



Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic+

Scandinavian Studies Newsletter

Fall 2023

Volume xxvii, Issue 1





Greetings from the Program Chair

Season's greetings and happy holidays to our friends, alumni, and donors from students, staff, and faculty in Scandinavian Studies!

As always, we are very busy—so busy that it has been impossible to find room for all of our news and endeavors in this newsletter. What we offer is just a sampling of our many activities and hard work, on top of teaching, research, and committee work. In this newsletter you can read about a group trip to IKEA, a visit and lecture from Icelandic scholars, and various events sponsored by the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures. This newsletter also features a new section called “Field Notes,” in which you can expect to read updates on research from faculty and graduate students.

I'm happy to announce that three new graduate students joined us this year: Shawn Hansen, Erica Li, and Cody King. You will find their profiles in this newsletter along with those of other graduate students as well as, of course, faculty, and staff members.

We hope that this newsletter provides you with good and interesting reading material over the holiday season.

- Program Chair, Kirsten Wolf

Photo credits

Cover photo: With Van Hise Hall blurred in the distance, a fall colored leaf is pictured near Observatory Drive during autumn at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on Oct. 22, 2021. (Photo by Brian Huynh / UW-Madison)

Above: A street lamp glows with light as snow begins to fall on Bascom Hill at the University of Wisconsin-Madison during a winter dawn on Dec. 11, 2021. In the background is Bascom Hall with graphic banner panels of UW-Madison mascot Bucky Badger hanging between the building's columns. (Photo by Jeff Miller / UW-Madison)

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gns.wisc.edu/gns-newsletters*

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There seem to be a number of Tomtes on the loose in the newsletter! Maybe we haven't been feeding them their porridge? See if you can spot them all - the answer can be found on page 20!



Pictured above: Staff and students of the College of the Menominee Nation, along with Marcus Cederström, heading toward the Sámediggi/Sámi Parliament building, Karašjohka/Karasjok, Norway. Photo by Tom DuBois

Indigenous Capacity-Building

by Tom DuBois

In May 2023, faculty from the Nordic unit and the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures (CSUMC) facilitated the visit of staff and students from the College of the Menominee Nation (CMN) to Sámi institutions in Norway. Tom DuBois, Marcus Cederström, and Anna Rue accompanied seven CMN representatives on a journey that included the Saemien Sijte/South Sámi Museum and Cultural Center in Snåsa, in the heart of the South Sámi area, and sites and institutions in the North Sámi area, including the Sámediggi/Sámi Parliament in Karašjohka/Karasjok and the Sámi allaskuvla/Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino. The purpose of the visit was to help Wisconsin Indigenous educators and students learn about and make contact with counterparts in Sápmi. The visit has already resulted in a return trip of several Sámi scholars to Madison and Keshena, and further exchanges are in the works. With strong research expertise in Sámi studies and close relations with Wisconsin tribal communities, the Nordic unit and CSUMC are uniquely equipped to promote these important linkages.

2023 Folk Artist-in-Residence Liesl Chatman

By Thomas Harb

Thomas Harb is a junior majoring in linguistics and anthropology, with a certificate in folklore. He is the documenter for the Fall 2023 Artist-in-Residency at the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures.

This year's Folk Artist-in-Residence at the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, Liesl Chatman, has been involved in various events on campus to share her art of making wooden spoons. She has been leading weekly spoon carving workshops as the main component of her residence, in which students are learning how to make their own wooden spoons from start to finish. Students started with a simple block of wood at the beginning of the semester, and after weeks of axing and carving, they are currently fleshing out the final form of their spoons. In the final weeks of the semester, they will do kolrosing, which is a decorative carving tradition from northern Europe in which a design is carved into wood with a fine blade, then treated and stained so it contrasts against the lighter wood.

Outside of these workshops, Liesl has been involved in various events on campus to share her art of spoon-carving and kolrosing. She held an event at the Bradley Learning Community in which she talked about her

own background and her approaches to spoon carving and kolrosing and showed some of her collection of kolrosed spoons. The small and intimate meeting on the floor in the lobby of Bradley Hall culminated with a kolrosing demonstration and mini-workshop. Participants were given a popsicle stick and a kolrosing knife and carved their own designs, staining them with Liesl's preferred mediums: walnut oil and cinnamon.

