



## eLIFE – news on life at LIFE

Thursday 2 April 2009

The next issue of eLIFE will be published on Thursday 16 April 2007.

Happy Easter!

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, LIFE-Communications, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk)

## Life at LIFE

### **Plant defence agents and toxic organics**

It was no joke when the University of Copenhagen and the Danish daily *Politiken* hosted a 'Mød Videnskaben' science lecture on Wednesday 1 April entitled: 'Toxic Organics'. And although Professor Michael Palmgren, Department of Plant Biology and Biotechnology, LIFE, started by explaining that the title of the lecture might have been a bit edgy and that he had no intention of taking a stance either for or against organic foods, supporters of organic farming in the audience were more than ready to voice their opinions in the debate following the lecture. They had been attracted by the provocative title, but were disappointed to discover that the lecture dealt more with plant defence agents than organic farming – a criticism that the organisers duly took note of. For the record, the lecturer did not choose the title.

Michael Palmgren wanted to talk about the growing of plants from the plants' point of view. Most plants do everything in their power to avoid being eaten. They protect themselves by producing secondary metabolites – constituents that are not essential for the plant to survive but which act as a defence against attacks from the outside. They can protect themselves in a variety of ways, for instance by forming nerve toxins such as cyanide, strychnine, cocaine and opium, or by penetrating and damaging the skin, like the sap of the hogweed and wild parsnip.

When a plant is attacked, wounded, rots or is stored too long, it produces more of these secondary metabolites, which means that the plant can become more poisonous and less healthy for us to eat.

Studies have shown that organically farmed plants contain larger amounts of these secondary metabolites than plants farmed using traditional methods. This is because the plants are more vulnerable and so they are in heightened state of alarm.

In small amounts, most of these metabolites are either harmless or beneficial for people to consume, but which can be harmful over an extended period of time has not been studied. Consequently, there is a possible health risk associated with eating many organically farmed vegetables – especially for people who eat very large amounts and who do not vary their diets.

One piece of advice that the large audience could take home with them was not to store vegetables in the refrigerator for too long. This stresses them and causes them to produce more secondary metabolites.

'Mød Videnskaben' is a series of lectures organised jointly by the University of Copenhagen and *Politiken*.

There is a lecture on the first Wednesday of every month – see more at [www.ku.dk/moedvidenskaben](http://www.ku.dk/moedvidenskaben)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 April 2009*

### **Did you miss out on the LIFE chocolate?**

When LIFE celebrated its 151st anniversary on 6 March, one of the birthday presents to participating staff and students was a very special sustainable chocolate. If you did not get a bar, they can now be bought at Café Væksthuset.

A joint venture between LIFE, researchers in Ghana and the Toms chocolate manufacturer has resulted in a sustainable gourmet chocolate. Mogens Jakobsen, Dennis Nielsen and Lene Jespersen, researchers from the Department of Food Science, are the brains behind the unique chocolate. They joined forces with researchers from the Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana to develop a special controlled fermentation of cocoa beans. The fermentation of the cocoa beans not only creates a really good chocolate, it also gives the farmers a much better price for their crops – and the new process has even made their workday easier.

The chocolate is manufactured by Toms and can be purchased for a limited time only at Café Væksthuset.

*Charlotte Aabo*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 1 April 2009*

### **Cutting the first turf in the springtime sun**

The official golden spade dug perfectly into the earth at the cutting of the first turf for Forest & Landscape's new building in Frederiksberg, which took place in the afternoon of Friday 27 March.

Before the official start of construction, a couple of serious showers had softened the earth, but then the sun broke through and the event took place in an atmosphere of springtime sensations.

[Read the article on Forest & Landscape's website.](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 31 March 2009*

### **The smithy and not the blacksmith ended on the scaffold**

Bindesbøll, the architect behind the Main Building, also designed the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University's smithy. For many years, its arches and open forges formed a unique background for the active smithy in Copenhagen. Farriery was practiced at the highest level because horse shoes were made to fit the individual hoof rather than the other way around. For a very long period of time, the horse was an extremely important animal in agriculture and the military, both for riding and for its pulling power. So it was crucial that the animals had no problems walking.

Farriery had, therefore, been associated with the Royal Veterinary School from as far back as Abildgaard's day, and long into the 20th century veterinary students carefully learned the trade.

Even though farriery gradually disappeared from the syllabus of veterinary studies, there was still plenty of activity in the old smithy. Students gathered in the workshop and adjoining rooms to learn the practical skills associated with treating horse and cattle hooves. And if a blacksmith from outside the university wanted to specialise in farriery or a hoof trimmer wanted to learn to handle the tools, this also took place in the cosy old smithy.

