're sharing good and bad news. The bad news is that Professor Harald Næss, an icon within the field of Scandinavian Studies and a professor of Norwegian in Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison for many years, passed away a few months ago. For many years, Harald served as department chair. It is largely due to him that the department became a department of Scandinavian Studies, since previous chairs had largely focused on Norwegian. Susan Brantly has written a touching and very personal obituary commemorating Harald in this newsletter.

There is, however, also plenty of good news. One is that Dr. Claus Elholm Andersen will be joining the faculty and serving as our new Assistant Professor of Danish in fall 2017, and we're greatly looking forward to welcoming him. The other is that Dr. Todd Michelson-Ambelang is now a permanent lecturer in our department, where he teaches one course per semester on topics pertaining to Old Norse-Icelandic literature, Scandinavian linguistics, and Norwegian. Both Claus Elholm Andersen and Todd Michelson-Ambelang are featured in this newsletter.

In addition, we include stories about how two of our recent graduates (Susanne Arthur and Jason Schroeder) are faring in their new positions, Tom DuBois's exciting narrative about his sabbatical in Sweden, two reports on courses taught this semester, and much more.

Enjoy!

SPRING 2017

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Department Welcomes New Professor of Danish



This fall, the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic will be welcoming a new Assistant Professor specializing in Danish studies. Dr. Claus Elholm Andersen is a prolific researcher with an impressive array of teaching experiences at universities in the United States and the Nordic region. He joins us after half a decade teaching at the University of Helsinki, where in 2015 he completed his doctoral dissertation on the Norwegian literary sensation Karl Ove Knausgård, entitled “‘På vakt skal man være.’ Om litterariteten i Karl Ove Knausgård’s *Min kamp*” (“You have to be on your guard.” On Literariness in Karl Ove Knausgård’s *My Struggle*). While Knausgård has been Andersen’s most conspicuous research focus—he is a recognized expert and has just published an anthology of critical essays on Knausgård’s *Min kamp*—it would be a mistake to overlook the substantial breadth of his expertise within Scandinavian studies. Apart from several excellent journal articles on Knausgård, Andersen has published academic work on key figures from Danish literary history such as Adam Oehlenschläger, Emil Aarestrup, Georg Brandes, and Søren Kierkegaard. He has given numerous public lectures on aspects of Danish and Scandinavian culture, and in the past few years he has also somehow found time to publish frequent literary reviews in the main Swedish-Finnish newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet*.

For Andersen, joining UW-Madison will be a return to North America. Since the year 2000, after he completed his master’s degree in Denmark with a thesis on Romantic irony, Andersen has been a lecturer in Danish and Scandinavian literature at three American universities (UCLA, UT-Austin, and UMN-Twin Cities). The breadth of teaching experience he has acquired over the years is considerable, ranging from Danish language and literature courses (Hans Christian Andersen, Søren Kierkegaard) to courses on a variety of other topics in Scandinavian literature and culture (Literature and Ethics, Popular Culture, Crime Fiction, The Feminist Tradition, Autobiography, Theory of the Novel). He seems to win at least one teaching award everywhere he goes, most recently “Best International Teacher” at Helsinki, so UW-Madison students can expect an engaging classroom experience with Professor Andersen. This fall, Andersen will be teaching two courses: “Readings in Danish Literature” (the fifth semester of Danish language instruction) and “Contemporary Scandinavian Literature.” The latter will focus on works from the past decade and explore topics such as race, gender, the welfare state, and questions of fiction vs. reality and why literature matters today.

We in the Scandinavian Studies Program of the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic are thrilled to welcome Claus Andersen and his family to Madison, where we hope he will feel at home among our lively and active group of faculty, staff, and students, with our diverse avenues of interest in Scandinavian studies.

