

AMERICAN SCANDINAVIAN ASSOCIATION

Promoting Cultural Exchange between the United States and the Nordic Countries

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Coming up

Joint Nordic Midsummer Fest

Carderock Park
Sunday June 22nd 3-5 pm

Swedish Midsummer on the Mall

Saturday June 20, 6-10 pm



ASA Monthly Meeting

Annual Meeting and Henry Hanson Award

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 7 PM

**St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish
6701 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, MD**

The Annual Business meeting with reports from ASA officers and election of officers for our board for 2025-2026 (see slate below). We thank all the board members who have served and welcome new board members.

We will also give out the annual Henry Hanson Award, recognizing a person who has provided outstanding service to ASA and the Nordic community. Awardee is to be announced. We are honored to host members of Washington's Spelmanslag as they entertain us with traditional Scandinavian music.

ASA President's Message

Dear Members,

I am about to draw the curtains on a cumulative six years as President of ASA! What a road I have traveled over the 42 years since Henry Hanson brought Gerry and me into an organization that had just spun off from the American-Scandinavian Foundation in New York City. Henry brought in new members routinely and was instrumental in creating programs during a period when members found pleasure in meeting in person. His outstanding dedication rubbed off on those around him. ASA grew in numbers as it strengthened its membership by providing informative meetings from all of the Nordic countries each year. In addition, Gerry and I invited other Nordic clubs to join Midsummer. Gerry also bolstered Lucia and started Valborg here in McLean. Certainly, we had absorbed Henry's enthusiasm!

However, enthusiasm alone cannot make a meeting! Speakers with enticing subject matter always draws a crowd. Secondly, officers that work together for the common good of an organization in the ways that Henry demonstrated cements an association together. And now we are waking up to the reality that Covid taught us. Zoom meetings work very well. They may be the future for many ASA meetings, too.

Nevertheless, our ASA May meeting should always be in person. Not only do we celebrate the election of officers but also the recipient of the 2025 Henry Hanson Award. I encourage our members to join us on Tuesday, May 20th at 7pm for our yearly business meeting.

Note: May 20th is a Tuesday at St. John's Episcopal Church in Chevy Chase.

Please support ASA with your presence. Please come to enjoy special refreshments on a very special evening at ASA. I, very much, would like to have your support one last time.

With warm greetings,
Margaret Bergvall Schueman
President, ASA



The University of Oslo has launched the [Great Viking Survey](https://vikingsurvey.org/) to explore how people across the world perceive and engage with the Vikings as history and heritage, and to map how media and academia shape these views. **Anyone over 18 can participate. Take the survey at <https://vikingsurvey.org/>**

ASA Nominations

Slate of Board Nominations May 2025-2026

PRESIDENT: Juris Lazdins
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Margaret Schueman
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: Nick Hashimoto
SECRETARY: Christina Lazdins
TREASURER: Matt Ferguson
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR: Barbara Hangemanole

MEMBERS AT LARGE

1. Kirsti Noring
2. Inger Dreng
3. Lisa Jacobson

Past Presidents: Margaret Schueman, Christina Lazdins
Newsletter editor: Anne Marie Hvid
Swedish Advisor: Viveca Stahl

ASA Meetup Group

Nordic Language Meetup
May the 4th (Force) Be with You
Nordic Connections to Star Wars
Sunday, May 4, 1:30 - 3:30 pm



On May 4th, 1:30-3:30 pm, join Nordic Language Meetup at Barracks Row Main Street, the unofficial site of DC's Star Wars Weekend! Do you know which Star Wars movie was filmed in Norway and starred Norwegian locals as rebel extras? Which two famous Danish actor brothers have both appeared in Star Wars? Which character did Stellan Skarsgård play? That many of the scenes from the planet Eadu in Rogue One were filmed in Iceland? And that two characters in The Phantom Menace actually speak Finnish to each other? Join us at Ted's Bulletin Capitol Hill to learn about the many connections between Star Wars and the Nordic countries. We will also use this opportunity to practice speaking in our Nordic languages following the Star Wars discussion. To sign up or for more information, go to: <https://www.meetup.com/nordic-language-meetup/events/307415286/>