Liesl has also discussed her artistry at various workshops, including the Midwest Folklorists and Cultural Workers Alliance and the "Sustainability, Art, and Education" panel of the Education and Sustainability in the Upper Midwest and Beyond: (Im)migration and Indigeneity Symposium. We look forward to the interesting events we have planned for the future. Be sure to follow along for more news and events at folklife.wisc.edu.

Pictured below: Liesl Chatman leading a spoon carving workshop at the Bradley Learning Community on 9/26/23.



An Autumn Afternoon with N.F.S. Grundtvig

by Shawn Hansen

On the afternoon of October 17, 2023, an audience of scholars, students, and Madison community members gathered at Van Hise Hall to listen to a lecture about the 19th-century Danish author, pastor, educator and historian N.F.S. Grundtvig. The lecture—titled “Denmark’s Catalyst: The Life and Letters of N.F.S. Grundtvig”—was given by Edward Broadbridge, a London-born author who has lived in Denmark since 1967. Fascinated by Grundtvig’s life and ideas, Broadbridge has translated five volumes of Grundtvig’s works into English, as well as published a recent illustrated biography.

Throughout his hour-long lecture, Broadbridge delivered an impassioned overview of Grundtvig’s life and career. Broadbridge touched on some of Grundtvig’s most influential ideas and contributions, including: his development of the “folk high school” concept, advancement of theories about popular education and lifelong learning, and writing or translating around 1500 hymns over the course of his life.

Symposium on (Im)migration and Indigeneity

By Marcus Cederstrom

In early October, the Nordic Folklife project organized the Education and Sustainability in the Upper Midwest and Beyond: (Im)migration and Indigeneity symposium. The symposium hosted artists, culture workers, musicians, and scholars from around the Upper Midwest as well as three scholars, Elisabeth Utsi Gaup, Máret Hætta, and Anne Lindblom, from Sámi allaskuvla [Sámi University of Applied Sciences]. Activities and presentations focused on ways in which sustainability (cultural, linguistic, environmental, etc.) can be integrated into educational settings and how support for various forms of sustainability can be cultivated and encouraged in local communities among people of all ages. Rather than sit inside on a beautiful fall day, we spent our first day outside. We wandered

along the shore of Lake Wingra hearing from teachers, scientists, and folklorists. We met with Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Bill Quackenbush on campus at the new Ho-Chunk Clan Circle. We toured Allen Centennial Garden. All the while, we talked and questioned and learned from and with each other. Day two began with the UW–Madison First Nations Cultural Landscape Tour and ended with presentations by our Sámi guests. By combining formal presentations with outdoor activities, we were able to experience first-hand how both academic and community-based professionals here in the Upper Midwest and in Sápmi are approaching the challenges of making education local, culturally responsive, and meaningful.

Pictured below: Máret Hætta and Elisabeth Utsi Gaup from Sámi allaskuvla exchange gifts with Ho-Chunk Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Bill Quackenbush at the Ho-Chunk Clan Circle. Photo credit: Carrie Danielson.





Pictured above: Three amigos: Birna, Kirsten, and Úlfar. Photo courtesy by Holly McArthur.

Icelandic Heritage in North America: A New Book and Lecture

By Kirsten Wolf

On October 10, Professors Úlfar Bragason and Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir of the University of Iceland gave well-attended lectures on the Icelandic Heritage in North America. The title of their lectures is also the title of their newly published book, an anthology of articles, which they co-edited in collaboration with Höskuldur Áráinsson. The book was published by the University of Manitoba Press in the spring of 2023.

Following a brief presentation of the book, Birna presented the major findings of the interdisciplinary Icelandic Heritage in North America Project, a three-year study involving over two hundred participants from Manitoba and North Dakota to the Pacific West Coast. The study reveals the durability of the Icelandic language and culture in North America. Birna's lecture focused specifically on linguistic developments of North American Icelandic and how community and family language policies and practices of the Icelandic immigrants favoring bilingualism affected the educational trajectories and social participation of their descendants. Finally, Birna discussed the relevance of these findings to the theoretical discussion about the nature of language, especially heritage languages.

