

# SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES SCAN

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## NOTICE

### You are invited to The Scandinavian Studies Association 2022 Annual General Meeting

Monday, May 9<sup>TH</sup> 7:30 P.M.  
Dutch Canadian Centre  
Home of the Scandinavians  
13312 - 142 Street NW, Edmonton

NOTE: Scandinavian Studies Association's by-laws define Association membership based on being 18 years of age or older and having completed volunteer service (such as being a casino volunteer) or having made other contributions to the Association.

#### Guest Speaker

Dr. Natalie Van Deusen  
Associate Professor & Henry Cabot and Linnea Lodge Scandinavian Professor  
University of Alberta

Speaking on

*"Modern Interpretations of Norse Mythology"*

Light refreshments will be served.

For more information, please contact

Nordahl Flakstad (Phone 780-444-9199 Email [nflakstad@shaw.ca](mailto:nflakstad@shaw.ca))

#### Scandinavian Studies Association By-laws

#### Notice of Proposal to Adopt New By-laws to Replace the Current By-Laws

In accordance with the Province of Alberta Societies Act, this is notice that a motion will be presented by way of a Special Resolution at the Scandinavian Studies Association's Annual General Meeting on Monday May 9th, 2022, to rescind the Association's current By-Laws and replace them with new By-Laws.

Please see notice above for the location and time of the Annual General Meeting.

Copies of the current By-Laws and the proposed By-Laws will be available at the meeting. For advanced electronic copies of these documents, please contact Carl Sorensen at [sorensn1@telusplanet.net](mailto:sorensn1@telusplanet.net)



# Scandinavian Connection Still Strong At the U of A's Augustana Campus

Scandinavian studies have deep roots in Alberta. That is certainly true of the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta. The Camrose-based institution traces its origins to 1910 when Camrose Lutheran College was established as a residential Lutheran-church-based high school. It largely served Alberta's then-growing Norwegian community. For its first two decades, it offered a "newcomers" course with the objectives of familiarizing young Norwegian immigrants with Canadian ways and the English-language, while also seeking to retain Norwegian fluency and cultural connections.

In 1959, some university-level courses began to be offered at the junior college. That eventually led to it becoming a full undergraduate degree-granting institution in 1984. In 1990, it assumed the name Augustana University College. Then, in 2004, as part of an Alberta post-secondary-education restructuring, it came under the wing of its northern neighbour by becoming the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta.

Although Norwegian has remained integral to the institution's DNA, a clearly defined Scandinavian Studies program emerged in the 1980s but then fell into dormancy for a while until 1994. That was when Dr. Ingrid Urberg joined the faculty. Over the last three decades, in many ways, her name became synonymous with a revitalized BA majors program in Scandinavian Studies at Augustana. Rather than spread its linguistic curriculum over several Scandinavian languages, given its history, Augustana has focused on Norwegian. However, its non-language Scandinavian courses do take a wider view of Nordic literature and culture. Access to Scandinavian classes remain open to students with aspirations beyond an Arts degree to also include those working toward science, management and music degrees. In many ways, Augustana aligns with the background and experience of other small-to-medium-sized North American colleges having ethnic roots.

Ingrid Urberg obtained her PhD in Scandinavian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an institution with an established tradition in Nordic Studies. However, she initially embarked on a journey to becoming another type of

doctor, namely an MD. Aiming for a medical degree, she started out at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. While there – prompted partly by her family roots – she enrolled in courses that led to a major in Scandinavian, to complement the one in biology.

She received a scholarship to spend the fourth year of her undergraduate degree in Norway where she took and became immersed in a regular curriculum – all in Norwegian – at Bø in Telemark. That campus now forms part of the University of Southeastern Norway. It did not have a program geared toward international students and Ingrid found herself in literature and culture classes taught in Norwegian.

"I didn't speak any English for a full year, except when I talked by phone to my

*"Augustana aligns with the background and experience of other small-to-medium-sized North American colleges having ethnic roots."*

parents two times," Ingrid explains, adding: "I really fell in love with Norway when I was an undergrad living there."

She returned to the U.S., and while she hadn't quite decided to set aside the stethoscope in favour of sagas, she did enroll at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in its Scandinavian Studies master's program.

Good fortune stayed with Ingrid when a former instructor offered her a one-year assignment teaching language and literature at Luther College. The short-term stint stretched into three years before she returned to Madison for her PhD focusing on Norwegian-America literature. This was followed by a three-year teaching appointment at the University of Oregon.

"The doors just kept opening" when she applied for and was offered a tenure-track position in Canada at Augustana University College, where she has



Dr. Ingrid Urberg (standing), Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies, with two of her students at the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus, where classes sizes lend themselves to participants receiving individual attention. (Photo Mark Fulton)

remained, now as an Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies in the Department of Fine Arts and Humanities.

