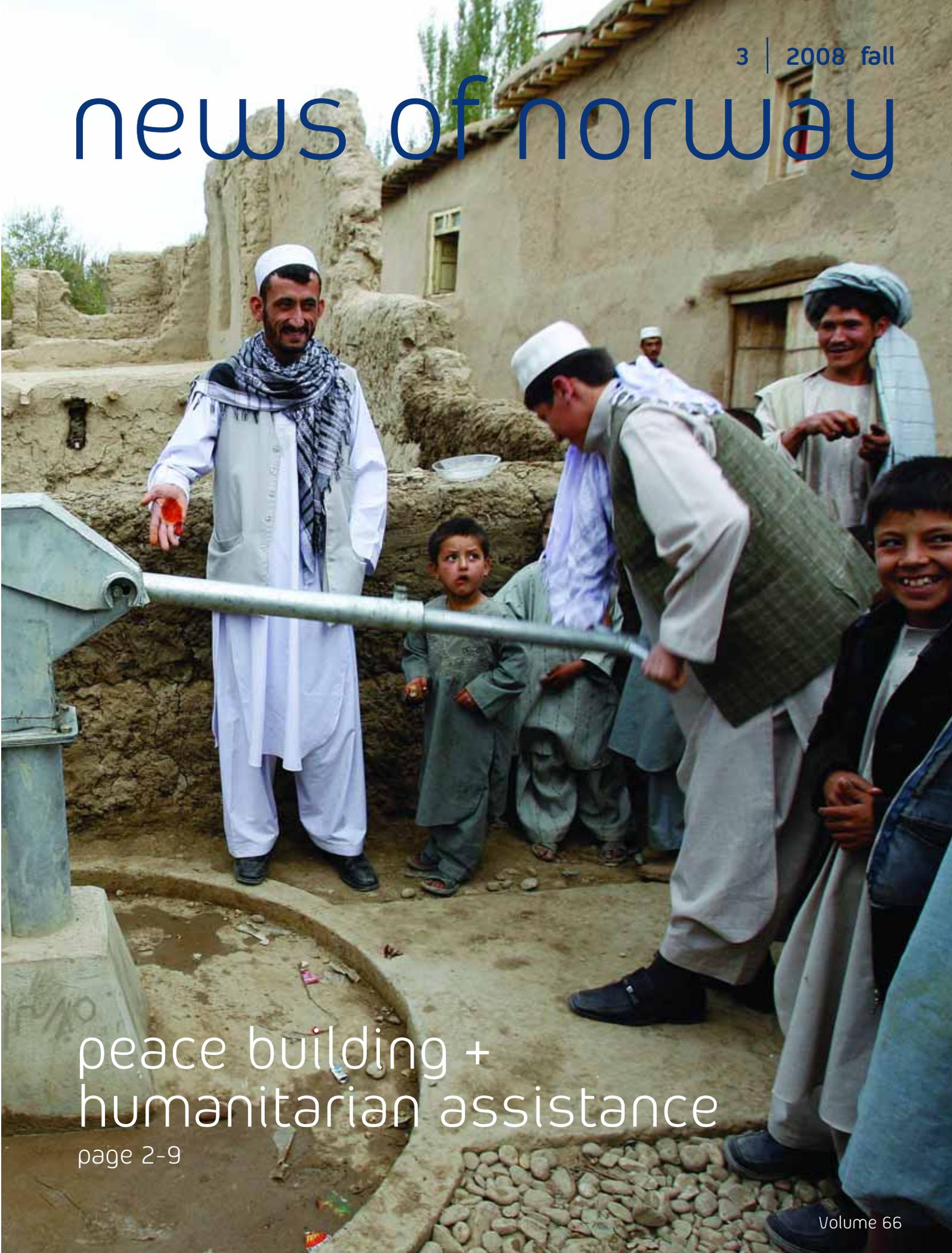


news of norway



peace building +
humanitarian assistance

page 2-9

We aim to reach out to key target groups and present stories we believe are important to our American audience. News of Norway has proven to be an effective tool for this, and I hope our readers appreciate our decision to focus on one major theme in each issue. This time we look at Norway's role in peace-building and humanitarian assistance. Despite a population of 4.6 million, Norway has an impact all over the world. Why? Since the days of the Vikings, Norwegians have been a seafaring people, trading with neighboring countries and exploring uncharted territory. Today, the average Norwegian travels extensively and exports of oil and gas and marine products form the backbone of our economy. Being an old nation – but a young country –



PHOTO BY ARILD STROMMEN

Norwegians have an international tradition, but also feel obliged to respond to injustice, poverty, and human suffering. It was therefore natural that Norway played an important part in the establishment of the U.N. and its headquarters in New York. Norway's commitment and financial contributions over the years continues to testify to this.

Jannicke Jæger
Counselor of Communications
Royal Norwegian Embassy, Washington, D.C.

Norwegians have actively promoted international development assistance and cooperation, and we have contributed civil and military personnel to U.N. peace and stabilization operations. In this edition of News of Norway you can read about Norway's involvement in Afghanistan and how we, with the United States and other NATO allies, are there to help restore security and develop the economy. Realizing that Afghanistan will only be stable when governed by the Afghans themselves, Norway has made Afghanistan its main development assistance partner.

This edition also highlights the "Norwegian model" as a peace broker – based on Norway's experience during the last decades. The lesson learned in trying to facilitate peace is that success to a large extent rests on involving people from NGOs and the academic community in the mediation process. Can the Norwegian model be exported? Read more on pages 4-5.

Q&A

ambassador morten wetland

Ambassador Morten Wetland took up his appointment as Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations in New York in August, 2008. Wetland was previously State Secretary at the office of Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. He has also been State Secretary to former Prime Minister of Norway, Dr. Gro H. Brundtland. From 1998 to 2003 Wetland served as Norway's Ambassador to Germany. Ambassador Wetland holds a graduate degree in law from the University of Oslo, where he specialized in international law. He is married to Hege Nygard Wetland and has two children.

News of Norway asked Ambassador Wetland about his new position and about Norway's role in the United Nations.

How does Norway contribute to the United Nations?

By consistently supporting the principles in the UN charter in international relations, and by funding the UN's development efforts and

its humanitarian activities.

What are the most important issues for you and the UN to work on this fall, and in the long term?

Supporting UN efforts in Afghanistan and Africa, working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, dealing with climate change, energy and the food crisis.

In which areas does Norway possess unique expertise and can make the most difference?

