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U.S. Embassy Oslo

REINFORCING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES THROUGH
EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE



focus

Over the past six months, the U.S. Embassy in Oslo has focused on

developing educational exchange in order to maintain the traditionally strong people-to-people ties between Norway and the U. S. The Ambassador is very pleased to present the first edition of this newsletter as a part of his dedication to this long-term project.

Ambassador Whitney's campaign to promote educational exchange began earlier this year, when he announced his ambitious goal to double Norwegian student enrollment in the U.S. within five years. To give the campaign momentum, Whitney joined forces with the Norwegian Ambassador to the U.S., Knut Vollebæk, on a very successful tour of U.S. universities and colleges in March. He also visited schools across Norway to promote education in the U.S., and encouraged the private sector and U.S. alumni across the country to pitch in.

The U.S. Embassy has also launched a web portal designed to inform and assist students (usastudier.no), and hired a new staff member to coordinate all projects related to Education. On a number of important issues, collaboration with others has proved fruitful. The Embassy now works closely with partners such as the American Chamber of Commerce, student organizations such as ANSA (Association of Norwegian Students Abroad), the Norway-

America Association, and key political players like the Ministries of Education and Research and Foreign Affairs.

We believe that over the past six months our efforts have laid the foundation for success. However, continued success depends on solid team effort. Reaching out to future students with information and assistance is crucial, as is identifying and engaging former students who are best equipped to help us advocate educational exchange.

Any contribution you as an individual or a member of an organization may have to our campaign will expand the reach and success of the program. Please do not hesitate to contact us with suggestions and ideas.



University of Life Sciences Launches Summer University

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences at Ås has for a long time been a front runner when it comes to developing educational exchange programs with U.S. schools.

The institution was established in 1859, but acquired formal university status only in 2005. The

University's core areas include the biological sciences, food science, and environmental studies and planning. The young University has strong ties to U.S. institutions such as the University of Minnesota, as well as a heavy international emphasis, with many of its 2800 students coming from outside Norway.

This summer the institution launched a new initiative, a Summer University. The program, in which four Americans and one Canadian student have participated, is taught entirely in English, and all courses are presented in an

international context. Participants are offered the chance to acquire familiarity with Norway both on and off campus, as the program includes trips to Oslo, as well as field work in the Norwegian mountains.

The Embassy would like to congratulate the University of Life Sciences on the addition of this program. If you have similar success stories you would like to share, please email us at alumni@usa.no.



High School Exchange *focus ...*



Line (left) and Heidi (right) at the 4th of July party

This year's July 4th celebration at Ambassador Whitney's residence featured two very special guests, the winners of our Benjamin Franklin program, **Heidi Østreg and Line Stensby Bogan**.

Line and Heidi, both students at Lambertseter High School in Oslo, have spent the summer at Wake Forest University in Winston – Salem, NC. There, they attended **The Summer Institutes for Youth**, a program under the *Benjamin*

Embassy Sends Participants to Ben Franklin Institutes for Leaders

Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Initiative.

The Initiative seeks to unite youth from Eurasia, Europe and America, allowing them to discover shared values across various ethnic, religious, and national groups. Participants this year discussed global warming and the Darfur situation, and visited the State Department in Washington.

The Embassy was in contact with the girls during the summer, and, minor difficulties locating their luggage aside, they had a fascinating experience and learned a lot.

While the girls did not take too much time out of their busy schedule to update their individual blogs on the Institute webpage (the Embassy considers this a sign that they had too much fun!), Heidi did enthuse over her teachers' abilities as well as the 'unique story' of each of her fellow participants.

Considering the content of the program, ensuring Norwegian participation was a natural priority for the Embassy. We look forward to staying in touch with Line and Heidi, and hope that they will become ambassadors of educational exchange in the future.