Graduate Student Abroad: Colin Connors



Thanks to generous funding from the American-Scandinavian Foundation, I have spent the past year conducting research in Iceland for my dissertation on the history of place names in the sagas of Iceland’s East Fjords. Thanks also to the Arnarnaganean Institute for Icelandic Studies for giving me a desk in Reykjavik, I have been able to delve into place name records critical to my research. And thanks finally to the Skriðuklaustur Centre for History and Culture in east Iceland for making me one of their scholars-in-residence, I have been able to interview local farmers and survey the geography particular to *Hrafnkels saga* and other sagas of the East Fjords. These opportunities allowed me to test my hypotheses in the field and to discover a waterfall once thought to be purely fictional. I also discovered the lengthy *Ballad of Hrafnkell* in the East Iceland Regional Archives, which I am now transcribing from the original manuscript for the first time. This March I presented my findings in English at an international conference held at the University of Iceland, and later this month I will present my most recent findings in Icelandic for the Icelandic Place Name Society. It has been a pleasure to work side by side with excellent scholars, to hike the heaths of Iceland, and to participate for the first time in the fall sheep roundup. I am now looking forward to summer and the return of the midnight sun. If I am lucky, I might be able to learn to ride horseback, so that I might better follow in the “hoofsteps” of medieval Icelanders in the highlands. But whether on horseback or foot, I plan to continue my fieldwork and writing until I return to Madison in the fall.

In Memoriam: Harald Næss



Harald Næss passed away in his native Kristiansand on February 5, 2017, after a brief illness. A more formal obituary can be found on the GNS website under “News,” but in this space, I wanted to share some of the stories I know about the man who had such a profound impact on Scandinavian Studies in Wisconsin.

Harald succeeded Einar Haugen in 1959 as the fourth Norwegian professor since Rasmus B. Anderson started it all in 1875. Dick Vowles was already here in Comparative Literature, and under Harald’s guidance the department expanded to include Dick Ringler, Niels Ingwersen, Kim Nilsson, and Ingrid Clareus. These colleagues worked together for decades and this is the roster that so many of us remember with such fondness.

Of course, Harald was a brilliant and productive scholar, but also a beloved and engaging teacher with a very dry wit. During my early years in Madison, I recall my colleagues reminiscing about staging Ibsen’s Viking plays up on Washington Island, and Harald remarked laconically: “That is the summer we sacrificed the graduate student.” He did not elaborate, but must have enjoyed my astonished expression. (Apparently, the graduate student was a good swimmer, so tossing her into Lake Michigan did not prove fatal.) Mary Kay Norseng told the tale that after her dissertation defense, Harald said, “Congratulations! Now you will be teaching the same 20 books for the rest of your life.” On one of the few occasions I taught “Scandinavian Life and Civilization,” the person I had booked to teach Holberg forgot they were doing it. A panicked phone call brought Harald rushing to my aid all the way from Mt. Horeb. With no notice at all he gave the most splendid lecture on *Erasmus Montanus*. I clearly should have asked him in the first place. In a way, Harald is still teaching in the department. In the late 1990’s he recorded a piece for me on the background of Knut Hamsun’s *Mysteries*, in which he describes meeting the 85-year-old model for Dagny. That is still part of my online 19th Century Literature class to this very day.

For all of Harald’s many services to Norway, he was made Knight First Class of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav in 1986. Faith Ingwersen recalled that because the King himself was coming for the ceremony, there was some gentle urging that Harald buy a new tuxedo for the occasion. Harald just as gently resisted, considering his tried and true tuxedo to be quite good enough. The joke is that, at the ceremony, both Harald and the King were dressed in identical tuxedos.

Harald and Ann Mari were tremendously gracious hosts, and it was a tradition to celebrate the end of the academic year with a bonfire at their historically Norwegian farm outside of Mt. Horeb. I remember belting out Bellman tunes and savoring Ann Mari’s hickory nut pie, made from nuts picked on the farm. The most coveted raffle prize at the SAC Christmas party was anything made by Ann Mari, hand-knit from her own home-grown, carded, and spun wool. Harald was a man of many parts: a musician, a skilled gardener, a master builder, a collector of antiques, a witty storyteller, and an occasional lumberjack and shepherd.

There are so many more stories to tell, but suffice it to say that Harald has left an enduring legacy in the Scandinavian Studies Department and touched the lives of students and colleagues in profound and transformative ways. He is fondly remembered and greatly missed. If you have any more stories about Harald you would like to share, please send them to: sbrantly@wisc.edu

Memorial gifts benefitting Scandinavian Studies may be directed to the Ann Mari and Harald Næss Fund, University of Wisconsin Foundation, US Bank Lockbox, Box 78807, Milwaukee WI 53728-0807.

