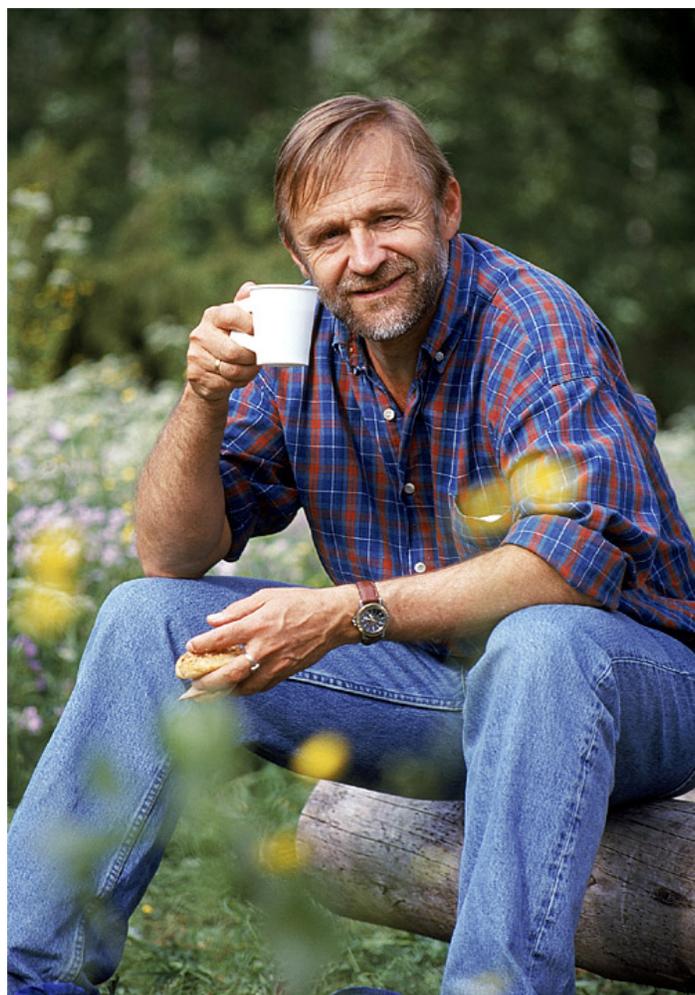


Professor i skogøkonomi
Birger Solberg
60 år



INA festskrift 1

Institutt for naturforvaltning
Universitetet for miljø- og biovitenskap

2006



FORORD

Hva gir man til en mann som fyller 60 år og har alt? Man overlater jobben til gode (?) kollegaer verden rundt.

«Dear friends and colleagues!

Professor Birger Solberg at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (the former Agricultural University of Norway) is 60 years in July. To celebrate this milestone, we are planning a surprise collection of stories and pictures from friends and colleagues of Birger.

You are among the lucky selected persons we ask for contributions!

We are interested in short stories, which may be more or less related to work (including creative research topics or utilisation of forest resources, i.e. hunting), and telling pictures from Birger's comprehensive and eventful career - so far. And we emphasise that we have no indications that Birger is planning to slow down at 60!

Do you have a good story about Birger and/or some nice pictures, please send them to us by e-mail or letter, by 3 July 2006 (See details below). We will return any original pictures.

We hope that you would like to contribute to this informal collection, and that your very best story is not subject to censorship.

Most important: Please do not mention this to Birger! We want it to be a surprise! »

Resultatet har du her.

Berit (red.)

Even (red.)

Ås, september 2006

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**"Å fylle seksti år er en sørgehøytidelighet"
(Bergliot Hobæk Haff)**



Courtesy of EFI archive

GREETINGS

Diverse post mottatt i posthylla i forbindelse med 70-års jubileet:

TELEGRAMMER

*

FRA STORTINGET

Til 60-års jublant Birger Solberg:
Husk at du kan trekke festen fra på
skatten

Og de aller beste ønsker for dagen
Vennlig hilsen Carl I. Hagen

*

*

(Nesten) FRA KONGEHUSET

Til Birger på 60-års dagen:
Du er råere enn en ferrari
Håper du koser deg no immari
Beste ønsker fra Martha og Ari

*

*

TELEGRAM FRA DE DYPE SKOGER

Ikke sett rentekravet for høyt!
Håper helsa holder - husk å ta tran
Vennlig hilsen skogguden Pan

*

LIMERIKS FRA CARLSEN OG RIKE

*

En professor med sansen for tall
Ja, faktisk en gal mann med ball.
Nå fyller han år
Skal si tida går (med trimmede lår?)
Vi håper at dagen blir knall

*

*

Tonnevis papir på hans kontor
Finnes der egentlig et bord?
Men atmosfæren er god,
For Proffen tar rotet med ro.
Selv om studentene på papirhaugen glor.

