

GLS

Newsletter

Letter from the Chair2
Undergraduate Connection.....3
In the Classroom.....4-5
Graduate Student Focus6
Faculty Focus7
Dutch Studies8
Scandinavian Studies9
In Memoriam10
Staying Connected11





Letter from the Chair



Dear Friends,

On a brisk and beautiful autumn day, as I look out of our office windows at Michigan's famous Burton Memorial Bell Tower and the Michigan League, it is a pleasure to reflect on our successes of the past and plans for the future. We received not only positive, but extraordinary feedback from the distinguished committee of Germanic scholars who conducted a review of the Department in mid-November. The vitality of this community was manifest to the visitors and to the administration, and they beamed at the unanimous enthusiasm and quality of the undergraduates, graduate students, staff and faculty whom they interviewed. We all, including our supporters, have reason to be proud.

The first half of the Fall term was already buzzing with activity here, with guest lecturers speaking on topics ranging from photography to psychoanalysis, and with cultural events in both Dutch and Scandinavian Studies focusing respectively on Renaissance Netherlandish art and on the operatic career of the great Jussi Björling. That public cultural activities of this kind are so regularly presented along with professional conferences and workshops is a great strength of our Department. We will continue to have visitors as well as colleagues in GLL and in other U-M departments lecture in our Colloquium series next semester,

and we will host two major workshops after classes end: the German Film Institute, where professors working in film studies in our area gather for an intensive week of screenings and discussions, and the new transnational Global Engagement for Doctoral Education seminar, where graduate students and faculty from Germany, Austria, Turkey, Israel, and the U.K. will come together to explore the different ways they see German Studies within international frameworks. This Department in all events continues to be a font of bustling intellectual activity. All of these activities are supported with gift funds and special grants awarded from the College, matched by the university, or solicited from foundations or other agencies. Support for our top-tier graduate program in the form of graduate stipend support is another cornerstone of the academic greatness of our unit.

For our undergraduates, study abroad continues to be a key element of their education in Germanic languages and cultures that we need to make possible to more and more participants by making scholarship funds available. We have a very large (and growing!) number of undergraduate majors and minors here on campus, to the envy of observers from German departments all over the country. Contributing to the success of our best and most active students is our support of their academic progress through our ability to offer academic prizes, scholarships, and events from the German Club and Max Kade House. I know this is not the first newsletter in which I have mentioned that in the past year we have, for the third time (!), been awarded the coveted prize of Departmental Award of Excellence, identified as the most outstanding undergraduate unit by the LSA student government. Special recognition is owed our undergraduate advising team Kalli Federhofer and Andrew Mills, as well as other faculty, notably Kerstin Barndt and Peter Mclsaac on our curriculum committee, Hartmut Rastalsky on whose shoulders rest our entire four-semester language sequence, and student services coordinator Jennifer White.

In this issue, we bring you news from the Dutch and Scandinavian programs; a tribute to our emeritus faculty member Hans Fabian, who passed away just as our last newsletter was going to press; several reports from instructors on our pursuit of excellence in the classroom; a faculty profile of our newest tenured member of the Department, Peter Mclsaac, who comes to us from York University in Toronto and whose efforts are shared by GLL and the Program in Museum Studies; and an intriguing report from Kevin Maratea ('04).

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers and their families the most delightful and meaningful of holiday seasons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Spector".

Scott Spector [spec@umich.edu]

Undergrad Connection

City Planning and Social Policy Made Possible through Zwart Scholarship

By Brand Koster

Let me first give a special thanks to the Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures and the Zwart family for presenting me with the Martijn Zwart Scholarship. It provided generous financial relief toward my study abroad in the Netherlands. I was in the Netherlands for almost two months this

I traveled almost every weekend to visit and meet members of my extended family for the first time. Both my mother and father have Dutch roots, so I have many second- and third-cousins that still live in the Netherlands. It was great to connect with family and experience my Dutch heritage firsthand.

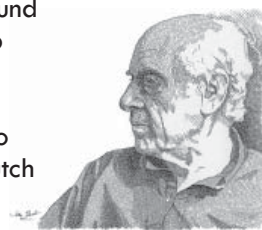


Panoramic view by Brand Koster ('12), from his Netherlandic travels made possible by the Martijn Zwart Scholarship

past summer, studying City Planning in Groningen and Dutch Social Policy in Amsterdam. As an undergraduate who is specializing in city planning and has family ties in the Netherlands, this program was both educational and meaningful. The classes incorporated numerous excursions around the country, offering insight to the Dutch way of life. The course work was intense at times, but never overwhelming, allowing plenty of time to travel and explore the country.

