



Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic+

Scandinavian Studies Newsletter

Fall 2024

Volume xxvii, Issue 1

TOVRA... CARLLON
PRE... CLASSES OF
1917 1918 1920 1921
1922 1923 1925 1926



Greetings from the Program Chair

Greetings and best wishes for a happy holiday season to our friends, alumni, and donors from students, staff, and faculty in Scandinavian Studies.

We have had a good, but busy, fall semester. Among other things, we have spent quite some time planning celebrations and events next year, which marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of a program in Scandinavian Studies here at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. You will receive invitations to these celebrations and events by mail, but please also look at our website for more information. Our newsletters in 2025 will be dedicated to the anniversary with the spring newsletter examining our history and the fall newsletter considering our future.

You will find much to read in this newsletter – from visits by foreign scholars and artists (Silje Solheim Karlsen, Juliane Egerer, Liesl Chapman) and recent publications by faculty to interviews with Scott Mellor and Charles Frary and fieldnotes by a graduate student to mention just a few things. Finally, at the end of the newsletter, faculty, staff, and students present their favorite Nordic paintings and provide faculty and staff updates. We hope the newsletter will give you pleasant and interesting reading material over the holidays.

It takes many people to put together a newsletter, and I am thankful to those who contributed. I am especially grateful to Ida Moen Johnson, who chairs the Newsletter Committee, and to Jenna Renae Sorensen, who does the layout.

- Program Chair, Kirsten Wolf

Photo credits

Cover photo: The Carillon Tower is covered in autumn-colored ivy against the blue sky during a fall morning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison on Oct. 14, 2024. (Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW–Madison)

Above: A sunburst shows through oak trees in Muir Woods during a fall (autumn) morning at the University of Wisconsin–Madison on Oct. 14, 2024. (Photo by Althea Dotzour / UW–Madison)

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There seem to be some cows roaming about in this newsletter! See if you can find them all.

Watch Cait Vitale-Sullivan demonstrating kulning at Fermentation Fest, 2021:
https://youtu.be/Lx04_QWuZyU

Answers are on page 32!



**Please look forward to our 2025 Newsletters,
which will commemorate 150 years of
Scandinavian Studies at the
University of Wisconsin-Madison.**

The Spring 2025 Newsletter, "Looking Back," will examine our history.

The Fall 2025 Newsletter, "Looking Forward," will consider our future.

If you would like to make a donation to the program or to the Anniversary Year programming, please scan this QR code:



Or follow this link: <https://secure.supportuw.org/give/> and choose Scandinavian Studies Centennial Fund 132731590. Or send a check to:

Scandinavian Studies Anniversary Year
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Dear Friend of Scandinavian Studies,

The year 2025 marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of a program in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1875, Rasmus B. Anderson, an ambitious Norwegian American from Albion, Wisconsin, succeeded in establishing a program in Scandinavian Studies at the UW: the first of its kind in the world, the first explicitly interdisciplinary department at the UW, and one of the first departments to truly embrace what eventually became known as the "Wisconsin Idea," the close engagement with community partners in Wisconsin, North America, and the world. Anderson's teaching and research in Norwegian and Old Norse were gradually supplemented by a long line of talented, sometimes quirky, and supremely memorable faculty, offering expertise in Danish, modern and medieval Icelandic, Swedish, Finnish, Sámi languages and linguistics, and a wide array of related topics, including culture, film, folklore, history, literature, material culture, media, medieval studies, migration, music, mythology, politics, society, and sustainability.

In the 150 years since Anderson's bold initiative, tens of thousands of UW students have taken one or more Scandinavian courses, maybe to fill a requirement or satisfy an interest, or deepen a longstanding fascination. Thousands of others have pursued an undergraduate major or certificate, or undertaken a master's or Ph.D. Students have built upon what they learned at UW, conducting research of their own, writing books and articles, founding companies, working in Nordic-related industries, or simply sharing their love of the Nordic region and its cultures with family, friends, children and grandchildren.

YOU are part of this legacy, and we want to celebrate the coming anniversary year with you! Please take the time to fill out [this brief survey](#) if you would like to learn more about the coming year's series of events, or visit our pages at the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic's website to find out more: <https://gns.wisc.edu/nordic/>. We hope to interview some of our alums for the UW's oral history archives and the enclosed card lets you indicate if you'd be interested in being interviewed. We hope to invite alums to a series of events and lectures we're planning, either in-person or online. We have also enclosed information if you are interested in donating, for which we are always grateful.

Please help us mark this tremendous anniversary and thank you for being part of our long and remarkable institutional history.

Claus Elholm Andersen
Susan Brantly
B. Marcus Cederström
Thomas A. DuBois
Helen R. Durst
Ida Moen Johnson
Dean Krouk
Scott Mellor
Benjamin Mier-Cruz
Liina-Ly Roos
Kirsten Wolf

Talk Given at Conference in Lillehammer, September 2024

By Dean Krouk

Over several beautiful days in late September, Dean Krouk attended a small conference about Norwegian literature, which was held at Bjerkebæk, the Sigrid Undset museum and house in Lillehammer. The conference was hosted by researchers at the National Library in Norway as part of the international research project “Producing Norwegian World Literature in a Time of Rupture, 1900-50.” (<https://www.nb.no/en/research/made-abroad/>). Participants included scholars and professors of Nordic literature from Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany, and the Czech Republic. Krouk’s presentation was entitled, “Nordahl Grieg, Veien frem, and Transnational Antifascism.” The talk situated Grieg’s project in the context of the broader literary and cultural mobilization against fascism and Nazism. It focused on Grieg’s journal *Veien frem* (The Way Forward), which ran for 12 issues in 1936-1937 and covered events such as the Berlin Olympics, the first years of the Spanish Civil War, and Stalin’s show trials. Krouk explained how this journal was Grieg’s attempt to build a venue for antifascist intellectual, cultural, and literary work - a project that ultimately proved elusive, as Krouk argues, due to Grieg’s increasingly rigid defense of Stalinism. Nonetheless, the run of *Veien frem* provides an important snapshot of Norwegian literary and cultural engagement with the transnational antifascist left in the late 1930s.



Sigrid Undset’s desk at Bjerkebæk.

Congratulations to the following students for earning degrees from our programs in December 2024!