Úlfar then gave a lecture on Hrólfur Jónsson (alias Ralph E. Halldorson), who was born at Long Pine, Nebraska, in 1888. His parents were Jón Halldórsson (1838–1919) from Stóruvellir in Bárðardalur, north

Iceland, and his wife Þórvör Sveinsdóttir (1849–1912) of Garður in Aðaldalur, also in the north. Jón and Þórvör were among the first Icelandic emigrants to the New World, leaving Iceland in 1872. They married in 1975 and lived in Nebraska for the rest of their married life. They had five children who lived to adulthood. The lecture was based on the last letters the family received from Ralph before he died, and letters his brother Thomas wrote to him via his regiment, which were returned after his death. All the letters are in English. Úlfar argued that this may have been necessary for reasons of censorship, but that all indications are that Jón and Þórvör's children had abandoned speaking Icelandic, let alone writing it, at an early age. Ralph's war service and his brothers' views on the war, as described by their father and Thomas in the letters, along with their opinions on the use of English and the desire to have mastery of the English language, were all clear indications of the family's integration with American culture and values. Úlfar drew attention to a publication commemorating Icelanders who did military service between 1914–1918, which shows that 1,245 Canadians and Americans of Icelandic descent had served in the military forces of those countries during World War I: 989 for Canada, 256 for the USA. Of these, 144 appear to have died during the war: 94 died in action, two in accidents, two missing in action, 19 died of wounds, and 17 of diseases. Ralph was one of the 17 who died of disease.

Faculty and Students Visit IKEA

By Cassidy Pamperin

Cassidy is a freshman at UW-Madison majoring in Political Science and Economics. She is a member of Norden House and is taking first-semester Norwegian.

On September 16th, there was a trip to IKEA, which included a presentation by PhD candidate in the Nordic Unit, Richelle Wilson, the day prior. The presentation was largely focused on Ikea's history and its importance for representing Swedish culture to the rest of the world, acting as a pseudo-"ambassador" for the country. UW-Madison has groups called Learning Communities, which bring together staff and students around a specific area of focus. The IKEA trip was offered to many of the Learning Communities, including Norden House, which has eight student members and is focused on Nordic culture and community. About thirty undergraduate students went on the trip, four of whom were from the Norden House. The group traveled from Madison to the IKEA near Milwaukee via bus to explore how IKEA acts as an "ambassador" for Sweden. Members of Norden House who have close ties to Sweden pointed out the Swedish names for IKEA products and to the Dala horses throughout the store. Indeed, Richelle Wilson's presentation the day before the trip gave many a new perspective on the experience of shopping at IKEA.



Pictured above: Students visiting Sweden's leading "ambassador": IKEA!

Swede Home Chicago

by Shawn Hansen

A celebration of music, record collecting, and Swedish-American culture took place at UW-Madison's Memorial Library on Tuesday, October 3, 2023. On this date, an engaged audience of nearly forty students, faculty, and community members were on hand to enjoy a multimedia presentation titled "Swede Home Chicago: The Wallin's Svenska Records Story, 1923-27," based on a two-CD music collection of the same name.

The presentation was given by Richard Martin and Meagan Hennessey from Archeophone Records (the record label of the collection), UW emeritus professor Jim Leary, and folklorist Marcus Cederström from GNS+. These presenters were part of the team that collaborated on the "Swede Home Chicago" collection, and each person shared their own unique contribution to the project. Together they spoke about a wide range of fascinating topics, including: the history of Svenska

records in Chicago (founded by Swedish immigrant Gustaf Waldemar Wallin), the hunt for a "lost" disc of recordings from the accordion-playing Berg Brothers, the sonic restoration of pre-vinyl records into computer audio files, and the process of translating the lyrics of the songs featured in the collection from Swedish into English.

The event was sponsored by the Nordic Folklife Project, the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, and Mills Music Library. These organisations were also involved in the production of the "Swede Home Chicago" CD collection, in cooperation with Archeophone Records. More information about this collection can be found on the Archeophone Records website:

www.archeophone.com/catalogue/swede-home-chicago/

UW Instructors at Norway Seminar 2023: The Old and the New

By John Prusynski

From October 19 to 21, Norwegian instructors from universities throughout North America, including Ida Moen Johnson and John Prusynski from UW–Madison, met in Decorah, Iowa for the annual Norway Seminar. The seminar was hosted by the Nordic Studies program at Luther College and Vesterheim, the National Norwegian-American Museum and Folk Art School, and was an opportunity for participants to exchange pedagogical techniques, hear lectures by guest speakers from both North America and Norway, and engage in Norwegian and Norwegian-American cultural activities.