I had taken Dutch language courses at the U-M with Professor Ton Broos before traveling to the Netherlands. Although my abroad program did not require me to have experience with the Dutch language, I found it to be extremely beneficial in day to day life.

The Martijn Zwart Fund provides scholarship support for undergraduate or graduate students to attend a summer Dutch Studies program in The Netherlands.



German 232: Contemporary German Society By Elizabeth (Biz) Nijdam



When I first learned that I would be teaching Contemporary German Society, I realized that despite the wealth of resources available to me, I was going to be faced with the task of making this course my own. Although the syllabi from previous years thematically addressed the subjects most important to the

German post-war period through to modern day, the materials and media through which these topics were investigated felt a little dated. With that in mind, I set about a rewriting of the syllabus to incorporate material and media more relevant to this generation of undergrads. Taking into account the recent visual turn in learning, I incorporated several underrepresented media into the Contemporary German Society syllabus, the first of which being cinema. Using films such as *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, *Die Ehe der Maria Braun*, *Die Legende von Paul und Paula* and *Das Leben der Anderen*, the class discussed the problems of the post-war period and division of Germany using texts that explicitly addressed these problems and some from the very time periods in question. Looking at actual material from cinematic *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* helped the students understand how Germany went about dealing with its past in the 1970s and 1980s, and watching DEFA's most successful film helped the students understand the East German cultural environment and artists' issues with censorship. Approaching the *Wendezeit*, the class watched *Helden wie wir* and *Herr Lehmann* accompanied by excerpts from both of the *Wenderomane* to contemplate different experiences of the collapse of East Germany from both sides of the Wall. While

also thinking back to their viewing of *Sonnenallee* and the *Ostalgie* phenomenon, students used *Das Leben der Anderen* and *Helden wie wir* as contrasts to ways of remembering the East German past. Additionally, students read the comic book *drüben!* by Simon Schwarz, which narrated his parents' emigration to West Berlin, and with it discussed post-unification remembrances of East Germany in similar terms to the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of the Nazi era. As the class moved into modern Germany, I began to introduce television shows, such as *Türkisch für Anfänger* to discuss Turkish-German relations in Germany, and *Tatort*, to introduce the Krimi component of the course. We started investigating German culture through music, including a guest lecture from Ela Gezen on Turkish-German rap, after which they wrote their own "Message-rap".

The students have been incredibly receptive to the incorporation of film, comics, music and contemporary literature into the course. It makes German class entertaining and engaging, while still covering the most important events and subject matter concerning post-war Germany. This class was a lot of fun to put together and has been a pleasure to teach—and I am very much looking forward to teaching it again next semester!

Cologne for Spring Break

By Vicki Dischler

As our German language program continues to thrive, more and more students are becoming involved with the Max Kade House. Their fresh perspective and enthusiasm breathes new life into this unique gem—the only foreign-language house on campus! Since its move into the new North Quad building, the Kade House has flourished.

Most of the Kade residents are majors or minors of German. They continue to be busy with this semester's happenings, including German Language Week, German Club activities, and the weekly House events (dinners, coffee and movies). Residents traveled to Chicago to visit German sites of interest during the fall break. This short trip helped prepare them for their upcoming spring break trip—a main highlight of living in the Max Kade House.

Max Kade House residents spend fall semester and the first half of winter semester preparing for the annual trip to a German-speaking city. This year the group will travel to Cologne for the first time. In the fall, students learn experientially what goes into preparing for a week-long trip abroad and exactly how to find the information they need. In the winter, students will continue planning



Max Kade Residents,
Munich Trip 2011

by mapping out the locations of the places we will visit. They will also continue developing the language skills needed for traveling internationally. Throughout the semester, guest speakers will share their expertise about various aspects of Cologne's culture and geography in relation to the student's itinerary—these sessions provide a backdrop for information and generate a great deal of anticipation for the trip.

Last year's residents traveled to Munich. To view student comments, please go to <http://lsa.umich.edu/german/german/kade>.



