

UW Department of Scandinavian Studies

VELKOMMEN TILBAKE!

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**Department of
Scandinavian Studies**

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Elsie Returns

by Rebecca Fish, a second year graduate student specializing in Norwegian.

Every Tuesday, 83-year-old Elsie Jacobsen packs up her car and drives two and a half hours to Madison, where she spends three days each week taking classes towards an MA in Scandinavian Studies. At night, Elsie stays at the Ivy Inn (where, by the way, she now knows the staff by name), while during the days she reads sagas and Nineteenth century romantic texts for her current courses.



Elsie assumes herself to be the oldest member of the UW Graduate School as she graduated Magna Cum Laude at Madison in 1936. While she proudly boasts of a Scandinavian Studies degree received under Einar Haugen, Elsie doesn't recall what her minor was at the time, but believes perhaps it might have been art history!

It is not surprising that Elsie originally chose to pursue a Scandinavian Studies undergraduate degree given her family background. Both of Elsie's parents came from Norway, and her mother was determined to send at least one of her children to study there. So Elsie ended up spending a semester studying at the University in Oslo (which at that time was referred to as Det Kongelige Frederiks Universitet). After returning from Norway, Elsie entered into an unexpected romance with the family dentist which eventually led to marriage. Earl, also a child of Norwegian immigrants, had lived in

Norway from the time he was three until he attended University here in the United States.

Elsie led an active life in her community of Oak Park. Having earned the titles, among others, of "Volunteer of the Year" and "Outstanding Citizen", Elsie remembers serving on eleven boards at one time. Slowly, however, these responsibilities dwindled, and more recently Elsie found herself in need of some new things to do. One of her most recent involvements, a Hemingway reading group, revived her academic interests. At about the same time, Elsie received the first edition of the Scandinavian Studies Alumni Newsletter in the mail. She started having conversations with Susan Brantly about the possibility of enrolling as a graduate student - and why not?! There was no reason why this energetic woman who was born when zippers were yet to be imagined could not go back to school.

When asked about how it feels to be back on campus, Elsie remarks about the size of the student body now compared to the 8,000 students when she was an undergraduate. She says she understands that UW - Madison is now known as a "party school", but doesn't think she will get too involved in that aspect of student life, because, she says, "I've never been real big on partying."

Elsie says that her time this year has been "constantly fun." She remarks that the young people (this includes, of course, staff and faculty) are all extremely friendly, and, she says, "everyone takes care of me."

It is a pleasure for all of us to be working with Elsie. Her presence is a

constant reminder to all of us to push the possibilities to the limit.

Random Roasts to Judy Anderson

by Professor Kim Nilsson
Judy Anderson has been with the Department for 20 years.

1. There were days of doom and despair in seventy-six when Mrs. Nielsen busted her bones and told us good-bye. Ingwersen got a cat, Næss dropped down from a tree. Nilsson fled and Vowles quit cigars. Ringler rejected Oðinn, Claréus went feminist.

2. On the tenth day the sun rose. It had donned red hair, speckled eyes. Petite of figure, nimble of mind, there she was.

Outdoing Aurora, a guileless, immediate smile.

3. Judy lives in secular bliss with John Herman, who scapes land. He said he'd marry her. Judy accepted, because she knows you can't believe a word John says.

4. Her middle initial is D. It stands for Darling. The fauna at the old farm house on County Road J -- the old, the blind, the deaf, the orphans -- call her Santa Francesca. They don't know she used to chomp on pigs, cows, sheep, and rabbits, and who knows what else if she ate at Yee's.

5. Don't try to converse if you walk down State Street with Judy. Every tenth step there's a friend and words to be exchanged.

Would it be different these days on Mannerheimintie, Gamla stan, Strøget, or Karl Johan?

6. Judy accepted our offer right away. Found something called *Scandinavia* in the *Atlas* on page 36. She went to class, learned rounded vowels, tones, and words with æ and ø.

There must be something more, she thought, and called up Kathy Myers. A *Judyssey* was inchoate.

7. They were quite tired by the time they

came to Finland. Much more so on the day they winged back to John and John. That was after pub crawls, sauna, desperate shopping, and six hours' sailing on a skiff without a potty.

8. We don't give her things for X-mas. We don't buy a lunch and a card on Thrallmarks' day.

Judy is a colleague - we respect her.