The opening reception of the meeting was held in the Vesterheim Commons, a new building designed by the Norwegian architecture firm Snøhetta, and was followed by a concert of Hardanger fiddle music by contemporary composer and performer Zosha Warpeha. Warpeha’s work unites traditional Norwegian musical motifs with experimental structure and pacing, embodying the

seminar’s theme of “the old and the new.”

Talks presented at the seminar covered a wide range of topics, from teaching architecture as text in the classroom to streamlined methods for introducing Norwegian vowels and tones to learners. The keynote speech was delivered by Anne Beate Hovind of the Future Library, a Norwegian artistic and literary endeavor that intends to commission one literary work every year for one hundred years following the project’s inception in 2014, while simultaneously maintaining a patch of newly replanted forest just outside of Oslo to be used for the eventual publication of these works. Hovind underscored the hope that goes into an intergenerational project such as the Future Library—hope not only that future artists will want to continue the project, but that the end result will be of interest to future readers—and the introspection that long-term projects spark within us to consider our own distant pasts and futures.”

Harvest Folk Festival

By Zachary Paronto

Zach is a senior majoring in Computer Science and Scandinavian Studies.

UW–Madison’s Harvest Festival made for a wonderful afternoon. Held September 30th at the Allen Centennial Garden, with one of the year’s last bright, warm days, the festival was home to a variety of activities. Music from local cultures and communities, dancing, storytelling, and a seed swap combined into a beautiful and exciting event.

For the foodies among the crowd, there was no shortage of fun and informative events. Chef Yusuf Bin-Rella was one of many culinary highlights of the festival. Focusing on dishes from the African Diaspora and often coinciding with Indigenous cuisine, he showcased both his expertise and his commitment to bringing people together through shared food. A particular favorite was the preserved Gete-okosomin squash, which imparts a delectable smell of pumpkin pie when prepared and can make a hearty autumn soup.

Among the groups that brought music to the gardens

were The Hmong Heritage Club and Jewop A-Capella. The Hmong Heritage Club played the ncas, a thin, brass instrument often used in secret by burgeoning couples. The instrument makes a distinctly soft, almost robotic tone. Jewop A-Capella, a student group, performed a powerful rendition of “Sweet Caroline” as many visitors meandered to the English Garden. There, they could see students like those from Professor Menechella’s Food Cultures of Italy First-Year Interest Group sharing their projects, including a section for the many pestos of Italy. Afterward, plenty went to enjoy the Norden house’s song, dance, and midsummer crown-making.

The festival also hosted a seed swap, where visitors could share seeds with friends and neighbors. Those without seeds to swap were welcome to grab a packet of seeds as well. Exchanging a wide variety of seeds, and anticipating the vibrant gardens that will grow from them, created enthusiasm for the growing seasons and harvests to come.

Introducing Fieldnotes

Svea Larson

In this newsletter, we are introducing a section in which Nordic and GNS+ members can share updates on their research projects. Enjoy three updates from Nordic Unit graduate students Svea Larson, Laura Moquin, and Holly McArthur!

Svea Larson

This summer, I spent three weeks in Tössebacken, a little village near Åmål. Part writing retreat, part research trip, I spent a lot of time learning how to use a cast iron cook stove to make cookies, cakes, and other snacks from handwritten and published cookbooks from the early 20th century. This was the last stop of my year of research in Swedish archives and object collections for my dissertation, which examines Swedish-American women who migrated between Sweden and the US in the early 20th century and the domestic skills they used in both places.

On the first day with the stove, I made “Godrån,” perhaps better known in Scandinavian-American circles as Norwegian “Krumkake.” I chose to make these because it let me play around with the stove temperatures, and because I’d recently found the iron at a loppis (flea market).

Godrån: 8 äggulor, 8 skedblad socker, 8 ditto grädde (söt), 8 ditto smält smör som är fridt från salt - kanel och kardemumma, mjöl så litet som möjligt.

Godrån: 8 egg yolks, 8 spoonfuls of sugar, 8 ditto cream (sweet), 8 ditto melted butter that has been freed from salt - cinnamon and cardamom, as little flour as possible.

Later on, as I got the hang of the oven, I graduated to recipes such as “Rågbröd,” (Rye Bread), “Bakelse Lika Mycket,” (Equal Parts Pastry), “Amerikansk Citrontårta” (American Lemon Cake), and a LOT of *hallonblåbärssylt*



(blueberry and raspberry jam) from the 30 liters of berries picked from the forest.