We have greater capacities than our population size suggests to assist in humanitarian crisis situations. We are able to make quick decisions if need be. We are an important energy nation, and a maritime nation.

What are the most challenging aspects of your job?

To manage the Norwegian Mission to the UN's human and other resources wisely, and to make it an effective foreign policy tool for the Norwegian Government.

What do you enjoy most about your position?



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PHOTO BY ROYAL MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

To be able to use all parts of my previous experience and to live and learn among so many talented people.

Who do you feel has done an especially admirable job within humanitarian and peace efforts?

Explorer Fridtjof Nansen, the first UN Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, former Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, and international public health specialist Tore Godal. We are also fortunate to have a Prime Minister (Jens Stoltenberg) and a Foreign Minister (Jonas Gahr Støre) who work every day to make a difference.



Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre arrived in Kabul, Afghanistan in January, 2008. A few days later an embedded Norwegian journalist and five Afghans were killed, and a member of Støre's delegation was badly wounded in a terrorist attack on Kabul's Serena Hotell.

norway's plea for mediation

by roger cohen, new york times columnist

Scandinavia does reasonableness well, even when faced with unreason. The Oslo Accords of 1993 were as close as Israelis and Palestinians have come to looking each other in the eye, admitting neither side is going away, and jettisoning a bitter past for a better future.

The mediation habit stayed with Norway, despite Oslo's collapse. Jonas Gahr Støre, the Norwegian foreign minister, is a battle-hardened Mr. Dialogue. He took a personal terrorism course earlier this year while on a diplomatic mission to Afghanistan.

Store was in Kabul's Serena Hotel on January 14 when explosions and machine-gun fire erupted in the lobby, a flight of stairs above where he sat. Carsten Thomassen, a prominent Norwegian diplomatic correspondent covering his visit, was killed by terrorists linked to the Taliban. At least five other people died; one of Støre's media officials was gravely wounded.

The foreign minister was left with what he calls "anger and sadness." But in the course of a conversation with Store, on the margins of the Oslo Forum, a meeting on conflict resolution that Norway hosts with the Geneva-based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, it was less anger I felt from him than relentless reason.

Perhaps Støre's world view — that of a very critical NATO ally — is a good introduction to this post-unipolar moment, when the United States has bumped down to earth from its with-us-or-against-us apotheosis.

Store disapproves of the way the Bush Administration has conducted the war on terror. "This paradigm of the war on terror, connecting all kinds of armed resistance around the globe in one huge ideological framework, as a new ideology at a stage in history when

most of the major ideologies are gone, does not reflect the facts on the ground," he told me.

Norway's message to the United States is blunt: the next administration, whether headed by Barack Obama or John McCain, should pronounce the war on terror over. Because it has tended to isolate the United States, polarize the world, inflate the enemy, conflate diverse movements and limit scope for dialogue, its time has passed.

The way this has been framed, as an indefinite war that will last for decades, has impoverished our ability to understand the point of departure of the conflict and how we should deal with it," Støre said. "Engaging is not weakness, and by not talking, the West has tended to give the upper hand to extremists on the other side."

He continued: "Moderates lose ground if they cannot show tangible results. You don't engage at any price, but the price can come down and we can achieve more."

Norway has kept channels open to Hamas and to Syria. It has spoken with the Hamas leadership. It is convinced the West missed an opportunity by not talking in March 2007 to the elected Palestinian national unity government composed of Fatah and Hamas members. It argues that Taliban elements can be drawn out of terror into politics through talks.

In all of this, Norway has used the greater diplomatic latitude it enjoys as a non-member of the European Union. The E.U., like the United States, lists Hamas as a terrorist organization.

"We have enormous reason to be upset with Hamas because it spent every day after Oslo trying to destroy Oslo," Støre said. "But there is a strong realist tradition in Hamas ori-

ented toward a political landscape. In general, it should be in our interest to get organizations out of military activity and into politics. The political working method has not been sufficiently tested."

Engaging, he insisted, does not mean lowering of requirements. It can be a means to set yardsticks, hold interlocutors accountable, and probe their thinking while surrendering nothing.

"If Hamas wants to be part of the real world, it has to end up accepting Israel's right to exist," Støre said. "The rest of the world will never yield on that." It must also recognize the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas of the mainstream Fatah movement, as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in negotiations.

For Norway, the Mecca accord of February 2007 came close enough to recognizing past Palestinian commitments to Israel for the West to begin rigorous engagement with Hamas. It chose another course and mayhem ensued.

Støre believes a "revisiting has started in U.S. foreign policy in the direction of engagement" and this will "accelerate" under the next administration. "Part of this ideology of the war on terror has been the United States doing things by themselves," he said. "Now we in Europe and Norway must expect to be more actively engaged by Washington." That will bring demands as well as opportunities.

Engagement begins with allies. It can be extended to enemies. It cannot be deterred by bloodshed or personal loss. An Oslo stop is in order for America's next president.

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rebuilding afghanistan

by arild strømmen

Contributing to stability and the rebuilding of Afghanistan is a priority in Norwegian foreign policy. Currently, about 500 Norwegian troops are stationed in the country, most in Mazar-e Sharif and with the Norwegian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Meymaneh, and a small contingent in Kabul. But Norwegian politicians have no illusions that military presence alone will get the war-torn country back on its feet: Significant political and economic development is absolutely necessary.

At the International Afghanistan Support Conference in Paris this summer, Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre advocated stepping up the civilian and political assistance to Afghanistan: “Norway is stepping up significantly. We are increasing our assistance by nearly 40 percent compared to last year, to a level of about \$140 million this year. And we intend to keep it at that level during the five-year timeframe of the present Afghanistan National Development Strategy,” he said. “We intend to maintain a significant military presence as well.”

Following a visit to Afghanistan, Støre recounted what he was told by Norwegian men and women in uniform: “Do not expect us to deliver a stable Afghanistan. Only political processes and civil efforts can do that; our mission is strictly speaking to provide the necessary stability for that to happen.”

“If you fall short on that critical civil agenda of reconciliation, reconstruction, and Afghanization, if the average Afghan does not see any change for the better in his daily life, then we, ISAF, the military – who are there with the best of mandates and the best of intentions – may end up being perceived as occupiers and part of the problem, rather than part of the solution.”