John Prusynski: PhD in Scandinavian Studies

Jack Robert Dodge: BS in Scandinavian Studies

Annika Kennerhed: Certificate in Scandinavian Studies

Alex Austin Kern: Certificate in the Languages and Cultures of Northern Europe



Visit from Silje Solheim Karlsen

By Ida Moen Johnson and Tom DuBois

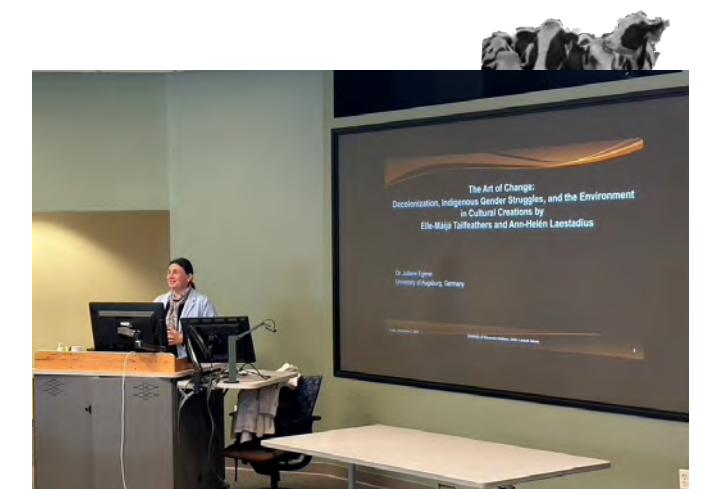
The Nordic Unit was pleased to welcome Professor Silje Solheim Karlsen to campus during the week of October 21. Silje is Professor of Nordic Literature in the Department of Teacher Education and Pedagogy at the University of Tromsø, Norway’s Arctic University, at the Alta campus. Her research expertise is in Sámi literature and culture and postcolonial studies in a northern/Nordic context. Professor Karlsen’s lecture on October 24, “With and Without Borders: Contemporary Fiction from Sápmi,” was attended by about 35 individuals. Her talk explored how fiction by Sámi authors published in the last fifteen years portrays complex relationships between Sámi and majority-culture individuals. Accompanied by Tom DuBois, Silje also traveled to the College of the Menominee Nation, in Keshena, Wisconsin, where she presented on the same topic to an appreciative audience of students and faculty.

Visit from Dr. Juliane Egerer

By Professor Tom Dubois

Juliane Egerer, a German Scandinavianist from the University of Augsburg, visited the UW on September 6, 2024 to present some of her recent research as part of the GNS+ Lectures program. The GNS+ Lectures are a series of lectures that are planned to appeal to at least two of the four units that combine to make up GNS+: German, Nordic, Slavic, and Folklore Studies. Dr. Egerer’s talk addressed the interests of both Scandinavianists and folklorists, and she also met with graduate students to discuss the challenges and rewards of an academic career within the German academic system.

Dr. Egerer’s well-attended lecture was entitled “The Art of Change: Decolonization, Indigenous Gender Struggles, and the Environment in Cultural Creations by Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and Ann-Helén Laestadius.” Dr. Egerer explored points of intersection between the films of the Blackfoot (Kanai)-Sámi Canadian filmmaker Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and the Sámi-Tornedalian Swedish author Ann-Helén Laestadius. Both artists engage in important ways in questions of environmental justice, gender, resource extraction, and



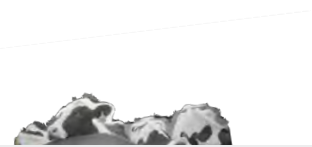
ongoing colonialism. Dr. Egerer presented their works as a blending of artistic practice and activism known as activism.

Dr. Egerer’s visit was an excellent way to sustain the Nordic section’s longstanding close relations with Scandinavianists in Germany and other parts of German-speaking Europe.

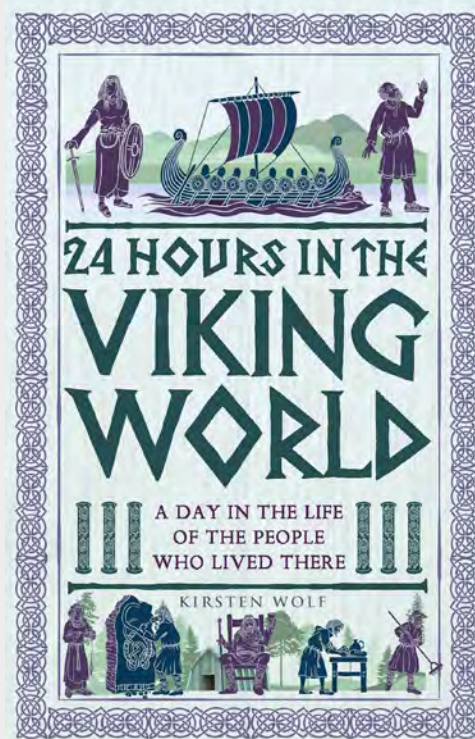
New Article On Sea Fiction to Appear in Edda

Building on the research from his 2022 book about the Norwegian author Nordahl Grieg (*The Making of an Antifascist*), Dean Krouk published an article in *Edda: Nordisk Tidsskrift for Litteraturforskning*. The title is “Steamship Disenchantment: Chronotopes of Sea Adventure in Nordahl Grieg’s *Skibet gaar videre*,” and it is about Grieg’s 1924 debut novel, which is known as *The Ships Sails On* in English. *Skibet gaar videre* was based on Grieg’s own experiences as a sailor aboard a merchant steamship called the “Henrik Ibsen” in 1920-1921. Krouk’s analysis of the novel builds on comparative literary studies such as Søren Frank’s *A Poetic History of the Oceans: Literature and Maritime Modernity* and Margaret Cohen’s *The Novel and the Sea*. He explains the novel’s “maritime world picture” (Frank) as a kind of disenchantment

connected to the steamship, while also arguing that it includes moments of re-enchantment that are connected to historical sailing vessels and sea animals. The article is structured around several typical chronotopes of nineteenth-century sea adventure narrative, which help to explain the young Grieg’s connections to the novel of the sea as a genre and as a way of representing maritime life.



24 Hours in the Viking World A Day in the Life of the People Who Lived There Kirsten Wolf



Spend 24 hours immersed in the rich and fascinating everyday lives of the Vikings.

Between the infamous Lindisfarne raid in 793 CE and the Norman conquest of 1066, the peoples we know now as the Vikings became one of the most far-ranging and influential civilizations in history. The Vikings are frequently portrayed as raiders, marauding across medieval Europe and Britain, but the culture and society of the medieval Nordic peoples was so much more diverse, multifaceted and influential than it is often depicted.

In *24 Hours in the Viking World*, author and Viking expert Kirsten Wolf chronicles an hour in the life of 24 individuals from every corner of Viking society over the course of a single day. From the warrior to the thrall, the shipbuilder to the farmer, the poet to the oracle, each chapter offers a snapshot of the world as it was in medieval Scandinavia, and an insight into how these people lived, loved, worked, fought and died.

The latest entry in the bestselling *24 Hours* series, *24 Hours in the Viking World* presents an absorbing, grounded and tangible look at what it was really like to be alive during this pivotal era in history.

Link to the publisher webpage: <https://www.mombooks.com/book/24-hours-in-the-viking-world/>

Fieldnotes

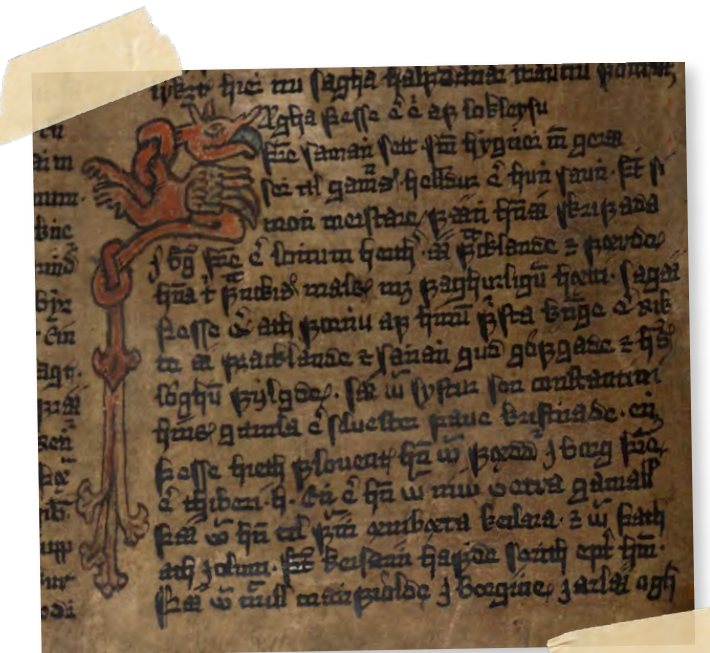
This piece is part of our ongoing “Field Notes” series, in which faculty, staff, and students report on their research.

