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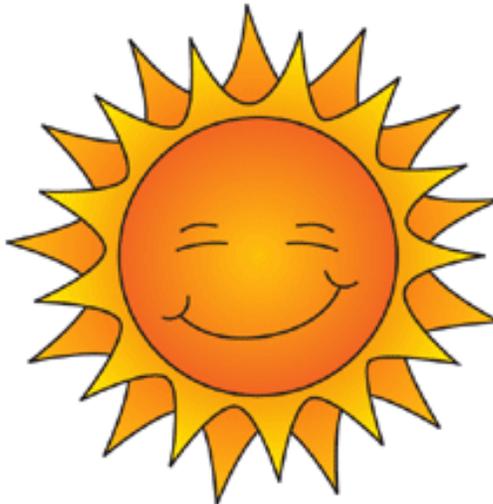
U.S. Embassy Oslo - Public Affairs Newsletter

Experience! Communicate!

Dear readers,

The new administration may have a good five months under its belt, but here at the Embassy we're still in transition! Since our last newsletter we've been busy saying goodbye to Ambassador Whitney while maintaining our usual hectic schedule of activities, which you can read more about in the following pages.

Ambassador Whitney left Norway on June 20 and Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Kevin M. Johnson will be Chargé d'Affaires until July 17, when he is off to Canada to assume the position as Consul General in Toronto. Our new DCM, [James T. Heg](#), arrives a week later and will be



Chargé until our new Ambassador arrives. Who that will be and when that will happen we still don't know, but we are hoping for word soon. We'll keep you updated!

In the meantime, please enjoy reading about our two new programs for high school students, some departing words from Ambassador Whitney, highlights from our Independence Day celebration, and other activities and announcements.

Happy summer!

Hilary Olsin-Windecker
Director, Public Affairs

Language for Leaders inspires high school students



5 of the LFL students with their graduation diplomas. From left: Mehdi Ettehadulhagh, Abu Bakar Zaman, Kenny Tuan Trong Nguyen, Thy Hoai Thi Nguyen, Sadia Khan.

This spring, the embassy started a new program; *Language for Leaders*. The goal of the project is to encourage high school students of minority backgrounds by helping them improve their English language skills. For the pilot program, we approached our good friends at Lørenskog Videregående Skole, one of Norway's most diverse schools. The Embassy provided instructional materials, while the school provided class time and space. We were lucky to find Susie Meserve, an experienced American English

teacher who was living in Oslo, to teach the class. After eight weeks of classes, field trips and language practice, seven proud students received their well-deserved "graduation" certificates on May 14, having made great progress in only two months. For two of them, the course will come in extra handy since they will be participating in a full-year high school exchange program in Idaho and Kentucky this fall. *Language for Leaders* has proven to be a success and we hope to expand and continue it in the fall.



Ambassador Whitney says “På gjensyn!” to Norway!

Ambassador Whitney left Norway on June 20. After three and a half years, two presidents, and countless meetings, speeches, receptions, interviews, travels and skiing trips, the Ambassador and his family are back in the U.S. to embark on new endeavors. Before he left, our *Language for Leaders* students asked him some questions.

After living in Norway for three and a half years, how do you feel about leaving?

It's definitely sad in many ways. My family and I have had a wonderful time here and we'll miss all the great people we've met, many of whom have become good friends. Living in the middle of the city, yet so close to *marka* and Bygdøy, so close to nature, has been amazing. I'll particularly miss the interesting work I've gotten to do over the past few years, and I hope I've made a positive impact on the relationship between Norway and the U.S. It's been great to be able to work with such a wide range of issues, from NATO to energy, climate change and educational exchange, to our joint efforts on peace, reconciliation, health and development in other regions of the world. We've been excellent partners.

What are the differences between working in Norway and working in the U.S.?

In general, I guess you could say Norwegians have a different balance between work, and family and leisure time. I've had a very hectic schedule while I've been here, but fortunately I've been able to spend some quality time with my family, go skiing, and travel around this beautiful country. I've also gotten to know and enjoy some of the characteristics of Norwegian workplaces such as *matpakke*, *fredagspils* and *julebord!*

Have you learned to speak Norwegian?

Not as well as I would have liked. I can read and speak some, but I don't understand spoken Norwegian very well. I think I'm too old! My kids are much better than me.



The Whitney Family on the balcony of the Ambassador's residence Villa Otium. From left Mary Farnham Whitney, Cope Whitney, David Whitney, Ambassador Benson K. Whitney and Lock Whitney. Absent is daughter Torry Whitney, currently studying in the U.S.

Do you like Norwegian food?

You mean pizza Grandiosa? Just kidding! No, I really like fresh salmon, Jarlsberg cheese and even *rakfisk*.