Susan Brantly

Tom DuBois – Report from Sabbatical



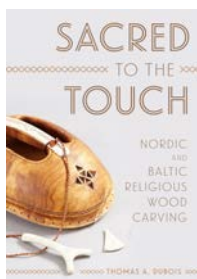
Sámi with tourists. Italian tourists posing with young Sámi at the Jokkmokk Winter Market, an event that has taken place every February for more than 400 years.



Lieksa church: The church created by Eva Rynänen, one of the artists featured in my book *Sacred to the Touch*.

The concept of a sabbatical actually comes from the Bible. It was conceived as the “Sabbath” year, a time once in every seven-year cycle that a person would stop ordinary activities and take stock of things in a different way. In practice, for academics, the sabbatical is often a time that one uses to finish up a huge research project that has been hanging over one’s head for years—finishing off a book or a set of articles, etc. It is also a time for starting new projects. Most importantly, it is a time when one can think through one’s research, teaching, and service and how they all fit together into a single package. Since professors are more-or-less self-guided, this sort of opportunity to think things through is crucial.

For my sabbatical, I chose to apply to be a fellow of the Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala, Sweden. The Collegium is a meeting place of scholars from Sweden and from around the world, who do their research with the aid of one of Scandinavia’s best libraries. Being at the Collegium has given me the opportunity to revise my book *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*, which is going on twenty years old now and needed updating. I have been writing new chapters on pre-Christian understandings of the landscape, gender, animals and ritual, and now have to figure out how to fit everything new into more-or-less the same number of pages as the earlier edition!



At the same time, I have been finishing up another book that has taken me years to produce. Entitled *Sacred to the Touch*, it will come out in November from the University of Washington Press. Inevitably there are tasks that come due in the last stages of producing a book. In my case, though, not only was there a question of copyediting and proofing all my pages, but also of producing good images for a book that looks at the ways in which Nordic and Baltic artists use wood to make religious sculptures. I found myself retracing my earlier tracks to the village of Lieksa in Finnish Karelia, then to Jukkasjärvi, near Kiruna, Sweden, and eventually to Arvidsjaur as well.

And, while working on these book projects, I have also gotten a chance to catch up with events happening in connection with Sámi culture. This spring marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the first official meeting of Sámi organizations from across the different Nordic countries, a coming together urged by the remarkable visionary leader Elsa Laula Renberg (1877-1931), a woman who saw the need of different Sámi groups to work together to combat the racism and colonialism that Sámi faced. And this spring also saw the premiere of an important new film, *Sameblod* (Sámi blood), directed by Amanda Kernell. That film tells the story of a young girl who flees her Sámi family in order to escape the entrenched racism of the 1930s, hiding herself, ironically, in the persona of a Swedish majority member. It is a painful and thought-provoking film, and it was tremendous to be able to follow the reactions it prompted both among Sámi and non-Sámi viewers. Since I am writing yet another book about Sámi media (music, film, radio, television, internet), this event was really valuable to follow.

Sabbaticals are a time for focusing on one’s research, but I have also been pulling together huge amounts of material to improve my teaching and my service in the future. I have literally thousands more photos to draw on for my courses, new ideas for projects to undertake with my students, and new possibilities for collaborations between Sámi organizations and counterparts in the Upper Midwest. And I am eager to get back to Madison and to share what I’ve learned with students, colleagues, and department friends!

Alumni Updates

Dear Readers:

We are hoping to feature our alumni on a regular basis in newsletters, so that you can see what your fellow alumni are up to so that we can share the varied trajectories of those who studied Scandinavian Studies on all levels. This semester we are featuring two alumni who recently received their PhDs from the department. If you are interested in sharing your journey in the newsletter, please send us an email at UWMadScandinavian@gmail.com.