Holly McArthur in Iceland

This year, with the support of the Leifur Eiriksson Foundation, I am spending some quality time with the manuscripts at Árni Magnússon collection and Landsbókasafn (the National Library) in Reykjavík. The actual manuscripts are an incredible mix from medieval parchment to late-nineteenth-century paper manuscripts. The youngest is Lbs 2784 8vo from 1888, which was copied by a Jón Jónsson from Einarshöfn–Eyrarbakka; the oldest is AM 152 fol., a fabulous two-column codex that even features some of Iceland’s rare decorated initials. I am spending this time with the manuscripts working towards my dissertation, a new critical edition of *Flóvents saga*. This is one of the sagas translated from Old French to Old Norse-Icelandic sometime in the late thirteenth or perhaps early fourteenth century. It is a fascinating account of the life of the first Christian king of France, made all the more interesting because of its factual errors. For example, the pagan Franks and Saxons prior to their conversion are portrayed as Muslim, worshiping the same gods we see in other medieval fiction narratives about the Middle East. My time in Reykjavík is also giving me plenty of opportunities to connect with Old Norse scholars from a number of fields at the University of Iceland. It has been a wonderful opportunity to discuss the theory behind the critical edition with a variety of scholars who are working on their own editions or who make frequent use of the edited texts to back their studies, lending a bit more immediacy to the work I have been doing here.



Holly with AM 152 folio.



AM 152 folio | 54v decorated initial.



Kara Oikarinen discusses a braided rug held by her mother, Lorri, during a conversation on stage with folklorist Marcus Cederström. Photo credit: Jason Schroeder.



Derek Brabender demonstrates pole lathe turning in action. Photo credit: Jason Schroeder.

FINNFEST 2024

By Marcus Cederström

This year FinnFest was again a gathering place for artists, scholars, politicians, and community members from the U.S. and Finland to experience Nordic, Sámi, and Native American culture in the region and beyond. Held at the end of July, about 2,000 people came together in Duluth for a weekend of Finnish American festivities. And, of course, folk art and music!

The Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project once again partnered with FinnFest, this time bringing six artists to Duluth. Through demonstrations and on-stage interviews, the artists shared their work and process with attendees. This year, we were lucky to work with some old friends—specifically artists who we had partnered with during our 2018 field school and our 2019 summer documentation like Alan Anderson, Taylor Johnson, Lorri Oikarinen, and Carole Spelić—and new friends like Kara Oikarinen and Derek Brabender.

Between the six of them, festival attendees were treated to acanthus carving, bowl turning, rag rug weaving, rya weaving, and spoon carving. In addition, each artist partnered with a folklorist to discuss their work, their approach to their respective art forms, and the importance of handmade things.

It wasn't all just woodworking and fiber arts though! This year, with a little help from the First Lutheran Church in Duluth, we also hosted a pulla baking workshop and showcase. On the first day of the festival, Professor Thomas DuBois and Beatrice

Ojakangas—celebrated cookbook author and TV cooking host (and also the person credited with inventing the pizza roll!)—gathered pulla bakers and community members in the basement of First Lutheran. Featuring discussion of Ojakangas' famous Finnish American cookbook and her personal history with baking, attendees even had the opportunity to sample her pulla. In addition, community members brought in their own pulla for sampling by attendees, which was a real treat. Tom and Beatrice were later joined by Hanna Snellman for a panel discussion on pulla baking as part of FinnFest's program.

It was another wonderful weekend in Duluth with new and old friends and an opportunity to export the Wisconsin Idea across the border to Minnesota.

As always, we want to thank everyone who helped out with this, including Marcus Cederström, Tom DuBois, Mirva Johnson, Jim Leary, and Jason Schroeder. Anna Rue and Erin Teksten were not with us in Duluth, but played an important role in making sure everything went smoothly.

Summer trip to Norwegian and Swedish sides of Sápmi with Ojibwe artists

By Marcus Cederström

We drove 1,633 miles. From June 9 until June 15, we drove 1,633 miles. From Oslo to Snåsa, from Snåsa to Hattfjelldal, from Hattfjelldal to Arvidsjaur in Sweden, from Arvidsjaur to Jokkmokk, Jokkmokk to Sundsvall, and then back to Oslo in Norway. As part of the 2024 Indigenous Cultural Capacity Building: Wisconsin-Sámi Collaborations trip to the Norwegian and Swedish sides of Sápmi, Marcus Cederström, Tom DuBois, and Anna Rue were joined by professor Tim Frandy from the University of British Columbia (UBC), artist and educator Mino-giizhig (Wayne Valliere) of the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe, as well as Valliere's apprentices, Michael Cisneros (Forest County Potawatami) and Spencer Smith (Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe). Together we drove those 1,633 miles as part of an ongoing effort to support and sustain relationships between artists, academics, and culture workers from Indigenous communities on both sides of the Atlantic.

Following a successful trip in 2023 with partners from the College of Menominee Nation that focused on language revitalization, this trip focused on cultural and artistic revitalization and sustainability. In Snåsa, for example, Valliere, Smith, and Cisneros taught students from a Sámi immersion school the traditional Ojibwe art of dreamcatchers as part of a partnership with Saemien Sijte - South Sámi museum ([there's a wonderful article about this from NRK!](#)). Valliere told the story of how the dreamcatcher came to be and the students were then helped by Valliere, his apprentices, and UW-Madison and UBC staff in creating their own. This workshop was followed by a two-day workshop with adults from the museum and community who learned how to carve a fish decoy. Still prevalent in Ojibwe fishing traditions, the

fish decoy was once also prevalent in Sámi communities, although colonizing efforts by the Norwegian state led to its eventual decline.

In addition to the workshops, we visited (or met with!) folks from, Nord University, Umeå University, Sijti Jarng - Center for sami language and culture, and Ájtte Museum. In Hattfjelldal we met with Josefina Skerk and Nils Johan Jacobsen from Sijti Jarng to better understand ongoing revitalization work, including their duodji/duedtie workshops. In Arvidsjaur, for example, we met with Krister Stoor from the Department of Language Studies/Sámi dutkan and the Várdduo-Centre för Sámi Research at Umeå University who, along with his own research, is also an accomplished performer of joik to learn more about the Sámi cultural and linguistic history of the area. The throughline was a desire for collaboration and a recognition of the difficult and important decolonization work that Indigenous artists and culture workers are undertaking in both the Nordic region and North America.

The thousands of miles traveled, the dozens of new connections, the meetings, the meals, the workshops were all part of a three-year Reilly-Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment Grant meant to supplement ongoing efforts to build connections, facilitate present and future research collaborations, and expand the Wisconsin Idea not just to the borders of the state, but well beyond. Those 1,633 miles did just that and took us well beyond the state of Wisconsin, connecting a diverse group of artists, academics, and culture workers through their shared interests and dedication to decolonization and revitalization efforts.

Spencer Smith looks on as Miino-giizhig (Wayne Valliere) explains the art of fish decoy carving at Saemien Sijte.