Invitation: Syttende Mai Picnic in the Park 2025

May 17, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Carderock Park, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Towpath,
Potomac, MD 20854

Join us on Saturday May 17 to celebrate Norway's Constitution Day! All welcome! Free admission! Live Music • Parade • Children's Games • Free Hot Dogs, Ice Cream, Snacks and Drinks • Guests are welcome to bring their own picnics as well. For more information and to RSVP, visit <https://www.norhamdc.org/events/syttende-mai-picnic-in-the-park-2025>



Nordic Notes

By Marshall H. Cohen (Bigmarshnewsphotos.com)

Danish Parliamentarian Ida Auken on Denmark's Recent Relationship with the United States

The Trump administration speaking through its Vice President JD Vance recently has shown an unexpected misreading of the Danish-American relationship, which until recently has been strong and cooperative. Following the signing of our Constitution on September 17, 1787, Denmark, which in the eighteenth century included Norway, Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and the Danish Virgin Islands, was one of the first countries to publish and spread the ideals of the United States' Constitution. Also, Denmark is one of few countries that celebrates our Fourth of July with festivities at Rebild Park, Jutland, inviting well known American and Danish speakers while thousands of Danes cheer from the adjoining hills. JD Vance certainly must know that the United States and Denmark have enjoyed a long relationship since 1949 as partners in NATO along today with 30 other member-states; his recent statements in Greenland slamming Denmark for "not being a good ally" to the United States and not doing enough to ensure Greenland's protection seems far out of



Danish-American Entertainer Victor Borge at Denmark's Rebild Park on a Fourth of July Celebration. @Marshall H. Cohen, Archives.

bounds and certainly raised diplomatic eyebrows and anxieties. Fortunately, a Danish member of Parliament (Folketing) and member of its Social Democrats Party, Ida Auken, responded to Vance's recent comments in a recent New York Times editorial. A short selection of Ida Auken's important statements from her poignant editorial follows:

"The United States has been Denmark's closest ally for 80 years. We have followed American presidents into wars that many Danes felt were not ours to fight....Thousands of Danish troops went on to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan after Sept. 11. More than 50 of them died.... Denmark lost roughly as many service members per capita in Afghanistan as the United States did...We understand the importance of alliances and cherish our partnership with the United States....

President Trump has concerns about security in the Arctic, of course; our countries should work together to address them. And it is not a pretext for America acquiring Greenland, as the President has suggested." Auken, Ida. *Why is Vance Doubting Denmark's Loyalty?* The New York Times, April 15, 2025. Photo:@ Marshall H. Cohen.

Nordic Language Courses and Conversation

Looking to learn a Nordic language? You can find courses and conversation groups in Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish in the DC area and online. See the ASA website for more information.

Nordic Arts: Val Kilmer, An Icelandic Film, ABBA, and Ibsen

By Nick Hashimoto

Swedish American Actor Val Kilmer Passes Away

Swedish American actor Val Kilmer passed away from pneumonia on April 1st, 2025.