*

*

Professor Solberg lagde en modell
Og det må sies han ble ganske
propell
Da funksjonen blei derivert
Blei modellen optimert
Han feira det lenge og vel

*

*

Professoren ble vist den høyeste ære
Skrev gode artikler - dog noe sære(?)
Om klimatrusler og karbonbinding i tre
Før han fløy videre rundt kloden av sted
Det var visst forskjell på liv og på lære

*

BIRGER 60 YEARS

Hans Fredrik Hoen

Trust the time signal

Birger has turned sixty. This is really, and I then mean *really*, hard to believe. The man has the same boyish look and the same youthful way of acting as twenty-five years ago when I first met him. Anyhow, the hard facts tell us that Birger now has turned sixty and this gives an excellent opportunity to memorise a bit about this extraordinary man. It is also wise not to deny facts. As our late colleague, John Eid used to say about a person he could not manage to convince with his arguments: That guy didn't even trust the time signal on the radio!

Let's face it Birger: You have passed the sixty-line and you deserve some words. By this, I will provide my un-scientific contribution.

The teacher and enthusiastic economist

When I was a student at AUN in first half of the 1980-s, Birger was teaching resource economics at the Department for Forest Economics at the Agricultural University of Norway (AUN). He was an inspiring teacher, devoted to help us understanding the basics of economic theory and how it could be applied to study and analyse relevant questions regarding the allocation of natural resources. We were introduced to basic tribal language for resource economists and started talking about renewable vs. non-renewable resources, the economics of recycling, carrying capacity, resource rent and much more. Birger brought in guest-lectures from the BIG world outside of AUN, e.g. "all the way" from the University of Oslo. For us students, the courses he taught had a true academic flavour that helped us believe that what we learned could be applied also on broader and more general issues that just for the management of forests.

The forester and logger

Even though Birger has been occupied with economic analyses in most of his professional career, I believe he is a forester by heart. He has managed to continuously have research projects going, dealing with timber stand management optimisation. My guess is that a part of Birger's heart lies in the intricacies of modelling, analysing and trying to understand the interaction of the biological growth process and the opportunities and pitfalls of finding the optimal economic decisions in the management of this resource. In a situation where Birger needs to convince others about his forestry background, his favourite story is telling about when he made his living as a timber logger in Canada. That one smells resin!

The driver and the East-coast-"raid"

In 1987-88 Birger spent a sabbatical-year at UC-Berkeley in California. Birger planned to end that year by spending a week visiting some of the Forestry-faculties at the East-coast of the US before returning to Norway. At that time I spent a 6 months visit at the University of Minnesota-St.Paul and I invited myself to join the trip. Birger of course approved that "invitation" in his typical generous way. Anders Lunnan was the third member of the Norwegian delegation, coming over from Ås. I flew into Washington late in the evening on the 4th of July. Next morning we met at breakfast at the hotel and Birger started telling us about this wonderful car that we were going to drive. Birger and his family had crossed the continent, driving all the way from Berkeley to Washington. Kari, Dag-Birger and Runar had then left for Norway and we were ready to do the East-coast-"raid". Coming down to the car-parking in the basement we were proudly introduced to the car, a Buick Regal Ltd, a real American car. Compared to the VW Jetta Birger at that time was driving back in Norway this was a big deal. Spirits were high in the Norwegian delegation when we passed the White house; Birger driving, Anders in the passenger front seat and myself naturally, as the junior on the team, sitting in the back-seat. The Buick ran like a dream, Birger was an experienced driver on US-highways (driving and discussing forest economics simultaneously) and the equipage took us

safely around West-Virginia, North- and South-Carolina. As the East-coast-“raid” came closer and closer to the end, a real economic decision problem started to grow for Birger. It could be categorised as an optimal stopping problem. Birger had to get rid of the car before he left for Norway. The question was, when and at what price? Anders and myself didn't engage too much in the problem and showed relatively little thoughtfulness for Birger when he was confronted the brute market for second-hand cars at the US east-coast. Finally, the economist had to “pocket his pride” and accept that the market was only willing to about half the price of what Birger thought was the value of the Buick.

