



## eLIFE – news on life at LIFE

Thursday 4 December 2008

Email to the editors: [elife@life.ku.dk](mailto:elife@life.ku.dk)

Final deadline for editorial changes is Wednesday before publication of eLIFE on Thursday.

Editorial changes may occur in relation to the online newsletter.

As regards links in the newsletter, please refer to the Danish online version at the faculty's website [http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life\\_internt/nyhedsbrev.aspx](http://www.life.ku.dk/Maalgruppe/medarbejdere/life_internt/nyhedsbrev.aspx)

Gudrun Lau Bjerno, Editor, Communications, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk)

## Life at LIFE

### **Wanted: New host for the KVL residence hall event Bright Minds**

The KVL residence hall (VLK) holds an annual event at which Poul Einer Hansen, professor emeritus (and ghost-writer for newspaper cartoonist Roald Als) has been a popular host until now. However, it is now time for replacement in the ranks, and Sara Toftegaard Petersen from the VLK Cultural Committee therefore encourages as many people as possible to show up at VLK on Thursday 4 December 2008 at 7.30 pm. The event takes place in the common room.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 4 December 2008*

### **Africa could be the world's granary**

At the seminar 'Hunger, Health and Hope in Africa' on Wednesday 3 December at LIFE, scientists, NGOs and decision-makers discussed recommendations for the government's Africa Commission. Read the [press release](#) issued before the seminar.

In connection with the seminar, the Danish daily *Kristeligt Dagblad* ran a major article about the Africa Commission and the situation on the continent. The following is a brief summary:

Eli Katunguka-Rwakishaya, Professor of Agricultural Science at the Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, is visiting Copenhagen in order to discuss agricultural development in Africa with Danish and African colleagues. The reason for the visit is that the Faculty of Life Sciences at the University of Copenhagen is hosting the conference *Hunger, Health & Hope*, which has the ambition of providing inspiration to the Africa Commission established by the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Raphael Wahome, project officer at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, will also attend the conference. He believes that the biggest problem for agriculture in Africa is access to land. For instance, in Kenya, 80 per cent of the farmland is unsuitable for agriculture because the soil is too dry for most of the year. This forces the population of 14 million to share the remaining 20 per cent of the farmland.

LIFE in the press: *Kristeligt Dagblad*, 3 December 2008

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno*, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 4 December 2008

### **The hard road as a veterinary student in the 1870s**

We continue our look at the arduous journey of young veterinary student Hans Madsen through his veterinary studies. This time, the students are finally given a chance to prove themselves with the animals.

The exam was the big, threatening spectre for which the students were trying to prepare themselves, and the practical duties with the animals seemed to be of lesser importance. In the clinic, everything seemed to pass them by without significant output, and if they dared to ask Professor Bagge a question, the reply was invariably an ironic question. His assistant, Mr Begger, was more of a lieutenant than a clinician, so there was not much useful intelligence to be acquired there, either.

Professor Stockfleth's surgery courses were based on practice, and because he also wrote books on the subject, this became the cornerstone of the students' future work as veterinary surgeons. He had been a practising veterinary surgeon himself, so he had dispensed with the frock coat and the top hat for more ordinary, simple clothes. Nonetheless, the students had tremendous respect for him and would walk through fire for him, if need be.

As was customary in that day, Stockfleth did not use any antiseptics during operations, and the students were, in fact, warned against moistening the incision site by washing it. In spite of this, Professor Stockfleth successfully operated the King's horse for roaring, thus earning a Knights Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog. The King would often visit his horse during its recuperation, and each time he would give the stable officer a large tip, to which Stockfleth would comment: "Well, well, Madsen, it's expensive being a king".

Professor Prosch, who was undoubtedly a very learned gentleman and, thus, far superior to the students, taught livestock farming, horse performance studies and farriery. He had to be handled with utmost care, because at the slightest disruption, he would interrupt his lecture, a huge vein in his forehead would visibly swell up and he would not be able to resume his lecture for some time. His lectures were practically incomprehensible because he had a preference for extremely long and complex sentences with nasty sidetracks about new thinkers or critical comments on the present state of affairs, making it difficult to figure out exactly where he stood. Luckily, he was a diligent writer, although it was not always easy to comprehend what the learned gentleman actually meant, for his style was weighed down by long, complex sentences that made it difficult to uncover the pearls of wisdom.