The unique building has even been featured on a number of drawings by the artist Mads Stage, who proved a master at capturing the atmosphere under the arches and in front of the forges.

Changes were made to the building several times, and ultimately it was no longer used as a farriery at all. But then the veterinary students adopted it as their preferred party venue. All the students from those days have fond memories of dancing among the forges to the Kansas City Stompers – those were festive days indeed.

No one knows whose idea it was, but in the 1970s there were new major building plans at KVL, and it was decided to tear down the smithy building. The case was debated by the governing bodies of the university over many years, but the final death sentence was pronounced in autumn 1976. However, the students had not intention of accepting the demolition of this unique building, so after a crowded public meeting at Gimle, they decided to blockade the building until the administration agreed to reconsider the case.

They then occupied the smithy, but they did not stop there – they also occupied the administration offices and the rector's office. Somewhere between 50 and 100 students spent the night in the office in the company of innumerable cases of beer and high spirits – I doubt anyone got much sleep that night. There was no vandalism, just indignant students demanding a just trial for their beloved old smithy.

Early the following morning, the rector, Professor H.C. Aslyng, managed to convince the students to lift the blockade of the administration offices, but they refused to give up the physical blockade of the smithy. Collections were launched for the picketers and the students walked about the city wearing bent horse shoe nails in their buttonholes to show their sympathy for the cause.

The blockade continued for months, but the decision to tear down the building remained unchanged, and the executioner in the form of a demolition company forever lurked in the background, just waiting for the perfect opportunity to bulldoze the place.

At Easter 1977, the students requested a truce so that they could go home to their families for the holiday. The rector agreed to the truce and promised that nothing would happen during the Easter break, so the students went home for a well-deserved rest. But then the unthinkable and unforgivable did happen. The rector broke his word and ordered the bulldozer to tear down the building. The disappointment of the students was great when they returned to find a pile of rubble, and their trust in the rector, who should have felt very ashamed, was damaged beyond repair.

The area lay untouched for several years as a disgraceful monument to the broken promises and bad, bull-headed decisions.

To replace Bindsbøll's beautiful old smithy, a new building was erected several years later that will never have the same charm on the outside or the inside. Today it houses facilities for producing and storing anatomical preparations. The building has the eloquent name 'Anubis', which is the Egyptian god who accompanies the soul to the underworld. At one point, Professor N. Björkmann resided in the building, and after he recommended replacing formaldehyde with alcohol, the building picked up the nickname 'Björkmanns Spritbolag' (Björkmann's Alcohol Company).

I have walked past the Anubis building hundreds of times, but never been inside. So, one day, I stuck my head in out of curiosity, and I think they have gone back to formaldehyde, because the smell was penetrating. Maybe the three large chimneys are not actually chimneys at all, but for ventilation.

The cleaned bones of a rhinoceros from Copenhagen ZOO were piled on tables and in boxes, and a daunting task lay ahead to put all the parts back together again. The valuable rhinoceros horn had been sawed off first thing and safely stowed away in a secret bank box to keep it out of harm's way. There was also a fox skeleton with its veins full of something that looked like red plastic, but the large stuffed swan and other little animals were a much more pleasant sight.

Outside, the building is now covered by oriental bittersweet, a vigorous climber that can overgrow and kill even large trees. Somehow it seems appropriate, both for the history of the place and for the building itself. In-between the leaves of the vine, there is a beautiful plaque made from fired tiles with the inscription: "For the old ones who fell, there are new ones everywhere, they will meet every time they are called". There is even a sad little bird on a gravestone with the inscription: "The smithy died at Easter 1977".

No, the smithy has not been forgotten. In fact, the Faculty's largest student party is called 'Smedefesten' (The Smithy Party). And who knows, maybe the name will live on much longer than the not particularly attractive Anubis building.

*Kim Greiner, Senior Gardener*

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 March 2009*

## Announcements

**Communication courses for scientific and academic staff members**

Do you want to write a thrilling academic article? Or do you want to improve your skills at handling meetings with journalists? PUMA is again offering its two well-tested and popular communication courses for scientific and academic staff at the University of Copenhagen.

On the first course, you will learn how to structure your article/analysis and find a connecting thread. You will also be given good ideas for how your text can be made more accessible and lively. The other course will provide training in how to get your message across. You will be presented with both theory and practical exercises.

Read more about the courses:

13 May, 9.00 am–4.00 pm – NOTE: registration deadline: 8 April

[Vil du skrive en fængende faglig kronik? Eller en analyse til Politiken?](#) (Want to write an absorbing scientific feature? Or an analysis for a daily newspaper?)