Susanne Arthur, PhD 2015, University of Reykjavik



1. What kinds of interesting things have you done since graduating from UW – Madison?

I received my PhD in Scandinavian Studies in May 2015 and continued working as a Project Assistant for Kirsten Wolf until mid-Summer. In late-August I was offered a position as a full-time German-to-English translator for a small translation company in Milwaukee. However, only two weeks after my first day at Point-to-Point, the translation company, I received notice that I had been awarded a three-year postdoctoral grant at the University of Iceland (for which I had applied much earlier in 2015). While I thoroughly enjoyed my experience of working in the non-academic sector, it was impossible for me to pass up the opportunity to continue working with Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts and to return to Iceland, which has been the home of my heart since childhood.

2. When did you start working in Iceland? What is your position there?

I moved to Iceland with my husband and daughter in March 2016 and officially began my three-year postdoc at the University of Iceland April 1st. The grant is paid for by the university's Recruitment Fund and is strictly a research position. Even though my postdoc is officially associated with the Literature Department, my workplace is at The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, one of the two major manuscript collections for Icelandic manuscripts. While I proposed my research topic as a stand-alone project, it is, in fact, connected to an ongoing larger project, allowing me close collaboration with other researchers both in Iceland and abroad.

3. How did your UW education prepare you for this career?

I am quite convinced that my degree from the UW as well as the support of my PhD advisor, Professor Kirsten Wolf, were one of the major reasons why the University of Iceland considered my application worthy of one of their grants (I was one of fifteen candidates to be awarded among a pool of over one hundred applicants). The courses I took as a graduate student in Madison, particularly in the field of Old Norse-Icelandic Studies as well as the research I conducted for my PhD thesis have certainly prepared me well for my current position. And even though my postdoc does not entail any teaching responsibilities, having taught and prepared courses in Madison has helped me organize my tasks and prepare public lectures. Also, my postdoc is closely related to my dissertation, which was a codicological study of manuscripts containing *Njáls saga*, which is *the* most famous saga in the corpus of Sagas of Icelanders. Codicology studies manuscripts as artifacts. It is also sometimes referred to as the archaeology of the book. I studied changes and trends in manuscript production, different types of manuscripts, and the history of readership and reception of the approximately sixty manuscripts and manuscript fragments containing *Njáls saga*. I based my research on features, such as size, layout, text density, and so-called paratextual features (marked passages, marginal notes, scribal remarks, etc.).

Continued on next page

4. What is the most exciting project that you're working on?

That would have to be my postdoc project, of course. Although it builds on my dissertation, I am now focusing more on the textual aspects of *Njáls saga* rather than the manuscripts themselves. I am, for example, researching chapter divisions and variances in verses among the various manuscripts of *Njáls saga*, though certainly my work on chapter divisions is still very much tied to codicological aspects. Particularly, the transmission of verses and scribal mistakes that indicate relationships between the various manuscripts have proven to be very fascinating, and sometimes even amusing to research.

Jason Schroeder, PhD 2016, Augustana College



1. What is your current position at Augustana College, and when did you start working there?

Beginning in August 2016, I became the Scandinavian Studies teaching fellow in the World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures department. My main duties are teaching elementary and intermediate Swedish courses (including a course on Swedish folklore taught in Swedish!). I also have the opportunity to teach an English language course in Scandinavian Folklore and on Icelandic family sagas. In addition, I am working on two new courses for general requirements: one on German and Nordic Epics and another is a senior project course.

2. How did your education at UW prepare you for your career in academia?

I worked most often as a language instructor for the Scandinavian Studies Department at UW-Madison, where I had a great amount of leeway to construct the language courses. This prepared me well for my current position. I have about ten semesters of material and experience to draw on. Developing papers, presentations, and my dissertation also prepared me to develop coherent and concise lectures for content courses and also how to teach research methods to students.

3. What are your favorite courses to teach?

Naturally, I love teaching the Scandinavian Folklore course, but I look forward to the intermediate Swedish courses – the students are at a level where they can have in-depth conversations. The first-year language sequence is also fun, because I get to know the students and watch them become more and more competent over the course of each term.

4. What is the most exciting project you're currently working on?

Preparing courses for next year is a lot of fun, since it includes creating a senior thesis course for our majors; I am also excited to be working on my first book and various folklore and folksong collection projects in the Quad Cities metropolitan area (on the Illinois and Iowa border).