Professor Prosch's exam was a nightmare, but one episode, in particular, went down in the history books. A student drew a slip of paper with three questions. The professor read the questions aloud and then sat back and shut his eyes to wait for the reply. The student asked to hear the questions one at a time, which caused the professor's vein in his head to swell up, and with a sigh he repeated all three questions. The student began to answer the first question, and when he paused for a moment, the professor commented that any cowhand could have told him that. The student suddenly stood up and responded that he thought he was there to take his exam and not to be made a fool of. This infuriated the professor who instructed the school porter to immediately throw the boy out of the room. Later, he also requested that the managing body of the school expel the student permanently. This did not happen, however, and the following year the student again attended Professor Prosch's exam with a full house of onlookers in the auditorium. The student had even been so far-sighted as to bring a couple of stenographers to take note of what was said during the exam. The student drew a slip of paper and the questions were read aloud by the professor, who otherwise did not say a word while the student answered the questions. After 20 minutes, the exam ended with a curt 'thank you' from the professor. The student received a grade of 'poor' for his efforts, but because he had done well in all the other disciplines, he still graduated as a veterinary surgeon.

Lecturer Bay, who was a trained doctor and teacher of veterinary jurisprudence, was of a completely different mould, even though his wide, stooping figure made him look as though he was forever pondering the problems of the world. The students always received a friendly nod when they tipped their hat to him, and he treated them with fatherly affection compared to most of the other lecturers. Bay gave private lessons in the secrets of pathology and much of his knowledge was more recent than what came from Professor Bagge, and for the first time, the students heard about something called bacteria.

When a great smallpox epidemic took hold in Copenhagen, Bay vaccinated the students with original smallpox lymph fluid from cows which he had created by inoculating a couple of heifers at the school. Some of the inoculations did not work, so lymph fluid was taken from one student and injected into the other. But Bay was not at all happy about this process, and he gave admonitory lectures on how dangerous it was because the disease could be passed on.

After the final exam for the second part of the study programme, the students were required to work at the clinic under Professor Stockfleth, but now they also had the right to prescribe medicine for sick animals. About a dozen so-called graduates manned the reception room which was located in the eastern end of the South Wing. All day and all night, they manned the reception room where they either admitted sick animals to one of the school's clinics or treated them themselves. The reception room was a miserable little place without an operating table and with very few instruments, but there was a gas ring, a coal-fired stove, a sofa bed upholstered in horse hair and a small desk.

One night, Madsen was awoken and asked to take a cab into town to see a cat that was very ill. It was a lovely home where a number of elderly ladies resided. Their beloved cat was dying and they demanded that the cat be given a painless death with potassium cyanide. This was not at all possible to do in the home, so the ladies were persuaded to bring the animal to the school. At that time, they did not know chloroform could be used for dispatching animals, and Madsen did not dare attempt to use Prussic acid, so there was nothing else to use but a butcher's block and a hammer, which he, of course, concealed from the ladies. The cat was wrapped up in a scarf, and one of the ladies accompanied it to the school to make sure that the animal was given a humane death and to bring the body back for a decent burial. With difficulty, they managed to talk the lady out of witnessing the execution as it would certainly upset her. And so Madsen went into the other room alone to give the animal the fatal blow. Madsen did not get much sleep afterwards for fear that, in his hurry, he had not hit

the animal hard enough. He was also afraid that his method would be discovered.

On another night, Madsen was roused by a farmer and rushed out to the countryside where he had a cow suffering from tympanites. When they reached the farm, they saw a large group of people standing around the sick cow, and a young man holding a trocar (a sharp instrument for inserting a drain), but he could not get it into the cow, because he thought it had to be jabbed in the back. Madsen quickly jabbed it into the stomach and out flowed a great deal of air. He was applauded for his skill and calmly driven back to the school.