Language Tables

The Scandinavian Studies Department has the tradition of *language tables* where students and non-students alike congregate and converse in their Scandinavian language. So, if you travel to Madison some time this year, join us! The Norwegian and Swedish tables meet every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. in the Rathskeller. The Norskies and the Swedes usually sit at opposite ends of the table, but they do speak to each other. Rumor has it that this past week they even sang drinking songs together!

The Danish language table meets on Thursdays in the first and third week of every month between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. Contact Assistant Professor Tine Frank for more information, her e-mail address is tfrank1@facstaff.wisc.edu and her office number is (608) 262-2128.

Summer Distance Course in Norwegian

by Dr. Dawn Tommerdahl, our most recent Ph.D. She taught the long distance course this past summer.

Six very untraditional students (two in Madison and four in Eau Claire) helped make the distance Norwegian course, taught in the summer of 1997, a definite success.

Students were challenged from day one by both the learning technologies employed and the new language to be learned. In the first week of class students had to adjust to video conferencing (two-way compressed video), the delivery system used most days. If that wasn't enough technology, they also had to become proficient users of the Netscape web browser, Eudora e-mail program, and FirstClass conferencing software in order to do their homework.

By the end of the session, students had become adept at using the various technologies and seemed comfortable with it. Of course, they learned a lot of Norwegian too!

The Department of Scandinavian Studies plans to offer a two-semester sequence of beginning Norwegian again in the summer and eventually to have two years offered as regular evening courses through UW Continuing Studies. UW-Eau Claire will be a partner campus for future courses, as will other UW System campuses.

The course web site can be found at: <http://midgard.lss.wisc.edu/home.html>.

For an in-depth article about the class, see the web version of Learning Support Services' Trends Fall 1997 newsletter at: <http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/lss/trends/trends.html>

SASS Conference

Several members of the Department of Scandinavian Studies presented papers at last year's Conference for the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study, held at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign.

Richard Vowles, emeritus, gave a paper entitled "Karen Blixen's Chippewa Kin."

Nick Hill, a history Ph.Cand. and a master's student in Scandinavian Studies lectured on "Finnish Independence Day:

Season's Greetings!



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An Arena for the Performance of Contesting Histories."

Anne-Marie Andreasson, lecturer, presented on "Building the Optimal Pitch Domain in Swedish."

Lisa A. Rainwater, a Ph.D. student of German and Scandinavian Studies minor presented on "August Strindberg's *Den starkare*: A Dialectic for the Modern Woman?"

Assistant Professor Tanya Thresher, gave a paper entitled "Busting the Brawn? Kristina Lugn's *Tant Blomma*."

Tine Frank, Visiting Assistant Professor, gave a lecture on "Rued Langgaard -- A Symbolist Composer?"

Scott Mellor, Ph.Cand. in Folklore and Scandinavian Studies presented on "Oral Formula and the Poetic Edda."

Jenny Aune, graduate student, gave a paper entitled "Women Settlers Unsettling Gender Roles: A Comparison between the Settlement of Iceland and the American West."

Professor Niels Ingwersen delivered a paper entitled "Telling Tales about Telling Tales."

Dawn Tommerdahl, Ph.D. '97, gave a speech about "Norwegian 101: An Experiment in Distance Learning."

Laura Lefgren-Banks, a recent Master's graduate, gave a paper entitled "Guðrún's Runes: Poetry and Discerning a Female Voice in Old Norse Literature."

In addition to the above presenters, Kim Nilsson, Anne-Marie Andreasson, Niels Ingwersen and Susan Brantly all chaired sessions in their areas of expertise. In attendance were graduate students Rebecca Fish and Katrina Culp-Heil and doctoral student Troy Storfjell.

How Do We Know Thor Had a Hammer?

This past summer between June 24 and July 10, Associate Professor Brantly held three workshops in Nordic mythology through the College for Kids program sponsored by the School of Education. Her audience consisted of gifted 10 to 12-year-olds.

"These kids were very bright indeed," says Professor Brantly. "One day I asked



the rhetorical question: 'What does an abundance of livestock have to do with books?' One kid promptly replied: 'Vellum is made out of animal skins.' I've seen plenty of undergraduates who don't even know the word 'vellum' much less what it is made out of!"