The soccer-player

Birger is a devoted fan of soccer. He is not difficult to ask to join a five-a-side exercise, although the frequency of complaints about uneven fields or other non-sensible excuses has been increasing over the years when the ball goes in other directions than what Birger believes it should do. It is also my firm impression that Birger more and more tends to circulate around the goal of the other team as the years have passed by. When I started up as a research-scholar after finishing my masters, it didn't take long before Birger asked me to join the training for the University soccer-team for employees. Years later I learned to know that this was a serious test of the new fellow, as one of Birger's criteria, or a necessary condition, for a person to become a true member of the forest economists at AUN is to possess reasonably well-developed skills and understanding of soccer.

The Effy-affair

In 1994 the Biennial meeting of the Scandinavian Society of Forest Economics was held in Denmark, more precisely at Gilleleje north of Copenhagen. These meetings have always been great successes, also those in Denmark of course. The Banquet is a highlight. That year, Birger got a lot of questions, in public, from the organiser Finn Helles during the Banquet. Finn was curiously interested and asking about who this “Effy” was, that Birger had been talking so much about. Luckily the 1994 Biennial meeting was without accompanying persons, otherwise I suspect that Birger's wife Kari could have started to get worried. No reason for that of course. “Effy” was European Forest Institute (EFI) and Birger had at that time just recently been appointed as the first Director general of EFI. Maybe, the most hectic part of Birger's career then started, as he commuted between Ås and Joensuu and became the dream-customer of any airline. With his enthusiasm, great ability to motivate and broad knowledge of forestry and forest sector issues Birger was probably the ideal person for that job. My experience is that foresters from Norway are always warmly welcomed in Finland and my guess is that Birger what he accomplished as the first DG of EFI has a great deal of responsibility for this.

Order in chaos

Birger's office is different from most others. He himself claims that there is “order in chaos”, but sometimes one may get doubts when looking into it. Anyhow, the empirical data tells that Birger is right. It's impressive to see how he can “fish up” the right paper or book from deep into a pile when something is at request.

The foreign minister

After serving at EFI Birger came back to Ås in 1996 and has been working her since. We are both happy and proud to have Birger as a member of our staff. Anyhow, working at Ås doesn't mean, being at Ås all the time, maybe not even the main part of the time. Birger is “all over the place”, i.e he travels and he has the most extensive network of professional contacts in most corners of the world. In many ways Birger is our Foreign minister within forestry and we thank you for making it easy for all the rest of us when we need to establish contacts with persons or environments in other countries. In this global era, this is very valuable for our department, probably a necessary condition for survival. We thank you for that and for all the other contributions you make to the environment at our department. We hope and trust, that you will keep up the speed and spirits for many more years together with us here at the Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Management.

**“Alder er som å bestige et fjell. Man blir nok litt andpusten, men får mye bedre utsikt”
(Ingrid Bergman)**



Chris Risbrudt's comment:

Here is our intrepid guide, leader of our hunt in the mountains for ptarmigan, in Norway. On this hunt, most of the day was foggy, although it is sunny in this photo. Our leader got us lost in the fog! After hours of wandering around, we met some hikers who told us we were going in the wrong direction to find our cabin. So we turned around, and after some time, Dag Birger yells at his father that, "I can see our cabin!" His father replies, "No, you can't!" "But I can see our car parked next to it!", says Dag Birger. He finally convinces his father when we walk over and find the cabin, and the car parked next to it.

NORDMENN I UTLANDET

Knut Øistad

My first post-graduate work experience was as a research assistant in Birger's team in the early 80s. My time in the field of research did not last too long, but I have had regular contact with Birger ever since, most often from different positions in the Ministry of Agriculture in Norway.