Michael Cisneros, Krister Stoor, and Miino-giizhig (Wayne Valliere) on a mountaintop near Arvidsjaur on the Swedish side of Sápmi.





OUR SHARED WATERS

Just a few weeks into the semester, students in Marcus Cederström’s First-Year Interest Group Cultures of Sustainability class found themselves braving the choppy waters of Lake Mendota in a dugout canoe built by Bill “Nąwqçekgize” Quackenbush, tribal historic preservation officer of the Ho-Chunk Nation, and others from Ho-Chunk Nation. Two days later, on Thursday, September 26, on a calm and sunny day, those same students had a chance to paddle around in the Ojibwe birchbark canoe built by Mino-giizhig (Wayne Valliere), which usually can be found on display in Four Lakes Market in DeJope Residence Hall.

As part of “Our Shared Waters: Heex Huu Hoik’oros & Wiigwaasi-Jiimaan/Ho-Chunk Cottonwood Dugout Canoe & Ojibwe Birchbark Canoe,” in collaboration with the Office of the Chancellor, the Office of the Provost, and Hoofers/Outdoor UW, students heard presentations by Quackenbush and Valliere, paddled the canoes, and made connections between the Indigenous communities in the area and the Nordic and Baltic region.

Students watched a video from the Soviet Era about Vepsian and Estonian dugout canoe making, connecting the techniques used by Quackenbush and those employed on the other side of the Atlantic. They also read a short piece, written in 1753 by Finnish Swede Anders Chydenius, titled, “Americanska Näfwerbåtar.” This 300-year-old piece used the notes and diaries of Pehr Kalm after his trip to North America between 1749 and 1751. Students noted, again, the similarities in canoe-building technique, this time stretching across hundreds of years to Valliere’s work, as well as the interesting intersections of culture and the environment. Chydenius, in writing “Americanska Näfwerbåtar” encouraged the Finnish people to take up the technique and begin building their own canoes using this technique. He was unsuccessful in his attempts, despite a short, but compelling case for the adoption of birchbark canoes.

Opportunities like this, high-impact practices as we call them here on campus, are central to so much of the work we do to ensure students are able to make concrete connections between the historical and contemporary issues we discuss in class and the historical and contemporary issues that continue to shape our world outside of class.

Above: Brian Bernal and Alexa Dowling paddle the dugout canoe with Bill Quackenbush. Photo credit: Marcus Cederström

Below: Tom DuBois, Brea Bierman, and Alexandra Holubowicz paddle the Ojibwe birchbark canoe with Michael Cisneros, apprentice to Wayne Valliere. Photo credit: Marcus Cederström



Kolrosing artist Liesl Chapman’s visit to UW Madison

By Svea Larson

On Thursday, October 10th, *kolrosing* artist Liesl Chapman visited UW-Madison. In addition to teaching *kolrosing* to Marcus Cederström and Anna Rue’s folklore classes, she presented on her recent trip to Scandinavia in search of *kolrosing* artifacts and artists to the Nordic department. On this trip, she traveled to Norway and Sweden to examine collections in museums and in communities. Many of these expeditions often started with a conversation with a community member who knew a current practitioner, who knew another, who knew another..... revealing a network of people who were interested in learning about and preserving the craft!



American Folklore Society Annual Meeting

By Mirva Johnson

The American Folklore Society Annual Meeting was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from November 6–10 and with a virtual meeting from November 18–19. The conference aimed, as the planning committee writes, to “bring together folklorists, culture bearers, communities, culture workers, and organizations in the struggle to build autonomy, commitment, and collaboration.”

UW-Madison was represented by faculty, graduate students, and alumni. A panel, “Public Folklore with Intention” was chaired by Marcus Cederström and included as speakers Thomas DuBois, Nate Gibson, Marcus Cederström, Anna Rue, Jason Schroeder, Chrissy Widmayer, and former postdocs Sallie Anna Pisera and Carrie Danielson.

In the forum, they discussed how “training in folklore foregrounds [their] public programming with the intent of community impact and potential transformation on terms defined by the communities.” The forum featured an engaging discussion of best practices in community engagement and troubleshooted common problems in relationship building and program development.

Other former department members Jim Leary and Tim Frandy were speakers in the forum, “Whatever happened to Laborlore?” This forum “considered the state of occupational folklife today, and the need for

renewed work in the subdiscipline in both public and academic contexts.”

One department graduate student, Ailie Westbrook, gave a presentation, “If she is not a virgin, she pisses herself”: Virginité Testing in Medieval Scandinavia.” This presentation examined the social construction of virginité in late medieval Sweden and Denmark revealed by tests of a woman’s virginité. Another graduate student, Mirva Johnson, gave a paper: “Koineization to Reallocation: Finnish American heritage in northern Wisconsin.” The presentation shared a piece of her dissertation research on processes of linguistic and cultural change in Finnish American communities of northern Wisconsin.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

By Marcus Cederström

On Saturday, September 28, Allen Centennial Garden hosted its annual Fall Harvest Festival, which included music, dance, student presentations, workshops, and a seed swap. The theme, Enchanted Ground, focused on the emotional connections we make with the natural world. This year, as in years past, Norden House and the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project helped organize a variety of events in collaboration with Allen Centennial Garden.

Students from Scott Mellor's class helped to decorate and raise a majstång, prepared and produced flower crowns, and then sang and danced around the maypole. Of course, dancing and singing around a maypole is traditionally done at midsummer in Sweden (as is creating a flower crown with seven different types of flowers that will eventually be put under your pillow in hopes that you will dream about the person you will marry) not in September. The Harvest Festival, though, provided a space to introduce the tradition to students who tend to not be on campus during midsummer while recognizing the deep connections that traditions like these have with the environment. Plus, sometimes pretending to be a frog while dancing around a big green pole is exactly what you need to do after a long week of classes.

In addition to singing and dancing, festival attendees had an opportunity to work with their hands. The Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project hosted Mary Erickson, a himmeli-maker from Mt. Iron, Minnesota. For four hours, over 100 people stopped by to watch, learn, and make their own himmeli. Himmeli, coming from the Swedish word himmel meaning sky or heaven, is a traditional straw ornament. Rye straw, brought together with thread to create geometric shapes, create beautiful mobiles or individual ornaments that, once hung from the ceiling, seem to be perpetually swaying, swinging, spinning, with the rhythms of a person's home.

Erickson is a master himmeli maker who studied with Elna Hietala in Minnesota and Eija Koski in Finland. Now a teacher herself, Mary recruited three students from Marcus Cederström's Cultures of Sustainability FIG class to learn the craft and serve as short-term apprentices. These students made their own himmeli, demonstrated the craft for others, and also helped

teach the scores of people who stopped by to chat with Mary.

Wrapping up a full day, the Scandinavian-American Old-time Dance Music Ensemble and 2022 Musician-in-Residence Beth Rotto both performed at the annual bowery dance bringing together students and community members for another night filled with schottisches, waltzes, and polkas.

Allen Centennial Garden is a gem on our campus and we are always so lucky and thankful for any and all opportunities to partner with Dr. Reba Luiken and Ryan Dostal at the Garden.

On a related note, if anyone is looking for common milkweed seeds, reach out to Marcus. He has too many.