27 August, 9.00 am–5.30 pm

[Forskeren ud i pressen – medietræning i at få dine forskningshistorier ud i medierne](#) (The researcher in the press – how to get your research stories into the media)

Courses currently offered by PUMA

There are still places available on the following courses:

4/5 [CURIS, advanced – for those responsible for research registration](#)

6/5 [Collegial coaching – coaching as a path to mutual collegial sparring](#)

7/5 [Stress management – thrive on being busy by focusing on your options for action](#)

12/5 [Active proofreading – learn tips for catching common errors to improve the quality of your texts](#)

See also [www.kursuskatalog.ku.dk](http://www.kursuskatalog.ku.dk) or the [course calendar](#) for other courses offered by HR & Organisation / PUMA.

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 April 2009*

## **Climate Consortium Denmark is hosting national climate championships**

Climate Consortium Denmark and Denmark's six regional growth forums are hosting Klima-DM – the national championships in climate solutions. There is more than DKK 1 million in prizes for the winners.

Anyone can participate in the nationwide competition to find the best solutions to the climate challenge. The goal is to prove that individuals, universities, organisations, companies etc. can help alleviate the consequences of climate change through creativity, resourcefulness and enterprise.

The national climate championships give everyone the chance to be climate champions. The winners in three different categories will each receive a cash award of DKK 250,000.

Ideas must be submitted to [www.klima-dm.dk](http://www.klima-dm.dk) by 1 May at the latest.

The three climate champions will be announced at the grand finale on 12 June 2009. However, on 15 May the regional champions will be found in six regions: Northern Jutland, Central Jutland, Southern Jutland, Zealand,

Greater Copenhagen and Bornholm.

HRH Crown Prince Frederik is an ambassador for Klima-DM. Many of Denmark's largest companies are donating funding, labour and advertising space to make Klima-DM a success. Klima-DM is also backed by a number of celebrity ambassadors, including Joachim B. Olsen, Christian Stadil, Annette Heick, Lene Espersen, Waage Sandø, Rikke Skov and René Toft Simonsen.

Klima-DM has been developed and organised by Climate Consortium Denmark and the regional growth forums. Climate Consortium Denmark is a public private partnership between the Danish state and five key private-sector organisations.

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*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 2 April 2009*

## Universitetsavisen

The latest issue of the university newspaper *Universitetsavisen* is out, bringing news, background articles and debate.

[See here where you can find a Universitetsavisen news stand.](#) If your department or unit wants to hand the newspaper out directly to its staff, LIFE-Operations would be happy to leave a stack in the department/unit mail room. Contact John Stone Andersen, Head of Operations, [jsa@life.ku.dk](mailto:jsa@life.ku.dk).

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gjb@life.ku.dk](mailto:gjb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 31 March 2009*

## University of Copenhagen calendar

The University of Copenhagen has introduced a new calendar page on ku.dk: <http://kalender.ku.dk>.

The calendar shows a selection of the public events taking place at the University within the next month. The aim is to give the users (especially external users) an overview of what is going on. However, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of events.

The calendar is edited by the Communication Department at Nørregade, and for it to work as intended, everyone organising a public event should report that event to [kalender@adm.ku.dk](mailto:kalender@adm.ku.dk) (you are welcome to attach a photo).

The mailbox is checked once a week, so the calendar is regularly updated with new events.

To be included in the University of Copenhagen calendar, events must:

- 1) Take place at the University

- 2) Be open to the public
- 3) Be of general interest

Thus, the events must appeal to target groups both within and outside the University. In an effort to reflect the diversity of the University, we are interested in representing as many disciplines as possible.

You can link to the calendar from [www.ku.dk](http://www.ku.dk) and [www.ku.dk/nyheder](http://www.ku.dk/nyheder). You are also welcome to link from relevant pages in the ku.dk domain.

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*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 31 March 2009*

### **Climate Lecture: Lene Espersen, Danish Minister for Economic and Business Affairs**

The minister will be presenting the Danish government's new business and climate change strategy. Tuesday 19 May 2009, 2.45–3.30 pm in the Ceremonial Hall, Frue Plads.

[Register here](#)

The University of Copenhagen is arranging a series of individual Climate Lectures in the run-up to the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009.

The Climate Lecture series will be presenting a wide range of climate change issues. Danish and international politicians, opinion formers and scientists will visit the University and present their views on how to tackle climate change problems in future. Everyone is welcome, but registration is necessary at [www.climate.ku.dk](http://www.climate.ku.dk)

[See previous Climate Lectures here](#)

Next Climate Lecture:

Mrs. Lene Espersen, Danish Minister for Economic and Business Affairs

The Minister will present the Danish government's business & climate change strategy.

Time: 19 May 2009, 2.45–3.30 pm Place: Ceremonial Hall, Frue Plads, Copenhagen

(The lecture will be in Danish!)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 30 March 2009*

### **KUeren**

The latest issue of *KUeren* is out – [read it here](#).