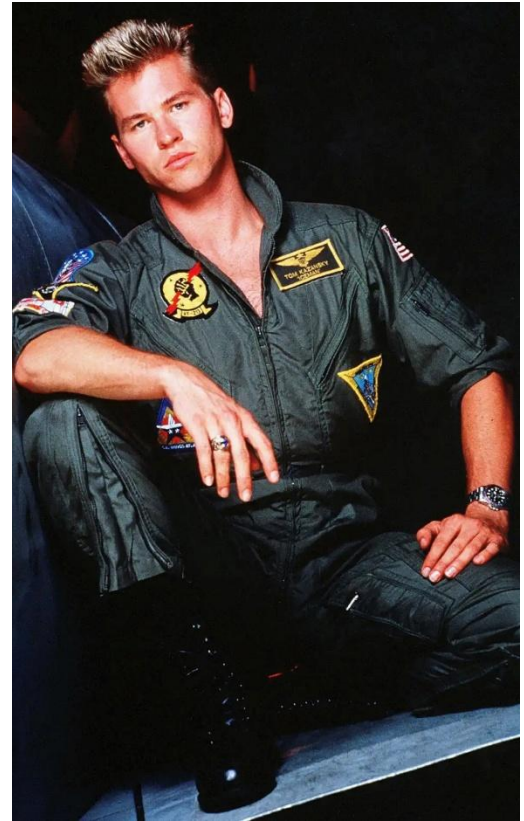
Kilmer was born on December 31st, 1959 in Los Angeles to a Swedish American mother, Gladys Leach (nee Ekstadt) from Gary, Indiana. Kilmer's maternal grandfather was John Ekstadt born in Martin, Minnesota to Swedish parents and his maternal grandmother was Hilma Swanson who was born in Sweden.

Kilmer was the youngest person ever to be accepted into Juilliard's Drama Division in 1981. He was part of Group 10 which included Linda Kozlowski who later gained fame for Crocodile Dundee.

A consummate method actor, Kilmer was known for portraying intense, cool characters such as LT Tom "Iceman" Kazansky in Top Gun, Doc Holliday in Tombstone, and Jim Morrison in The Doors.

He was especially adept at weapons dexterity (second only to the legendary Steve McQueen) as displayed in the bank robbery scene in Michal Mann's Heat and the gunfight at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone.

Kilmer's final film was Top Gun: Maverick where he reprised his role as now Admiral Tom "Iceman" Kazansky. Photo: Paramount/Kobal/Shutterstock

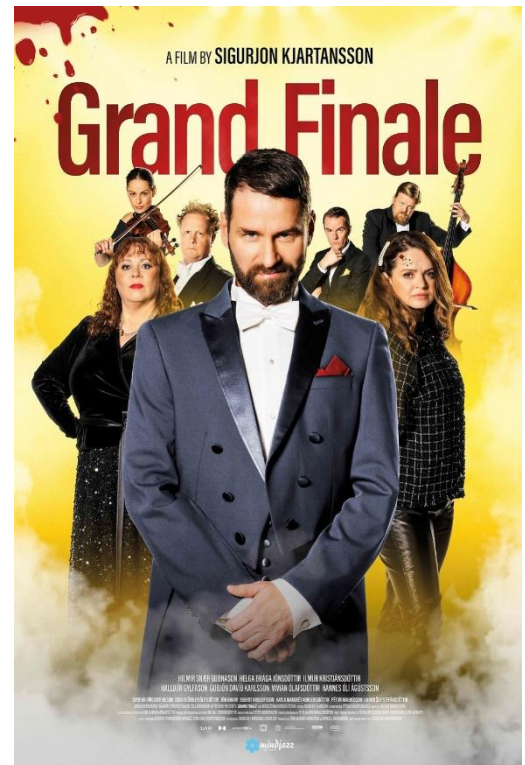


Icelandic Film: Grand Finale

The Washington DC International Film Festival Closing Night Film, the Icelandic film, Grand Finale will be screened on Sunday, May 4th at 4 pm. This comedy about an orchestra facing funding cuts will be shown at the MLK Jr. Library in DC and include a reception.

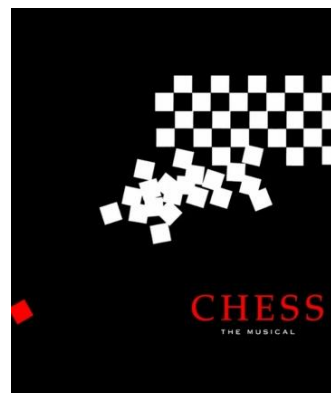
Advance tickets are currently sold out but some tickets will be available at the venue the day of the screening.