Shubhangi Dabak
pictured in Berlin. She
teaches German 112
and 231.

Diversity Speaks

By Shubhangi Dabak

Lecturer Shubhangi Dabak attended *Stimmen: Interkulturelles Leben und Wirken*, a two-week seminar aimed at furthering understanding and appreciation of the breadth of diversity found in the German population. The seminar took place from June 25 through July 9, 2011. Chosen as a participant, Shubhangi Dabak traveled to Berlin where she spent two weeks immersed in a wide range of activities, including conversations with

political and social activists, lectures, films, and guided tours. Seminar participants experienced Berlin in all of its cross-cultural splendor. They also met with private individuals and with representatives from governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations that represent the interests of many in Berlin's diverse population.

Solveig's Opera Course Continues to Captivate

By Solveig Heinz



"Do we have to sing?" students asked before signing up for German 232 Opera. "No, of course not!" was my somewhat ethically gray answer. Once the deadline for dropping the course had passed, I lured my students into the Bell Tower where, with Prof. Agnew's help, we serenaded Father Triton. By the end of the semester the young opera scholars had danced to Baroque music, acted out scenes from the operas, and compared Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* with Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean*. They had speculated endings of the operas, discussed characters' actions, and melodramatically recited Papageno's lament: "Weil das Leben mir missfällt: Gut' Nacht, du falsche Welt." All while learning relative clauses, adjective endings, and good ol' German vocab.

After having taught the course twice, I wrote an article for *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, a pedagogical journal published by the AATG (Vol 43.1, Spring 2010). This led to an exchange of materials and ideas with instructors and scholars across the U.S. A few months ago, it was voted Best Article of 2010 by the editorial board of the journal. Teaching the course and writing the article was a fantastic experience. Many thanks go to Hartmut Rastalsky, Vanessa Agnew, Naomi Andre, Steven Whiting, and Jason Geary for their support and ideas.

Fundbüro Objects Incite Memories

By Elizabeth (Biz) Nijdam

Last summer I spent June and July in Germany to start the preliminary research for my dissertation. I was invited to work with artist Monica Sheets at the Fundbüro, an art, memory and material culture project space that opened in Leipzig in September 2010. Hosting monthly events featuring speakers from around the country, the Fundbüro seeks to engage members of the community in discussion on life in the former GDR, their experiences of the Wende and their acclimation to post-Unification Germany. Additionally, the Fundbüro provides a physical space for East German objects looking for a new home. Through donation and thrift-store scavenging, the Fundbüro has collected hundreds of everyday items from the former GDR. Unlike most museums, however, these objects aren't placed in cases behind glass, decontextualized from their original environment and inauthentically lit by strategically placed lights or accompanied by informative though impersonal statements about their use-value in socialist East Germany. Instead, these objects remain active in the day-to-day activities of the Fundbüro. The East German desk is used for the Fundbüro's administrative duties; the cups and saucers are used to serve coffee and cake

to visitors; the chairs are sat upon at the space's monthly events; and the 1970s record player has been hotwired to hook up to an iPod. These objects, though seen as out-of-date by German society, still have a purpose in the Fundbüro, and that purpose is to incite memories. Along with the collection of objects, the Fundbüro collects memories, stories and anecdotes. Whether inspired by the project's traveling suitcase of objects set out at every street-fair in Leipzig or submitted with the donated object themselves, these memories and the process of remembering are pivotal to the Fundbüro's project.

My work at the Fundbüro has shaped my research significantly. A poster that I designed was presented at the recent Women in German conference. Accompanied by quotes to help spectators consider the implications of organization and choice of objects, my poster used photographs to tease out the major trends of engaging with East German objects in the museum environment. In May 2013, I hope to return to Germany for my research year, where I will continue to collaborate with the Fundbüro, while collecting material for my dissertation.

Meet Associate Professor Peter Mclsaac

A native of Michigan, Mclsaac's interest in German language and culture led him to spend 1984-1985 studying in Austria before pursuing a B.S. in Physics and German at the University of Michigan. A month before German unification in 1990, Mclsaac began a Fulbright research fellowship on German student movements and the Frankfurt School at the Universität Köln. He went on to graduate studies at Harvard University, and received his Ph.D. in 1996 with a dissertation on the intersections of literary and museum cultures in Germany and Austria from the Age of Goethe to the present. After teaching at Duke and York universities, Mclsaac began a position as an Associate Professor in German and Museum Studies at the University of Michigan in September 2011.