Upper left: Students admire an almost-clad majstång before Dr. Scott Mellor taught a variety of songs and dances. Photo credit: Marcus Cederström

Upper right: FIG student Bella Wittwer learns the art of himmeli making from Mary Erickson. Photo credit: Marcus Cederström

Bottom: Dancers take to the floor as the Scandinavian-American Old-time Dance Music Ensemble pen the Bowery Dance. Photo credit: Marcus Cederström



Sámi Language Revitalization Brown Bag Lunch and Talk

By [Mirva Johnson](#)

On September 30, Annika Pasanen (Professor of Sámi Linguistics) and Rauni Äärelä-Vihriälä (Associate Professor of Pedagogy) from the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu, Norway, presented a brown bag lunch titled “Revitalization of Sámi Languages: Language Nests as an Example.” The talks were well-attended by students and staff from many programs across campus and sponsored by GNS+, The Language Institute, Enwejjig Indigenous Language Advocates, European Studies, and Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment. The talks focused on language revitalization of Inari Sámi language on the Finnish side of Sápmi as well as Indigenous pedagogy used in language nests. During their visit to Wisconsin, the researchers also traveled to the College of the Menominee Nation in Keshena, Wisconsin, attended the Shifting Seasons summit on sustainability, and arranged for conversations about language revitalization, immersion language pre-

schools, and the master-apprentice language program. This visit was part of a larger exchange between Indigenous artists, scholars, and teachers from Sápmi and the Menominee nations as part of Tom DuBois’ and Marcus Cederström’s “Indigenous Cultural Capacity Building: Wisconsin-Sámi Collaborations” project.

Project post-docs

Over the past two years we (and many of you!) were lucky to meet and work with Drs. Carrie Danielson and Sallie Anna Pisera. Part of the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project, the two worked as post-docs at the University beginning in 2022 (we featured both of their work in the [2024 Spring newsletter](#)). Working at the intersections of Scandinavian Studies and folklore and ethnomusicology, the two successfully hosted a variety of public programs, presented at conferences, and continued work on their respective monographs. And, they also each landed amazing jobs!

Today, Dr. Pisera is Museum Director at Sunnfjord Museum in Norway and Dr. Danielson is the Assistant Professor of Musicology and Les and Ruth Akers Endowed Chair in Community Music at Florida State University.

The two have been an important part of Nordic Studies on campus for these past two years, collaborating with folks across disciplines here in Madison, working with artists, community members, students, and

scholars, and helping to build lasting relationships with communities throughout the Upper Midwest. Their work takes the Wisconsin Idea to heart as they constantly found ways to make their research community-centered and community-driven. Congratulations to both and we look forward to continuing to support and collaborate with Carrie and Sallie Anna.

Interview with Scott Mellor, President of SASS



This interview was conducted by Ailie Westbrook. It has been edited for length and clarity.

What are some of the challenges facing SASS?

One of our challenges is ensuring people can afford to attend our conferences. We’ve made our best efforts to support people, for example by paying for a chunk of the graduate students’ hotel rooms, hoping that frees up some money for departments to support SASS attendance. We’re also trying to work on fundraising so that we can help both academic staff and continue to help graduate students with SASS funding. Besides UC-Berkeley, UW-Wisconsin, and the University of Wisconsin in Seattle, I think a lot of other departments have seen dwindling funds. We have to grow the money we have as an organization so that we can continue to support people are making the least. Otherwise we are not going to be a field.

The other problem is the lack of people learning languages in the United States. If we are going to have a diversity of voices in our field we have to do something or we’re going to only be drawing from the same three universities. There are a growing number of people who are interested in Scandinavian Studies but don’t have the language skills. So what do we do now about helping to augment the ability for people to learn the language, probably after college? We now have a new fund to help fund students who are interested in the language but who don’t have the opportunity.

Do you think being academic staff rather than a tenured faculty member has affected your experience as President?

Fun fact, I’m the first one. I think it would be really difficult if I didn’t have the support of my department. I don’t really see people treating me differently, which I think speaks well for our field. I think in general, my experience is not that terribly different than tenured faculty.

What has your experience been meeting with other presidents of organizations like SASS?

Attending the ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) was very interesting. The majority of attendees were from larger fields like English and History. Still, it is very beneficial for us to go there, be seen, and talk to people. It gave me the opportunity to talk to Peter Baldwin, who has been a donor to Scandinavian studies on several occasions. He is in History and has given some money to other components of ACLS. So there are networking opportunities. There are also some ideas that we can see that the bigger groups have been doing and thinking about.

One idea that people were bringing up at this last meeting was service or community oriented dissertations and how if you’re going to embed yourself into a community, how that can take an awfully long time. Both to gain the trust of the community, and also for you to understand what’s going on in the community. Our institutions dictate that in order to get your dissertation done it has to be done in a 5 year period, and that can be a problem for certain kinds of dissertations which are doing really good work.

I also thought about how the time limit drives us to a certain type of dissertation. I grab this book and I sit by myself and I read what other people have said. What kind of benefit to the world are we creating when we do that? I think there’s a value in that, and I do not want to discount that kind of a dissertation, but I think the problem is that we don’t really have a space for the community-based dissertation either.

That brings us all the way back to the conversation about language learning. What about embedding people into language communities, which then creates a different

kind of dissertation? Should that be something that as a field we ought to be considering? I'm not sure that we always are. In Folklore Studies, we do think about that a little bit. We understand the need for gaining the trust of the communities that we're working. It's a two-way street. But maybe, in order to be a good Ibsen scholar, you need to embed yourself in Norway to understand how the Norwegians understand Ibsen.

How do you think that SASS as an organization could make space for that sort of dissertation?

Sometimes it comes back to tradition, and sometimes some traditions need to be tested or changed. But a lot of the issues come down to money. We finance graduate students to do their dissertations in 4 years, largely because we can't afford to fund longer than that. So if I'm going to think big for our society, it would be to increase the amount of money that we have that we can offer up to learn the languages, and take more time to do dissertations that need more time. I think that there are few who would conceptually be opposed.

How do you think the field has changed post-pandemic?

I think that one thing that changed across the board in academia was people became too comfortable with Zoom. I think there is absolutely a place for Zoom. But I think that after the pandemic, people started thinking, well, why do I need to actually get on a plane and go to a conference? Of course, keeping down your carbon footprint is an important component of this. On the other hand, I think that the coffee conversations that happen at SASS are valuable. Face to face builds community in a way that Zoom doesn't.

I think people nevertheless got used to online conferences, and so SASS ended up with a numbers problem, which we're still trying to recover from. People didn't come to the conferences and they let their memberships lapse. I'd like to live in a world that wasn't quite so money-obsessed, but when the membership drops, then the money drops, then other things drop. I think that's one of the biggest challenges that SASS has had, trying to get people back to the conference for that personal connection.

How do you think conferences should balance the need for that personal connection with the accessibility of hybrid or online conferences? For example for parents?

That is partially a structural issue in the United States, due to a lack of affordable childcare. I don't know if people want to bring children to SASS, but I don't see why they should not be able to. People used to do more of that. Maybe we should think about a childcare center while the conference is going on.

More broadly, it is a question of figuring out what makes sense to do online and what makes sense to do in person. From the logistical point of view, one of the reasons we're not doing hybrid conferences is because it's incredibly expensive and logistically very difficult. We thought after we had the online conference that it would be straightforward to run a hybrid conference. But it doesn't work that way.

Do you think there is a generational shift with how people are treating SASS as an organization and what they are looking for from it?