The most popular part of the workshop was the runic alphabet, and most kids were writing fluently in runes by the end of the four days. Pity the poor teachers for the secret messages they will intercept! Now we just need to wait and see if a flurry of new Kensington stones will come out of it all.

Experience Scandinavia through Elderhostel

This article originally appeared in SAC News.

By Katrina Culp-Heil, a fourth year graduate student of Danish.

This summer I had the opportunity to lead a group of 36 "Elderhostellers" to Norway, Denmark and Finland. Elderhostel is an educational program for adults aged 55 and older. The particular program I led was set up by Scandinavian Seminar for Elderhostel. The program lasts for three weeks, one week in each country. Elderhostellers stayed at Folk High Schools in each country and all meals were provided. During the week, there are 12 hours of lectures about the history, culture, people, government, etc. of each country, as well as field trips to surrounding areas. Group Leaders, like myself, are familiar with the region, speak one of the languages of the general area, and are with the group for the entire program.

The group I led had an average age of 70. The youngest was 58 and the youngest at heart was 84.

We visited such places as the Nigard glacier in Norway, Jelling in Denmark, and a farm in the archipelago of Finland - the latter being an experience to remember. After taking a tour of the Finnish farm, which included several archeological sites, we were treated to a dinner prepared by the farmer, his wife and their three daughters. The dinner consisted of tomato salad, fresh baked rolls, new potatoes and same day salmon with dill sauce. The meal was completed with a dessert of a fresh mixed berry torte. It was simply amazing and

very *hyggelig*.

In Norway we had the chance to visit with the Norwegian artist Knut Rumohr. To reach his home we had to travel by ferry, as there are no roads where he lives. We visited his home and studio. We were also given a tour of his collection of traditional Norwegian farm buildings including *stabbur* - a food storage and curing shed on stilts, often elaborately decorated with wood carvings or *rosemaling*.

The Danish program also had its own special opportunities. There were twenty Danes who joined our program for the week. This added a unique chance for lively discussion and interaction. There was also an afternoon visit with Danish families in their homes, and the families were then invited to participate in our farewell dinner and show.

As a Group Leader this was a wonderful experience, I was able to see parts of Scandinavia that I had never seen before - and I met a great group of people. Most of all I enjoyed seeing all the Elderhostellers experience new cultures up close and personal.

If you are interested in finding out more about Elderhostel or Scandinavian Seminar, please contact *Elderhostel*; 75 Federal St.; Boston, MA 02110; (617) 426-7788 -or- *Scandinavian Seminar*; 24 Dickinson St.; Amherst, MA 01002; (413) 253-9736.

Bergen Summer

This article originally appeared in SAC News.

By David Schwartz, an undergraduate in Norwegian.

Bergen is supposed to be the rainiest place in Norway, with 210 days of rain in the average year. You'd never know that, though, from the three and a half weeks I spent there this past summer. We had three days of rain, a few overcast days, and the rest of the time was clear and sunny. The weather really brought out the beauty of the city. Located on the west coast, Bergen is bounded on one side by the North Sea and on the other by the mountains, with numerous islands large and small between. I can't say that I expected to spend so much time at the beach in Norway, but that is exactly what happened.

Unfortunately, I wasn't there just to

enjoy the sunshine. I was attending Sommerkurset at the University of Bergen, a seventeen year old program for foreign students studying Norwegian. My teachers were Able Kristiansand, the course leader, four young Norwegians, various guest lecturers from the University, and 60 other students from 26 different countries. Most of the students were European -- there was only one American besides myself, and a Canadian -- with differing levels of proficiency in Norwegian. We met for three to five hours every weekday, mostly studying language, but also Norwegian music, history, art and politics.

On the weekends, we took field trips. We took a boat to Lasagne, the island once owned by Bergen native and world class violinist Ole Bull. We hiked through the mountains on two separate occasions, at one point hiking 31 kilometers in two days. We spent the night on a small island west of Bergen proper, visiting Fedje, an island with the earliest known settlement in Norway.

It was a busy three weeks, and I'm still recovering, but I'm grateful I had the opportunity to go. I want to thank SAC and the Ygdrasil Literary Society of Madison for helping me cover my travel expenses with a grant. And I would encourage any and all students of Norwegian, no matter their proficiency, to apply to attend Sommerkurset next year. Able told me they were looking for more Americans, and it will be an experience you'll never forget.

