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Mail form and check(s) to:
UO Foundation
PO Box 3346
Eugene, OR 97403-0346

Friends of Scandinavian Studies
Department of German and Scandinavian
1250 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1250

**Please join us
for
SCAN concert,
Fri, Apr 3,
7:30 pm**

Friends of Scandinavian Studies Newsletter



Hal Vempel and his wife, Helen

Generous to the End

What would you do after retiring to Oregon following a highly successful career as a Danish language teacher, a director of language training, an executive editor for publishing houses, and the owner of a publishing consulting company? Why, of course, you would volunteer to teach Danish and to find a way to fund Danish language instruction on a continuing basis at the University of Oregon. This is what Val Hempel did when he lived on the McKenzie River in "retirement" from 1988 to 2001. With his wife, Helen, and daughter, Jodi, by his side, Mr. Hempel passed away on January 3, 2009, at his home in Salinas, California, following a bout with pancreatic cancer. He was born in Kolding, Denmark, on December 8, 1919, and emigrated

to the United States in 1947.

"No, he didn't plan to teach Danish when he went to Oregon, but the opportunity found him," recalled Helen Hempel. Helen explained that Val made monthly trips to Oregon, prior to their move from California in 1988, to check on their McKenzie River property. During one trip, Val picked up a law school application for Helen, and also "... stopped by the German Dept (department) to ask what Scandinavian languages were being taught." This led to meetings with Jean Woods, head of Germanic languages and literatures at the time. Val agreed to teach Danish and to look for funding so Danish could be taught on a continuing basis. He undertook this formidable task without pay from the UO. Virpi Zuck, professor emerita of Swedish, and department head of German and Scandinavian during most of the time that Val volunteered at the UO, explained *continued on page 3.*

***Please Mark
Your Calendars!***

Scandinavian Classical Music Concert

Friday, April 3, 7:30 pm
Central Lutheran Church
1857 Potter St * Eugene
See page 3 for more details.

Annual Midsummer Potluck Picnic

Sunday, June 21, 11-5 pm
Shelter 1, Alton Baker Park,
Eugene

Bring a dish to share, special beverages and your own place settings.

Coffee, tea and juice will be provided.

Bring musical instruments and wear ethnic costumes, if possible

Sponsored by the Friends, Sonja Lodge, and Vasa Lodge.

Any questions? Please e-mail:
scan@uoregon.edu.



*Friends' President,
Kathie Lindlan*

*Friends of
Scandinavian Studies*

*Department of
German and Scandinavian*

202 Friendly Hall
1250 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1250
(541) 346-4051
<http://scandinavian.uoregon.edu/>

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Layout: Evan Kornfeldt

Contributors: Kathie Lindlan,
Tom Mills,
Evan Kornfeldt

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This publication will be made available
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President's Letter

Dear Friends,

As promised, preparations are underway for an evening of Scandinavian classical music at Central Lutheran Church. With the exception of Grieg and Sibelius, the music of Scandinavian composers is seldom performed in the U.S. We hope that you and your family and friends can join the Friends in this special celebration of Scandinavian culture.

After the snowflakes of the past few days, it seems a bit premature to mention the Midsummer Picnic at Alton Baker Park. But please remember to attend this annual potluck feast with our local Scandinavian-American community. As usual, *Fossegrimen* will be Hardanger fiddling as others decorate and

folk dance around the maypole.

In the fall, the Department of German and Scandinavian will welcome visiting professor Dr. David Gantt Gurley. He specializes in 19th-century Scandinavian literature, medieval Icelandic literature, and Jewish Studies.

Friends' Board member Line Morkbak and her husband announced the birth of their second child on the 1st of January. We really appreciate the contributions Line made to the Friends and hope she will return to the Friends' board when her children are older. (In the meantime, we certainly hope some of you will volunteer to take her place.)

Best wishes,

Kathie Lindlan

Upcoming Classes

Spring 2009

DANE 199 Intro to Danish Language and Culture
(C. Mortensen)

SCAN 315 Cinematic Traditions in Scandinavia:
"Assimilation and its Discontents"
(M. Stern)

Fall 2009

SCAN 251 Text & Interpretation (M. Stern)

SCAN 325 Identities (TBA)

SCAN 340 Medieval Culture (TBA)

Hempel continued.

that Val not only taught Danish language courses on and off over a decade (starting in 1988), but also short seminars on such topics as Hans Christian Andersen and the Nazi occupation of Denmark. Because Val was living in Denmark during WWII, he could describe his own first hand encounters with occupation forces and the war's effects on Danish lives.

Helen Hempel recalled "a harrowing experience" that Val often told about the German occupation. Helen explained that Val had agreed to deliver a package at the request of an acquaintance, and during the delivery "...he was stopped by a young German army officer who asked him what was in the package. (Val didn't know and didn't ask his acquaintance what the package contained.) Val, by instinct blurted out, 'food.' The officer ... looked at him for a long minute, then curtly motioned him on his way." It was only later that Val learned that the package contained explosives and that his acquaintance was a member of the Danish underground. (If Val related this incident to the UO students in his seminar, it certainly must have caught their imagination.)

While at the UO, Val used his own money to make numerous trips to Denmark in order to seek funding for the on-going teaching of Danish. Agreements were eventually reached with the Danish Association for the Education of Young Businessmen (FUHU), and with the Danish Fulbright Commission. These agencies agreed to recruit, select, and provide maintenance stipends for

qualified graduate students to teach Danish while pursuing graduate studies in a UO department. Val also obtained short-term grants for the Danish program such as a grant of 10,000 Danish kroner from the Niels Brock Fund. Val enhanced Scandinavian studies in other ways. On a number of occasions, he invited important Danish officials, such as the Danish Consul General and heads of Danish educational foundations to campus to familiarize them with UO Scandinavian studies. Virpi Zuck remembered that these visits created much "goodwill" for Scandinavian studies. "On such occasions he usually arranged a lunch meeting at the then Faculty Club, paying for it from his own pocket, for the visitor plus key members of the Scandinavian community..."

"Without Val there would be no Danish instruction at the UO."
"Val was a treasure", emphasized

Professor Zuck.

As the director of international programs during Val's time in Eugene, I, too, had the good fortune to work with Val, and to join him for visits he organized for Danish guests. Val and Helen also extended their generosity to their McKenzie River home, enhanced by Scandinavian design and furniture. Their international visitors and Oregon friends enjoyed homemade, gourmet, Danish meals while marveling at the towering firs and the fast moving waters of the McKenzie River.

Val loved nature. He was an extraordinary leader. He possessed a vast and intimate knowledge of European history and culture. He was dignified and thoughtful. He was generous to the end.

*Tom Mills, Board Member, UO
Friends of Scandinavian Studies*

Scandinavian Classical Music Concert

MUSIC OF

Denmark	Bentzon, Gade, Nørgård
Finland	Sibelius
Norway	Grieg
Sweden	Rangström, Stenhammer

Performed by

Annika Bäckstrom	Voice
Ben Corbin	Piano
Helena Kopchick	Bassoon
Julia Lin	Piano
Holland Phillips	Violin
Tara Schwab	Flute
Nicoleen Willson	Clarinet

**Friday, April 3rd at 7:30 pm
Central Lutheran Church
1857 Potter Street, Eugene**

**Tax-deductible donation of \$10/\$5 students
Benefit for UO Scandinavian Program**