In an effort to make a noticeable difference for the local population, Norwegian military personnel have built water wells (see News of Norway’s cover photo), repaired infrastructure, cleared minefields, and trained local security staff. Yet some NGOs have criticized the effort, arguing that uniformed personnel should strictly perform military duties to avoid confusion between unarmed civilian workers and foreign troops, which can put locals at risk. This issue has been fiercely debated, but undoubtedly, the more of the reconstruction that can be

done by Afghans themselves, the more sustainable it will be.

One initiative to strengthen Afghanistan’s judicial infrastructure is through the Norwegian Mission of Legal Advisers to Afghanistan. A task group named “The Well of Strength” is made up of people from the whole chain of justice in Norway. Lawyers, prosecutors, judges and representatives from the Prison Service are deployed in the country following an invitation from national authorities. The aim of the task group – in Afghanistan and other countries – is to support implementation of a democratic legal, judiciary and correctional system.

Støre believes that more external funds should be channeled through the Afghan authorities in order to increase national control. Norway was one of the first donors, and remains a strong supporter of the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), and over the years about half of all Norwegian assistance has been channeled through the fund.

Afghanistan is now one of the two largest recipients of Norwegian development assistance. In fact, Norway has supported humanitarian aid and development in Afghanistan for the past 30 years. Until the fall of the Taliban, this support was channeled through the Afghanistan Support Group, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations.

“We are heartened that the U.N. now has a more robust mandate, and that the leaders of the world seem to have trust in U.N. special representative for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, and his ability to coordinate the efforts of the international community,” Støre said. Newly appointed, Eide, a Norwegian diplomat, is tasked with coordinating 30 embassies in Kabul, several financial institutions, U.N. organizations, and about 2,000 NGOs and contractors.

Eide seems undaunted by the formidable task, yet has a sober picture of the challenges. “We have underestimated the humanitarian needs, the importance of institution building, and the effectiveness of assistance. And we need experts who can ‘follow the money’ better than we do today,” Eide told Norwegian newspaper “Dagens Næringsliv.” “We need to formulate a clearer strategy to succeed in the long term.”



PHOTO BY PEP ARNE JUWANG/THE NORWEGIAN ARMY



ABOVE: Norwegian forces are deployed through NATO-led ISAF (International Security Assistance Force)

LEFT: Norwegian medics exercising in Mazar-e Sharif.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP: A Norwegian mine clearer marks a mine at Bagram airport.

BOTTOM: Norwegian soldiers giving away soccer balls to local children in a village outside the city of Meymaneh.

a fragile path to peace

Since the early 1990s, Norway has played an important role as a facilitator in a number of peace and reconciliation processes. In several cases, Norwegian involvement has led to lasting peace. In others, agreements between warring factions have proved fragile. But Norway's experience has shown that small countries can play a constructive role in resolving complex armed conflicts, even without the direct involvement of the United Nations or major powers.

Norway did not develop its reputation as a peace-broker overnight. Until the early 1990s, hardly anyone would recognize that the small country of 4.6 million people played a role at all – except for a fairly significant contribution in terms of volunteering troops to United Nations peacekeeping forces.

In the summer of 1993, however, the world learned about a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, an agreement drafted by negotiators from both sides - in Norway. Norwegian mediators, representing the Norwegian government as well as a non-governmental think tank, had been meeting discretely with both parties near Oslo.

Regrettably, the implementation failed. Yet it had shown the world that a small country could make a meaningful contribution to conflict resolution.

In 1996, Norwegians facilitated an agreement in Guatemala ending no less than 36 years of civil war that had cost more than 100,000 lives and created more than 1 million refugees.

Norway also helped broker a ceasefire between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE in 2002, following 19 years of civil war. The Norwegian government headed a group of personnel from Nordic countries monitoring the ceasefire in Sri Lanka while working toward a final settlement. After five years of relative calm, civil strife flared up once again, and the country remains in a precarious situation.

Norwegian peace efforts ultimately are contingent on whether the involved parties demonstrate a genuine will to negotiate, their acceptance of Norway as a facilitator, and whether they are willing to abide by agreements that have been reached. But even when the outlook is bleak there may be a certain measure of comfort. In the words of Norwegian ambassador to the United States, Wegger Chr. Strommen: "Even when peace agreements have broken apart, the situation would likely have been much worse if we hadn't been involved at all."

the "norwegian model"

Over the last few decades Norway has developed its own model of conflict resolution, often referred to as the "Norwegian model."

The keystone of the model is the close cooperation and coordination that exist between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The cooperation has developed over a long period, based on common experience in development assistance since the mid-1960s.

At play is a close network of key personnel from NGOs, the academic community, and the Foreign Service. The network has proved useful in offering unconventional diplomatic channels. For example, Sri Lanka had for a long time been a recipient of Norwegian development assistance. The experience both NGOs and the Norwegian government gained in the country, as well as the trust they earned from the local population, made it possible to enter into an active role as a peace negotiator.

Also key is that Norway has no colonial past. This provides a good basis for trust in countries formerly ruled by others. As a small country, one does not normally suspect Norway of having economic or political self-interest in far away regions.



PHOTO BY TORBJØRN KJOSVOLD/THE NORWEGIAN ARMY



PHOTO BY PER ARNE JUVAANG/THE NORWEGIAN ARMY

UN HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK:

Norway actively supports the efforts to strengthen the UN's capacity for conflict prevention and crisis management, and also the UN's role in various ongoing peace processes. Norway is a driving force in UN peacebuilding efforts, and was among the first countries to take part in the UN Peacebuilding Commission established in 2006.

HAITI:

Norway has been involved in various trust building and reconciliation efforts between political and civil actors in Haiti since the mid 1990's.

PREVIOUS CONFLICTS:

Norway has been engaged in peace and reconciliation efforts in Guatemala, Colombia, in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as in East Timor.

THE MIDDLE EAST:

In the aftermath of the Oslo Process, Norway has contributed to the peace process in the Middle East through its role as the leader of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC). The Committee seeks to promote dialogue between international donors, the Palestinian authorities and the Israeli government to strengthen institutionbuilding and encourage economic development in the Palestinian areas.

SUDAN:

Norway has played a central role in peace efforts in Sudan over several years, including in the facilitation of the North-South peace agreement of 2005. Norway supports the United Nation peacekeeping presence with both funding and personnel. Norwegian Development assistance to Sudan will amount to \$120 million in 2008.



AFGHANISTAN:

Norway has around 500 troops stationed in Mazar-e Sharif and with the Norwegian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Meymaneh, as well as a small contingent in Kabul. Development assistance from Norway will amount to \$140 million in 2008, making the Afghanistan one of the major recipients of Norwegian development assistance.

