

UW Department of Scandinavian Studies

Newsletter

Jim Leary Gets a Vilas!

Congratulations to Jim Leary who has been chosen as a Vilas Fellow. A Vilas Fellowship is awarded as the result of a campus-wide competition. Professor Leary garnered the distinction so he could pursue research on his new project, *Folk Humor and the Making of Upper Midwestern Culture*. Here are a few words from Professor Leary's research proposal: "Folk humor invariably juxtaposes double meanings that emerge from interactions across linguistic, ethnic, class, and other salient cultural borders. In regions where such



'border-crossing' is a facet of everyday life, regional folk humor fuses inevitable incongruities with familiar and significant characters settings and themes. Thus through regional humor, a place's people, be they as varied as the 'old indian' and the 'BIA man', can nonetheless conjoin to ponder, debate, create, and acknowledge not only the issues that concern them most, but also just who they are and who they are not. Put another way, folk humor does not merely reflect a region's culture, it is a fundamental means by which that culture is constituted

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Alumni Online with Internet Course

This spring semester, "19th Century Scandinavian Literature" has a few alumni guests taking the course alongside the undergraduates. "19th Century Scandinavian Literature" is one of the department's new distance courses, so physical presence in Madison is not required. In order to generate excitement about the U.W. Alumni Conference taking place in

Oslo this summer, the Alumni Association thought it would be a good idea to encourage U.W. alumni to begin exploring Scandinavian culture before they arrive. Five brave souls rose to the challenge. The alumni are following the course from as far a field as Arizona, and even Germany! If the experiment proves successful, we may try it again next spring.

Isak
Dinesen

Recent Books by Faculty

Several of our faculty members have published books in the past year. Here is a sampling of these books, which range from discussing the legend of Saint Anne to folk humor in the Midwest:

Susan C. Brantly *Understanding Isak Dinesen* University of South Carolina Press, 2002
Brantly's book is part of the University of South Carolina Press' series *Understanding Modern European and Latin American Literature*. The book gives an introduction to Dinesen and her works, and analyzes the best known works by Dinesen such as *Seven Gothic Tales* and *Out of Africa*.

"*Understanding Isak Dinesen* will I think become the most accessible and useful port of entry for students and scholars beginning their engagement with Dinesen's texts. It contains most of what students need to become oriented in Dinesen's fictional universe and Dinesen scholarship, so that they can venture out on their own paths of inquiry."

- Ellen Rees *Scandinavian Studies* Winter 2002

James P. Leary *So Ole Says to Lena: Folk Humor of the Upper Midwest 2nd Edition* University of Wisconsin Press, 2001.

Praised in reviews as "one of the best works we currently have on American folk humor" and worthy of "a place of distinction among recent folklore publications," *So Ole Says to Lena: Folk Humor of the Upper Midwest* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), compiled and edited by Jim Leary, is an annotated collection of more than 300 jokes and humorous anecdotes recorded from storytellers in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Sections on "Scandinavians," "Finns," "Loggers," and "Miners" abound with tales of Ole and Lena and Eino and Toivo, as told by such superb storytellers as Oljanna Venden Cunneen of Blue Mounds and Oren Tikkanen of Calumet. Biographies and photographs introduce the tellers; each joke is accompanied by comparative notes, while introductory and concluding essays offer historical and cultural interpretation.

Scott A. Mellor *Hippocrene's Beginner's Swedish Hippocrene Books*, 2003.

Scott Mellor's book on beginner's Swedish, just out this year, is a book intended for people with little or no knowledge of Swedish. It is mainly geared toward those wanting to learn a bit about Sweden and Swedish with the intention of travelling to Scandinavia on business or otherwise. It contains dialogues, exercises and grammar explanations. A good overview of the history of the language, as well as information about the culture, society and politics of the Nordic Countries is also included.