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Old Face/New Face: Todd Michelson-Ambelang



I am truly delighted to announce a new hire and an addition to the number of faculty and staff in Scandinavian Studies: Dr. Todd Michelson-Ambelang was appointed Associate Lecturer in the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic in January 2016, where he teaches one course per semester on topics pertaining to Old Norse-Icelandic literature, linguistics, Scandinavian culture, and Norwegian.

While Todd is a “new face” as a lecturer in Scandinavian Studies, he is an “old face” in the sense that we in Scandinavian Studies consider him one of our own. Todd came to Madison, where he has family roots, in 2001 with a BA from Arizona State University and embarked on no fewer than two MA degrees: one in Scandinavian Studies, where he pursued the philology track, and the other in Library and Information Studies, where he specialized in academic and special libraries. He completed his MAs in 2007. As if this weren’t enough education, Todd started a PhD in Scandinavian Studies, where he took advanced courses and also participated in advanced seminars on manuscript studies and Latin codicology at the University of Copenhagen and The University of Virginia’s Rare Book School (at the Walters Art Museum and Johns Hopkins University), respectively. Todd wrote a fascinating dissertation entitled “Outsiders on the Inside: Conception of Disability in Medieval Western Scandinavia,” which he defended in December 2015. While writing the dissertation, he also held a position as an associate academic librarian and bibliographer for Scandinavian humanities and Classics. In addition, he gave a number of papers at national and international conferences on a variety of topics within the fields of Scandinavian Studies and Library and Information Studies. Juggling so many responsibilities is no small feat.

Todd had a lot of teaching and research experience before his appointment as Associate Lecturer. Among other things, he taught a course on New Norwegian as a lecturer and served as a Norwegian language TA. In addition, he co-taught with Julie Allen a course on “Populism in Scandinavia” teaching the Disabled and Immigrant Other Component. Since his permanent appointment in the Department, Todd has taught our very popular course on “Scandinavian Life and Civilization” and is currently teaching “The Sagas of Icelanders.” In addition, he has twice taught overload by giving a 3-week linguistic introduction to “Contemporary Scandinavian Languages,” which is a team-taught 6th-semester language course.

Todd holds two hats. In addition to teaching 33% in Scandinavian Studies, he works 67% as an academic librarian and bibliographer for Scandinavian humanities, Classics, Jewish, and South Asian Studies. We consider it our good fortune to have a colleague in Memorial Library, knowing that we’ll never lack bibliographical help or resources in terms of books and articles.

Todd is and has always been a wonderful colleague and an amazingly good citizen. He has volunteered his services in terms of committee work on so very, very many occasions. If a colleague is sick or has a family emergency, Todd is the first to reach out with an offer to take over a class. We are extraordinarily lucky to have Todd in Scandinavian Studies and consider his hire a real coup.

Kirsten Wolf

Would you like to help conserve paper, save the department a bit of money, and receive your newsletter via email? Please sign up to receive the Scandinavian Studies Newsletter via email by sending an email request to UWMadScandinavian@gmail.com

New Course: Memory and Literature



In the spring semester of 2017, Assistant Professor Dean Krouk taught a new course, which he designed after starting at UW-Madison in the 2015-2016 academic year. “Memory and Literature” arose from Krouk’s interest in a set of interdisciplinary questions about how societies and individuals remember, commemorate, or work through difficult pasts. Literary texts have long provided vivid narrative representations of remembering, and in recent decades there has been a pronounced interest in memory, memoir, and autobiographical fiction in the Nordic countries and elsewhere. This literary development has accompanied a broader cultural and academic phenomenon sometimes called “the memory boom,” which cuts across the disciplines of history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and others. These various approaches constitute the research field of “memory studies,” which has produced important books, edited volumes, university courses, and several new academic journals since its coalescence in the 1980s. Among the topics studied in this field are Holocaust memory, trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder, war remembrance and memorials, the use of the past in cultural identity construction, the haunting legacies of misdeeds such as slavery and colonialism, and the ways history is (mis)represented in film, fiction, television and other popular media. And that is only scratching the surface. The more one reads and thinks about it, the more it seems that “memory” permeates a variety of disciplines, engaging us in historical, sociological, and personal reflection.

