



Anneli and Karl Kawders at the Midsummer event in June.

FRIENDS OF SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

As fall is upon us again with new workloads and shorter days, I treasure memories of the long, light, and carefree days of summer. Specifically, what I recall this year is the Midsummer celebration.

We – FSS that is – sponsored a Midsummer celebration in Alton Baker Park this past June 19th. Around 50 people gathered to tie flower wreaths, share Scandinavian food and other delicacies, and, of course, dance.

Talented musicians provided the perfect atmosphere with traditional Scandinavian folk music. The Elliker-Vaagsberg family, David, Claire, and Karl, played nyckelharpa (key harp), fiddle, and bass, and Chester Pietka played the accordion. They were joined by our own Michael Raymer on guitar. The hambo, schottis, polka, and waltz proved irresistible.

I vividly recall the image of men, women, and children, young and old, holding hands in a big ring, preparing for various folk dance formations. This celebration, in all its simplicity, reminds us of the pure joy and appreciation of nature, music, and togetherness that is deeply rooted in the Scandinavian culture. The success of this event confirms that it also is well suited for Oregon. ~ Harriet



Friends' President Harriet Bagdade

Calendar of Scandinavian Events

Tues., Oct. 12 • 7:00 pm • International Resource Center/EMU

Scandinavian Film Series: *Cool and Crazy* (2001), directed by Knut Erik Jensen. This diverting documentary is about a male choir from a remote fishing village in Norway. The film captures the predominantly elderly Norwegian singers as they rehearse in preparation for a major tour of Russia. (105 min.)

Tues., Nov. 9 • 7:00 pm • International Resource Center/EMU

Scandinavian Film Series: *Insomnia* (1997), directed by Erik Skjoldberg. Two criminal investigators from the capital city of Oslo travel to northern Norway to assist the local police in a murder case. Another murder soon follows, and the investigation ends in an intense manhunt where the stakes are high both for the hunter and the hunted. *Insomnia* is a contemporary thriller with dramatic turns and unexpected results. (90 min.)

Thur., Nov. 18 • 7:00 pm • 110 Willamette Hall

7:00 - 7:30 2004 General Meeting for Friends of Scandinavian Studies

7:30 - 9:00 Lecture by Dr. Ellen Rees, new SCAN professor:

Cora Sandel's Alberta and Jacob and Problems of Autobiographical Fiction.

Tues., Dec. 7 • 7:00 pm • International Resource Center/EMU

Scandinavian Film Series: *The Other Side of Sunday* (1996), directed by Berit Nesheim. Maria, the vicar's daughter, calculates that by the time of her confirmation, she will have spent 640 hours sitting in church, and decides that this is far too much wasted time. She longs for a freer existence in which she could wear earrings, meet boys, and go out with friends. A festival favorite, this film offers a charming light-hearted portrayal of a young girl as she faces the challenges of adolescence. (103 min.)

We are planning to continue Scandinavian Folk Dancing at the Sons of Norway Lodge. Check the website calendar for information update. (<http://scandinavian.uoregon.edu>)

Check out our website at <http://scandinavian.uoregon.edu>

Jon Erlandson Gives Commencement Address



Jon M. Erlandson (B.A., 1980; M.A., 1983, Ph.D., 1988, UC-Santa Barbara) has been a professor at UO since 1990 and was selected to give the commencement address for the 2004 spring graduation.

Jon is an archaeologist, who has been engaged in fieldwork in Iceland since 2001. Last summer marked his fourth trip. He is appreciative of the support for his work from the people of Iceland as evidenced by their television and newspaper coverage. The following is an excerpt from his 2004 commencement address:

“The (Icelandic) sagas are the oral histories of the Viking Age, written down in the 13th and 14th centuries by Icelandic historians, but long dismissed by

Scandinavian scholars as fiction.

“A farmer who lives not far from Reykjavík on land prominently mentioned in several of the sagas, implored Icelandic archaeologists to explore his farm. The sagas name it as the home of some of Iceland’s most celebrated historical figures, who built one of the first churches in Viking Iceland. Local people had long known a small mound on the farm as Church Knoll, but Icelandic archaeologists dismissed their knowledge, for they were taught that the sagas were works of fiction.

“Two American friends of mine were interested in the historical foundations of the sagas, however, and in 2001 we excavated a small trench at Church Knoll. In one day we identified the foundations of a church built a thousand years ago and a Viking grave field that confirms several accounts from the sagas. At nearby Elfin Hill, we found the remains of a Viking cremation – the first documented in Iceland – where a chieftan was burned on a mound shaped like a symbolic ship. Icelandic archaeologists insisted that Viking cremations do not exist in Iceland, but further work has proven our claims.