The following morning, the farmer was there again claiming that the cow was still very sick. Luckily Professor Stockfleth arrived and immediately ordered the school ambulance to be hitched up and filled with as many students as possible. When they arrived at the farm, the professor examined the cow and told the owner to fetch a bucket of warm water. After the farmer left, the cow was turned in the stall so that no one from outside could see what was going on, and the professor fished a large piece of turnip out of the cow's throat, which he hid in his pocket. The cow was then turned back around so that it stood in the same position as when the farmer had left. Suddenly the cow felt much better, and when it had been washed with the warm water, it was as good as new. On the way back to the school, the somewhat shaken student was told to sit next to the professor while he considerably showed him the piece of turnip and explained the symptoms that had caused him to look in the throat. The farmer never learned what had actually been wrong, and both the school's and the professor's reputations were saved.

One Sunday morning, a man drove up demanding to speak to the professor because he had a horse at home with a limp. The professor did not have time to attend to the horse, but he would send a good man along. The professor just managed to whisper to Madsen that the man was extremely difficult and had a temper. If all went well, he would be invited to lunch and driven back afterwards, but if things did not go well, he would get no lunch and have to walk all the way back. And so they travelled down Bülowsvej to the man's residence on Strandvejen. The student determined the problem was an infected hoof, but the man was certain it had to be in the tendons. When they had argued back and forth for a while, the student was permitted to cut into the hoof, and puss flowed out. The student was invited to stay for lunch and the man drove him back to the school later, but he had to promise to have the professor drop by sometime, because you can't really rely on these young veterinary surgeon.

Madsen went on many house calls with the professor and his six months in the clinic under the tutelage of Professor Stockfleth passed quickly. On 2 May 1873, Madsen completed his studies, but leaving the reception room and saying farewell to Professor Stockfleth were difficult.

After signing his oath at the office, Madsen left the school as a newly trained veterinary surgeon. He ultimately established a practice in Faaborg, where he worked for many years. In the beginning, he travelled out to his customers on foot, but as his practice grew, he could afford a horse, and then he felt like a real veterinary surgeon.

All over the Faculty, you can find busts of famous and honoured professors who have taught at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University over the years. Professor Stockfleth can be found to the right of the entrance to the Anatomy building on Grønnegårdsvej, and such an honourable man should always receive a kind nod. As far as I know, no one ever felt a desire to do a bust of Professor Prosch.

*Kim Greiner, Senior Gardener*

**Gudrun Lau Bjerno**, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 1 December 2008

# Announcements

## **Open AC hearing: The University Evaluation 2009: Degrees of freedom and freedom of research**

Wednesday 28 January 2009, 9.00 am-3.30 pm in the Ceremonial Hall, Frue Plads. Deadline for registration:

Wednesday 14 January 2009 at the [Danish Confederation of Professional Associations' website](#).

[See the programme here](#) (in Danish).

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 4 December 2008*

## **Christmas market at the Danish Forestry College**

Come spend a lovely time with the whole family at the Danish Forestry College (Skovskolen), Forestry & Landscape. This year, the forestry and landscape students from the class of 2011 are organising the Christmas market at the Danish Forestry College, Nødebovej 77a, 3480 Fredensborg.

Saturday 20 December, 10 am-5 pm and Sunday 21 December, 10 am-5 pm

This year the students will be offering:

Organic and conventional Christmas trees

Greenery

Forest stoves

Horse-drawn carriage rides

Tanned sheepskins

Decorations, including Advent wreaths

Everything you need for Christmas decorations

Hunting horn performance every day at 11 am

Sale of game

Activities for the kids

Treats for the stomach

and much more...

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 3 December 2008*

## **Morning Entrepreneurial Education Encounters**

On Tuesday 9 December at 8 am, the Øresund Entrepreneurship Academy is hosting the second in a series of Morning Entrepreneurial Education Encounters. These regular morning meetings, where lecturers and entrepreneurs meet over breakfast, offer the perfect opportunity for sparring, networking, discussions and

reflection. Teaching entrepreneurship is the keyword, and the objective is for the participants to find inspiration for their own teaching and to meet with other people who are interested in entrepreneurship.

