



Friends Board Members, Linda Gunn (far left) and Ursula Lindqvist (far right) join Medical Ethics presenters, Halla Thorsteinsdóttir and Bjørn Hofmann

# FRIENDS OF SCANDINAVIAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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## From the President's Desk

Dear Friends,

A wonderful sense of achievement has replaced worries and many hours of hard work for the Medical Ethics Symposium we hosted February 20-21, 2004. Covering some of the most complex topics in society today, the invited speakers were deeply knowledgeable, insightful, and eloquent. In this issue we give some very brief summaries of some of the presentations.

On behalf of Friends of Scandinavian Studies, I want to thank our sponsors and everyone involved in planning and implementing this great undertaking. The Symposium was a success and could not have happened without the tremendous pooling of resources that we experienced.



Friends President  
Harriet Bagdade

Harriet

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## Friends of Scandinavian Studies

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## Calendar of Scandinavian Events

### Tues., April 13 • 7:00 pm • International Resource Center/EMU

Scandinavian Film Series: *Together* (2000), written and directed by Lukas Moodysson, 106 minutes, Swedish with English subtitles, rated R. *Together* interweaves three of four major plots which all revolve around loneliness and its opposite. A married woman leaves her drunken husband to live in a commune with her brother and other socialists. The couple's children, Stefan and Eva, especially suffer from their parents' split and finally conclude that "all adults are idiots."

### Tues., May 11 • 7:00 pm • International Resource Center/EMU

Scandinavian Film Series: *Elina - Som om jag inte fanns (Elina: As If I Wasn't There)* (2002), directed by Klaus Haro, 77 min., Swedish/Finnish with English subtitles, not rated. In rural northern Sweden of the early 1950s, little Elina goes to school again after recovering from tuberculosis.

### Tuesdays, April 20, May 4, and May 18 • 7:00 pm • Sons of Norway Lodge

Scandinavian Couple Dancing will be offered on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the remaining months in Spring term at the Sons of Norway Lodge, 1836 Alder (within walking distance of campus with parking behind the building), from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. There will be an hour of instruction followed by requests. Instruction will include the basic dances of waltz, schottisch, hambo and polka as well as easy mixers. There is a possibility of live music near the end of the term. No partner necessary, bring leather soled shoes, friends and a smile. Free and open to the public! Velkommen!! Direct questions and comments to Linda Gunn: [lgunn@darkwing.uoregon.edu](mailto:lgunn@darkwing.uoregon.edu).



Images from the Medical Ethics Symposium

From left to right: John Santa, Reidar Lie, the symposium room, and Veronica Pimenoff  
 For more photos, see the website: <http://scandinavian.uoregon.edu>

## Danish Internet Resources

General Websites

[www.denmark.com](http://www.denmark.com)

Genealogy Websites

[www.emiarch.dk](http://www.emiarch.dk)

[www.dkmuseum.org](http://www.dkmuseum.org)

[www.distantcousin.com](http://www.distantcousin.com)

[www.genealogi.dk](http://www.genealogi.dk)

[www.karenblizen.com](http://www.karenblizen.com)

Tourist Information

[www.visitdenmark.com](http://www.visitdenmark.com)

[www.woco.dk](http://www.woco.dk)

Pictures of Denmark

[www.copenhagenpictures.dk](http://www.copenhagenpictures.dk)

[www.virtualdenmark.dk](http://www.virtualdenmark.dk)

Shopping

[www.dkshop.com](http://www.dkshop.com)

[www.alldanish.com](http://www.alldanish.com)

[dk.paley.com/shopping](http://dk.paley.com/shopping)

Danish Museums

[dkmuseum.org](http://dkmuseum.org)

[www.kum.dk/sw3172.asp](http://www.kum.dk/sw3172.asp)

Traditional Music and Dance

[www.folksylinks.it/](http://www.folksylinks.it/)

[folksy\\_d.html](http://folksy_d.html)

## From the Vikings to Kierkegaard:

### Spring Scandinavian Studies

SCAN 259 Vikings through the Sagas, *Professor Virpi Zuck*

Scandinavia's greatest contribution to world literature consists of the 13th Century Icelandic Sagas which depict life in Iceland during the Viking Era. They have been called a world treasure, comparable to the Homeric epics, Dante's *Divina Commedia* and the plays of Shakespeare. The Sagas were written in vernacular prose at a time when most European literature consisted of poetry; they dealt with the lives of ordinary people, Norse settlers on the Atlantic island, while much of European writing was scholastic in nature. To today's readers, accustomed to reading novels, the Sagas seem perplexingly modern, in style and content. This course will acquaint students with the lives of the Vikings at home and abroad through translations of sagas, viewed in their cultural and historical context.