NEPAL:

Norway supports democracy building in Nepal, and will continue long-term aid, in areas of on clean energy, education. Norway has contributed to UN's peace efforts with personnel and funding.

SOMALIA:

Norway has supported various dialogue and reconciliation efforts. Norway has also been an advocate for a better coordinated international effort in, and initiated the now UN-led, International Contact Group (ICG) for Somalia

SRI LANKA:

Norway has played a facilitating role between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE (Tamil Tigers). Norway headed a group of personnel from Nordic countries monitoring a cease-fire until the mission was terminated in January 2008. Norway remains committed to assisting Sri Lanka in finding a solution to its ethnic conflict.

THE PHILIPPINES:

Norway facilitates peace talks between the Philippine Government and the opposition group National Democratic Front (NDF).

facelift for the norwegian room at the united nations



by monique watne

The Security Council Chamber at the United Nations headquarters in New York was donated by Norway to the U.N., and is called the Norwegian Room. In 2009, it is due for a makeover.

The first U.N. secretary general was Trygve Lie from Norway. He was never in doubt as to who should design the room in which the Security Council meets when the headquarters of the U.N. was built 60 years ago. In his opinion, the Norwegian architect Arnstein Arneberg was the right person for the job.

“Arneberg was exceedingly conservative, but this was his uniqueness. This uniqueness has to be preserved when the restoration starts,” Eirik T. Bøe said while walking around the enormous room with its massive wooden doors and immense painting by Per Krogh looming at the front. Bøe works for the Norwegian Branch of the International Council on Monuments and Sights (ICOMOS Norway), and the organization regards this room as a part of Norway’s cultural heritage.

In the mid-1940s, there was a debate among representatives of the 51 original U.N. member states about where the headquarters should be located. U.S. cities such as Philadelphia, Boston, and San Francisco were much-discussed options. A few cities in Europe were also considered.

After much deliberation, Trygve Lie decided enough was enough. He made a phone call to the mayor of New York and managed to get initial financial help of \$8.5 million from the Rockefeller family. Finally, the U.N. had the site for its headquarters, by the East River in midtown Manhattan.

Still, the problem of location wasn’t quite solved yet. The organization needed additional funds to furnish the interior. The member states acted individually. The Economic and Social Council Chamber is a gift from Sweden, the Trusteeship Council Chamber is a gift from Denmark, and arguably the world’s most important room, the Security Council Chamber, is a gift from Norway.

The room is Norwegian from top to bottom: wallpaper of straw from Biri in the Gudbrandsdal in the back, Else Poulsson’s blue draperies hanging on three sides of the room, and Per Krogh’s painting. Johan Fredrik Monrad’s upholstery firm in Oslo made the vinyl-covered wooden chairs where the members of the Security Council are

seated when in session.

Although modern at the time, now the Security Council Chamber and the rest of the headquarters violate New York City’s current fire regulations and are in desperate need of a complete overhaul.

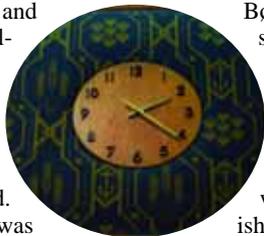
“It’s about time the renovation starts,” Johan L. Løvald said in his office before he left New York to go back to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo this summer. Løvald knows the headquarters well after having served as the Norwegian ambassador to the U.N. for five years.

“On my way to meetings with the secretary general, I’ve passed buckets filled with water in his anteroom because of water leaks in the roof,” Løvald stated. No major renovation has ever been done. The headquarters was built to house 70 members. Today the number of member states has reached 192.

Bøe believes a restoration process, which is scheduled to start in 2009, is necessary. However, he has his concerns:

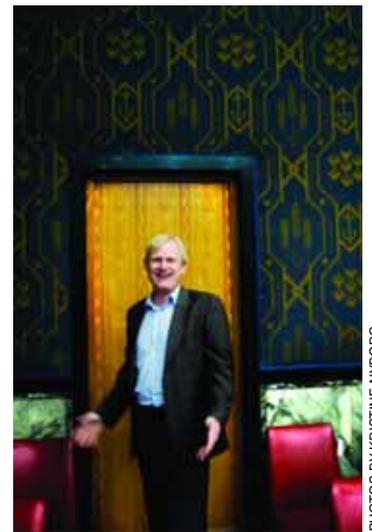
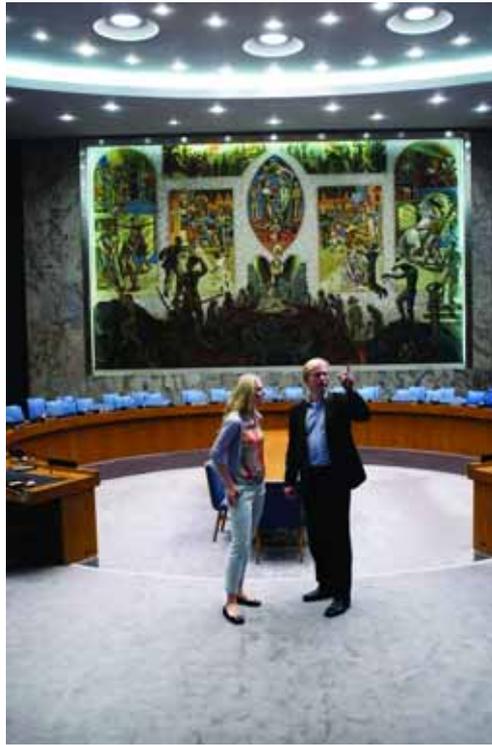
“We hope the room will have the same look when the work is finished.”

Michael Adlerstein is in charge of the restoration process, and assures Bøe that the outlook of both the Security Council room and the rest of the headquarters will be preserved. “The rooms have changed over the years, and in some cases we will restore them even more to the way they actually looked when the U.N. headquarters opened years ago,” Adlerstein said.



ABOVE: The Security Council Chamber is known as the Norwegian Room. The chamber was designed by Arnstein Arneberg of Norway and was completed in September 1952.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Eirik T. Bøe and Linda Lovise Veiby with the Norwegian Branch of the International Council on Monuments and Sights inspect the room before renovations. The walls are marble. The doors are inlaid with ash bearing a torch and a sword motif. The silk blue and gold tapestry and the chairs of the delegates were donated by Norway after WWII. The mural, in oil on canvas, was painted by the Norwegian artist Per Krogh. It symbolizes a future of peace obtained through man’s efforts and the efforts of the UN.