Birger's optimistic and enthusiastic approach to the possible role and contributions of research has always impressed me. Everything is workable and contains some strange "researchable" topics. I have only once experienced that Birger kept silent for more than 30 seconds after listening to the description of a project proposal. It happened after I phoned him during a time-out in the negotiations in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests in New York:

A slightly inexperienced Norwegian delegation to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forest was then approached by the far more experienced and persuasive Head and Coordinator of the IPF secretariat, Dr Jag Maini. His idea was to invite a country to sponsor (and organise) a study of the long-term supply and demand for forest products world-wide. Since the study should enlighten the country representatives participating in the negotiations, the result had to be presented at the next session of the intergovernmental panel – less than a year later.

We discussed this in the Norwegian delegation and our first reactions was that there was a somewhat lack of balance between the complexity of the task and the time available. My colleagues asked me if I knew anybody that would accept to conduct the project on those unfavourable conditions. I responded positively.

I would have been more comfortable if I was given the possibility to consult back home before we accepted to take on the project, but time did not allow sufficient consultations. In a plenary session the Norwegian delegation accepted to take on the task.

Later I phoned Birger, at that time the Director of the European Forest Institute. I carefully explained what we had agreed to do, and asked (begged) if it was possible to conduct a project on these conditions. That was the time when the silence occurred. I thought the line was cut. The otherwise relentlessly optimistic Birger was finally lost for words. He eventually uttered his disbelief when he asked me twice: Did you really accept to do this project?

To cut the story short: Birger dug his teeth into it and collected a team of excellent researchers from Europe and the US. The project became a great success and provided a lot of useful knowledge for the intergovernmental process on forests. The Norwegian delegation to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, slightly more experienced, was relieved.



Ilpo Tikkanen's comment:
Sumukka-camp, our beloved overnight residence. The host is happy, hanging your great catch in your right hand...



Ilpo Tikkanen's comment:
Best congratulations from Päivi, Juhana and myself! Juhana shows how to handle the big game.
The biggest and now maybe the oldest is still flying at the Riverside!

RYDDIG?

Grethe Delbeck

Dette skjedde mens Birger holdt på med sin doktorgrad (dette var før e-mail kom). Han var imidlertid i USA under slutfasen av skrivingen, og ringte meg på kontoret for å be meg ta med manuset jeg hadde skrevet hjem. Vi måtte ta korrekturen pr telefon på kvelden! Han måtte jo få noen enorme telefonregninger!

Avhandlingen hans inneholdt flere hundre ligninger, og i det dataprogrammet vi den gang brukte lot det seg ikke gjøre å skrive avanserte ligninger. Disse måtte det derfor avsettes plass til, og siden skrive dem inn ved hjelp av en IBM kulehode-maskin, med bruk av opptil 3 forskjellige kulehoder! Men – avhandlingen ble ferdig, og Birger ble Dr.agric.

Birger er vel ikke kjent for å være den som har det ryddigste kontoret. En gang kom han imidlertid stolt som en hane - nå hadde han ryddet! Han hadde fått nye skap med sjalusidører, og Kari (kona) hadde hjulpet ham en helg. Det var blåst! Man kunne til og med se bordplata! En stund senere var Birger imidlertid bortreist, og det ble spørsmål etter en bok som jeg mistenkte at han kunne ha. Jeg lette rundt, men så ingen. Så åpnet jeg en av dørene i det nye fine skapet med sjalusidører – og ut kom alt innholdet rasende, hulter til bulter! Snakk om rydding!!

FORESTRY SCHOOLS?

Keith Gilles

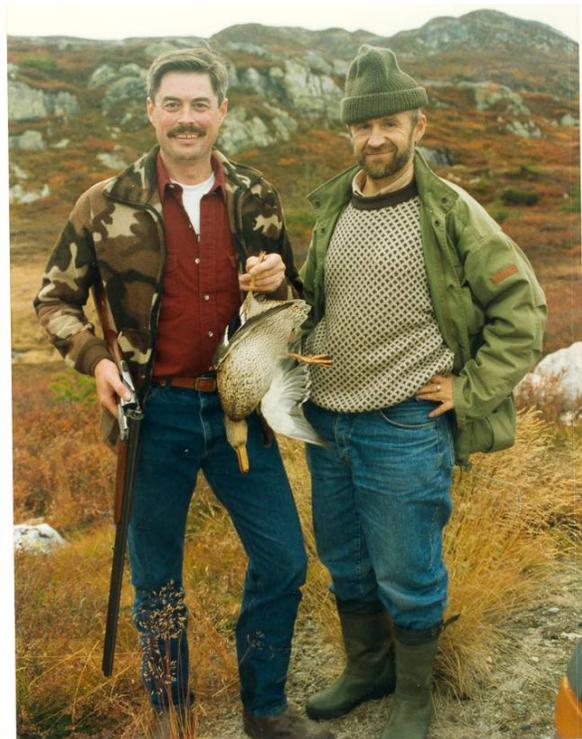
Several years ago, while Birger was on sabbatical, he and his family were at a UC Berkeley Department of Forestry Christmas party at my home. When Birger identified himself as a professor of forestry from Norway, another guest politely inquired as to which forestry school in Norway he was from. Birger looked a bit puzzled for a moment, then asked my geographically-challenged guest, "Well...the population of Norway is about the same as that of the San Francisco Bay Area. How many forestry schools do you imagine we have?"