Extension Course

by Stokes Schwartz, a first year graduate student of Norwegian who is currently teaching beginning Norwegian through Extension.

Beginning Norwegian is offered annually through the UW-Extension Outreach Program. This semester there are 12 students from a variety of professions ranging from graphic design and sales, contracting, nursing teaching to retired UW professors. Their reasons for studying Norwegian are just as diverse.

This class meets one evening a week, on Wednesdays between 7:30 and 9:00 p.m. The textbook is *Norsk Nå* and it is a good choice for those studying independently during the remainder of the

week. All classroom instruction is in Norwegian. The entire course is scheduled to last eight weeks, from Sept. 17 to Nov. 12. If enough students are interested in continuing, the Extension will offer a second eight week course during the Spring Semester 1998.

For those who might be interested in brushing up on their Norwegian, or who are interested in other UW-Extension courses, please call (608) 263-2055 for additional information.

What are you up to?

Please send to the editor any information that you wish to share. *Vær så god* and include your degree and year of graduation. Hope to hear from you soon!

Rona Klein, BA '71, is teaching both English and Women's Studies in the English Department of Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

Carol (Orange) Schroeder, MA '74, is the author of *Specialty Shop Retailing: How to Run Your Own Store*, published earlier this year by John Wiley & Sons. She and her husband Dean own *Orange Tree Imports*, a gift and gourmet shop in Madison.

Sue Ann Gladhaug (Erickson), MA '77, is living in Stavanger, Norway.

Trilby L. Gustafson, MA '77, is currently working in Ballerup, Denmark as PA to the Danish Vice Presidents of International Sales at DSC Communications Corporations.

Mark Palatt, BA '92, is currently living in Los Angeles and working as a Set Dresser.

Erich Dietrich, MA '95, is working as Assistant Dean of Admissions for Sarah Lawrence College in New York, NY.

Rob Quanbeck, MA '96, is currently working in the International Summer School office at the University of Oslo. Check out the ISS web site at:

<http://www.uio.no/iss/iss.html>.

Dawn Tommerdahl, Ph.D. '97, is currently leading the Oslo Year Program, a study abroad program for North American students run by the ISS.



Recent Graduates

Laura Banks completed the Masters program with specialization in Old

Norse this past August.

Suzanne Townley recently completed the Masters program with a specialization in the Modern Breakthrough. She currently conducting research in Berlin on Women Writers from the Turn of the Century.

Martin Fossum, MA '96, specialized in Norwegian literature and is currently working in Seattle, Washington.

Swedish Teachers

The Workshop for North American Teachers of Swedish was held at the University of Wisconsin - Madison on October 23 to 26. Four members of the Scandinavian Studies Dept. were in attendance and two members helped in the planning of the events.

The theme for the conference was technology, and there were several demonstrations of CD-ROMs useful to the instruction of Swedish. Presenters included Britta Holm from the Swedish Information Service; Anne-Marie Andreasson from the Scandinavian Studies Department of UW - Madison; Lars Melin from the Institutionen för nordiska språk, Stockholm universitet; Ove Joanson, Cultural Counselor in the Embassy of Sweden; Lena Trancik from Cornell University; Tim Hildreth from Transparent Language and Bruce Brotsma from Pronouncement Software.

Norway Seminar

by Troy Storfjell, a doctoral student of Norwegian and Sami literature.

Three members of the Scandinavian Studies Department attended this year's Norgeseminar (Norway Seminar), which was held from Oct. 16 to 18 in Minneapolis. The theme for the seminar was "Norge - et flerkulturelt samfunn?" (Norway - a multicultural society?) Attending from the department were Tanya Thresher, Rebecca Fish and Troy Storfjell.

This year's speakers included, among others, Leif Dunfjeld from the Ministry of Townships and Labor; Khalid Salimi and Mari Linløyken of the Anti-Racism Center in Norway; and Harald Gaski, Professor of Sami literature at the University of Tromsø. Representatives of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry were also present.

The presenters generally agreed that

Norway has taken the first steps on the path to successful integration and cultural tolerance, but that there is still a long way to go.

Annual Fall Retreat

by Troy Storfjell

Departmental faculty, staff, graduate students and their significant others met at Camp Crossways, near Wausau, Wisconsin, for a three-day stint of rest, relaxation and socializing in a beautiful autumn woodland setting. Gladdened by the unusually warm weather, the campers (who stayed in cabins at the camp) took hikes, fished, played games, told stories, and basked in the sun.