<https://www.filmfestdc.org/filmView.cfm?passID=13>



ABBA's Chess (the Musical)

Tim Rice stated that the Broadway revival of Chess is set for later this year. This rock opera about the Cold War is a collaboration between Swedish ABBA musicians Benny Andersson, Bjorn Ulvaeus and Rice.



Nordic Dance

Various Nordic dance groups are meeting on a regular basis.

Please see the [ASA website](https://scandinavian-dc.org/dancegroups/) for meeting times and updates.

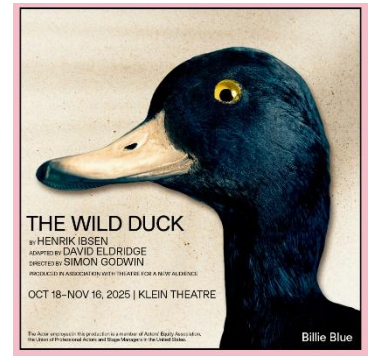
<https://scandinavian-dc.org/dancegroups/>

The original performance debuted on Broadway on April 28th, 1988 and the musical score has since developed a cult following.

Ibsen's The Wild Duck

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's the Wild Duck will be performed at the Shakespeare Theater Company in Washington, D.C. from Oct 18th to Nov 16. Season Ticket subscriptions on sale now. Individual tickets for The Wild Duck will be open for sale at a future date.

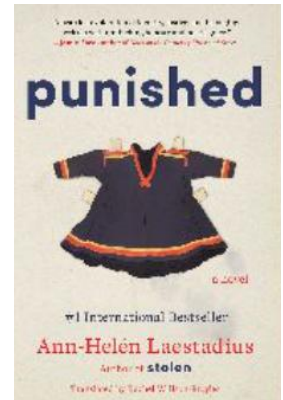
<https://www.shakespearetheatre.org/index.php/events/25-26-season/>



Literature

ASF NORDIC BOOK CLUB ONLINE PUNISHED BY ANN-HELEN LAESTADIUS Tuesday, May 6, 6 PM

Join us to discuss contemporary Nordic literature online! On May 6, we'll be discussing Punished, a searing new novel from author Ann-Helén Laestadius, the internationally bestselling author of the "extraordinary" (Fredrik Backman) novel Stolen. In the 1950s near the Arctic Circle, seven-year-olds Jon-Ante, Else-Maj, Nilsa, Marge, and Anne-Risten are taken from their families. As children of Sámi reindeer herders, the Swedish state has mandated they attend a "nomad school," where they are forbidden to speak their native language. With only sporadic visits home, the parents know little about the abuse face, much of it at the hands of their housemother Rita. Thirty years later, the now-grown adults have chosen different paths to cope with the past, some holding strong in their Sámi identity and others hiding their heritage. When their former housemother Rita appears, the five must face their past and decide: if you have the chance to punish someone who wronged you as a child, what will you do? More information at <https://www.scandinaviahouse.org/sh/lectures-literary/punished-ann-helen-laestadius/>



Nordic Church Services

Swedish Church: Augustana Lutheran Church. Church service May 4, 4 pm. More information: <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/washingtondc>

Norwegian Church: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 7730 Bradley Blvd, Bethesda, MD 20187. Church services second Sunday each month. See website: <https://nosokirken.org/>

Finnish Church: See website: <https://agricolalutheran.org>

Danish and Icelandic churches have no ongoing local services

Live Music and Events

Embassy of Sweden Exhibition Tours: Snow and Rain Shall Pass

The Embassy of Sweden presents the exhibition 'Snow and Rain Shall Pass' by Swedish Photographer Karin Alfredsson. Join the Embassy at House of Sweden for guided evening tours of Snow and Rain Shall Pass. The tours are free of admission and begin at 6 PM on the dates below. [Please reserve your spot here.](#) Drop-ins are welcome if space is available.

- Monday, May 5
- Monday, June 2



**More programs
from the
American
Scandinavian
Foundation at**
www.amscan.org

- Monday, September 8
- Tuesday, October 7
- Monday, November 3

Karin Alfredsson was born in Jämtland and grew up on Frösön. As a photographer, she seeks out landscapes that few humans have visited, and even fewer have left their mark on: forests, mountains, and waterways. Today these locations are rare and hard to find.