The subject of the morning meeting on 9 December is strategic communication for entrepreneurs, focusing on the types of skills we consider important for entrepreneurs. Jesper Falkheimer will be making the presentation, which will take place this time in Lund.

See [here for more information and for the programme](#) (in Danish). Register by contacting Pål Fernvall, [pal.fernvall@oeacademy.org](mailto:pal.fernvall@oeacademy.org).

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 3 December 2008*

### **New library search system – new procedures**

One of the consequences of the university merger is the establishment of a new, joint University of Copenhagen library organisation – the University of Copenhagen's Library and Information Service, KUBIS.

Since its creation, KUBIS has worked to improve and streamline University users' access to all of the information resources in KUBIS.

In mid-January 2009, the Faculty of Life Science's Library will consequently begin using a new search system: PRIMO. PRIMO is a significant improvement for library users because it allows users to search for books, digital full-text articles and e-books using the same user-friendly interface.

Concurrently with the implementation of PRIMO, a few changes will be made to the Library's procedures as a result of the KUBIS collaboration.

The impending changes include:

In future, students will have to use their Danish civil registration cards to borrow material. The date of the implementation of this change will be announced later.

Staff will be asked to update their borrower information with the address of their department. An email concerning this change will be sent directly to staff.

In future, there will be a fee for book recalls: DKK 25 per book for the first recall, DKK 50 per book for the second recall.

Departments and professional groups are more than welcome to contact Librarian Anne Cathrine Trumpy, [act@life.ku.dk](mailto:act@life.ku.dk), to arrange a lunch-time meeting or similar on the topic of the updating of the LIFE Library's and KUBIS's information resources and search options.

A beta version of PRIMO is available at [www.kubis.ku.dk](http://www.kubis.ku.dk).

The Library will provide regular information and announce the dates of the most important changes on its website. Se under News:

<http://www.bvfb.life.ku.dk/English/Nyheder.aspx>

**Marianne Grützmeier, LIFE library, [mg@life.ku.dk](mailto:mg@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 3 December 2008*

## **Courses and workshops in the use of Absalon**

Courses that start block three are available for lecturers now. Access to Absalon will be through PunktKU [http://www2.adm.ku.dk/portal/frontpage/default.asp?p\\_sprog\\_kode=en](http://www2.adm.ku.dk/portal/frontpage/default.asp?p_sprog_kode=en).

Access to courses before block three as usual.

Forgot your pin code to PunktKU?

Employees can call the University of Copenhagen service desk at ext. 22700.

The IT Learning Center is offering a number of courses in the use of Absalon throughout December and January. Register at <http://www.itlc.life.ku.dk/kurser.aspx>.

Read more about Absalon at <http://uk.absalon.life.ku.dk>

**Gitte Preisler, IT Learning Center, [gip@life.ku.dk](mailto:gip@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 1 December 2008*

## **Make room in your calorie budget for the temptations of Christmas**

[University of Copenhagen Running Club](#)

Free joint runs for all University staff – see here where and when to meet up, how long the routes are and where you can change your clothes.

[Discount on fitness](#)

University of Copenhagen staff can obtain discounts at a number of fitness centres in and around Copenhagen. We currently have agreements with Fitness World and fitness dk.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 1 December 2008*

## **Christmas decorations**

Dear Everyone

Christmas decorations made from materials from the Faculty Gardens are on sale at Café Væksthuset on Grønnegårdsvej.

Best wishes

Hanne

**Hanne Lipczak Jakobsen, Green Support Services, [halj@life.ku.dk](mailto:halj@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 November 2008*

# Education

**Line of study projects at LIFE – also this week**

Also this week, promising young scientists from all over Denmark have had the opportunity to genetically engineer plants, melt chocolate and examine microorganisms in the stomachs of cows. They have chosen to focus on life science in their line of study projects and have therefore visited LIFE – Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen. One of these young people is Mark Kvanner from Rønne.

Mark Kvanner from Bornholm's business school in Rønne travelled all the way to Copenhagen with his line of study project – a compulsory multidisciplinary project for all graduating classes at Danish upper secondary schools. He wanted to try his hand at the life sciences with his project on bioethanol.