Ph.Cand. Scott Mellor provided the group with a steady supply of delicious food, and the Scandinavian scholars made sure to provision themselves with all the liquid entertainment they needed. After long evenings by the roaring campfire the graduate students partook in what has become a traditional test of Viking fortitude at



the Fall Retreat -- mass skinny-dipping by moonlight in the ice-cold waters of Mission Lake.

Benny Andersen Visits

by Troy Storfjell

The well-known Danish poet Benny Andersen recently visited the UW - Madison campus and read from his latest book, *Cosmopolitan in Denmark - and Other Poems about the Danes*.

The book was the result of various requests to Andersen to say something definitive about Denmark and the Danes, he explained, and included both original and previously published poems, the earliest of which were first published in 1964.

The packed audience responded with outbursts of laughter to the self-ironic and humorous readings, which made light of the idea of any sort of national character or identity.

Andersen made his publishing debut in 1960 with the collection *Den musikalske ål*. Since that time he has become quite popular in Denmark, and has published 40 books, including 15 poetry collections and a number of children's books, short story

collections, songs, and drama for radio, television, film, and the stage.

After the reading Andersen attended a reception hosted by Scandinavian Studies Masters' alumna Carol (Orange) Schroeder.

Two days later, on Saturday, Oct. 4, Andersen appeared on Garrison Keillor's radio show "A Prairie Home Companion."

Nostalgic for the Classroom?

Last spring, Wisconsin Public Radio's Norman Gilliland and Emily Auerbach produced a series of taped dialogues on Scandinavian literature with members of our department. Professor Ringler spoke about Iceland's Jónas Hallgrímsson, Niels Ingwersen presented Henrik Ibsen, Susan Brantly tackled August Strindberg, and Troy Storfjell described the Sami practice of *Yoiking*. These lectures are available for purchase through WPR's Audio Store at 1-800-97-AUDIO.

Dinesen Lecture

Susan Brantly gave a lecture titled "Isak Dinesen: The Woman and the Mask" to a capacity crowd at the UW Spring Day on Campus on May 8, 1997. The talk is featured in the July/August 1997 issue of *On Wisconsin*, the UW alumni magazine.

Upcoming Events

Eva Zetterberg, a member of the Swedish Parliament and a UW alumna, will deliver a speech entitled "How to Maintain a Welfare System in Times of Economic Recession" on Tuesday, November 11 at 8:00 p.m. in 7191 Helen C. White Hall.

On Nov. 16, the national language day of Iceland, the world will become acquainted with the works and life of Iceland's most beloved poet Jónas Hallgrímsson. For on that day the website entitled *Jónas Hallgrímsson: Selected Poetry and Prose*, edited and translated by Professor Dick Ringler, will be formally opened during a special ceremony in Iceland.

The annual Scandinavian American Club Christmas party is scheduled for Dec. 13.

On February 12, Professor Daniel Rabuzzi of Luther College will address the public on "The Economic Role of Women in Scandinavia and the Baltic in the 18th and 19th Centuries" in 1312 Van Hise at 3:30 p.m.

Letter From the Editor

The success of this newsletter is due to a multitude of people, and it is here that I would like to thank them all. Thanks to those of you who sent letters and e-mails to me and other members of the Department in response to the Winter/Spring newsletter. Thanks also goes to the contributors who took time out of their busy fall semester to write articles for the Summer/Fall edition, and my personal gratitude to those who proofread the newsletter again (and again)! And finally, a big thank you to *Orange Tree Imports* and *Century House Inc* for donating the paper on which the newsletter is printed!

Thanks everyone! You made my job that much easier!



From the Chair's Desk

As you can tell from this newsletter, we have all been busy, busy, busy. Still, we have not forgotten our promise to arrange a gathering of alumni and friends of the Scandinavian Studies Department. We have set our sights on October 1998, when the weather and the leaves are glorious. We plan to arrange a dinner at Tripp Commons in the Memorial Union, which will make up in nostalgia whatever it lacks in culinary finesse. We have a few other ideas in the works, but we would also welcome suggestions from you. What would you like to do or see while you are here? We will do our best to try to accommodate the requests we receive.

Thanks to all of you who responded to our last newsletter. We were glad to know people liked it. Please keep in touch!

Pue