To facilitate the cooking, I spent a lot of time heating up water, chopping wood, doing dishes, picking berries and chanterelles, and collecting and nursing a few burns. But I most enjoyed sharing the results (good and bad) over fika with my neighbors and the friends and colleagues who ventured out to the countryside to help me cook.

You can see some of the results of the baking on Instagram @nagorlundavarmt

Laura Moquin

My dissertation explores the post-shift presence of the Norwegian language in Vernon County, Wisconsin. Post-shift linguistic phenomena can be understood as any remaining presence or relationship to a language in a community after it has undergone a shift to a majority language. Until the early 20th century, the people of Vernon County (and other areas of Wisconsin) lived their day-to-day lives in the Norwegian language. This region is home to one of the highest concentrations of heritage speakers of Norwegian in the country and many more who grew up hearing the language at home and in their community.

The research I've been conducting focuses on understudied examples of phonetic transfer from Norwegian—that is, sounds from Norwegian that can still be detected in the local English of monolinguals—as well as continued symbolic value and use of the Norwegian language. I spent last summer conducting

fieldwork, mostly in Westby, Wisconsin. I was met with a warm welcome and very helpful community members that connected me with participants. Those I've interviewed so far have generously shared with me their perspectives on Norwegian language, culture, and identity—and what they thought about their own variety of English. Now I get to revisit those conversations as I analyze and annotate specific sounds and patterns in their speech with a speech analysis software program called Praat.

I am currently dividing my time carefully between measuring aspiration (a brief puff of air) after word-final examples of /p/, /t/, and /k/ in Praat and writing dissertation chapters. I will present my work on final stop aspiration at the American Dialect Society (ADS) in January that will be held during the Linguistic Society of America's (LSA) annual meeting in New York City.

Holly McArthur

My summer research took me to Copenhagen, where I spent three weeks between the Royal Danish Library and the Summer School in Scandinavian Manuscript Studies hosted this past year by the Arnamagnæan Institute at the University of Copenhagen.

Here, I had the opportunity to work directly with many of the manuscripts containing *Flóvents saga*, a romance translated into Old Norse sometime in the thirteenth century, which is the focus of my dissertation. This included one of the oldest manuscripts containing Old Norse romances (AM 580 4to), which is from the beginning of the fourteenth century). For many romances, including *Flóvents saga*, this is the earliest version we have.

Several of the manuscripts I went to see have not been digitized and are low priority for the process since they are younger, paper copies of medieval manuscripts which were made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Viewing these younger manuscripts in person was the only way to include them in my research. I was particularly fascinated by a large, seventeenth-century parchment folio. It was made to purposefully mimic format and handwriting styles of much older manuscripts, and had a fascinating mixture of Icelandic family sagas, sagas about the ancient Scandinavian past, and romances.



At the Summer School, I took part in a Master Class which worked on identifying and studying some parchment manuscript fragments from the Arnamagnæan collection. We are working on writing about the manuscript fragments, which my group was able to identify as part of a glossed canon law manuscript from Italy.

A huge thank you to the Nordic Unit and the Lemoine-Midelfort Foundation for supporting my research trip this year!

← Remembering Contributors to the Field →

Rasmus Bjørn Anderson: The Hub of Norwegian-American Life

by Susan C. Brantly



Rasmus B. Anderson (1846-1936) founded the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Wisconsin. His path to the UW was slightly checkered, since he was expelled from Luther College in 1865 after leading a protest (“We were required to saw and chop wood for the teachers”) and he

was fired from the Albion Academy when he plotted to take over as president. He was taken on as an instructor at the UW in 1869 and named a professor in 1875, the date from which the Scandinavian Department counts its origin as the oldest such department in the United States.

During his 14 years at the UW, Anderson acted as something of an impresario for Nordic celebrities. In 1881, he arranged a lecture tour in the upper Midwest for Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and he cultivated a friendship with the famous violin virtuoso Ole Bull. Bull gave a benefit concert on May 17, 1872 that raised enough money to purchase 500 books, the beginning of the Scandinavian collection at the library. When Knut Hamsun came seeking Anderson’s assistance with a letter from Bjørnson in hand, he did not find the help he was looking for: “He just cut me off and said that I would have to help myself.”