"I've been fortunate. It just happened for me. I have had the opportunities and I took hold of them," Ingrid observes.

Although there had been a lapse of a few years of instruction when she arrived, Augustana already had Scandinavian courses on the books. They included first and second-year Norwegian, which Ingrid reintroduced. This, while offering new courses in areas such as Scandinavian folk literature.

When she came to Camrose, there already was a Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Alberta, led and fostered by the late Professor Chris Hale, starting in the 1970s. "My first connection with the University of Alberta, now its North Campus, had to do with Chris Hale. When I arrived, Chris invited me to Edmonton and said: 'We have got to work together.' We gave guest lectures in each other's classes at least once a year, and also worked together through the Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Canada." (See accompanying article.)

Once Dr. Natalie Van Deusen replaced Dr. Hale upon his retirement, co-operation and exchanges have continued. "In the case of the teaching, we try to create opportunities where students can benefit from the expertise of the other," Ingrid stresses.

Since Natalie and John Eason (also with Scandinavian Studies on the North Campus), have very differing backgrounds in terms of specialities, it makes sense to continue that co-operation.

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# AASSC Marks 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By Dr. Ingrid Urberg

*Acting President of the Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Canada*

This year the Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Canada, AASSC, is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

Founded in Ottawa in 1982 by a group of Canadian academics interested in creating a space for researchers to share their work on Scandinavia and the Nordic region, this interdisciplinary group welcomes members from North America, Europe and around the world.



ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF  
**SCANDINAVIAN  
STUDIES IN CANADA**

Our members conduct research on myriad areas within the social sciences and the humanities including demography, Sámi studies, sociology, art, literature, language, theatre and film, music, geography, folklore, religion, geography, Norse sagas, archaeology and more.

In addition to an annual spring conference, AASSC publishes a journal – *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies* – and sponsors two annual publication awards. The Gurli Agard Woods Undergraduate Publication Award honours one of our founders, Dr. Gurli Woods, who taught at Carleton University for many years. The Marna Feldt Graduate Publication Award honours another longtime AASSC member, Marna Feldt, who worked for the Swedish Information Service. These awards are a way of recognizing our history, and looking forward to our future. Please visit our website ([www.aassc.com](http://www.aassc.com)) to learn more about AASSC. 🐾



Dr. Ingrid Urberg, Acting President of the the Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies in Canada, pictured beside the replica of Norway's Gol Stave Church. Alberta volunteers of Scandinavian background built it for display at the Scandinavian Showcase at Edmonton's 2003 Klondike Days. The Scandinavian Trade and Cultural Society sponsored the project, which first stood at Edmonton's Northlands Exhibition grounds. The stave church has found a permanent home at on the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus in Camrose. (Photo Mark Fulton)

## Augustana Campus *continued from page 2*

The Scandinavian clubs on the two campuses also have interacted, including through joint excursions. A point is made to have guest speakers invited to one campus also to have a chance to address the other location.

"Those are things I really worked hard on with Chris. I think it is important to co-operate," says Ingrid.

**"Students are drawn to Scandinavian for assorted reasons – possibly family background, or interest in working or studying in Norway."**

She notes that while there have been challenges during Covid, there also have been opportunities for Augustana to demonstrate the value of smaller classes, and more direct and individualized instructor-student interaction, made easier on a smaller campus.

Like other post-secondary institutions, Augustana has undergone various program revisions and consolidations in recent decades. At Augustana that led to discontinuing certain majors, Scandinavian

Studies included. That did not mean the courses were not taught. However, students ended up with a broader modern-languages degree based on study of two or more languages, plus a linguistic and cultural immersion experience via travel and international study (including at the University of Bergen and the University of Oslo International Summer School).

As part of a more recent development, Augustana has moved toward a project-based core, allowing for several interdisciplinary majors, one of them being Creativity and Culture, which can encompass several subject areas, including Scandinavian Studies.

"We are still teaching disciplinary courses, but we are also developing new interdisciplinary and disciplinary offerings to service our core. We have evolved with the times, and it is making Augustana very distinctive, both in terms of our course offerings and core."

These changes have widened Ingrid's teaching responsibilities whereby in a given term she is teaching a Norwegian-language course, one on Scandinavian literature or culture, as well an interdis-

ciplinary or humanities course where it is possible to weave in Scandinavian content. Ingrid's classes are typically small, between 12 to 20 students, and this allows her to give her students individual attention.

As with any program, students are drawn to Scandinavian for assorted reasons – possibly family background, or interest in working or studying in Norway. However, Ingrid notes that in a recent class of a dozen students she had students from Nigeria, Russia, China, Mexico, the U.S and Canada. With its active winter sports program, Augustana attracts competitive skiers with international aspirations, some wanting to include Norwegian in their kit.