There are all kinds of things that have changed. There are benefits that I worked for that I didn't get, but I'm glad current graduate students have gotten. It is still ridiculous how little people are making and I think that part of the problem with graduate students is there's an emphasis on the student part and not the professional part. What other job does somebody say, "you're going to work 30% of the time and learn the field 70% of the time, but we're only going to pay you for that 30%." I don't know many jobs where that's the way that works. Oh and by the way, we're also going to stretch out apprenticeships for 6 to 8 years. Some of the generational shifts are those kinds of shifts, things that are just available, possibilities that exist now.

But another shift, which I'm not sure is good, is the shift to breadth instead of depth. It puts a huge strain on people to have to be responsible for everything. You never manage to get into that in depth moment of the thing that you know.

One of the reasons I think Scandinavian Studies is losing ground in terms of membership is the proliferation of society memberships. Being in not just 1 or 2 but 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 societies. It gets overwhelming and expensive and you have to drop one. And ours might be the one you drop. The amount of devotion to Scandinavian Studies, I think, dwindled because of the proliferation of societies.

Interview with alumnus of the program, Charles Frary



The interview below, conducted via email in September of 2024 by Ida Moen Johnson, gives one alumnus's perspective on the value of a degree in Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison.

Tell a bit about yourself. Where do you live and what kind of work do you do?

My name is Charles Edward Frary, and I am a physician that currently lives in Copenhagen, Denmark. I've lived in Denmark for the past 25 years. After I received my bachelor's with honors from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Scandinavian Studies, I applied to and got accepted to the University of Southern Denmark medical school.

I am currently in the process of purchasing my own private practice in the Østerbro neighborhood of Copenhagen. I am also currently in the process of defending my PhD thesis, which I submitted last month.

You majored in Scandinavian Studies at UW-Madison, earning your degree in 2001. Why did you choose to major in Scandinavian Studies, and how does it connect to your life today?

I originally chose to major in Scandinavian Studies my sophomore year of my undergraduate studies due to the fact that I already was able to speak Danish after I had lived in Denmark as an exchange student in 1997 and 1998 via Rotary and due to the fact that I could go on exchange again in Denmark my junior year. I was actually able to finish my bachelor's degree in three years, with only two years in Madison and the final year abroad in Copenhagen. I started in the fall of 1999 and graduated in the spring of 2001.

I would not be where I am today without the education and the opportunities that I got at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Faculty of Scandinavian Studies.

You wrote a senior thesis, "The Clashing of Swords and the Mingling of Blood: A Comparative Analysis of Celtic and Nordic Anthropology and Mythology," with Professor Tom Dubois as your advisor. What was the main argument of your thesis, and what was it like working with Tom?

I wrote my honors thesis under Professor Dubois. Now I cannot recall the actual details of the thesis. In fact, it only exists on a floppy disk somewhere in my records. From what I recall, the main argument of my thesis was that the relationship between Celtic and Nordic mythology was more or less based on the idea that they were of similar origins but in different "cycles." I was trying to compare Celtic and Nordic mythology and support an argument for similar origins.

Professor DuBois was a joy to work under. Tom is not only a wonderful person, but he is deeply passionate and knowledgeable in his field. I had not corresponded with him in over 25 years. I heard him on BBC4's "In Our Time," which I listen to quite frequently, and I was very surprised to hear his voice. The very next day, I wrote to him to congratulate him. I really enjoyed the program, and I was surprised that he actually could remember me years later and that his email was still the same.

Favorite Nordic Paintings



Ida Moen Johnson

My favorite Nordic painting is *Vinternatt i Rondane (Winter Night in the Mountains)* by Harald Sohlberg, 1914. The painting features large, snow-covered mountains in a dark blue night sky, with leafless trees in the foreground. On the one hand, the painting evokes the National Romantic obsession with grand Norwegian landscapes. On the other hand, the black trees in the foreground seem gnarled, lifeless, and eerie. For me, the soft white mountains and ocean-like sky are vast and inviting, while the shriveled trees and branches remind me of life's more immediate obstacles.



Dean Krouk

Revebjeller (Foxgloves) by Nikolai Astrup, 1920

Revebjeller (Foxgloves, 1920, oil on canvas). Nikolai Astrup (1880-1928) is an artist known for vibrant and magical paintings of the customs and landscapes of western Norway. When I saw a large exhibition of his work in Bergen in 2019, this painting was one of my favorites.



Thomas Dubois

Hugo Simberg (1873-1917) made this painting in 1903. Entitled *Haavoittanut enkeli (Wounded Angel)*, it is probably his most famous work. It is displayed at Ateneum, the gallery across from the main train station in Helsinki which, like the Chicago Art Institute, was meant to provide artists with examples of great paintings so that they would not need to travel to France or Italy in order to become painters. When I first saw the painting as a student back in the 1980s I burst out laughing. To me, it captures the Finnish penchant for humanity and pathos. But the French filmmaker Jean Michel Roux made a documentary about it in 2017, asking Finns of different ages and backgrounds just exactly they think it means. His finding: sort of like the Mona Lisa, it leaves the viewer wondering what it is all about, what has happened, and what will happen next.



Erica Li

Skogsinteriør (Wooded Landscape) by Hans Gude, no year

This painting depicts a vast forest. The lush greenery, combined with the subtle interplay of light and shadow, creates a sense of mystery and tranquility. It draws me in, and reminds me of my first time passing by the forest in Norway.



Berit Skogen

Kyss (The Kiss) by Edvard Munch, 1892

I chose *Kyss* because I saw it for the first time ever in person at Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo and it really drew me into the scene. The color usage and ambiguity of the figures results in a desire to look closer and I find it captivating.



Joanna Schuth

Støvkornenes dans i solstrålerne eller Solstråler (Dust Motes Dancing in the Sunbeams or Sunbeams) by Vilhelm Hammershøi, 1900

You can almost hear the silence in the painting; the still air and drifting dust mute any sound that might come in from the outside. Your eye is drawn to the door; is someone about to come through? Or will the sunbeams creep along the floor, undisturbed until the light fades?



Susan Brantly

Girl with Sunflowers, Michael Ancher, 1889

Michael Ancher has been a focus of some of my recent research on the intersection of art and literature in the 1880s. Although his fishermen have been of greatest interest, I have a soft spot for sunflowers, which remind me of my mother (who was from Kansas, the Sunflower State). The sunflower was a favorite of Oscar Wilde and the fin de siècle, not to mention the famous iterations of the flower in the work of Vincent van Gogh.



Kirsten Wolf

Fra Jejsing Bjerg (From Jejsing Bjerg) by Ernst Tranekjer, 1990

Ernst Tranekjer was an artist in a small village, Jejsing, on the border of Denmark / Germany in South Jutland, where I grew up. In terms of his paintings, he was inspired by Emil Nolde. I got to know Tranekjer when I was a child. When I got married, my parents bought my husband and me one of his paintings as a wedding present. It is in charcoal and depicts the marshes near the North Sea in South Jutland — a tranquil place and one of my most cherished places in the world. It was painted in 1990.



Drew Swasey

Vädersolstavlan is a painting of firsts: it is arguably the first depiction of Stockholm in color, the oldest Swedish landscape painting, and the oldest depiction of solar sun dogs. The work is praised for its accurate depiction of the halos' brightness and its realistic orientation to Stockholm's landscape, but its history is also well known for its depiction of an atmospheric phenomenon that was interpreted so differently by various people. This duality between interpretation and reality, as well as the painting's position as a precipice of change in Sweden, is what endears me to *Vädersolstavlan*.