Anderson’s career at the UW ended in 1885 when he was appointed by President Grover Cleveland as the US Minister to Denmark. He held that post until 1889. Anderson was in Copenhagen at the peak of the Modern Breakthrough and rubbed shoulders with many literary celebrities. When Georg Brandes made some remarks critical of Bismarck at a dinner held by Anderson, he was challenged to a duel by the German consul. Anderson advised Brandes to tell the

police, since dueling was illegal in Denmark, and the consul was sentenced to a term in jail. Anderson was offended at the sight of Amalie Skram smoking at a party and worried about the indecency in the writings of Garborg, Jaeger, Krohg and Ibsen. August Strindberg frequented the same café as Anderson: “His talents are everywhere recognized and it is plain that he is a towering genius, but it would be difficult to determine from his strange conversation whether he is sane or not...for he told everything about himself from childhood up. How he hates women! On that subject he certainly is insane.”

When Anderson returned to Wisconsin, his post had been filled successfully by his brother-in-law, Julius Olson, who held that position for 50 years. For a while, Anderson sold cod-liver oil, involved himself in local politics, and in 1898 became the editor of *Amerika*, a Norwegian language journal that he ran for 24 years. From that platform, he remained an influential figure in Scandinavian-American culture in the U.S. For more information about Rasmus B. Anderson, see Lloyd Hustvedt’s book, *Rasmus Bjørn Anderson: Pioneer Scholar* (1966).



Faculty and Staff Updates



Claus Elholm Andersen

Claus Elholm Andersen, who every year teaches a large course on Hans Christian Andersen, has begun working on a book-length project on Andersen's fairytales. This new project led to a short visit as a research fellow at the Kierkegaard Center in Copenhagen last May, where he worked on an article on Søren Kierkegaard and Hans Christian Andersen. And this May, the project will bring him to the Hans Christian Andersen Center in Odense, Denmark where he will investigate how Andersen through the formalistic features of his fairytales offers an early criticism of capitalism. Professor Andersen's forthcoming 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.



Susan Brantly

After 10 years of service, Brantly has handed the editorial baton for *Scandinavian Studies* over to her colleague Dean Krouk. George C. Schoolfield's last book, *A Literary and Historical Exploration of the Life and Works of Runar Schildt*, has just appeared in Cambridge Scholar's Press, edited by Brantly and Kathy Saranpa, who both had the privilege of being his students. Brantly's research interest in the intersection of art and literature has shifted to focus on the artists and authors of the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough, who were thick as thieves in the 1880s and 1890s. For this reason, she spent some time in Skagen this summer and looked through old illustrated Nordic magazines for art reproductions in both Stockholm and Copenhagen. Brantly's work with the Bradley Learning Community continues to be a pleasure and a challenge, as University Housing faces a number of post-pandemic changes.



Marcus Cederström

Marcus Cederström continues his work with the Sustaining Scandinavian Folk Arts in the Upper Midwest project. This past year has included a week-long tour with colleagues from the College of Menominee Nation in Sápmi; trips around the Upper Midwest for festivals, presentations, and exhibitions; and a symposium on (im)migration and Indigeneity here on campus. And, of course, a bowery dance with old-time Scandinavian American music at Allen Centennial Gardens.



Tom DuBois

Tom DuBois completed his term as chair of GNS+ in the summer of 2022. Since then, he has resumed his work as head of the Folklore program and completed articles on various topics, including turn-of-the-century Sámi and Irish magic practices and the ways in which Sámi dictionaries reflect colonial experiences. He has worked to facilitate contacts between Wisconsin Indigenous communities and Sámi counterparts, through in-person visits both in Norway and Wisconsin.



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 third year as the Permanent Lecturer in Norwegian in the Nordic Unit. In addition to teaching two Norwegian language courses each semester, Ida teaches courses focused on Nordic literature and culture. Her Scandinavian Children's Literature class (Fall 2023) recently visited the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC) on the UW-Madison campus, which was an enlightening and fun experience for students as they got to handle a range of Nordic children's texts while learning about the challenges and rewards of publishing translated works. Beyond teaching, Ida enjoys walks, meals, and playtime with her partner and young daughter.