Broadly interested in developing new paradigms for approaching German-speaking literature, culture and more recently, science and medicine, Mclsaac has devoted particular attention to the rich relationships of collecting and literature. In his first book, *Museums of the Mind: German Modernity and the Dynamics of Collecting*, he developed new categories for understanding how object-based storytelling has become a key means of defining community, shaping cognition and experience and relating cultural truths. In stand-alone essays on Thomas Bernhard, Gerhard Roth and Ingeborg Bachmann and institutions such as the Austrian Army Museum, he has taken up questions relating to the legacies of repressed violence from the Hapsburg and Nazi eras.

Mclsaac's second book-length project, *The Body Spectacular: Science, Public Enlightenment and Profit in German Anatomy Exhibitions*, engages the wildly successful and highly controversial exhibition of specially preserved human corpses and organs known as Body Worlds. Viewed to-date by over 32 million visitors worldwide since 1995, Body Worlds has until now escaped association with strikingly similar mass anatomy and public health exhibitions that flourished in the Wilhelmine, Weimar and Nazi eras in Germany. When set into dialog with Body Worlds, these shows illuminate the ways that Body Worlds represents only the latest installment in a series of shifting attempts to articulate and mitigate pressing societal problems through mass display of the anatomized body. Revealing the ways in which present-day displays remain in unconscious dialogue with earlier conceptions is a key ambition of the book.

Mclsaac's other work-in-progress ties into his interests in exhibitions, literature and science. In a project that excavates popular anatomy exhibitions around 1900, Mclsaac is re-reading Gottfried Benn's *Morgue* in terms of the visual archive of its day. Mclsaac and Gabriele Mueller (York University), co-organized the 2011 international conference *The Past on Display: Museums, Film, Musealization*, which the two are now editing as a book.



Peter Mclsaac may be contacted by email at pmcisaac@umich.edu

16th Annual DeVries–Van der Kooy Memorial Lecture presents Professor Ludo Beheydt

By Ton Broos



Although the word ‘Dutch’ etymologically means ‘the people’, which could include Germans also (as in Pennsylvania Dutch), it is nowadays mainly a reference to the Netherlands. In Dutch Studies, however, we also embrace the Dutch speaking area of Belgium, often called Flanders. That was the reason for inviting Professor Ludo Beheydt from the University of Louvain La Neuve, who delivered the 16th Annual DeVries-Van der Kooy Lecture “The Cultural Identity of Netherlandish Painting” on October 20, 2011 in the Michigan League. Through a fascinating visual presentation and lecture, the large audience learned about the early 15th century, when Europe had two centers of art: Italy and Flanders, both inspired by Byzantine art, but different in identity.

There were many students who enjoyed the lecture and picked up interesting details. Stefan Hovy (‘15) remarked that the Dutch paintings were sometimes so realistic that modern day dermatologists could identify certain sicknesses and physical problems of the people in the paintings. Michelle Lin (‘15) remembered that in the Italian rendition of Adam and Eve, Adam has perfect male anatomy while Eve was a “babe”, full of elegant grace. On the other

hand, the Netherlandish portrayal presents us with Eve as the woman next door. Equally revealing is a comparison of Botticelli’s delicate elegance in “The Three Graces” with Rubens’ somewhat plump version, where one of the graces showed signs of sclerosis while the other two have flat feet. Italian art promotes synthetic idealization while Netherlandish art is analytic and ocular.

Jon Vreede (‘15) commented that following the cultural shifts of the Reformation, Netherlandish art diverged into two distinct styles: Dutch art and Flemish art. Dutch art, taking its cues from a tradition of Calvinist iconoclasm and simplicity, was austere and restrained, with many moral warnings or reminders of one’s mortality. Flemish art, supported by both the Catholic Church and Flanders’ Spanish rulers, emphasized the glory of the Church and expressed the joy of life.

Dhananjaya Premawardena (‘14) stated, “Overall the presentation gave a clear and entertaining discourse on the differences between painting styles of the Renaissance. It had bits of humor over the realities and caricatures expressed in Netherlandish art even though some subjects were about sobering things. The examples for each type of art did well to show the objectivity of the Dutch, the ostentatiousness of the Flemish and the idealizations of the Italians.”