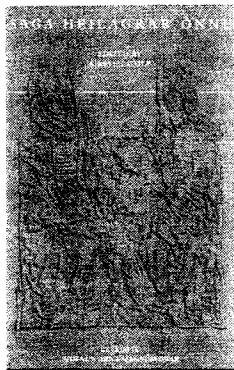
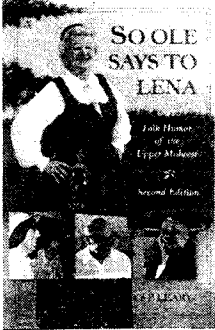
Dick Ringler *Bard of Iceland: Jónas Hallgrímsson, Poet and Scientist*. . . The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002.

The book is about the life and works of the Icelandic poet, Jónas Hallgrímsson. Translations of stories, poems, and scientific articles are included in the book as well as a biographical section on the author, and extensive commentary on his works.

"This book is a tremendous achievement that deserves a warm welcome and will unquestionably open a door to Jónas for speakers of English, not least to scholars and students. The book is at one and the same time a collection of splendid translations and a careful work of scholarship." – Skaftið. Halldórsson, *Morgunblaði*

Kirsten Wolf *Saga Heilagrar Önnu. Stofnun Árna Magnússonar*, 2001

Saga Heilagrar Önnu is a translation of the Low German version of the legend of Saint Anne, "Sunte Annen legend unde all oeres geschlechtes" a text which was printed by Hans Dorn in Braunschweig in 1507, and is commonly referred to as the "St. Annen Buchlein." The Icelandic text survives fragmentarily in two manuscripts. This edition includes the text of both surviving manuscripts with the corresponding Low German text on facing pages. The introduction contains a full paleographic and orthographic description of the manuscripts, as well as a discussion of the cult of Saint Anne and its transmission in Iceland.



Susan Brantly Receives Teaching Award

Professor Susan Brantly has received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. Here is a glimpse at some of the reasons her teaching has received recognition:

"Generally speaking, good students are easier to teach than the not-so-good. Brantly however specializes in both. A student suffering from dyslexia wrote, 'Your class revived my interest in literature, which had been completely destroyed by the workings of my high schools teachers.' A student caught cheating wrote to thank Brantly for a second chance. Another, a friend of a student with a mental disability, wrote to commend Brantly for the individualized attention she had shown."

Brantly has also received recognition through her innovations in the classroom by employing the use of technology in her teaching, such as Power Point and Real Media. She is able to bring the uses of pictures, sound and movie clips to the students, which they would otherwise not have access too. Technology plays a big part in her CD-ROM based course "19th century Scandinavian Literature," and in the CD-ROM based course on the Scandinavian Baroque, which she is currently working on.



Prof. Susan Brantly

N.O.R.S.E. (Nordic Students Etc)

The Department's student club, N.O.R.S.E., which stands for Nordic Students Etc, is in full swing with Scandinavian activities this semester. The club was started just this past year and is open to any student interested in the Nordic countries. So far this year, there have been movie nights and a student/faculty dinner. N.O.R.S.E. is currently working on putting together a Kubb (an old Viking game) tournament in

cooperation with Madison's Scandinavian American Club. N.O.R.S.E. is also hoping to get together enough people to start playing the game Inibandi, which is a very popular sport in Scandinavia, similar to indoor field hockey. More Nordic Film evenings, a *syttende mai* celebration, and a trip to Old World Wisconsin are planned for later in the semester.



Revised & Redesigned Department Website

Department Webmaster Scott Mellor recently released a new layout and design to the Department's website. You can check out our revamped site at <http://scandinavian.wisc.edu>.

2003 SASS Conference

Six Graduate Students and seven Faculty/Staff members will be giving papers at the 93rd Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study (SASS), which will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota May 1- 4th, 2003.