Dean Krouk

The fall of 2023 marks the start of Dean's ninth academic year at UW-Madison. He spent the summer engaged in research and new course development, while also learning the ropes of his new role as editor of the journal *Scandinavian Studies*. His translation of Bjørn Westlie's *Fars krig* (*My Father's War*) was published in June. Dean continues to serve as the Director of Graduate Studies for the Scandinavian program and one of the two associate chairs of GNS+. His miniature schnauzer, Max, makes an occasional appearance on Zoom calls or walks with colleagues.



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 continues to work as the librarian for Scandinavian Humanities and South Asian Studies. He is slowly but surely researching and publishing in his areas of interest. He recently served as Principal Investigator for a library survey of faculty use and expectations of library materials and services. He has found a new love in number crunching and creating graphs of the results and then presenting them to various audiences in the university community. He continues to teach library instruction classes and guest lecture in Scandinavian Studies Classes. He is grateful to have so many opportunities to share knowledge.



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 spent much of 2022 working on her book, and her articles on Swedish film *Amateurs* (Gabriela Pichler, 2018) and on reimagining cultural memory through parody music videos on Estonian Public Broadcasting were published in the spring of 2022. She taught her first graduate seminar in the fall; the seminar that focused on Nordic cinema brought together a wonderful intellectual community of students whose insights in class discussion were always valuable and inspiring. In the fall, Liina-Ly and her husband Justin bought their first house in Oregon, just south of Madison, and they're enjoying the charm of that small town.

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 joined the department in July 2022 as the new Media Designer. She creates promotional materials for courses and department events, maintains the GNS+ website, and manages the social media accounts along with any other outreach needs. Prior to joining GNS+, she graduated in Fall 2019 from the University of Iowa with a BFA in Graphic Design, and previously worked as a Studio Production Artist at an advertising agency. Outside of work, she enjoys music, drawing, reading, and finding new bookstores in and out of Madison with her partner, Sean.

Kirsten Wolf



Kirsten Wolf continues as head of the Nordic Unit and Chair of the Department of Art History. Her summer was uneventful. She had agreed to serve as faculty host for a trip to Iceland arranged by the Alumni Association, but a week before the trip, she unfortunately tripped, broke her ankle, and so had to cancel her trip. So, in her big boot, she spent a lot of time at the computer and got a fair bit of research done. In addition to several book reviews and a co-authored article with Marianne Kalinke, she also managed to complete about half of *24 Hours in the Viking Age: A Day in the Life of the People Who Lived There*, a book commissioned by Michael O-Mara Books and due in April 2024. This is her first attempt at creative writing, and she is thoroughly enjoying it.

Graduate Student Updates

We are happy to introduce to you our new graduate students who have shared with us what brought them to the Nordic department in addition to what they like most about living in Madison so far.

Shawn Hansen



Shawn is a first-year MA/PhD student on the Folklore track. His academic interests include mythology, folktales, religious studies, theatre, and film. He is focusing on Norwegian as his primary Nordic language. Shawn was introduced to the Nordic department by way of taking classes as a “Special student” through UW’s Continuing Studies program. After being away from the academic world for a number of years, he longed to be in an intellectual environment again, and enrolling as a Special student helped put himself in a position to prepare for graduate school. The first course he took at UW was Folklore 100 during the summer term of 2021, which in turn introduced him to the Folklore program here at the university and the Nordic department in general. He began taking more courses throughout the department and has never looked back, as he has been so impressed by the high quality of the courses and subjects offered in this program, as well as the intelligence and kindness of the faculty members. What Shawn likes most about Madison is its mixture of big-city elements along with more laid-back, peaceful qualities. He appreciates the fact that he can go out to eat at one of the city’s excellent restaurants one night, featuring cuisine from all over the world, and then the next day be in the middle of a forest at the UW Arboretum, watching a flock of wild turkeys cross his path. Both types of experiences are important to him as a person, and he feels grateful that Madison has a variety of opportunities to enjoy both.

Erica Li



Erica Li is a first-year Ph.D. student on the literary and cultural studies track. She focuses her research on Scandinavian literature and history, with a special emphasis on nineteenth-century Norwegian literature. Erica was previously an undergraduate student in the department, where she had the opportunity to explore her interests in Scandinavian Studies and gain valuable experience. She knows that with its excellent faculty and staff, as well as its abundant resources, the department will enable her to continue her research in Norwegian literature. She is also excited about exploring a diverse range of topics related to Scandinavian Studies. In addition, Erica also likes the city of Madison very well—she found herself particularly missing Madison when she was studying in London for graduate school. Erica really enjoys the beautiful nature of Madison. She enjoys strolling by the lake and visiting the Arboretum, which brings her a sense of inner peace. She often reads in Memorial Union, where she can see Lake Mendota through the window. Erica also enjoys watching the local bunnies, squirrels, and recording videos of them.