Mitch Vermet (‘15) summed it up like this: “In my opinion I thought the lecture was pretty interesting and I am not a fan of art so it was pretty good if it impressed me.”

Scandinavian Studies

SOLD OUT: A Tribute to Jussi Björling

By Johanna Eriksson



The Swedish trio gave seven concerts in their U.S. tour, including Ann Arbor, New York City, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Chicago and San Francisco.

The Scandinavian Program's Annual Signe Karlström Event commemorated the centennial birthday of beloved Swedish tenor Jussi Björling. Jussi Björling's 100th birthday has been celebrated by more than 200 events throughout Sweden, Europe and the U.S. Jussi is recognized by many as one of opera's

The unique and intimate Kerrytown Concert House hosted the sold out November event. Following the splendid performance, several members of the Ann Arbor audience shared their memories from Jussi's past performances. The Ann Arbor performance was sponsored by the Signe Karlström Fund of the Scandinavian Program, SWEA Michigan, the Detroit-Swedish Foundation and the Jenny Lind Club.

greatest tenors. In addition to several other awards, Jussi received a Grammy Award for Best Classical Vocal Performance in 1960.

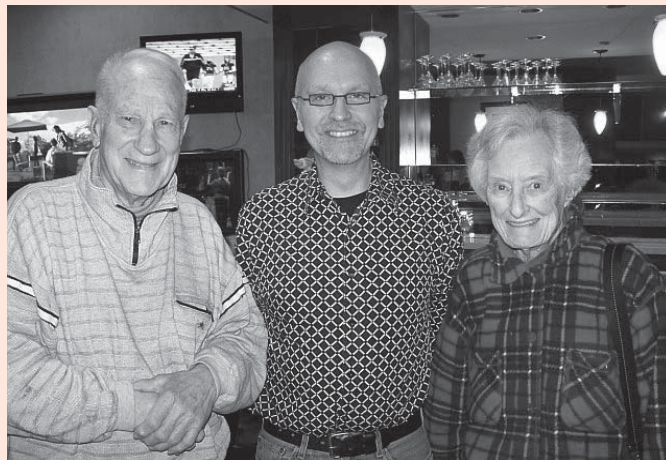
Jussi's repertoire was presented by tenor Mats Carlsson of the Royal Opera. Mats was the first recipient of the Scandinavian Jussi Björling Society Award in 2008. The first half of the program was dedicated to Nordic songs by Alfvén, Peterson-Berger and Sjöberg. The program's second half delivered arias by Puccini, Donizetti, Ponchielli and Verdi. Mats was accompanied by renowned pianist, Love Derwinger, who also performed solos by Liszt and Chopin. To the delight of many in the attendance, Mats concluded the vocal portion by singing "Till Havs."

Lecturer Bertil Bengtsson, one of the founders of the Scandinavian Jussi Björling Society, told the story of Jussi's remarkable life—captivating the audience with stories and images. Jussi Björling performed throughout his life, from the age of 4 to a few weeks before his death in 1960, at the age of 49. He gave a remarkable number of concerts—close to 4,000, with approximately 22 of them in Michigan. His voice may still be enjoyed today through recordings available online.



The Signe Karlström Event was inaugurated in 1989 in honor of Signe Karlström and her family, who have been great benefactors of the University of Michigan's Scandinavian program. Originally an annual lecture, the format was extended in 2000 to allow for a variety of cultural events. Continuing Signe's legacy are her son, Olof Karlström, and his wife, Regent Olivia Maynard, pictured above at the Jussi Björling concert.

Professor Emeritus Hans J. Fabian



Hans J. Fabian, Assistant Professor Emeritus of Germanic Languages and Literatures (left), pictured with his wife and Professor Helmut Puff at the 2008 Freiburg reunion in Chicago.

Professor Fabian passed away on July 10, 2011. Professor Fabian's family, friends, and former colleagues and students gathered together at the Michigan League to share memories of his life.

Hans Fabian (1926–2011) Professor Fabian was a much beloved and appreciated teacher at the University of Michigan from 1964 to 1995. Prior to his appointment at Michigan, he taught at Wilmington College and at the Ohio State University. In the summer of 1968 he directed the Wells College summer program in German. His dedication to undergraduate teaching at Michigan was demonstrated throughout his years on campus, in his role as faculty advisor of the Max Kade German Residence Hall from 1974 until his retirement, and in serving as resident director of the University's year-abroad program in Freiburg on two separate occasions.