Eurovision Song Contest

by Alexandra Knight

The joy of the Eurovision Song Contest is rolling around once again to enchant its viewers with incredible songs and performers, this year with the two semi-finals on May 13 and 15, and the final on Norwegian Independence Day: May 17! It is set to take place in Basel, Switzerland, following the country's victory last year with "The Code" by Nemo. From Denmark, the artist Sissal will be singing her song, titled "Hallucination." From Finland, singer Erika Vikman will be performing her song "Ich komme." Next, coming from Iceland, the electronic pop duo Væb will be singing their new single, "Róa." Norway is being represented this year by the artist Kyle Alessandro, who will be performing "Lighter" this year. And last but certainly not least, from Sweden comes the music and comedy group KAJ, performing their song, "Bara bada bastu." Iceland, Norway, and Sweden perform in the first semi-final on May 13th. Finland and Denmark compete on May 15th in the second semi-final. Eurovision will be streamed live on Peacock during each day of the contest at 3pm ET each day, so make sure to look out for your favorite country performing their song!

The Art of the Brick Washington DC: A LEGO® Art Exhibit – Ending May 22nd

524 Rhode Island Ave NE, Bryant St Center, Washington, DC

<https://theartofthebrickexpo.com/washington-dc/#tickets>

Let's Play at IKEA

LEKA is IKEA's new kids' club at IKEA College Park. Open every Wednesday from 12–1 pm and 6–7 pm for a special activity just for kids. For more events at IKEA College Park, including bingo, please visit <https://www.ikea.com/us/en/stores/events/ikea-college-park-md/>

Scotts Spokesman Is Norwegian

Now that Spring is here, are you outside enjoying "friluftsliv" while tending to your lawn? Did you know that "Scott" from Scotts lawncare company is currently not Scottish but... Norwegian?! Norwegian actor Kristofer Hivju plays Scott, the official spokesman for Scotts lawncare products, in their comedic advertisements. Many will recognize Hivju as Tormund Giantsbane from the Game of Thrones TV series!



ASA in April

Thanks to everyone who joined us for the April event. **Swedish author and historian Maria Bouroncle** enthralled us with her books about 20th century Scandinavian women and their experiences. Maria just launched her new Guidebook of Washington DC co-authored with Karin Henriksson, freelance journalist and author. The book is called Washington DC: Makten, Historien, Kulturen (Washington DC: the power, the history, the culture). Photo: Matthew Ferguson.



4th Walpurgis Valborg April 26, 2025

With rainstorm in the forecast, strong winds, and bleak sun conditions, it did not look favorable for our planned Valborg event, but the rain did stop just before 3 PM and the sun did shine bright with temperatures in the 70's; and more and more people started to arrive. In fact, we might have had more attendees than in previous years. There definitely were more



newcomers to Valborg than in the past four years. With the bonfire lit, starting a bit smoky it turned into a beautiful fire. The folk music was wonderful, the singing both arranged and spontaneous was engaging. The games were in full action with lots of children participating and the hot dogs flew off the grill. We had a

great time! A huge thank you to all volunteers from ASA, Drott Lodge, and SWEA who made it all happen, as well as a big thank you to Spelmanslaget, with Kerstin Hendrickson's arranging to bring all the musicians together, and of course to all who made the spring time celebration of Valborg a great experience for participants and volunteers. Photos: Christina Lazdins and Viveca Stahl.





On April 27, **Nordic Language Meetup** learned about Nordic architects/Nordic architecture at the National Building Museum. Here, Charles Crawford of the National Building Museum talks about the works of Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Photo: Christine Knight.



ASA Member Notes

Please submit content for the newsletter by the 25th of the month to amscaninfo@gmail.com.

We welcome your thoughts, observations, and ideas to add to our newsletter.