PHOTOS BY KRISTINE NYBORG

On Top of the World

Marianne Fosland with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington D.C. accompanied staffers from the United States Congress on a study tour to Norway in August, the highlight of which was the Arctic archipelago Svalbard. Arild Strømmen asked her about the experience:

What was the purpose of the study tour?

We host an annual study tour to Norway for American parliamentarians, where they get to see parts of the country and meet with politicians and leaders in business and research. Together we explore US – Norwegian Cooperation in the areas of defense and security policy, energy security, climate change and issues related to the high north.

Who came along to Norway?

I accompanied staffers for four Congressmen and one Senator, along with representatives from the Norwegian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the of Defense, as well as from the US Embassy in Oslo. (See caption for names). At the final stop in Svalbard the delegation was joined by US Undersecretary Paula Dobriansky and Mr. Dean Pittman from the State Department. The trip was part of the Norwegian American Parliamentary Exchange Program (NAPEP).

What is NAPEP?

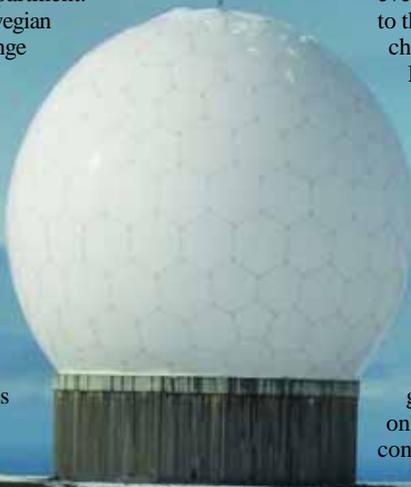
The program was established in 1997 by the United States Information Agency in accordance with Section 108A of the Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (MECEA). Since then, more than 60 Congressional staffers, Congressmen and Senators have participated, including Senators John McCain og Hillary Clinton.

Where in Norway did you go?

The seven day long program was tight – there were a lot of issues to cover, and many places to visit. We started in the Norwegian capital, Oslo, then flew north to Bodø, Kjerringøy, Kirkenes and Tromsø, before finally making it to the northernmost settlement in the world: Svalbard. Our journey took us further and further north in Norway, the landscape turning more and more arctic until we reached Kirkenes – our northernmost stop on the mainland before Svalbard.

What were the highlights of the trip?

In Kirkenes we were in for a real treat: A true delicacy from the coast of Finnmark County, namely King Crabs. But before we could even start thinking about dinner, the crabs had to be caught. Luckily, I didn't have to throw my American friends in the water; Mr. Lars Erik Øye from Arctic Adventure Resorts did the job for us. We were safe and sound in a boat, dressed in survival suits, while he dived into the freezing water. We were all waiting, expecting him to return with one crab at the time. But when he finally appeared from the deep he held 15 crabs in his hands – more than enough for our dinner. Then we headed even further north – probably as far north as any of us will ever go – to the Archipelago of Svalbard. In Svalbard the main focus was climate change and research in the Arctic. The Norwegian Polar institute is Norway's central institution for environmental monitoring and mapping of the Polar Regions. The institute is located in Tromsø and in Ny-Ålesund – the world's most northernmost permanent public settlement. In Ny-Ålesund we got a briefing from the polar institute and we got to meet with both the Indian and the Chinese research stations, which are part of the international research community on Svalbard. In Longyearbyen, one of my fellow travelers expressed the feeling we had looking at the antennae landscape of the Svalbard Satellite Station SVALSAT: "I am on top of the world – this is truly a surreal experience." Polar orbiting satellites make observations and collect meteorological data during earth orbit and download the data directly to a ground station. From stations at lower latitudes the satellites are only in touch during part of their orbit, but at SVALSAT they have contact with the satellites 24 hours a day.



ABOVE: An antennae part of the Svalbard Satellite Station SVALSAT

RIGHT: Participants in the North American Parliamentary Exchange Program 2008 were (from left to right): Erling Rimestad, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Marianne Fosland, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C.; Kate Spaziani, Legislative Director, Office of Congressman Ron J. Kind (D-WI); Kevin Johnson, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the United States in Oslo; Mariana Maguire, Staff Associate, Office of Congressman Robert I. Wexler (D-FL), Sub-Committee on Europe; Brian Bonlender, Chief of Staff, Office of Congressman Jay Inslee (D-WA); Vance Serchuk, Legislative Assistant, Office of Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (I-CT); Karl Haddeland, Legislative Assistant, Office of Congressman Keith Ellison (D-MN); Kirsten Gislesen, Norwegian Ministry of Defense.



Oslo Elsewhere Premiered Jon Fosse's SA KA LA

by erlend haugen

Performing arts group Oslo Elsewhere, now in its 4th season, presented the U.S. premiere of Jon Fosse's "SA KA LA," in September. The show in New York is directed and translated by Sarah Cameron Sunde, and starring Norwegian actress Anna Gutto.

"SA KA LA" takes place during a moment of crisis when some family members are aware of a piece of bad news while the others have yet to hear it. A mother has fallen victim to a stroke on her 60th birthday, taking her three grown children, Nora, Hilde, and Ola, completely by surprise. Meanwhile, the rest of the family can't be reached as they wait for her party to begin.

World-renowned Norwegian playwright Fosse has enraged, excited, inspired, and some say divided the theater world between those who love and understand his work and others, who feel they don't "get" it.

With 600 productions under his belt, numerous awards and even a French national order of merit, Fosse has become one of the great names in theater since his international debut 10 years ago. Jon Fosse's name is often mentioned in the same breath as legendary dramatists such as Henrik Ibsen and Samuel Beckett, but the comparison is more about level of depth and insight, rather than writing style or commonality of themes.

"Jon Fosse's title as heir to Ibsen says more about his skills than his style," says Anna Gutto. "While Ibsen used big words, poetic language, and expanded sentences, Fosse's unique style of complex simplicity is what makes him so great. Fosse manages to communicate so much meaning by using fewer and simpler words. Furthermore, the same words often mean different things in the changing circumstances."

Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen almost single-handedly revolutionized modern drama in the 19th century by turning it into a vehicle for social commentary. Fosse, on the contrary, strips issues of cultural influence and social norms to focus on the raw emotions and the consequences of human interaction. "I believe Fosse opens up a space for reflection and manages to draw the audience in, and encourage interpretations reflecting the audience's own experiences. Much of his international success could be due to his ability to transcend cultural barriers and find common ground in our humanity," says director Sunde. "Fosse doesn't impose his views, but encourages reflections around who we are and who we might not be, about life and, more importantly, death."

Fosse's writings about death, and especial-



PHOTO BY BEN HORTON

ly suicide, are controversial and often challenging for an American audience. Fosse's obsession with death stems from his existentialism, a belief that an individual creates the meaning and essence of his or her life, as opposed to it being defined by philosophical or theological doctrines. Beckett is often said to share Fosse's existential worldview, but while Beckett wrote often absurd plays reject-

ing simplicity and realism, Fosse's plots often deals with the drama of everyday life. "Fosse has an extraordinary way of bringing great drama out of everyday lives. The world of Fosse is nothing but encounters between people," says actress Gutto.

Read more:
www.osloelsewhere.org

Norwegians Place 4th in World Barbecue Championship

by caroline schönheyder

Americans are more known for barbecuing than Norwegians, but this year, a team from Norway heated up the competition in the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest. Two thousand enthusiasts gathered on a two-mile strip along the Mississippi River in Memphis, Tenn., in the spring. Among the 270 teams, Norway placed 4th in one of 11 categories, with its grilled salmon in mustard sauce.

Oda Smeby Christiansen was one of the members on the Norwegian team. The team was one of three from Europe, and was warmly welcomed by their American competitors. Oda is humbly proud of the 4th place. “It was an experience of a lifetime to participate in the barbecue championship in Tennessee,” she said.

When asked what made the Norwegian team stand out in the crowd of BBQ-connoisseurs, Oda answered: “because of our Scandinavian touch. It was basically fairly recently that Norway became a wealthy nation. Norwegians have been used to getting as much as possible out of very little. This led to simple recipes used with great knowledge of the ingredients – that is our strength,” she said.

Enduring long, dark, and cold winters, it is no wonder Norwegians are desperate for an excuse to stay outdoors and soak up sunny weather, even when cooking. Come spring and summer, Norwegians pull out their small grills. Though barbecuing has always been a big hit in Norway, Oda Christensen thinks Norwegians still have a lot to learn from American grillmasters. While Norwegians tend to be a bit impatient and cook at high heat, high speed, with a tendency to burn the food on the outside while the inside remains raw, Americans do well in cooking at moderate temperatures for a longer time, often using indirect heat.

Christensen also distinguishes between the small Norwegian and American grills. In Tennessee she was faced by grills “the size of small locomotives.” You may try the below recipe for grilled salmon in mustard, that impressed the panel at the World Championship in Memphis, and judge for yourself.



Oda Smeby Christiansen on the Norwegian team at the World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest in Memphis prepared lamb and salmon.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ODA SMEBY CHRISTIANSENOPPLYSNINGSKONTORET

Grilled Salmon in Mustard

Serves eight people

Cooking time (on the grill): 20 min

Grilling method: indirect heat

Temperature: medium/low

Ingredients

1 whole flank of salmon with its skin
 1 cup coarse French mustard
 3 tablespoons dark beer
 2 tablespoons fresh dill
 Brown sugar
 Sea salt
 Ground black pepper
 A few chunks of hickory or mesquite

Preparation

Unless you are using a gas grill, you may soak a few chunks of hickory or mesquite in water for half an hour prior to cooking. Add them to the charcoal before placing the salmon on the grill. Keep adding the chunks a couple more times during cooking.

1. Salt and pepper the salmon (only on the side without skin).
2. Mix mustard, beer, and dill in a bowl. Cover the fish with the mixture (only the side without skin).
3. Sprinkle brown sugar on the salmon.
4. Add the fresh dill on top of the sugar.
5. Put the salmon on the grill, skin side down. Make sure to place the fish on the least warm part of the grill. Put the lid on the grill to let the fish be cooked by indirect heat.
6. Let the salmon cook until it is firm.

A Blessed Story

by anne myklebust

Author and literary critic Elizabeth Wurtzel once described how as an adolescent she loathed being described as “full of promise.” But not all who display talent at an early age, or who are expected to possess extraordinary abilities by virtue of pedigree, buckle under the weight of great

expectations. Fortunately for the literary public, Linn Ullmann, daughter of legendary director Ingmar Bergman, and his versatile and talented muse, actress Liv Ullmann, is one of those.

Linn Ullmann published her first novel, “Before You Sleep,” in 1998, and since has received a number of awards and nominations. In her fourth novel, “A Blessed Child,” published in the U.S. by Random House in August, Ullmann explores guilt and reconciliation with a plot driven by sensuality and violence. The book is set during the summer of 1979, when, on the Swedish island Hammarsö, something terrible happens in the lives of three young sisters. More than 25 years pass before they return to the island to see their aging father.

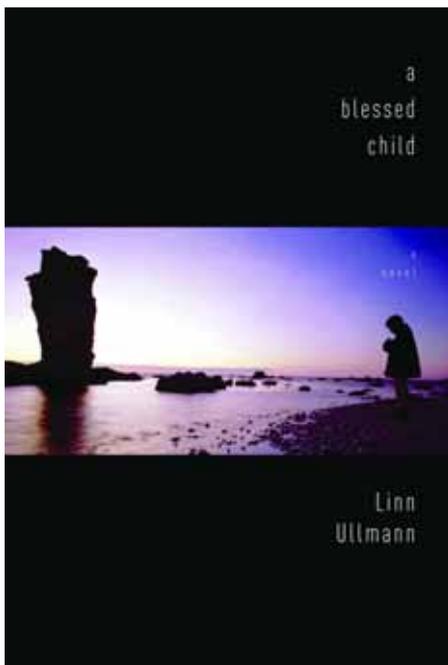
Like so many great literary works, “A Blessed Child” makes the passing of time a topic in its own right. But for all the melancholy and philosophical undercurrents of her work, Ullmann herself has a matter-of-fact perspective on her profession. When discussing the writing process with Sverre Gunnar Haga from the Norwegian Book Clubs, Ullmann made a point of

shunning the “tortured artist” brush: “This just happens to be what I want to do. It’s as simple as that. As an author I can access so many different persons and stories. So many variables and distortions of myself.”