"I am extracting sugar from various raw materials with a view to converting it into bioethanol. It looks like we will have an energy shortage in the future, especially fossil fuels, so it's interesting to research alternative sources of energy," says Mark Kvanner.

He is doing one of the exercises created for the upper secondary school line of study projects that LIFE organises every year to encourage young people's interest in life sciences.

"I want to work with this in the future, and preferably study here at LIFE," he continues, adding with a smile: "There is so much high-quality equipment available to the students, and the teachers are energetic, not just a bunch of sticks-in-the-mud."

Every year, 10,000 upper secondary school students from all over the country visit LIFE. The programme gives students the opportunity to carry out scientific experiments in connection with their line of study project in their third and final year of upper secondary school. Last year, 48 students took part in the programme. It was such a huge success, that this year, 200 students registered for the programme, which takes place in calendar weeks 48, 49 and 50.

The line of study project exercises have been developed as a collaboration between LIFE, the business community and the upper secondary schools in Denmark. They are all multidisciplinary and tailored for line of study projects.

*Katherina Ludvigsen*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 December 2008*

## **New highly topical courses at Forestry & Landscape**

The Master programme in Rural Development and Landscape Management is offering new highly topical courses. In spring 2009, the following courses will be offered: [Rural district policy – theory and practice](#) (incl. local action groups) and [The open countryside](#) in municipal planning. Both courses offered in Danish are based on the latest knowledge and draw on key Danish examples. It is possible to take only one course or to follow the full programme.

Deadline for registration: 16 December.

For more information, please contact:

Professor Jørgen Primdahl, Forest & Landscape, tel. +45 3533 1822 or [jpr@life.ku.dk](mailto:jpr@life.ku.dk)

Senior Advisor Hanne Tanvig, Forest & Landscape, tel. +45 3533 1710 or [hwt@life.ku.dk](mailto:hwt@life.ku.dk)

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

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 December 2008*

## Staff news

### **Four professors receive the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog 2008**

They are: Professor André Chwaliborg, DSc, Professor Asger Lundorff Jensen, DVM, Professor Ib Michael Skovgaard, DSc, and Professor Merete Fredholm, DVM.

The honours were conferred on 20 November 2008.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 28 November 2008*

## Research

### **Laboratory Animal Science C**

There are still spaces available on the Laboratory Animal Science C (FELASA C) course beginning in calendar week 3, 2009. The objective of the course is to give postgraduate and PhD students an introduction to a wide variety of aspects concerning use of laboratory animals in research. The course also qualifies them to apply for their own permit for carrying out animal testing and to work with laboratory animals.

More information on the course: [http://emed.ku.dk/kurser/forsoegsdyrskundskab\\_c/](http://emed.ku.dk/kurser/forsoegsdyrskundskab_c/) (in Danish)

Registration: <http://emed.ku.dk/kurser/tilmelding/> (in Danish)

**Christian Kampmann, Department of Experimental Medicine, SUND, [chka@sund.ku.dk](mailto:chka@sund.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 3 December 2008*

### **Christmas tree research**

December is upon us and as per tradition, the pine tree will be invited into many a Danish home. This year is special because it marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of the Christmas tree in Denmark.

Forest & Landscape has compiled a number of stories from the 200-year history of the Christmas tree, new research, the latest figures from the Christmas tree sector and a press release from the Danish Society for Nature Conservation. The stories and pictures can be seen and downloaded from [Forest and Landscape's website](#).

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 December 2008*

## Grants

## Grant awarded

Grants from the Foundation for Scientific Studies and Treatment of Diseases in Dogs and Cats were awarded on 3 December 2008. The grant recipients will be notified directly, and letters of rejection will not be sent.

**Annette Guildal, Study and Students' Affairs, [ag@life.ku.dk](mailto:ag@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 4 December 2008*

## Travel grants awarded

Foreningen PlanDanmark awarded travel grants on 1 December 2008. The recipients will be informed directly. Letters of rejection will not be sent.

**Annette Guildal, Study and Students' Affairs, [ag@life.ku.dk](mailto:ag@life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 December 2008*

## Research funds etc.

See the updated information on the Research & Information website.