What do you think of President Obama?

I think he's had an impressive first few months, but he has a lot of work ahead of him. With all the issues facing the United States and the world, from the financial crisis to climate change to Iraq and Afghanistan to health care - everyone is looking to him for solutions and to the U.S. for leadership. But we have to remember that most of these challenges are our common concern and everyone has to get involved in finding solutions. The great partnership the U.S. has with countries such as Norway will make his job a lot easier.

What will you do when you go back to the U.S.?

Well, first off we're going home to Minnesota for the summer to see family and friends. Then my oldest son is off to college and the rest of us are moving to Washington D.C. I don't know exactly what I'll be doing yet, but it'll be something having to do with international relations.

Will you be coming back to Norway to visit or for a vacation?

Absolutely! I have a lot of skiing and hiking to do and we want to visit our Norwegian friends. We'll definitely be back!



The Public Affairs Section's 'farewell photo' for the Ambassador: an acrobatic display of BEN in the Embassy atrium.



Independence Day Celebration 2009



To catch our many Embassy friends and contacts before they headed off for summer vacation, and to bid Ambassador Whitney farewell before his departure, the Embassy celebrated Independence Day on June 18 this year.

The 1000 guests did not let the pouring rain stop them from joining us in the garden of the Ambassador's residence Villa Otium to eat hamburgers, listen to the U.S. Navy Brass Band 'The

Diplomats' and taste the more than forty U.S. wines offered in our special wine tasting.

The occasion also marked the farewell to Ambassador Whiney, who left his post two days later. This was a true celebration of the strong U.S.-Norwegian relationship.

Read more about the celebration on the [Embassy website](#) and check out the many photos on the [U.S. Embassy Facebook profile](#).



1) The guests enjoyed the food and wine while the rain was pouring down outside. 2) Among our guests were many young friends, here represented by two Language for Leaders students. 3) The celebration took place in the Villa Otium garden. 4) The U.S. Marine Guards performed the Color Guard ceremony and the American and Norwegian anthems were played. 5) Ambassador Whitney's youngest son Cope introduced his father. 6) The U.S. Navy band 'The Diplomats' entertained the guests with their festive brass tunes.

Lørenskog – Lake City High School Exchange, from Oslo to Idaho

Interested in offering more international opportunities to their student body, Lørenskog Videregående Skole (VGS) approached the Embassy to help them find a sister school in the U.S. We were able to connect Lørenskog to Lake City High School in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. They have now formalized an agreement, including the opportunity for short term student exchanges, academic year student exchanges, faculty exchanges and joint projects. In April, Lørenskog VGS sent four students and a teacher to Lake City High School for a first face-to-face meeting. The Norwegians stayed with American host families, attended classes, participated in school activities and made local friends. The next phase of the partnership is for two Norwegian students to spend an academic year at Lake City. The Idaho school is planning to send a delegation of students and teachers to Lørenskog in the fall.



The Norwegian students had a great time while in Idaho, and feel that Lørenskog's recent U.S. initiatives bring great opportunities for both students and teachers.



Traveling to the U.S.? Register Online NOW!

As of January 12th, 2009, all Norwegian citizens must obtain approval through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) prior to traveling to the United States without a visa under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP). The registration has a 2-year validity. Register on <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>. [Read more on the Embassy website](#)

Outreach & Events



The U.S. Embassy interacts with the Norwegian public in many different ways. Here are some of the events and projects we were involved in during the past few months:

Celebrating Black History Month

February is Black History Month in the United States. Since 1976 it has been a special month for honoring the struggles, triumphs, culture and history of black Americans. In 2009, the inauguration of Barack Obama, America's first African-American president, gave Black History Month a special significance.

This year, the Embassy invited Elbert Ransom Jr., a civil rights activist and former aide to Dr. Martin Luther King,

to Oslo to talk to Norwegians about black history. Mr. Ransom was the guest of honor at the Embassy's Black History Month celebration at the Ambassador's residence on February 26, where he recounted his first-hand experience of the Alabama Bus Boycott and noted the immense progress in civil rights since then, culminating in the election and inauguration of President Obama. Gospel singer Siv Misund provided musical entertainment with beautiful renditions of traditional African-American songs.

[See some video clips here](#)
[Mr. Ransom shares his stories](#) (on Facebook).

Elvis Nwosu from African Cultural Awareness brought some of his aspiring young students.



gender issues.

American Imam Yahya Hendi speaks in Norway

American Imam Yahya Hendi visited Norway in May to speak about integration and Islam in America. Imam Hendi spoke at the annual national conference organized by the Contact Committee for Immigrants and the Authorities, opened by Norway's Crown Prince Haakon Magnus, where he stressed the value of diversity and religious freedom in American society.