These distortions have clearly struck a chord with critics and readers alike. All of her works have been well received in the more than 30 countries where they have been released. When “A Blessed Child” was published in Norwegian in 2005, it was described in *Dagbladet*, one of Norway’s major newspapers, as “eloquent, sober, and merciless storytelling.”

The critics on this side of the Atlantic appear to agree. In a recent review for the *New York Times*, Stacey D’Erasmus gets tangled in the story’s tender presentation of memories: “The past persists, more vivid than the present. This is true not of life, in which events do draw to a close, but of the magic-lantern slide show of memory, that pensive perpetual motion machine. Does anyone ever really want to visit the summer island for the last time? Think twice before answering.”

While revisiting the pastures of summers past might not always be a good idea, bundling up with “A Blessed Child” this fall is highly recommended.



“A Blessed Child” by Linn Ullmann was published by Random House in August,

For a complete and updated calendar of events please visit www.norway.org



on tour

music

Trio Mediæval

PHOTO BY ASA M. MIKKELSEN



LODI, CA, November 15
St. John's Episcopal Church
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Nov. 16, 7 pm
Herbst Theater

MADISON, WI, Nov. 20, 8 pm
Wisconsin Union Theater
MILWAUKEE, WI, Nov. 21
Cathedral of All Saints
NEW YORK, NY, Nov. 22, 8 pm
Washington Irving High School
NEW YORK, NY, Nov. 23
Corpus Christi Church

Formed just ten years ago, Trio Mediæval is firmly established as one of the world's premier early music vocal ensembles. For this tour, they veer agilely into the rich realm of their native folk traditions.
Info: www.norway.org or www.triomedieval.no

new york

music

Feleboga Folk Music:

Traditional Music From Norway

New York, NY, October 2, 7 pm
Contributing to one of the most vibrant folk music scenes in Europe, Feleboga has been performing Norwegian rural dance music from the 18th and 19th centuries for more than ten years.

Info: www.scandinaviahouse.org
(212) 879-9779

Norwegian Folk Music and Dance Workshop for Children

New York, NY, October 4, 1 pm
Join the world-renowned folk group Feleboga to learn about traditional Norwegian Dance from Telemark. Accompanied by a Hardanger fiddle, the group will demonstrate and teach basic traditional steps.

Info: www.scandinaviahouse.org
(212) 879-9779

Pro Musica Antiqua: Early and Medieval Scandinavian Music

New York, NY, Oct 7 at 7:30 pm
Pro Musica Antiqua use period instruments and perform with a historically informed style, they bring medieval and renaissance music to life in spontaneous and thrilling performances.

Info: www.scandinaviahouse.org
or (212) 879-9779

Ane Brun in Concert

New York, NY, October 22
Singer-songwriter Ane Brun plays at the Living Room

Info: www.livingroomny.com

exhibits

Ulf M in A Symphony of Symbolism

New York, NY, Oct 1-21
The characters in Norwegian painter Ulf M's work are completely at home in their surreal environments. They inhabit the paintings as if in eternal dreamscapes.

Info: www.agora-gallery.com/ArtistInvite/Ulf_M.aspx

The Three by Borgny Svalastog

New York, NY, through Oct 5
Based upon and inspired by the poem "The Three," by the acclaimed Norwegian poet Henrik Wergeland (1808-1845), the renowned Norwegian artist, Borgny Svalastog, made the 18 monotypes displayed in this exhibition, honoring Wergeland 200 years after his birth. The monotypes visually interpret the poem "The Three," written by one Wergeland.

Info: www.kjerka.com
or (212) 319-0370

Summer Light with Dag Alveng



New York, NY, Through Oct. 25
Deborah Bell Photographs present Norwegian photographer Dag Alveng's second one-person exhibition in New York. The exhibition will feature black-and-white gelatin silver prints depicting landscapes and everyday situations in pastoral summer settings in Norway and Sweden from Alveng's ongoing series, Summer Light, dating from the late 1970s to the present.

Info: (212) 691-3883 or www.deborahbellphotographs.com

Paradise Lost

New York, NY, Through Nov 2
Norwegian born Michael Knud Ross will be showing his first painting in New York. "New World" will be in the Williamsburg Art and Historical Center's "Paradise Lost" show, which honors the four-hundred year birthday of the poet John Milton.

Info: <http://wahcenter.net>

Sublime Nature

New York, NY, through Jan 10, 2009
This exhibition features 49 romantic paintings by 13 of the period's most prominent artists from the collection of Asbjørn Lunde.

Info: www.scandinaviahouse.org
(212) 879-9779

performing arts

Jo Strømgren Kompani's The Society

PHOTO BY KNUT BRY



New York, NY, Oct. 15-19
Jo Strømgren Kompani's groundbreaking performance "The Society" is play about a society of sworn coffee drinkers...

Info: www.ps122.org

festivals

Fall Fair at NCHHC

BROOKLYN, NY, Oct 4
The Norwegian Christian Home and Health Center is hosting its 2008 Fall Fair on Saturday, October 4. Food Service and raffle drawings from 10 a.m. through 4 p.m. Norwegian food such as waffles, lapskaus, pea soup and various handicraft items for sale. Large flea market with great vendors and children's activities such as face painting, balloons and games. Grand prize raffle drawing at 4:30 p.m.

Info: Contact Maria Lorenzo at (718) 306-5645. or www.nchhc.org

The Norwegian Festival



New York, NY, Oct 4 at 8:00 am
The 14th annual New York City Norwegian Festival takes place in Central Park on October 4. and everyone is welcome to challenge themselves in one of the running events, come along and cheer on friends or family, or simply join in for a little piece of Norway. Participants can run the 1.7 mile Norway Run or take on the 13.1 mile long Grete's Great Gallop. The Troll Stroll is a great way for kids to experience Central Park, the Norwegian Festival and the joys of running.

Info: www.norway.org
or www.nyrr.org/races

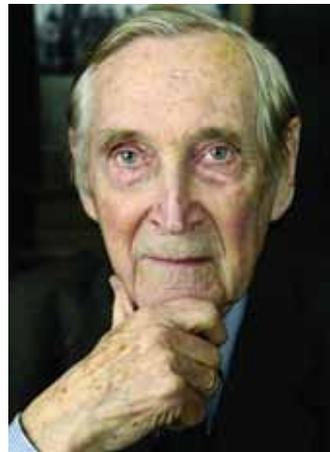
washington dc

lecture

Gunnar Sønsteby: Hero of the Norwegian Resistance

WASHINGTON, DC, Oct. 16, 6:30 pm
When Norway was invaded during World War II, few could have predicted the strength of Norwegian resistance. Now in his 91st year, Gunnar Sønsteby, the most highly decorated Norwegian citizen, invites you to look back with him on his awe-inspiring days as a resistance fighter.