Faculty and Staff Updates



Claus Elholm Andersen

Claus Elholm Andersen, who teaches a large course on Hans Christian Andersen every year, and who will be a visiting fellow at the Hans Christian Andersen Center in Odense, Denmark, during his sabbatical this spring, is finishing a book on Andersen's early fairytales. He has recently edited an anthology on the reception of Hans Christian Andersen from the 1840s to the present that is scheduled to come out in the beginning of 2025. His book, *Knausgård and the Autofictional Novel*, on the Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgård and his 6-volume autobiographical novel *My Struggle*, will be published by SUNY Press in December. He also got tenure and was promoted to associate professor. Currently, he writes a weekly column for the Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten.



Susan Brantly

Susan Brantly continues to enjoy her research into art and literature and was happy to see two articles appear in the past year that speak to long-held interests: "Carina Karlsson's *Märket* as 'Glocal' Literature" and "P.C. Jersild's *Ypsilon* (2012): Postmodernism, Metafiction, and Social Purpose." She had fun being interviewed by scholars at Harvard who are producing a documentary on Karen Blixen in the U.S. Although she did not make it to Scandinavia this past year, she did check Australia off her bucket list. This academic year is Brantly's last year as the Faculty Director of the Bradley Learning Community, a position she has held for 17 years.



Marcus Cederström

Marcus Cederström continues his work with the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project. This past year has included a weeklong tour and a series of workshops on fish decoys and dream catchers in Sápmi with colleagues from Lac du Flambeau Public School; trips around the Upper Midwest for festivals, presentations, and exhibitions; and a week of Ho-Chunk dugout canoes and Ojibwe birchbark canoes as part of the Our Shared Waters symposium here on campus. And, of course, there were plenty of public programs with dances, concerts, and even a little bit of kolrosing and himmeli-making for students and community members!



Tom DuBois

In 2024, Tom finished work on an introduction to Nordic folklore. In March, he introduced the *Kalevala* in the BBC radio program "In Our Time." At FinnFest in Duluth, Minnesota, he interviewed Finnish-American cookbook author Beatrice Ojakangas. Together with Marcus Cederström and Anna Rue, he led a group of Anishinaabe artists to teach workshops at the Saemien Sijte South Sámi Museum in Snåsa, Norway. In September, he helped organize a series of events on our campus entitled "Our Shared Waters," celebrating Indigenous watercrafts of Wisconsin. The picture is from fieldwork in northern Norway, where mosquitoes abound.



Helen Durst

Helen Durst has been the Danish lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since fall 2022. Helen is also a PhD Candidate in Scandinavian languages and literature (with an emphasis in Danish) at the University of Washington. Helen holds an MA in Slavic Studies and Russian from University of Arizona (2020), teaching certificate in Mathematics from Calvin College, and a BA in Russian from University of Iowa. Helen taught mathematics at Grandville High School for 16 years before returning to Academia. She is currently working on her dissertation *Under the Umbrella: Intertextuality and Materiality in Tove Ditlevsen's Works* on 20th century Danish writer Tove Ditlevsen, author of *The Copenhagen Trilogy*.



Rebecca Forbes Wank

Rebecca is the financial specialist in the department. She also handles reimbursements and grants for the department and the funds at the Foundation. Outside of work, she and her husband are bird paparazzi (his words), and she plays the mandolin (and sometimes fiddle) in a contra dance band.



Ida Moen Johnson

Ida is happy to be in her fourth year as the Lecturer in Norwegian. In addition to teaching two Norwegian language courses each semester, she enjoys teaching courses on The Nordic Child and Humans and Other Animals in Nordic Literature and Film. I'm also happy to be part of the Nordic Undergraduate Committee, which works to enhance our undergraduate curriculum and student engagement. Outside of work, she loves taking walks, making meals, and spending time with her partner and young daughter.



Dean Krouk

Dean continues in his enjoyable roles as Associate Chair in GNS+, editor of the journal *Scandinavian Studies*, and Director of Graduate Studies in the Scandinavian Studies program. His teaching and advising continues, with a focus on Norwegian literature and Nordic history since 1815. Research activity fills up the remaining available time. A new article about Nordahl Grieg's 1924 *Skibet gaar videre* as a disenchanting sea adventure novel will appear in *Edda* (issue four of 2024). In September, Dean gave a talk about Grieg and transnational anti-fascism in the late 1930s at a wonderful small conference in Lillehammer.



Mark Mears

Mark Mears is the Graduate Coordinator for German, Nordic, and Slavic+ since it formed in 2016. Prior to that he was the Graduate Coordinator for the German Department and has worked at UW-Madison for over 30 years. He is the first contact for all graduate student admissions, and he assists current graduate students with navigating both Department and Graduate School policies and procedures from their initial recruitment to their final graduation. He is also the Curricular Representative for GNS+ and responsible for posting course offerings to the University's Catalog of Courses each term and for classroom scheduling. In his leisure time Mark enjoys hiking, pickleball, and camping, with family and friends.



Scott Mellor

Scott Mellor continues his work with the International Learning Community as the faculty director of the Norden Language floor and the Bradley Learning Community for first-year students. Scott is the president of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study. He is co-editor of a volume on Finland-Swedish culture, which comes out at the beginning of next year. He has also written a chapter in a book on Oral Theory in medieval Scandinavia that will appear later this year. Scott continues to teach a First-year Interest Group on the medieval Sagas and use games and gaming to explore images of the medieval Nordic countries in pop culture, and is also re-starting a summer study abroad to Stockholm and the Baltic for in-coming first-years in 2024 for the Summer Launch Program.



Todd Michelson-Ambelang

Todd Michelson-Ambelang keeps himself busy with work in the library, ordering materials, teaching classes on library research, and meeting with various guests, students, faculty and staff. He continues to research—albeit slowly—in areas of interest, especially in decolonizing collections, accessibility, and disability studies in Medieval Nordic Literature. He also continues to teach a small portion of Scandinavian Studies 401, every Spring, as well as teaching about libraries, librarianship, and archives to interns at an oral history archive. Last summer, Todd went to Denmark, the Netherlands, and Turkey. It was a fantastic trip, and his first one without work obligations.



Benjamin Mier-Cruz

Benjamin Mier-Cruz is Assistant Professor of Scandinavian Studies and Gender and Women's Studies. Their research interests are modern Nordic literature and film with a focus on writers and filmmakers of color and intersectional representations of gender, sexuality, and race. Benjamin's current book project explores contemporary representations of non-whiteness in Swedish visual culture. They have recently written "Edith Södergran's Genderqueer Modernism," "Swedish Racial Innocence on Film: To be Young, Queer and Black in Swedish Documentary Filmmaking," and the co-authored "Dracula or Draculitz? Translational Forgery and Bram Stoker's 'Lost Version' of *Dracula*."



Liina-Ly Roos

Liina-Ly Roos continued to work on her book, *The Not-Quite Child: Colonial Histories, Racialization, and Swedish Exceptionalism*, during most of 2024. Her book is forthcoming with University of Washington Press in 2025! She has also been excited to teach classes like "Sexual Politics in Scandinavia" and "Nordic Television," and has enjoyed getting to know students learning Swedish at UW-Madison. Now, Liina-Ly continues to work on new research projects that address entangled colonial memories and discourses of health in Northern European cultures. She, her husband, and their dog, Tui, took a fun and beautiful road trip to Seattle, Washington in May.