Crown Prince Haakon (left) with Imam Hendi at the KIM Conference.

Imam Hendi also spoke to other groups and organizations, including student and youth

groups. From youth audiences he fielded candid questions about the Middle East conflict, the treatment of Muslims in the U.S. following September 11th, the Islamic perspective on wife-beating, and his experience as an immigrant to the United States.

Young Immigrant TV

In September 2008, Public Affairs awarded a grant to African Cultural Awareness (Young Immigrant TV) to establish a youth film project aimed at creating awareness and engagement for immigrant youths.

In the following months, workshops driven by professionals included courses in photography, digital editing, graphics and other audio visual techniques. The objective was to produce short films addressing contemporary issues such as Islamophobia, xenophobia, freedom of speech, irrational prejudice against the U.S., climate justice, youth cinema and

The project is now complete and the films have given the group an opportunity to tell their own stories through audiovisual expression. The results show how film can be used as a tool to promote tolerance, mutual respect and social changes.

They can be viewed on www.youtube.com/yitv.



Nome Teachers Take Study Tour to U.S.



In an innovative program, former Fulbrighter and current teacher Jarl-Håvard Borgen used his Fulbright contacts and collaborated with the U.S. Embassy to develop a study tour of the U.S. for English language middle school teachers from three schools in the Nome area in Telemark. Another former Fulbrighter, Øyvind Gulliksen, organized a full course around the study tour, allowing the participating teachers to earn 10 credits through

Telemark University College. The group's U.S. experience started with a series of college-level seminars organized through the University of Chicago, then continued with additional seminars and historical visits in Washington, D.C. and ended with a few days in Las Vegas.

The goals of the program were to expose English-language teachers to the U.S. society and culture as well as to provide a colorful and educational opportunity to test and improve their English-language ability. The teachers returned energized and excited, with a new understanding of the U.S. and a pocketful of new slang words to incorporate in their classes.

Alumni initiatives



Marit S. Hauger: a Fulbright experience



Marit is a 2008 Norwegian Fulbright Fellow, and in this newsletter, she shares with us her updates from Harvard University.



"Live and Learn

This year has taught me many lessons. The most important lesson has been the importance of educational exchange.

With a strong multicultural focus, American universities represent a unique arena where future leaders from all over the world get to meet, knit bonds and learn to understand and respect each other's traditions, cultures, and values.

My year at Harvard School of Public Health has been an exciting and rewarding intellectual challenge. However, it is the relationship with my fellow students, - composed of over sixty different nationalities, - that has made this year an exceptional experience that I will live, build and grow on.

Thank you for my Fulbright experience!"

-Marit-

New Embassy Alumni Program: USA Stories

Are YOU a U.S. high school, college or university alum? Then you can participate! We lend you the camera and you share your story!

On the USA Stories Facebook group, videos by Norwegian alumni will be uploaded and shared with anybody interested in learning more about the topic.



If you have friends or colleagues who also studied in the U.S. and want to share a minute-long story, you can

organize a USA Story Night. We send you a 'Party in a Box' with various U.S. goodies and you host an evening of reminiscing and fun while filming.

Check out our website or e-mail osloEDU@state.gov to see what you have to do to take part in the project.

Embassy gathers 50 U.S. alumni to celebrate Cinco de Mayo

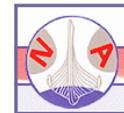
Cinco de Mayo is a regional holiday in Mexico, but is widely observed in the U.S. and other locations around the world as a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride.



On May 8, the U.S. Embassy hosted a Cinco de Mayo happy hour for Norwegians who have signed up to be part of the Embassy's educational exchange initiative: the Speaker Bureau Program and/or the Mentor program. The alums enjoyed Mexican food, -beverages, - music and - décor, and the event concluded with the announcement of the winner of the best salsa.

If you would like to receive more information and/or sign up as a mentor and/or speaker, please contact OsloEDU@state.gov

Embassy Partner: The Norway-America Association (NAA)



News:

- This year, NAA celebrates 90 years of promoting cultural and educational exchange between Norway and North America.
NAA received a record number of applicants to our Undergraduate Scholarship Program this year. Approximately 40 students will be traveling to the U.S. or Canada to begin their undergraduate studies through the program this fall.
NAA has a new Director of Scholarship Programs; On May 1, Tove Knudsen, former Fulbright Program Officer, took over the position from Cheryl Storø.

Application deadlines for scholarships:

- Graduate: September 22, 2009
Undergraduate: December 2, 2009
Summer Course for Teachers: February 10, 2010
See Noram.no for more information

Contact Us

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for alumni inquiries
for school- and youth activities
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osloIRC@state.gov / 21308996

See Embassy Website on Norway.usembassy.gov

See www.USAstudier.no for student guidance

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