Barbro Osher ProSuecia Foundation upgrades Professorship in Swedish to an Endowed Chair in Swedish Studies

The Barbro Osher ProSuecia Foundation has upgraded the Barbro Osher Endowed Professorship in Swedish Studies to an Endowed Chair in Swedish Studies with a most generous donation now totaling $1,000,000.

A native of Stockholm, Sweden, Barbro Osher graduated from Stockholm University with a degree in languages and political science. Osher is deeply concerned that Scandinavian Studies Departments are loosing ground at American universities. She feels that Scandinavia stands for social awareness and responsibility towards others both locally and globally. The Nordic countries - despite their small size - have been at the forefront in social sciences as well as scientific research. They have well-defined policies to deal with issues such as global warming and sustainable development. The establishment of an Endowed Chair in Swedish studies speak to Barbro Oshers conviction that Swedish Studies and Scandinavian Departments not only stand for the study of languages and literature, they also stand for developing vision and responsible attitudes on a global scale.

Barbro Osher is Honorary Consul of Sweden in San Francisco. She also serves as the Chair for both the Bernard Osher Foundation and the Barbro Osher ProSuecia Foundation.

The present holder of the Barbro Osher Endowed Chair in Swedish Studies is Professor Ann-Charlotte Gavel Adams. The Endowed Chair will support her teaching and research in Swedish Studies, especially in literature, language, and cultural studies.

UW Students and Faculty Celebrate 74th Birthday of H.M. Queen Margrethe II with Danish Community

On Wednesday, April 16th the Department of Scandinavian Studies at University of Washington and the Royal Danish Guards
Association hosted a well-attended reception, held at the Northwest Danish Association to celebrate the 74th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

Over 80 guests attended the event which Kenneth Olsen (Royal Danish Guards Association, president of the Pacific NW Chapter) and UW Professor Marianne Stecher had arranged.

At the reception OKS Kristian Gedso Holst and OKS Alex Bylander from the Royal Danish Guards Drum Corps performed. The Danish students and faculty from UW, lead by TA Kevin Jenson, sang the Danish National Anthems and the rest of the guests joined in in a Danish community singing style. HM Queen Margrethe II was celebrated with a champagne toast. Later, UW Visiting Danish lecturer Desiree Ohrbeck was also toasted in recognition of her April 16th birthday!

The guests were served refreshments and delicious Danish appetizers prepared by caterer Lori Barber and Danish birthday cake by Larsen Bakery.

Thank you to the Danish community, the NWDA, the Danish Brotherhood Lodge #29, and other individuals who made donations in sponsorship of the event.

Guntis Šmidchens, Associate Professor of Baltic Studies, has been awarded the Cross of Recognition, 4th Class, by the government of Latvia. Guntis will be traveling to Riga, Latvia to accept the award from the President of Latvia, Andris Berzins. The Cross of Recognition (Croix de la reconnaissance) was established in Liepaja, Latvia in 1710 and reinstated in Latvia in 1938 in commemoration of the glory days of the Duchy of Kurzeme and Zemgale. It is given to people who have demonstrated outstanding love of their Fatherland, as well as for great achievements in the realm of politics, culture, science, athletics or education. The Baltic Studies Program, under the leadership of Professor Šmidchens, has achieved outstanding results in advancing the languages and knowledge about the Baltic States. The Program is an important part of the Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington and for that Professor Guntis Šmidchens was selected by the government of Latvia to be honored with the award of the Cross of Recognition.

March 2014 was the release of Professor Marianne Stecher's new book, "The Creative Dialectic in Karen Blixen's Essays: On Gender, Nazi Germany, and Colonial Desire." The University of Chicago Press, which is distributing the book, has supplied this description:

"Best known for Out of Africa and Babette's Feast, Karen Blixen—often writing under the name Isak Dinesen—was an iconic figure in Scandinavia and the Anglo-American world, celebrated as a literary star and a pundit in newspapers, radio, and lecture halls. Many of her topical pieces would later be published as essays, and in this book Marianne Stecher offers the first critical examination of them, exploring Blixen's sagacious reflections on some of the twentieth century's greatest challenges. Stecher uncovers a 'creative dialectic' in Blixen's work, an interplay of complementary opposites that Blixen saw as fundamental to human life and artistic creativity."

You can learn more about the book at the University of Chicago Press. You can also buy the book at a discounted rate if you purchase...
Guntis Šmidchens' New Book Explores "The Singing Revolution"

Professor Šmidchens' book, *The Power of Song*, documents the Baltic nations' successful, nonviolent, resistance to the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s. When the Soviet Union began to pressure the Baltic nations, their citizens responded by staging singing protests. "The way nonviolent movements work, every case seems impossible," Šmidchens says. "This one was no different. But like many others before it, it did work." To learn more about the book or the remarkable story it documents, follow the links below.

Perspectives article on *The Power of Song*

Video Interview by the UWashingtonPress

*The Power of Song* was released in January 2014.

Andrew Nestingen Presents on Aki Kaurismäki and the Finnish Tango

Professor Andrew Nestingen gave a presentation at the Nordic Heritage Museum where he discussed the presence and use of the Finnish tango in the films of Aki Kaurismäki. This discussion coincided with the release of Prof. Nestingen's recent book, *The Cinema of Aki Kaurismäki: Contrarian Stories*. Be sure to watch Prof. Nestingen's presentation, linked below, if you were unable to attend the event.

Video of Andrew Nestingen's Lecture

Please Welcome Caroli Leiman - Our New Office Assistant

Caroli is new to the UW as a staff member, but graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University in 2010. Caroli also has a Bachelor of Arts in Choreography from Tallinn Pedagogical University in Estonia. She has been here in Seattle as part of the Baltic Community for over eight years. We are very excited to have her join our Department! Her hours will be Monday through Friday from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.
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