Nick Schultz

Nick Schultz joined GNS+ in October of 2022 as the new Department Administrator. Nick has lived in Madison since 2005 during his undergrad years, and until recently was a supervisor for the UW Survey Center. He's been having a great time getting to know faculty and staff in German, Nordic & Slavic, and looks forward to a new year with more experience under his belt. When not working Nick enjoys spending time with his wife and two children on Madison's west side, camping, hiking, and simply staying afloat in a house with two rambunctious boys. Depending on the season, for personal leisure time he enjoys playing ultimate frisbee (poorly), basketball (even more poorly) and volleyball (slightly less poorly). When Wisconsin weather isn't cooperative board games and video games can help scratch that competitive itch. Board game night anyone?



Joanna Schuth

Joanna Schuth is the undergraduate advisor for the Scandinavian Studies major and certificate. She has been with GNS+ since 2019 and is the point of contact for all students in the department's twelve undergrad majors and certificates. When not at work she lives with her husband, daughter, and two cats on the East Side of Madison, where she foists classical music on her kid, dreams of summer, and invariably overplants her garden.



Jenna Sorensen

Jenna Sorensen is the Media Designer for GNS+, joining the department in July of 2022. She creates promotional materials for courses and events, maintains the GNS+ website, manages the GNS+ social media accounts, and designs the departmental newsletters. Outside of work, she enjoys listening to music, watching movies, reading, drawing, and finding interesting things to do in the Midwest with her partner, Sean.



Kirsten Wolf

Kirsten Wolf continues as head of the Nordic Unit and chair of the Department of Art History. She spent most of the summer proofreading forthcoming books and working on a paper / article on "Manuscripts and Scriptoria in Medieval Iceland" commissioned by Professor Dario Bullitta for inclusion in a forthcoming edited volume. She did, however, realize that it was time for a much-needed vacation, so in July she and her son went to London for eight days and did a lot of touristy stuff -- from visiting Buckingham Palace to experiencing the London Eye. For Kirsten, it was nice to be back in London to visit old haunts (she did her graduate work at University College London), but she does not recommend going to a big European city in July. It was so, so crowded with tourists.

Graduate Student Updates



Emily Beyer

Emily Beyer is a PhD student with a Medieval Studies Minor. She is looking ahead to her exams and is excited to begin her dissertation project in Old Norse Studies. She is also looking forward to a forthcoming article in the *Journal for Scandinavian-Canadian Studies* that she co-authored with Prof. Wolf.



Nico Borbely

Nico is a Scandinavian Studies graduate student and Icelandic T.A. from Ann Arbor, Michigan and Viadana, Italy. He is an alumnus of Beloit College, where he completed a B.A. in Russian, and the University of Iceland, where he completed a B.A. in Icelandic as a Second Language.



Rachel Bott

Rachel is a PhD Candidate focusing on the use of folklore in Swedish Traditional Ballads. This summer she participated in a course in Tórshavn, and she is currently researching in Sweden for the academic year.



Elliott Brandsma

Elliott Brandsma is a Ph.D. Candidate in Scandinavian Literature, with minors in Global Studies and Political Science. He specializes in the development of Nordic literary modernism, focusing primarily on twentieth-century Swedish, Icelandic and Finnish literature. He has spent the past year and a half in Stockholm, Sweden, conducting research for his dissertation.



Shawn Hansen

Shawn is a second-year MA/PhD student on the Folklore track. His academic interests include mythology, folktales, religious studies, sacred places, theatre and film. He is currently in his second semester of being a teaching assistant for Folklore 100.



Mirva Johnson

Mirva Johnson is a PhD Candidate on the Folklore track. She has spent this past year teaching elementary Finnish at UW-Madison. Her dissertation examines linguistic and cultural change in Finnish American communities in northern Wisconsin and Minnesota.



Svea Larson

Svea Larson is a PhD candidate on the folklore track. Her research focuses on Swedish-American cookbooks and domestic culture in the early twentieth century. When not working on her dissertation, she can be found looking at old things, cooking, and running crafting activities in the Work In Progress Lab at the Center for Design and Material Culture.



Erica Li

Erica Li is a second-year PhD student in Scandinavian Studies. Her research interests include nineteenth-century Scandinavian literature, Norwegian history, reception studies, nationalism and national identity.



Holly McArthur

Holly McArthur is a PhD candidate working on a critical edition of Flóvent's saga. She is a 2024–2025 Leifur Eiríksson fellow, working with manuscripts at the National Library of Iceland and the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík and thinking about accessibility in text-editing.



Laura Moquin

Laura is a PhD candidate writing her dissertation on Norwegian-influenced linguistic contact phenomena in varieties of regional American English, the trajectory of those features over time, and the relationship of those features to contemporary regional and heritage identity.



John Prusynski

John Prusynski is currently writing a dissertation that focuses on the theme of travel in works by Sámi authors such as Jalvvi Niillas Holmberg, Inger-Mari Aikio, and Kirste Paltto. He is also a lecturer at UC, Berkeley, where he teaches Norwegian language and contemporary Nordic literature.



Berit Skogen

Berit is a first year MA/PhD student pursuing the literary and cultural studies track. Her main language is Norwegian and is currently interested in studying issues of cultural racism and applications of eco-criticism in the Norwegian context. A fond memory she has of Norway is running with a friend to the Tromsø airport (in the dark) (with a headlamp) (and luggage) after missing the bus.



Drew Swasey

Drew is a first-year MA/PhD student on the literary and cultural studies track. Her current research interests include cognitive literary studies, genre studies, and representations of hospitality in the Middle Ages. She looks forward to continuing her exploration of these fields of study within a Scandinavian lens.



Cait Vitale-Sullivan

Cait Vitale-Sullivan is intrigued by the human connection to nature, art, and music, and the different methods that teachers and tradition bearers use to engage their communities. She has studied music in Norway and Sweden, focusing on Kulning and Hardingfele. She enjoys rock climbing, swimming in cold water, skiing, and baking treats.



Ailie Westbrook

Ailie Westbrook is a PhD candidate writing the final chapter of her dissertation on reproductive health in medieval Scandinavia. She also works as an editorial assistant for the Journal *Scandinavian Studies*.



Benjamin Wilson

Benjamin earned his MA from the department in May, and is currently a PhD candidate on the philology track. His studies focus on Scandinavian history, culture, and politics, with a focus on the Medieval period and sagas.



Richelle Wilson

Richelle Wilson is a PhD candidate writing a dissertation about IKEA in literature and culture. She works full-time as a producer at Wisconsin Public Radio.

Cow Sticker Locations

- Pg. 7, above the picture of Juliane Egerer***
- Pg. 8, above the box for "24 Hours in the Viking World"***
- Pg. 15, in the center of the 3 pictures***
- Pg. 20, behind Dean Krouk's favorite painting***
- Pg. 31, behind Cait Vitale-Sullivan's picture***

Support Scandinavian Studies

Our sincere thanks to the many alumni and friends who have generously supported Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Private gifts are increasingly critical to ensuring that we maintain our stature as one of the nation’s best Scandinavian Studies programs. Your donations help us attract top faculty and graduate students, support our amazing undergraduate majors, and host a stimulating series of lectures, symposia, and other scholarly activities. Gifts of any size are most welcome and gratefully received. There are several options if you’d like to donate.

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Scandinavian Studies Newsletter Committee

Ida Moen Johnson
Ailie Westbrook
Svea Larson
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Be sure to check out gns.wisc.edu/gns-newsletters
for past newsletters and our upcoming issues.

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