The goal of “Memory and Literature” is to introduce students to new ways of thinking about memory, both individual and collective, and to analyze modern literary representations of remembering, forgetting, and trauma. The very first reading in the course is the famous excerpt about the madeleine cookie from volume one of Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* (*À la recherche du temps perdu*, 1913-1927). Krouk then uses several weeks to explore readings in the field of memory studies, as students learn to define and investigate topics such as involuntary memory, traumatic memory, collective and cultural memory, sites of memory, and the relations of memory to history. Assigned readings in this section of the course include work by historians, sociologists, psychoanalysts, and literary scholars. For example, in 2017 the class read texts by the French historian Pierre Nora, the American comparative literature professor and trauma theorist Cathy Caruth, and the late Slavicist Svetlana Boym. After considering a variety of terms and theories, the class discussed the narrative forms as well as the ethical and political dimensions of remembering in several novels. In spring 2017, these novels were *Austerlitz* (2001), widely regarded as a masterpiece by the late German author W. G. Sebald; *Days in the History of Silence* (*Dager i stillhetens historie*, 2011), a haunting novel by the Norwegian author Merethe Lindstrøm; *Montecore: The Silence of the Tiger* (*Montecore: en unik tiger*, 2006), a stunning and hilarious novel by the Swedish author Jonas Hassen Khemiri (which is beautifully translated by Rachel Willson-Broyles, an alum of the Scandinavian Studies PhD program); and lastly the first volume of Karl Ove Knausgård’s momentous six-volume work of autofiction, *My Struggle* (*Min kamp*). Future versions of the course may include different novels by other Scandinavian authors. This semester, the class included twelve undergraduates from a variety of majors, three graduate students, and a senior auditor, all of whom responded with enthusiasm to these challenging, inventive, and at times extremely moving texts.



Here are some comments from students:

“Dean’s course has expanded my understanding of memory and its significance on an individual level in creating a home within a community. The novels we have read, like Merethe Lindstrøm’s Days in the History of Silence and Jonas Hassen Khemiri’s Montecore, have challenged and expanded my understanding of a person’s relationship to the past and how one’s past experiences affect one’s idea sense of belonging in the community in which they live.” – Bailey Green, Scandinavian Studies, MA Student.

“I really like how Dean helped us to build a theoretical framework before we started reading his carefully curated selection of novels. These novels explore the elusiveness and the familiarity that characterize trauma, memory and related human experiences on both individual and collective scales. The discussions we have in class are open to individual experiences, the texts themselves, and the world at large. Excellent course!” – Laura Moquin, Scandinavian Studies, MA Student.

A New Take on an Old Course: Icelandic Sagas



In the spring semester of 2017, the course Literature in Translation: The Icelandic Sagas, was taught again in the department. Because of students' fascination with the unique genre, this course has been taught many times over the years. Students from across campus, majoring in a variety of disciplines in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences register for the course. This semester the course was taught by Dr. Todd Michelson-Ambelang, Associate Lecturer, GNS, and Academic Librarian, Memorial Library. The course-content was based on Todd's dissertation and his ongoing research in the field of Digital Humanities.

Todd's dissertation explored ways to create a better cultural, literary, and lexicographical understanding of the concepts of "impairment" and "disability" in the Sagas and *Battir* of Icelanders. To this end, he identified, collated and examined terms used to describe impairments in characters within the genre. The course introduced students to this important and timely field of research, but this was not the sole focus. Many other important topics, such as the efficacy of curses, the role of women in society, the vulnerability of crying, male characters, descriptions of characters before and after being impaired, Christian vs. non-Christian characters, were also included and discussed.

The course began with investigations of the reliability of texts from the Middle Ages and into the present through an examination of *Landnámabók* and discussions on the laws of the times. This was followed by reading and discussing the Sagas of the Greenlanders to help students understand the settlers' desire to explore and to be free from the rule of others. At the completion of this section, the class moved to an engagement with epic-, family-, and outlaw-sagas.