SCAN 351 Periods in Scandinavian Literature: "Kierkegaard in Context," *Professor Michael Stern*

Søren Kierkegaard was a controversial figure in his time. In many ways, he was the odd man out in the intellectual environment of Golden Age Denmark. This environment was dominated by a small coterie of like-minded intellectuals and Kierkegaard was part of a three-pronged assault on their hegemony. Kierkegaard enjoyed his first wave of popularity posthumously. A diverse group of 20th century philosophers found him intriguing. His attack on the primacy of rationality and his emphasis on lived experience, choice, and absurdity made him a darling of the existential philosophers who came of age between the World Wars, and a stalking horse for their intellectual opponents. His emphasis on faith made him relevant for theologians interested in the possibilities of living a religious life in a secular society.

This class will examine Kierkegaard's polemical writings and their position within his contemporary world. Then we will read a selection of his aesthetic writings and try to determine what attracted other thinkers to his work. And of course, in all moments we will interrogate our own experience and try to come to an understanding about which Kierkegaard remains important for our own world.

# Dynamic Presenters Offer Medical Ethics Insights

The symposium, "Medical Ethics in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Scandinavia and North America," was held February 20-22, 2004, on campus in the new Lillis Business Complex. Distinguished guest lecturers from the U.S. and Scandinavia offered their insights on topics such as doctor-assisted suicide and medical prioritization.

The free symposium drew a large crowd from both the campus and the larger Eugene/Springfield community. Professor Virpi Zuck also incorporated the symposium into her two-credit course called "Medical Ethics: A Dialogue of Cultures."

Below are some brief summaries of three of the speakers' presentations.

## **On the Pursuit of Happiness, Dr. Veronica Pimenoff**

Dr. Pimenoff pointed out that the *pursuit of happiness* is avowed in Europe to a much lesser degree than in the U.S. For instance, whereas it took centerstage in the American Revolution, the *pursuit of happiness* was not a concept in the French Revolution 12 years later. Rather, in France, one spoke of *solidarity*. Pursuit of happiness has its base on an individual level.

*Pursuit of happiness* leads to the avoidance of suffering. In our culture, where a need to be in control is central, death with dignity is as close as we can come to a "Happy Death." Dr. Pimenoff argued that suffering is part of life. She says there is no life without suffering.

## **Autonomy Lost: On the Relevance of the Concept of Autonomy in Medical Ethics From a Scandinavian Perspective, Dr. Bjørn Hofmann**

The conflict between the autonomy of the patient and that of the physician underlies the loss of autonomy in the Norwegian health system. Autonomy defined as personal control does not address the issues of this conflict, whereas autonomy defined as personal capacity limits patient autonomy. Autonomy defined in terms of actions does not have these problems, but does require some threshold of competence.

The current obsession with autonomy in medical ethics, unfortunately, has focused not on what patients actually want, but what they should want. A better model



of the physician-patient relationship is needed to address the weaknesses of this situation, so that patients can make educated decisions, and not just defer to medical professionals.

## **Death with Dignity, Dr. Alan Bates**

Dr. Bates spoke about his experiences with Death with Dignity in Oregon from his perspective both as a member of the Oregon



Legislature and as a physician who has taken part in Death with Dignity with his patients. He explained, "I've had approximately a dozen patients over the past five or six years ask for Death with Dignity. Only one has actually proceeded." He also said, "Anyone who thinks that prior to this law physicians didn't practice Death with

Dignity with patients is not being realistic. It was done behind closed doors. Now we're up front about it. It's the first step in dealing in a sane way with a very difficult part of life that we all have to face sometime."

## *Thank you to all our Symposium Sponsors!*

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