Professor Fabian was a refugee from Nazi Germany whose family immigrated to the United States

when he was a teenager. He served with the U.S. Army during World War II, working in military intelligence. He recalled with poignancy a boyhood memory of watching his fellow hometown residents salute Adolf Hitler as he drove through town, contrasted by the memory of his own salute of General Eisenhower as the latter's staff car drove through war-torn Frankfurt after an allied victory. Following military service, Fabian received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University.

While his main area of academic interest was German Expressionism, Professor Fabian wrote on other modernist authors, and pioneered courses in German Film and Business German that remain staples of our curriculum.

The **Hans Fabian Endowment** was established in 2008 by alumni of the Freiburg year abroad. This fund supports students studying abroad in the Freiburg program. Funds from this Endowment are used to fund student activities in years in which Michigan is the Director for the consortium program. Those wishing to honor Professor Fabian's memory with a contribution may specify "Hans Fabian Endowment" or "In Memory of Hans Fabian" on a check made out to the University of Michigan and delivered to the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, 3110 MLB, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275.

Staying Connected

Diving Into a Life of Curiosities & Opportunities

Majoring in German changed my life, although I never intended to pursue this degree. Truly, the LS&A language requirement was the only reason I began taking German courses. However, my time spent in the MLB increased each year, as I found my favorite professors were from the German department. After graduating in 2004, my career path did not require using much German until I started to travel and eventually became a professional scuba diving instructor.

During my time at U-M, the German department helped me secure two successive summer internships. These experiences allowed me to work for German companies and travel in Western Europe. In 2002, I worked in Munich at the headquarters of Wacker-Chemie. It was my first time abroad. When I arrived back in Ann Arbor to start my junior year, I had found a new passion and my major. The next summer, I was fortunate to spend my second internship at the Volkswagen headquarters. During this time I took a trip to Hamburg and met new friends who told me about Koh Tao, a tiny island with no airport and no chain restaurants in the Gulf of Thailand. They told me the island was popular with travelers and scuba divers from all over the world. Without a question, my internships had opened my life to new curiosities and opportunities.

My first trip to Thailand happened one year after graduation. I found Koh Tao and learned to scuba dive. The next year I decided to resign from my job and book a one-way ticket to backpack around Asia. However, I quickly found myself back on Koh Tao, underwater with tank, regulator and mask, learning to become a diving instructor.

Perhaps the best credential an instructor can possess is being multi-lingual. German dive instructors are often in demand, because there are many Swiss, German and Austrian travelers. My German-speaking customers often ask where in Germany am I from! That is one of the best compliments I can receive. As a PADI master scuba diver trainer, teaching in German has allowed me to continually work and travel. Besides living on Koh Tao for most of the past five years, I have traveled through twenty countries and my diving career has led to the Honduran island of Roatan, the Similan Islands and Dahab, Egypt.

My German degree provided me with the skills to work abroad in a unique profession, which has therefore allowed me to continue working and traveling.

Alles Gute
-Kev Maratea



Both images are of Kevin Maratea ('04), at work and at play.

To learn more about his endeavors, please visit www.kohtao.com
coralgranddivers.com



The Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures

The University of Michigan
812 E. Washington St., 3110 MLB
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1275
(734) 764-8018 • www.lsa.umich.edu/german

Chair: Scott Spector

Asst. Editor & Layout: Rachelle Grubb

The Regents of The University of Michigan

Julia Donovan Darlow

Laurence B. Deitch

Denise Ilitch

Olivia P. Maynard

Andrea Fischer Newman

Andrew C. Richner

S. Martin Taylor

Katherine E. White

Mary Sue Coleman (ex officio)



The 28th Annual GERMAN DAY Event

Friday, March 16, 2012 • 9AM–2PM

at Rackham Graduate School, Michigan League, and North Quad

This year's theme is

Fairytales / Märchen

Please email us at german.day@umich.edu for details.

Giving to German, Dutch, and Scandinavian Studies *In these times of economic uncertainty and potential budget cuts, we are grateful to our many supporters and benefactors for their trust and gifts of support. The quality and diversity of the programs and opportunities we provide for graduate and undergraduate students would not be possible without this support. Please consider making a donation this year.*