

# **STERLING NORTH SOCIETY**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **PROGRAM ON JAPANESE CARTOON ABOUT EDGERTON AND “RASCAL” COMING TO STERLING NORTH MUSEUM**

EDGERTON, Wis. – The year 2022 marks the 25th anniversary of the Sterling North Home and Museum. Each month during this year, the Sterling North Society offers a special program to celebrate the legacy of the late Edgerton author Sterling North.

The May program will feature Janesville writer and computer consultant John Foust discussing “Araiguma Rasukaru,” the Japanese “anime” cartoon series produced by Nippon Animation Co. Ltd., based on Sterling North’s book “Rascal: A Memoir Of A Better Era.” The free program will be Sunday, May 15, at 2 p.m. in the barn of the Sterling North Museum, 409 W. Rollin St.

This is the first time the museum has featured a presentation on the history of the Japanese cartoon. Because the cartoon was never dubbed into English or shown in the United States, very few know about this Wisconsin-themed “anime.”

At 3 p.m., a “Rockoon” rock painting activity can be enjoyed at no cost by artists of all ages. There is no admission cost for this event.

First shown on Japanese television in 1977, the “Raccoon Rascal” animated series was part of Nippon Animation’s “World Masterpiece Theater” program. Each year from 1975 through 1997, the company adapted a children’s book into a year-long series. Other books they adapted include “Heidi, Girl of the Alps,” “Anne of Green Gables” and “Swiss Family Robinson.”

Foust, a member of the Sterling North Society board, is developing a book about “Araiguma Rasukaru” and has created and maintained a web page for the last 16 years describing the connections between North’s “Rascal” book and the worldwide popularity of the Japanese cartoon.

“My ‘Rascal’ anime website has drawn fan mail from all over the world,” said Foust. “The ‘Rascal’ anime was dubbed or subtitled into many languages, including German, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Tagalog and Chinese. Millions of kids all around the world watched it after school since 1977. I think it is the only anime set in Wisconsin.”

Indeed, the cartoon’s “Rascal” raccoon still acts as the mascot of [Nippon Animation](#) today and is often featured front-and-center in its promotions.



Today's Nippon Animation web site home page...

Rascal's image has been adapted into hundreds of products including plush toys, dishes, coloring books and even postage stamps. Some of these items are on display in the Museum and will be shown during the talk.

The year 2022 also marks the 45th anniversary of the anime series. To celebrate, Nippon Animation's YouTube channel features all 52 episodes of the series in the original Japanese. They can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/user/NipponAnimation> .

World-renowned animator Hayao Miyazaki was lead animator on 19 of the 52 episodes. Animator Isao Takahata directed. Later, Miyazaki and Takahata founded Studio Ghibli, best known for animated feature films such as "Kiki's Delivery Service," "My Neighbor Totoro," "Princess Mononoke" and "Howl's Moving Castle."

In 1976, the Nippon Animation team traveled to Edgerton. They visited the North home, the elementary school, the downtown train depot and tobacco warehouses, and the Indianford dam area. Indeed, the cartoon accurately represents all these places. The opening theme song is titled "To The Rock River" and shows Sterling riding his bicycle down County Highway F to the dam.

The Museum is open from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. For more information, visit <http://sterlingnorthsociety.com/>.