William Banks "Kierkegaard and Ibsen Revisited: The Dialectics of Despair in *Brand*"

Susan Brantly "Stiernhielm's *Hercules* and Veronese's Allegorical Paintings"

Thomas Dubois "Sts. Sunniva and Henrik: Scandinavian Martyr Saints in their Hagiographic and National Contexts"

John Eason "*The Old Chevalier* and Simone de Beauvoir's Theory of the Hetaira"

Peggy Hager "Using Wireless Devices in the Beginning Language Classroom"

Niels Ingwersen "Glahn Dreams: Eyes Wide Shut in Hamsun's *Pan*"

Michael Lange "Knowledge and Conceptions of Space in Tarjei Vesaas's *Fuglane*"

Scott A. Mellor "Saint Ansgar: His Swedish Mission and its Larger Context"

Dick Ringler and Peter Gorman "Icelandic Online"

Milda Ostrauskaite "Deconstructing Feminine Stereotypes with Language: Cecilie Løveid's *Barock Friise* (1993)"

Nete Schmidt "Jan Sonnergaard's *Radiator* and Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*"

Thor Templin "*The Greatest Misfortune Ever to Befall Gods and Men*: Meanings in the Death of Balder"

Katarina Tucker "Heidenstam and Wilde: Coincidence or Plagiarism? The Case of Hans Alienus and Dorian Gray"

Graduate Students...

Here is a list of our current graduate students:

Todd Ambelang, MA Cand.

Jenny Aune, Ph.D.

William Banks, M.A. Cand.

Brad Berkland, M.A. Cand.

Vendula Cachotska, M.A. Cand.

Jana Carlson, M.A. Cand

David Drake, M.A. Cand.

Casey Dinger, M.A. Cand.

John Eason, M.A. Cand.

Mary Jo Fröden, M.A Cand.

Jeffrey Hancks, M.A Cand.

Nathen Hillman, M.A. Cand.

Suzanne Martin, M.A. Cand.

Kjerstin Moody, M.A. Cand.

Milda Ostrauskaite, Ph.D. Cand

Michael Lange, Ph.D Cand.

Thor Templin, M.A. Cand.

Katarina Tucker, Ph.D. Cand.

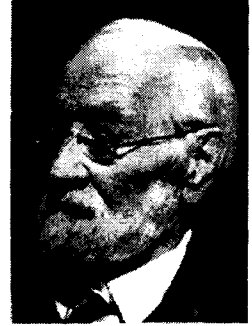
Susan Vincent, M.A. Cand.

New Scholarship Fund

The Department is delighted to announce the establishment of a new scholarship fund. The Cullander - Raoul Wallenberg Fund was established by Cecil C.H. Cullander (BS 1944, MD 1946) and Jeanne F. Cullander (BS 1945, MS 1946), for the purpose of memorializing Raoul Wallenberg's heroic activities in saving more than 100,000 Hungarian Jews from Nazi destruction during World War II. Monies from this fund

will be used to support undergraduate and graduate students of Scandinavian Studies in need of financial assistance.

Cecil Cullander was a dear man and a good friend to the Department. We will enjoy remembering him every time we make an award in his name. We are also especially pleased to honor the memory of Raoul Wallenberg, who was indeed a hero.



Rasmus B. Andersen,
Department's Founder

Niels Ingwersen Announces Retirement Plans

Niels Ingwersen has announced his plans to retire in January 2004 and plans to spend his retirement writing on Scandinavian literature and folklore and going back and forth from Wyoming and Wisconsin.

We would love to collect memories and stories about Niels from his former students. We will collect them and give them to him as a present.

Send your story to:

Susan Brantly
Scandinavian Studies
1306 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706

Grad. Student lands Assistant Professor Position

Jeffrey Hancks has accepted the position of Assistant Professor for Library Services at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois. He received an MA in Library and Information Studies from Wisconsin and will soon finish an MA in Scandinavian Studies.

Save the Date!

On November 1, 2003, the Department will be sponsoring a day-long symposium on The Nordic Storyteller in the Pyle Center on the U.W. campus. The purpose of the symposium is to share with an academic and general public the myriad ways in which storytelling plays a role in daily life in the Nordic region. The papers presented will also highlight the significant ways in which Nordic folklorists use stories as a means of exploring key issues facing Nordic peoples in the past and present. Information about the event will be posted on our web site as it becomes available. Thanks to the generous support of the Nordic Council, the symposium is free and open to the public. Please join us!

Contributors and Editors for this Issue:
Katarina Tucker, Susan Brantly & Thor Templin

Summer 2003

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Department of Scandinavian Studies
University of Wisconsin - Madison
1306 Van Hise Hall
Madison, WI 53706

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