As noted, Covid has had an impact. Augustana followed the same directives as other UofA sites. Only recently has it moved back to in-person instruction. "Although online is not ideal, I feel it has worked for me. We still had community – a big part of language-learning – online and the students have learned. With small classes, engagement has remained and I have been present for my students."

"But," Ingrid admits: "it's really good to be back in the classroom." 🐾



# President's Message

As with so much else, this *Scandinavian Scan* newsletter marks an awakening of sorts following the Covid-forced hibernation we have all endured. The fact that we are planning an in-person Annual General Meeting at the Dutch Canadian Centre on May 9th, is, in itself, cause for celebration.

Besides seeing each other in-person following too much Zooming, it also will offer you an update on the Association and what has happened relative to Scandinavian Studies at University of Alberta. That latter will be provided by Dr. Natalie Van Deusen, Associate Professor & Henry Cabot and Linnea Lodge Scandinavian Professor at the U of A.

She has also kindly agreed to speak on "Modern Interpretations of Norse Mythology." This lecture will cover modern interpretations of Norse mythology, from literature to film and television. It will discuss the appeal of Norse mythology in the 20th and 21st centuries, and will also focus on some of the ways in which the material has been historically misappropriated.

I am personally looking forward to the presentation,

which I hope also gets us back on track with Association-sponsored Speaker Events covering various Nordic topics. Such presentations have become a featured part of the Association's yearly calendar.

Since our May 9th gathering is an AGM, by necessity, some business will be transacted. That includes an opportunity to approve revised Association bylaws. The pandemic led the Association's board to meet online. Virtual meetings were legitimized by changes to the Alberta Societies Act.

However, the board decided it made sense to provide for that option in our bylaws – thereby giving future boards clear and easily-to-access information. In reviewing the bylaws, under the able guidance of board member Carl Sorensen, it became apparent the current 30-plus-year-old bylaws could benefit from some touch-ups and streamlining. (Please check page 1 of this newsletter if you wish to receive an advance electronic copy of the proposed and current bylaws.)

I look forward to seeing many of you on May 9th.

Nordahl Flakstad  
President, Scandinavian  
Studies Association 🐦

## Contact Us

For additional information about the Scandinavian Studies Program and the Scandinavian Studies Association, check

[Modern Languages and Cultural Studies \(ualberta.ca\)](http://ualberta.ca)

or contact the Association's President,  
Nordahl Flakstad  
email: [nflakstad@shaw.ca](mailto:nflakstad@shaw.ca)  
phone: 780-444-9199

## Verna Larson Turns One Hundred

Verna Larson, whose name will be familiar to many in Alberta's Scandinavian community, is seen as she celebrated her one-hundred birthday in early March.



Verna Larson

Along with other members of the local Swedish community, such as the late Linnea Lodge and the late Lennart Petersson, Verna can be counted among the early and long-time supporters of the Scandinavian Studies Association. While Verna was not a founding director, she did rate a mention in the minutes of the Association's very first meeting, held February 13th, 1990. The minutes specifically identify Verna as among those being asked to organize and serve on the newly formed Association's committees.

Verna's birthday was celebrated at a gathering in Sherwood Park on March 5th. The Scandinavian Studies Association joins the many others congratulating Verna on her milestone birthday and in thanking her for many years of dedicated service to the Swedish and wider Scandinavian community. 🐦

## Canadian Initiative for Nordic Studies

**Editor's Note:** *In addition to the Scandinavian Studies Association, mainly focused upon Alberta and the University of Alberta, two organizations with national reach are dedicated to Nordic studies. One is the Association for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies (see item on previous page), centred on academic research. The other is Canadian Initiative for Nordic Studies (CINS), details of which are given below.*

The Canadian Initiative for Nordic Studies (CINS) was established in 1987 to promote and support multidisciplinary academic, professional, and cultural interest and exchanges between Canada and the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, including the Faeroe Islands and Greenland. CINS has a national mandate and is governed by a Board of Directors.

In addition to the graduate and undergraduate scholarships CINS funds on an annual basis, we are open to funding other projects and initiatives to

further the multidisciplinary linkages and exchanges between Canada and the Nordic countries. In the past, these have included guest speakers for conferences, publishing of scholarly journals, and supporting student and community groups.

Most recently, CINS provided financial support to the international peer-reviewed journal *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies* to transition it to an online journal housed by the University of Alberta through the Open Journal Systems (OJS).

CINS is currently working with the SOS Media Group to update its brand and logo, and develop an engaging and user-friendly website. This website will allow CINS to improve its capability to serve as a hub and clearinghouse on information, events, projects, and initiatives of interest to the Canadian-Nordic audience.

Dr. Rickard Enstroem  
Chair, Canadian Initiative for  
Nordic Studies 🐦