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June, Issue 1 - 2010

## U.S. EMBASSY - PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

### Hilary Olsin-Windecker Public Affairs Officer

#### Leaving Norway in June

“A book entitled *Reisen som Forandrer Liv* describes the experiences of students who traveled to the U.S. to study abroad. It sums up what I have tried to accomplish in Norway. Hundreds of Norwegian and American students, teachers, and professionals have traveled as exchange students, Fulbright scholars, teachers on study tours, and participants at summer institutes. The direct contact with people in another country creates an understanding that no movie, TV show, electronic friend or newspaper can provide. I hope the visits of high school classes to the embassy will also encourage these students to seek similar opportunities in the future.

My life has been permanently changed by my three years in Norway. I have learned a lot about our special historic ties and the ways these ties are strengthened by our work together globally. I have been lucky to see two Americans receive the Nobel Peace Prize and help work on the historic visit of President Obama. And I still have one trip planned on the Hurtigruten and a visit to Sami country. Takk for meg, og på gjensyn!”

Hilary’s next position is as PAO in Tel Aviv, Israel.



### Stephanie Darnell Assistant Public Affairs Officer

#### Leaving Norway in June

“Working in Norway has been amazing. It has been a pleasure partnering with so many motivated and enthusiastic Norwegians on everything from educational exchange to integration issues, from environmental policy to President Obama’s visit for accepting the Nobel

Peace Prize. I feel privileged to have been able to serve here; I’ve learned a lot and I’ll be taking lots of great ideas with me!

Personally, Norway has been a wonderful second home for me and my family. My kids were lucky enough to learn how to ski here, and my husband entered his first long-distance bicycle competition. These are memories we will always treasure. I have been awed by Norway’s beauty, to the extent that from time to time, I just have to stop, look and wonder if it’s real. It’s incredible that it is.”

Stephanie has been at the Embassy for 3 years and will in June move on to Washington, D.C. to work on Ukraine and Belarus issues.



## GOOD LUCK!

The Public Affairs staff would like to thank Hilary and Stephanie for 3 great years here at the U.S Embassy in Oslo. You have initiated hundreds, if not thousands of new programs, inspired us and encouraged us, and you will truly be missed! Good luck in Tel Aviv and Washington D.C.!

Sincerely; Anne Charlotte, Kjersti, Claire, Petter Ingrid, Line-Anne and Marit



## Obamamania - The Nobel Peace Prize 2009



The President and First Lady took the time to meet-and-greet the Embassy community.

from booking hotels and arranging transportation, to providing information and guidance about people, venues and practices, and not least being the intermediary between the White House and the Norwegian hosts. Some of us had worked on the visit of President Clinton in 1999 and some had worked on Presidential visits elsewhere, but we needed help,

who travel with the President wherever he goes. The Embassy staff worked with their counterparts on the team to make sure everything would go seamlessly on the big day.

We here at the Public Affairs Office worked on the press side of the visit, with the task of accommodating the needs of the more than 100

journalists who travelled with the President. This included setting up a press office for both print and broadcast media, helping them out with whatever they needed, and being represented at every venue to make sure the press could do their jobs. Our duties included escorting a group of journalists to join the motorcade at the airport, blocking space for them at City Hall, making sure they kept quiet while the President met the Nobel committee, and updating our special information blog with relevant and up-to date information.



White House photo

We were all very excited to meet and shake hands with President Obama.

Shortly after the release of the previous issue of our newsletter, the Embassy experienced the very hectic but very exciting visit of President Obama. Little did we know, on the morning of October 9 before the Nobel Committee announced President Obama as the laureate for 2009, that the rest of our work year was about to be turned upside down!

and got that from experienced colleagues from Washington and other posts, who came in a few weeks ahead of the visit.

A couple of weeks later, a team of about twenty people from the White House arrived to “stake out” Oslo and every possible aspect of the President’s schedule. The Embassy was involved every step of the way;

Approximately one week before the President and First Lady’s arrival, the White House advance team came to Oslo. This is a large group of assistants, advisors, travel organizers, security, logistics and IT personnel

To top it all off, many of us got to shake the President and First Lady’s hands and take some memorable photos at the embassy meet-and-greet right before the Obamas left Norway. Needless to say, these were days we will never forget!

### SECRETARY CLINTON’S SPECIAL ADVISOR VISITS OSLO

On March 17 and 18, Special Representative to Muslim Communities [Farah Pandith](#) made a whirlwind visit to Oslo, meeting people and groups who represent or work with Muslims in Norway.

While in Oslo, Ms. Pandith met with representatives from the Islamic Council, the Organization Against Public Discrimination, political parties, students, and journalists and writers who focus on minority issues. Pandith was also the keynote speaker at a [dialogue meeting](#) hosted by Abid Raja focusing on empowerment of minority women.

Ms. Pandith was appointed by Secretary Clinton last September, as part of the Obama administration’s efforts to improve not just the image of the United States within the Muslim world, but to actively listen and respond to the concerns of Muslims in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Her visit was part of the Embassy’s ongoing partnership with the minority communities of Norway.



Special Representative to Muslim Communities, Farah Pandith, met and talked with many Norwegian Muslims while in Oslo.

# Outreach & Events



## Ambassador White helps kick off the Vancouver Olympics

On President's Day, February 15, Ambassador White joined the Ambassadors of Canada and Switzerland and the Mayor of Oslo for a friendly demonstration of curling and ice hockey at "Spikersuppa" in the center of Oslo. The event was initiated by the Canadian Embassy in Norway as a kick off to the Vancouver Winter Olympic Games.

The event was open to the public, and was supported by the [National Curling Federation](#) and the ice hockey clubs of [Vålerenga](#) and [Frisk Asker](#) Hockey. After the official program ended, the participants and the general public came together to enjoy some hot chocolate and pancakes.