Cody King

Cody King is a first-year MA/PhD student on the philology track. His current interests are the Danish language and Nordic prehistory, especially the solar cult of the Nordic Bronze Age. He received a bachelor's degree in German in 2020 and another in French in 2023, both from the University of North Texas. While there, he decided that his interest in ancient Northern Europe would be no better accommodated than at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and with the encouragement of German professor and UW-Madison alumnus Christoph Weber, he decided to apply. He has found the milieu in the Nordic program to be exceptionally welcoming and the educational opportunities here to be very satisfying. Being attracted to natural landscapes and having grown up by woods on the shore of Lake Lewisville in Texas, Cody's favorite part of Madison is undoubtedly Lake Mendota and the beautiful woodland by his apartment in Eagle Heights.



Emily Beyer

Emily Beyer is a third-year graduate student in Scandinavian Studies. She holds an MFA in Poetry from the University of Iowa and an MA in Medieval Icelandic Studies from the University of Iceland. Her interests lie in Old Norse, Icelandic, and Norwegian studies, as well as Latvian literature. This year, she enjoyed taking German and getting to present a paper at SASS.



Rachel Bott

Rachel is a third-year Ph.D. on the Folklore track minoring in Medieval Studies. She is currently on a FLAS Fellowship to study Danish. She is preparing to complete her prelims next spring and works with Serials Acquisitions at Memorial Library. Her research focuses on monstrosity in Scandinavian Medieval Ballads.



Elliott Brandsma

Elliott Brandsma is a fourth-year Ph.D. student on the Literature and Cultural Studies track, with minors in Global Studies and Political Science. He intends to take his comprehensive exams this year and begin work on his dissertation research. As he prepares for his preliminary exams, he is also learning Finnish.



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 and is keeping busy writing her dissertation, which examines early 20th century Swedish-American migration, women's history, and domestic practices. She's also helping Dr. Sarah Anne Carter (SoHE) with a book about museums and the feelings they create!



Holly McArthur

Holly is a PhD candidate on the Philology track. Finishing up her fourth year with the University of Wisconsin Press, she has been working on digital text editing methods and writing about the transmission of Flóvent's saga, Icelandic reception of European texts, and the many medievalisms of Tamora Pierce.



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.



Lauren Poyer

Lauren is still a PhD Candidate here at UW-Madison and an Assistant Teaching Professor of Scandinavian Studies in the Department of Scandinavian Studies at UW-Seattle. Her research and teaching are in Old Norse literature and language. In summer 2022 she co-led a summer study abroad in Stockholm on Nordic conceptions of social justice.



John Prusynski

John Prusynski is a PhD Candidate writing a dissertation about the theme of travel in Sámi literature. He is interested in mostly contemporary authors such as Kirste Paltto, Niillas Holmberg, and Máret Anne Sara. He is also a lecturer at UC Berkeley teaching courses in Norwegian language and Sámi literature.



David Smith

David Smith is a 3rd-year PhD student and a translator from Norwegian to English. Recent activities include continuing to work on his translation of Tarjei Vesaas's short stories and taking part in a cross-disciplinary Hegel reading group at UW-Madison.



Ailie Westbrook

Ailie is a PhD candidate in the Folklore track. She passed her preliminary examination in May and is now writing her dissertation on women's sexual and reproductive health in medieval Denmark and Sweden. She is currently working as a PA for Scandinavian Studies.



Benjamin Wilson

Benjamin is a first year Scandinavian Studies MA/PhD student on the philology track. His studies focus on Scandinavian history, culture, and politics, especially in the Medieval period. He looks forward to continuing his study of both contemporary and historical Scandinavia.



Richelle Wilson

Richelle Wilson is a PhD candidate writing a dissertation about IKEA in literature and culture. Earlier this year, she started a full-time job as a producer at Wisconsin Public Radio.

Tomte Answers:



Pg. 7: Hanging below the photo, left side



Pg. 10: Behind the photo of Svea Larson



Pg. 13: Near the bottom right of the page

Pg. 15: Behind Ida Moen Johnson's picture, top right

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