Info: www.spymuseum.org or (866) 779-6873





Norwegian Christmas

AT UNION STATION

For complete program, visit norway.org/xmas

kick off

Toys for Tots Kick-off and Model Train Launch

WASHINGTON, DC, Nov. 25
The start of the Norwegian model train at Union Station also marks the regional kick-off for the 2008 U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots campaign. A giant Norwegian model train winds through the mountains and fjords of Norway. Each train is hand-crafted by our expert model builder and is a replica of a current or historic Norwegian train.

opening ceremony

Tree Lighting

WASHINGTON, DC, Nov. 25
Norway presents a 32-foot tall Christmas tree as a gift to the people of Washington, D.C., and as a symbol of friendship between the United States and Norway.

bazaar

Norwegian-American Bazaar

WASHINGTON, DC, Dec 6-7
Norwegian-American organizations host a shopping extravaganza featuring traditional crafts from Norway, including hand made items, jewelry, calendars, trolls, dolls, holiday ornaments, pewter items, sweaters, and food.

concerts

Eivind Opsvik and Håkon Kornstad

WASHINGTON, DC, Dec. 10
The Norwegian jazz musicians perform at The Kennedy Center.

Music of the Sea: A Norwegian Christmas

WASHINGTON, DC, Dec. 14, 6:30 pm
Operatic excerpts and classical song repertoire emblematic of Norway with a Christmas theme, sung by a host of talented opera singers. A collaboration between the New York Opera Society and Oslo-based Kulturentusiastene.

Info: www.nga.gov or (202) 737-4215



PHOTO BY ORJAN ELLINGSVÅG



PHOTO BY NILS VIK

exhibit

Detour at the National Building Museum

WASHINGTON DC, January – May 2009

In recent years, small but sensational architectural projects along Norwegian tourist routes have gained national as well as international attention. Inspired by the initial success, the partners behind

the exhibit, Norwegian Public Roads Administration and Norsk Form, bring an exhibit showcasing these eye-catching constructions to those not able to travel to Norway. The exhibit opens in Washington, D.C., in January 2009 and may travel to other cities in North America.

Info: www.norway.org

atlanta

festival

Scandinavian Festival in Atlanta
ATLANTA, GA, October 11, 2008,
10:00 am - 6:00 pm

The Scandinavian Festival offers fun for the whole family, featuring the diversity, similarity and richness of the heritage of the Nordic countries. Festivities include live entertainment, Viking encampment, Scandinavian food, vendors' market, raffle, and games.
Info: www.atlantascandinavian-festival.org or (770) 596-9264



Norsk Høstfest 2008

NORTH DAKOTA, October 1 - 5
Norsk Høstfest, North America's largest Scandinavian festival, is celebrating its 31st year. The Beach Boys, Kenny Rogers and Daniel O'Donnell are some of the artists that will entertain at this year's festival.

Info: www.hostfest.com or (701) 852-2368

phoenix

holiday bazaar

Scandinavian Jul Bazaar

PHOENIX, AZ, November 15
Scandinavian groups get together for a Jul bazaar with traditional food and crafts for sale.

Info: (602) 995-7268

mid west

festivals

Minnesota's Norwegian Sesquicentennial Celebration

ROCHESTER, MN, October 18
As Minnesota celebrates the 150th anniversary of statehood, the Norwegian Statehood Pioneer Project will recognize those Norwegian pioneers who were here when the state was born and contributed to the development of its institutions and culture. Join the celebrations at Marriott Hotel in Rochester.

Info: www.mn-nspp.org

san francisco

music

Leif Ove Andsnes in Concert

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, Jan. 27, 2009
Celebrated Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes has performed at Carnegie Hall, London Proms, and with the Bavarian Symphony Orchestra. Program includes Mozart, Brahms, Janacek and Schubert.

Info: (415) 621-6600 or www.norway.org

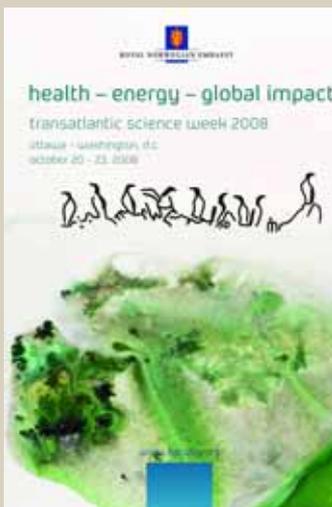


washington dc and ottawa

conference

Transatlantic Science Week 2008: Health – Energy – Global Impact

OTTAWA, Oct 19-21,
WASHINGTON, DC, Oct 21-23
Science Week is a meeting place for cooperation between Norway and North America in research, innovation and higher education. The forum attracts scientists, innovators, policymakers and others interested in promoting such collaborations. A trilateral perspective brings the Science Week 2008 to Ottawa and Washington DC, with top speakers, young contributors and a Kavli Prize lecture.
Info: www.norway.org/restech/scienceweek or call (202) 333-6000



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PHOTO BY PER ARNE JUVANG/THE NORWEGIAN ARMY

COVER: Afghans using a water well built by Norwegian forces in a village outside of Meymaneh, Afghanistan. (Page 4)



News of Norway is printed on forest-friendly paper. Number of trees saved: 12.39; total energy saved: 8,776,250 BTUs; greenhouse gas reduction: 1,147 lbs.; wastewater reduction: 5,263 gallons; solid waste reduction: 582 lbs.

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architecture: a norwegian view of the himalayas



PHOTO BY GURI DAHL / STATSBYGG

What happens when you combine Norwegian and Nepali building traditions? The answer can be found on the outskirts of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, where Norway has built a new embassy. It was designed by the Norwegian architectural firm Kristin Jarmund Architects. Local advisers and contractors were involved throughout the process.

The building has a distinctly Nordic flavor, but the building materials – wood and stone – are local. Like Norwegians, Nepalis are proud of their mountains, which are echoed in the motifs of the embassy building. The glass façade sports large, zigzag windows overlooking the Himalayas. On clear days you can see the reflection of the Lang Tang mountain in the huge expanse of glass.

The embassy was officially opened by Minister of the Environment and International Development Erik Solheim on August 18, 2008.

www.norway.org