Fulbright Students attend Summer Institutes for European Student Leaders

Our Benjamin Franklin participants were not the only students invited to the Embassy's 4th of July event this year. This summer, one of our closest partners, Fulbright, sent four of Norway's best and brightest youngsters to a Summer Institute for European Leaders in the U.S. All four prepared for departure by celebrating July 4th at Ambassador Whitney's residence.

The four studied at two different campuses, the University of Nebraska, Omaha, and the University of Philadelphia. Participation in the program should spur their academic progress, considering its potent mix of in-classroom activities, lectures and presentations by university faculty members, professionals and community leaders. All activities are aimed at improving skills crucial to successful leadership, such as cross-cultural communication, negotiation and debate.

The 4th of July party was not the students' first encounter with the Ambassador. They also visited the Embassy earlier, as the Ambassador was eager to learn more about why they applied to the program. During a lively discussion, the Ambassador encouraged them to return to the U.S. to study after the program, and urged them to tell friends about their U.S. experience.

According to Sonia Noronha Mykletun, Director of the Norwegian Fulbright branch, these four impressed the Fulbright interviewing

committee. The Ambassador was equally struck by the wit and intellect of all four, and has no doubt that they will become the community leaders that the program aspires to make of them.

Left to right:

Christoffer Magnus Kjelsberg (20) is a first-year student at the University of Oslo, where he studies International Studies.

Maren Kristine Skarra (20) studies "Youth Science" at the Faculty of Education at Vestfold University College.

Ellen Ravdna Sara (18) attends a Sámi high school in remote, northern Kautokeino.

Farooq Ali Afzal Ansari (21), is a third-year law student at the University of Oslo.



 usastudier.no

**LIVE!
LEARN!**



Teenage participation in educational exchange programs is a great way to ensure that people-to-people ties are created.

The Embassy would therefore like to thank everybody involved with high school exchanges.

During the fall we intend to meet with several key organizations focusing on high school programs. Email us at alumni@usa.no if you are interested.

Assisting these organizations in their work, and encouraging and assisting former high school students who want to do entire degrees in the U.S. is one of the Embassy's key priorities.



This Quarter's Cultural Headline...



Siri Hustvedt Prepares to Publish Norway-America Novel

With her last novel, Siri Hustvedt went from 'talented wife' to 'famous author'. As the daughter of Norwegian immigrants on both parents' sides, the immigration novel she is currently wrapping up was always in the cards.

In 2006, *The Observer* voted Siri Hustvedt one of the world's most noted female intellectuals. Others who made it to *The Observer's* list were Zadie Smith, Condoleezza Rice and Ségolène Royal.

For some, Siri Hustvedt is still best known for her marriage to Paul Auster, cult author and script writer for infamous movies like *Smoke* and *Blue in the Face*. However, since the publication of *What I Loved* (2003), many have come to realize that Hustvedt may well be an equal to her spouse as far as literary abilities are concerned.

Through her entire authorship, what Hustvedt describes as 'longing' has been a recurring theme. In her 2003 breakthrough publication, Hustvedt's main character was an elderly art historian who reflects on the relationships and events that have marked two families in the Soho neighborhood of New York City.

The topic of her new book, which her husband is currently reading and discussing with her, suggests that this novel too will address the theme of longing. It narrates the story of the

offspring of Norwegian immigrants, and like Hustvedt, the narrator has a Norwegian mother and great-grandfather. According to Hustvedt, the storyline is complicated and covers great spans of both time and space.

The attention surrounding Hustvedt's new novel is considerable, and given the topic it should be of equal interest on either side of the Atlantic. Anybody interested in literature should make a mental note of this imminent addition to an increasingly impressive oeuvre.

Siri Hustvedt Box of Facts:

- ◆ She was born in Northfield, Minnesota, in 1955
- ◆ Her mother and great-grandfather are both Norwegian.
- ◆ She has published essay and poetry collections in addition to her three novels. (*The Blindfold* (1992), *The Enchantment of Lily Dahl* (1996), *What I Loved* (2003).
- ◆ She is married to American author Paul Auster, whom she met in 1981.
- ◆ She lives with Auster and their daughter Sophie (19) in Brooklyn, NYC.