“Participating in this project, I have come to understand that we are often blinded by what we know – or think we know – and that imagination and creative thinking can be crucial to scientific discovery. If we had been pinned beneath the weight of prevailing knowledge, we would never have searched for the ruins of a small church in the Mosfell Valley, or found a Viking cremation at Elfin Hill.”

Jon plans to continue his work in Iceland, which was recently featured in a short documentary film. He is on sabbatical during the 2004-05 academic year. ■



Michael Raymer, Claire and David Elliker-Vaagsberg, and Chester Pietka at the Midsummer event in June.

Important Notice

The Board of the Friends of Scandinavian Studies would like to update membership files. For your convenience expiration dates are on the address labels to this newsletter. Please take a moment to fill in and return the renewal form with your membership dues.

To help control costs, it may become necessary to remove non-paying members from the mailing list.

Please contact Terri Monk at (541) 346-3194 or tmonk@uoregon.edu if you are unable to pay dues but wish to remain on our mailing list.

Fall Scandinavian Studies Courses

In addition to Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish language courses, the following Scandinavian literature classes will be offered fall term:

SCAN 250 Masks and Ecstatic Experience, Professor Michael Stern

In this class we will read a variety of texts and view several films that depict ecstatic experiences through the use of various masking techniques. These narratives tell tales of gender confusion, love, sexual trauma, religious longing, and madness. We will investigate how the inexpressible is expressed through the use of various literary and cinematic techniques, and how masks are used to construct identity. Readings include works by Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen), Knut Hamsun, Henrik Ibsen, Søren Kierkegaard, and August Strindberg. The films are directed by Ingmar Bergman and Thomas Vinterberg.

SCAN 354 Genres in Scandinavian Literature, Short Stories, and Tales Professor Ellen Rees

This course has two objectives: To engage critically with short prose texts by some of Scandinavia’s most important writers (H.C. Andersen, Isak Dinesen, Peter Høeg, and Pär Lagerkvist, among others) and to gain an understanding of the main developments in short story theory.

Anna Leppänen Gains Valuable Teaching Experience at the UO

Anna Leppänen says her first impression of Eugene was that of a small city with lots of green and no tall buildings, “though the campus felt really big, and I had to carry a map with me at all times for the first two weeks of classes.”

Anna was born and raised in Kangasala, a small town outside Tampere, Finland. After graduating with a master’s in comparative literature (she speaks Finnish, Swedish, French and English), she decided to look for a job in the U.S. She claims to have come to the UO somewhat by accident: “I wrote Virpi (Zuck) and told her I was looking for a teaching job. She wrote back and said the UO had an exchange program in Tampere, and that if I applied for a GTF position on the UO campus, I would probably get it since no one else had applied for it.”

“I really enjoy teaching,” she says, “and the University of Oregon was a good starting point for me since I want to continue to teach in the U.S.” Anna taught the Finnish second-year students during the 2003-04 academic year.

Anna’s favorite things to do in Eugene were going to movies, spending time on the coast, and hiking with Helmut Plant. You can find Anna this year in Hancock, Michigan, at Finlandia University, a small private university founded by Finnish immigrants over 100 years ago. ■



Anna on the UO campus in early summer

Friends of Scandinavian Studies Scholarship Winners

The Friends awarded two \$500 scholarships for the 2004-05 year to two deserving undergraduate students, Marcus Cederström and Rachael Hansen.

Marcus Cederström was born in Sweden, though he was raised primarily in the U.S. He is pursuing a minor in Scandinavian Studies, as well as majors in business and history and another minor in economics. He wants to be not only bilingual but multicultural as well.

Through the University’s study abroad program, Marcus has studied Swedish culture and language for a semester at Uppsala University. Since his return, he has had independent reading courses on classics of Swedish literature (in Swedish, of course) and participated in the Scandinavian Women Writers course. His scholarship enables him to continue studies here at the UO.

Rachael Hansen has Swedish ties as well: her grandmother’s family emigrated from Sweden in the 1880s. She is majoring in international studies with a focus on Swedish. She learned Swedish, and some personal and Swedish history, during a year abroad while she was in high school. During the winter and spring terms of 2005, she hopes to again immerse herself in Swedish culture – as a participant in the study abroad program in Uppsala. Rachael will use her scholarship to supplement her summer earnings as a wildland firefighter.

The Friends want to thank all scholarship applicants. The next opportunity for students of Scandinavian Studies to submit applications will be during spring term 2005. For more information on scholarships, please go to our website at <http://scandinavian.uoregon.edu>. ■

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