In this issue of *KUeren*, you can read the following articles:

#### **Debate on the University Act: Something old and something new**

About 120 students, staff and managers met yesterday in the Ceremonial Hall for an internal debate on the University Act and experiences with the new management system. [Read more here](#).

## Education

### **Global climate course at University of Copenhagen**

This semester, people from all over the world are participating in the same course at the University of Copenhagen. Global education has been made possible by local electronics. The theme is also something that affects international society – climate change. The University of Copenhagen is very pleased about the course, and Assistant Professor Christian Bugge Hansen, who is responsible for the course, points out the University's past experiences with e-learning initiatives and the interactivity that comes with such courses.

"The really great thing is that we are saving CO<sub>2</sub> with this course, especially the transport costs that would have otherwise gone to transporting the lecturers and students we have from other countries," he says.

Read the entire article in [Computerworld](#) (in Danish)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 1 April 2009*

### **LIFE company fair – take the first step to a career!**

On Thursday 23 April 2009, 10 am–2 pm and Friday 24 April 2009, 10 am– 3 pm, the fair committee of the students' association DSR is hosting the LIFE company fair in the Marble Hall. At the fair, you have the chance to meet many exciting companies which are just waiting to talk to you about BSc or thesis project opportunities, trainee programmes, student jobs and job opportunities for graduates. Seize the moment and make your first move.

For more information, visit our website at [www.messe.life.ku.dk](http://www.messe.life.ku.dk)

**Ann Kallehauge Nielsen, DSR, [annkalle@dsr.life.ku.dk](mailto:annkalle@dsr.life.ku.dk)**

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [glb@life.ku.dk](mailto:glb@life.ku.dk) – latest update 30 March 2009*

### **Open house, networking and career day on MSc programmes, Friday 24 April**

Have you completed your BSc studies or will you be doing so soon? If you are interested in making the final part of your studies more business-oriented or if you want to network your way to a relevant student job, you are welcome when LIFE – Faculty of Life Sciences hosts its open house, networking and career day. Here you can learn more about how your career can take shape if you follow one of LIFE's 17 MSc study programmes.

It all takes place on 24 April at Frederiksberg Campus, Thorvaldsensvej 40, 1871 Frederiksberg from 10.00 am to 3.30 pm.

#### **Programme for the day**

10.00 Meet your future workplace: speak to representatives from 20 international companies and organisations. The company stands will be open until 3 pm

10.00 Career workshops – how to network your way to a student job, internship or your first job after graduation. More information on registration will be available later

11.00 Career workshops – continued

12 noon Free lunch for career workshop participants

13.00 How to make the final part of your studies business-oriented

13.10 Hear about one of the 17 MSc programmes you are interested in. Directors of studies and students provide information and answer questions

13.55 Hear about how graduates use their education

14.55 Hear about another of LIFE's 17 MSc programmes

15.30 Experience A-vej – LIFE's Friday's bar

[Read more on the website](#) (in Danish) [Registration for Career workshops](#) (in Danish)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 March 2009*

## **International Student Energy Summit, University of Calgary, 11-13 June 2009**

The University of Calgary, Canada, will be hosting the International Student Energy Summit (ISES) on 11-13 June 2009. ISES is a student-oriented energy conference which aims to bring together international students, academics and businesses to discuss pressing energy issues and to develop goals and solutions for today's energy problems. The conference is endorsed by the University of Calgary, the World Petroleum Council and the University of Calgary Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy.

[Read the brochure here.](#)

For more information about registration, accommodation and updates, please visit:

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

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 27 March 2009*

## **Staff news**

### **LIFE students win Grundfos Challenge economics prize**

Grundfos has found the winners of the Grundfos Challenge. This year's winners of the prize for economics students totalling DKK 75,000 are the team from LIFE: Louise Lund Rants, Mikael Strandbygaard Pedersen and Anne Taasti Kejser.

Read more at the [Grundfos Challenge website](#)

*Gudrun Lau Bjerno, [gib@life.ku.dk](mailto:gib@life.ku.dk) – latest update 30 March 2009*

## **Research**

### **Festival of Research: A race against breast cancer**

Come to the Festival of Research and hear about the latest on breast cancer research in Denmark: Thursday 23 April, 3–5 pm, Marble Hall, aud. 3.14. [Read more here](#) – and at <http://www.araceagainstbreastcancer.dk/> (in Danish). Register by email to: [krj@araceagainstbreastcancer.dk](mailto:krj@araceagainstbreastcancer.dk)

About DCTB: [www.dctb.org](http://www.dctb.org)

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## Grants

### Research funds etc.

See the updated information on the Research & Information website.