Did you also know....

- ◆ that she was once hospitalized with constant migraine, a condition with which she still struggles?
- ◆ that she describes herself as 'obsessed' with neurology?
- ◆ that she never lets her husband read any of her scripts until she considers every page finished?

U.S. Bestsellers List, August 2007

- 1) **THE QUICKIE**, by J. Patterson and M. Ledwidge.
- 2) **A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS**, by K. Hosseini.
- 3) **HIGH NOON**, by N. Roberts.
- 4) **THE TIN ROOF BLOWDOWN**, by J. L. Burke.
- 5) **LEAN MEAN THIRTEEN**, by J. Evanovich.
- 6) **UP CLOSE AND DANGEROUS**, by L. Howard.
- 7) **THE FIRST COMMANDMENT**, by B. Thor.
- 8) **SOMEONE TO LOVE**, by J. Deveraux.
- 9) **THE JUDAS STRAIN**, by J. Rollins.
- 10) **BUNGALOW 2**, by Danielle Steel.

U.S. Singles Top Ten List, August

- 1) Fergie: **BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY**
- 2) Plain White T's: **HEY THERE DELKILAH**
- 3) Rihanna Featuring Jay-Z: **UMBRELLA**
- 4) Timbaland Featuring Keri Hilson: **THE WAY I ARE**
- 5) Shop Boyz : **PARTY LIKE A ROCKSTAR**
- 6) High School Musical 2 Cast: **WHAT TIME IS IT**
- 7) Akon: **SORRY, BLAME IT ON ME**
- 8) Hurricane Chris: **A BAY BAY**
- 9) T-Pain Featuring Yung Joc: **BUY U A DRANK (SHAWTY SNAPPIN')**
- 10) T-Pain Featuring Akon: **BARTENDER**





GET INVOLVED! EMBASSY LOOKS TO LOCATE AND ENGAGE U.S. ALUMNI!

Those of you who attended the Embassy's 4th of July event will already be familiar with the Ambassador's wish to locate and engage the alumni.

During the 4th of July event several of you left your business cards, or signed up to receive this newsletter. We would like to assist you in locating and activating your alumni association. If you belong to an active alumni association, please let us know the contact information of the designated contact person, so that we have a way of reaching out to the entire association.

In coming editions of this newsletter, we hope to dedicate one page to the activities and events of various alumni associations. Please be in touch with us if you want to participate.

We are also more than willing to announce activities on your behalf. If your association is hosting an event you want a broader public to know about, please email us at alumni@usa.no.

In the coming months, the Embassy will be involved in two events for former exchange program participants. In August, we will host a reception for the University of Wisconsin alumni in Norway. The Ambassador is eager to host further events of this nature—just let us know.

We will also bring former Fulbrighters and International Visitors together at an event hosted at Ambassador Whitney's residence in September. We are

extremely happy to announce that former Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland has accepted our invitation to speak to this knowledgeable and resourceful gathering.

Through our contact with students we realize, time and again, the important influence of family and acquaintances on a young person about to decide where to study. Former U.S. students are therefore in a unique position of influence in their encounters with Norwegian youth who are considering a move across the Atlantic. We encourage you to advocate U.S. studies to people in your community, and to encourage and assist youth with the process of finding and applying to a school, which may seem daunting to some.



Education table at this year's 4th of July event

Alumni focus

Over the past six months, the Embassy has located a considerable amount of Norwegian alumni associations for former students as U.S. institutions.

Some of the associations we have been in touch with are:

Augustana College
Harvard Alumni
MIT Alumni
University of Minnesota
University of Wisconsin
University of Oregon
University of Denver
University of North Dakota

Hopefully, we will be able to form strong ties with all of these associations in the foreseeable future.

If you are a member of these or other alumni associations, and have ideas for events or projects that may be of mutual interest, we would be happy to hear from you.

Please email us at
alumni@usa.no

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