Ambassador White testing his hockey skills.

## "Art in Embassy" Collection unveiled

U.S. Ambassadors are given the opportunity to display works of art at their residences through the State Department's [Art in Embassies Program](#). On March 10, in honor of the new collection, Ambassador and Mrs. White hosted a reception in the residence for representatives from the private and public sectors as well as the art world of Oslo, the Fulbright Foundation Board of Directors and the diplomatic corps.

exhibition of Ambassador White's Art in Embassy collection (which includes the works of several Norwegian-American artists) provides an excellent opportunity to highlight U.S.-Norway cultural linkages, and will be on display at the residence throughout Barry White's tenure as U.S. Ambassador.



The opening of the

## Young Ambassadors Leadership Program 2009/2010



In September 2009, the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Embassy started a new leadership program for Norwegian high school students: The Young Ambassadors Leadership Program. It was developed for aspiring leaders who want new challenges and valuable leadership experience outside the classroom, and was initiated by a group of Embassy youth contacts who have previously participated in summer youth leadership institutes in the U.S. They wanted to transfer some of the knowledge they had gained to other young Norwegian students.

Through a competitive application process, where high school students were asked to write an essay about their thoughts on leadership, we selected 13 outstanding and motivated high school students as our

Young Ambassadors.

Throughout the 2009/2010 school year, the Young Ambassadors participated in monthly workshops relating to principles of leadership. They learned about topics such as public speaking, debating, discussion techniques, networking, project management, career planning and social engagement, and were hosted by businesses and organizations such as [Schlumberger](#), [ANSA](#), [Statens Vegvesen](#), [University of Oslo](#) and [Abbott](#).

There was also a mentoring component to the program, in which the Young Ambassadors were matched up with a Norwegian leader within their field of interest, allowing participants to gain valuable experience and guidance.

On April 20, Ambassador White invited all participants and parents, organizers, speakers, mentors and hosts to his residence for a Young Ambassadors graduation, where we all congratulated the students on their active participation and completion of this new Embassy program.

The Embassy wishes to thank all the involved for a successful partnership: the steering committee for their dedicated work with planning and organizing the seminars; the mentors for contributing with their time and expertise; the speakers for their leadership insights; and the hosts for sharing their space; and of course the Young Ambassadors for making the program what it was.

[Read more about the program and seminars on the Embassy website](#)



[Find photos from the Young Ambassadors Program on Facebook](#)

# Educational Exchange - Study in the U.S.



## Do you need help with your personal statement?

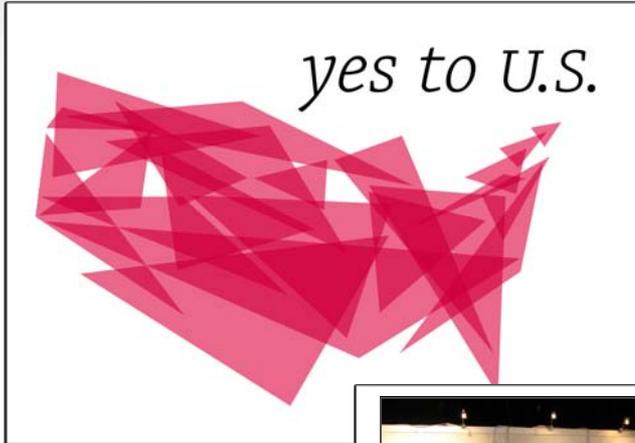
The Writing Center at St. John's University in Queens, New York, provides a forum where all students are welcome to discuss their writing with trained writing consultants. Students work with consultants on such issues as the writing process, organization, argumentation, grammar, syntax, rhetorical style, plagiarism, and appropriate citation methods both in person and through the center's online consultation service. [Read more...](#)



The service is free of charge. Just send an email to [writingcenter@stjohns.edu](mailto:writingcenter@stjohns.edu).

## "Yes to U.S." Educational Campaign

This year as in previous years, the U.S. embassy had a pavilion at Oslo's annual educational fair. The booth promoted U.S. higher education to Norwegian students alongside the Embassy's educational exchange partners - the Fulbright Foundation, the Norway-American Association and the American College of Norway. Each day, an average of 500 students stopped by the U.S. studies booth to learn more about educational exchange possibilities in the States.



New this year was the "Yes to U.S." design of the booth which was developed to give a unified look for all organiza-

tions involved.

The educational fairs provide an excellent opportunity to connect the organizations to the students. This design will stay with us as we continue our educational exchange efforts.



## U.S. Embassy celebrates people-to-people ties

On January 19, Public Affairs organized the second Bureau of Educational and Cultural (ECA) Alumni Reception at the Ambassador's residence to honor participants of various exchange programs and the institutions which partner with us to promote U.S.-Norway relations. Among the guests were many well known politicians and movers-and-shakers of Norwegian society who have visited the U.S. as International Visitors, Voluntary Visitors, Fulbright Fellows, Outstanding Student Summer Institute participants and Ben Franklin Fellows. Also attending was the Minister of Research and Higher Education Tora Aasland. In her remarks, Minister Aasland reinforced Ambassador White's comments about the importance of the people-to-people connection and how student exchange is the basis for internationalization.

The reception also gathered the embassy's educational exchange partners as well as representatives from various international offices at Norwegian universities, some as far away as the Arctic University College of Bodø, the University of Stavanger and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim.



## Traveling to the U.S.?

**REGISTER ONLINE TODAY**



## Contact Us...

- ♣ for ideas, comments and suggestions
- ♣ for educational and alumni inquiries
- ♣ for school and youth activities

See Embassy Website on <http://Norway.usembassy.gov>

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Embassy on Facebook and Twitter