The discussions of the sagas were thematically and conceptually organized, and to fortify students' understanding, Todd shared several analytical strategies and tools that he had conducted in his dissertation project, for example, the number of times a particular word or phrase appeared in the genre as a whole in comparison to the individual saga that was being studied. He did this by using a software which finds words, and by consulting dictionaries. The analyses were formed during in-class discussions and shared by students in bi-weekly, blog-style reaction papers. After finding a term by data-mining, the students examined the larger text surrounding the term in order to give meaning to the term and determine its cultural significance.

As Todd explained to the class, there are many programs available to search documents for terms—some more reliable than others, but all with their own peculiarities. The most reliable software for the needs of the class is Adobe Acrobat, which has a feature that can search multiple documents simultaneously. Difficulties encountered in data mining include the highly-inflected nature of Old Norse-Icelandic, which often can change the root of the word being searched; the reliability of the searchable information created in the digitization process; and understanding the background meaning of a word. The number of results in a search is also important: in some searches for words and phrases, words or phrases were found many times throughout the genre, others only once.

But the course was not limited to digital searches. To help foster an understanding of the rich print cultural aspects of saga literature, the class made comparisons of digital facsimiles with pictures of saga manuscripts. This assisted them in comprehending the material histories of saga literature, the ways in which sagas were written, and how aspects, such as handwriting, abbreviations, and text blocks, varied over time. To examine the modes in which contemporary society views sagas, students watched and critiqued documentaries, as well as a feature film on the topic of sagas. This also helped bring them to contemporary media portrayals of medieval historical realities, and ways in which society, and the sagas are romanticized today.



Karin Jonch-Clausen



The Scandinavian Studies Program has been fortunate to welcome Karin Jonch-Clausen to teach in the department for the spring semester. Karin originally comes from Copenhagen, Denmark, and she currently serves as one of the department's Danish lecturers. This semester, Karin teaches second semester Danish. Every day, her students are exposed to a Danish dialect in the classroom, fostering a learning environment that will enhance her students' abilities to understand and communicate in Danish with fellow students and native Danes, as well as their comprehension of Danish, should they choose to study in Denmark. Additionally, Karin is able to convey to her students information about Denmark. Her students are not limited by the classroom setting, as Karin's expertise offers them unique perspectives on pop culture and contemporary events in Denmark.

Although she has only taught for one semester, she has made an impact, and her students, the staff, and the faculty will certainly miss her presence. We are grateful for Karin's exceptional commitment to advancing her students' Danish comprehension and overall knowledge of Danish culture, as well as her dedication to the Scandinavian Studies Program. Following this semester, Karin will be furthering her own education, in that she plans to begin law school in the fall. We would like to thank Karin for teaching in the department this semester, and we wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

44th Annual Midwest Scandinavian Retreat



UW-Madison was excited to act as the organizing university for the 2017 Annual Midwest Scandinavian Retreat.



Nordic aficionados of all ages and students from over six Midwestern universities and colleges braved the winter weather to spend a weekend at

Beaver Creek Reserve just east of Eau Claire, WI. They spent their time meeting new and familiar faces, engaging with their Scandinavian-American heritage, and learning about current research projects and resources in the field of Scandinavian studies. Presentation topics ranged from heritage-language interviews in

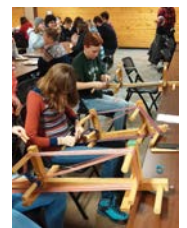


Finnish-American communities in northern Wisconsin (by our own graduate student Mirva Johnson) to ongoing music digitization projects at UW-Madison (led by Anna Rue and Nate Gibson of the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures) to Lisa Huntsha's work with Swedish-American newspaper collections at the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, just to name a few. Participants punctuated the lecture series with ax-throwing, spark racing, and band-weaving. They also danced away their Saturday night learning traditional Norwegian folk dancing from the Minneapolis-based folk dance group SVIKT!

Norden Folk hosts a speaker every year at the retreat, and this year they invited author Barton Sutter, three-time winner of the Minnesota Book Award, to read some of his poetry and give students advice on how to incorporate their love of Scandinavian language and culture into their own careers.



At the end of the weekend, retreat organizers voted to change the retreat's name for future years to honor its founder, Larry Wahlstrom. Beginning 2018, mark your calendars for the annual Wahlstrom Nordic Workshop!



**Check out the new Scandinavian Webpage: gns.wisc.edu/nordic
There you will find past newsletters, current staff and students, and more.**

Congratulations to Our Graduates and Award Winners

Graduates

PhD

Marcus Cederström, December 2016

MA

Samantha Brown, August 2016

Bachelors

Wyatt Paul, August 2016

Christophe Delaunay, December 2016

Phoebe Flesch, December 2016

Chloe Holmskov, December 2016

Derek Johns, December 2016

Ikwe Mennen, December 2016

Lindsey Thompson, December 2016

Jenna Wroblewski, December 2016

Zachary Beethem, May 2017

Calvin Berg, May 2017

Alexis Dunnun, May 2017

Jamie Elsen, May 2017

Mitchell Fossen, May 2017

Thomas Malcolm, May 2017

Kayla Pfeiffer-Mundt, May 2017

Frederik Strabo, May 2017

Isabel Wilson, May 2017

Certificate

Nathaniel Grill, August 2016

Sydney Anderson, May 2017

Olivia Cook, May 2017

Neva Fuller, May 2017

James Holmquest, May 2017

James Rasmussen, May 2017

Samuel Rivedal, May 2017

Samantha Solberg, May 2017

Anna Tolle, May 201

Awards

Marit Barkve: Crown Princess Märtha Friendship Fund PhD/Dissertation Research Grant, American Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship 2016-17; Barbara Morgridge WGDF Fellowship 2016-17; NORTANA Travel Grant 2016-17; Vera Cronor Grant

Colin Connors: Vera Cronor Grant

Bailey Green: Department of Scandinavian Studies Travel Grant, Norway, Summer 2017; Wisconsin Alumni Association Norway Chapter Scholarship, Norway, Summer 2017

Ben Hubbard: Spring 2017 University Housing Honored Instructor

Mirva Johnson: Scandinavian Studies Department Travel Grant; Vera Cronor; Wisconsin Idea Award; Finlandia Foundation, NY Metropolitan Chapter, Scholarship; Uppsala International Summer School

Laura Moquin: Vera Cronor Grant; Department of Scandinavian Studies Travel Grant, Norway, Summer 2017; Wisconsin Idea Award

Tristan Mueller-Vollmer: Vera Cronor Grant

David Natvig: University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School Conference Presentation Award; *Nominee*: Letter and Sciences TA Fellowship (GNS); *Nominee*: Campus-Wide Teaching Assistant Award for Exceptional Service to the Department (GNS); Vera Cronor Grant; Wisconsin Idea Award

Amber Rose: Vera Cronor Grant; American-Scandinavian Foundation Fellowship, Summer 2017; Wisconsin Idea Award

Johanna Weissing: Department of Scandinavian Studies Travel Grant, University of Copenhagen Summer School in Manuscript Studies, Copenhagen, Summer 2017

Richelle Wilson: Svenska institutet scholarship, August 2016; UW-Madison Graduate School Office of Professional Development Award, March 2017; Vera Cronor Grant, 2017; Maxwell Institute Summer Seminar Award, June 2017



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Edited by Kirsten Wolf, Todd Michelson-Ambelang, Marit Barkve, Bailey Green, Tristan Mueller-Vollmer, Lauren Poyer, and Richelle Wilson

New Administrators in the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic

Because of the merger of the Departments of German, Scandinavian Studies, and Slavic Studies into the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic, there has been a restructuring of the administration staff in the department. This restructuring has caused changes in titles and responsibilities to streamline service to the department as a whole. Should you need anything, here is the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic Administrative team:

- Nicole Senter is the Academic Department Manager. She oversees the human resources for all department personnel (payroll), assists the department chair, and is the website admin. 608.262-2192
- Katja Mohaupt-Hedden is the Financial Specialist. She is the contact for expense reports, grant funding, guest flights & accommodations. 608.262.2193
- Mark Mears is the Graduate Coordinator. He assists in graduate student admissions and graduate student administration. 608.262.6764
- Jeff Casey is the facilitator for the Undergrad Advisers and is the first contact step in the advising process. 608.262.2090

The main GNS office is located in Van Hise Room 818. Questions or comments can be sent to: info@gns.wisc.edu