Please let the Professor know that I consider him a great friend, and that I have enjoyed all our adventures together. I hope we have many more, along with our friend, Ilpo Tikkanen, from Finland.

- Chris Risbrudt



Here, the Professor is taking over as captain of my boat, Viking's Dream.



In this photo, I have shot a duck on this same hunt (as in page 7). Not having gotten anything himself, our hunt leader wants a photo to show success by association.

From the great winter war ...



Courtesy of Alexander Moiseyev

EN GAL MANN MED BALL

Tireb Reguah Datsdnil

Åkken æ re som æ så gammal at'n husse stipendiatperioden som et kunstnerstipend?

Åkken æ re som på spørsmål om hva grill heter på finsk, tilbød seg å kjøpe to og ta med på flyet til Norge?

Åkken i salen er re som er kjent for å skrukke i panna og gni seg i skjegget –og kunne skremme sjøl den mest sjølvsikre foredragsholder. Og som etter endt presentasjon kjæm med de vanskeligste spørsmåla?

Åkken æ re som rømte tell USA for å komma unna sine stipendiater, - ell kanskje problemet va at'n ikke makta å hevde seg i "førstemann på plass om mårran"...

Åkken æ re som på konferanse i Frankrike insisterte på at det måtte være TV-overføring fra en fotballkamp – under konferansemiddagen? Når man er på konferanse og middagen kolliderer med en kamp i ett eller annet mesterskap, ville mange innfinne seg med at den kampen gikk man glipp av. Andre ville tenke at det finnes mer givende ting å bruke tida til enn å se på noen som henger i skjorta til hverandre og liksom konkurrerer om å få ei lærkule i hvert sitt nett.

Men ikke Birger! Han insisterte faktisk på at det måtte være TV i lokalet under middagen i Epinal i 2003. Og da er det ikke mer en rett og rimelig at Birger midt i sin hilsen-fra-styret-ved-EFI opptreden, måtte ta en pause mens det skjedde noe lidderlig spennende på skjermen.

At hele middagen ble preget av en gjeng som strategisk plassert nærmest TV, delvis hoiet seg gjennom middagen er kanskje ikke mer enn rett og rimelig når fotballen går foran det franske kjøkken.

Man fleiper rett og slett ikke med fotball i nærheten av Birger. Dette ble behørig bevist da det var inviterte til en leken fotballturnering (eller var det –cup?) mellom studenter og ansatte ved tidligere IBN og ISF rett etter sammenslåingen. At planen var et uformelt og lekent oppgjør har jeg førstehånds kjennskap til ettersom jeg deltok i planleggingen.

Men ikke for Birger, nei. Med sitt svarteste blikk og sin bryskeste stemme, fikk jeg passet mitt grundig påskrevet fra Birger da jeg insisterte på at Hans Fredrik var dommer, og slett ikke skulle stå i mål for ISF-ansatt (med forsterkninger).



Ilpo Tikkanen's comment:
For vikings there should never be u-turn!



Ilpo Tikkanen's comment:
You still remember the "Big one", just flushing in front of you over this river? "Perkele, gamle bjørn, why did you not shoot"?

BIRGER– GENTLE SLAVE DRIVER !

TIM PECK

My close association with Birger Solberg began in 1993, when he was appointed the first Director of the newly founded European Forest Institute and I was the Chairman of the Board. In that capacity I was privileged to watch how, in a remarkably short time, Birger and his small staff built up the Institute's work programme and membership with a mixture of diplomacy, energy, enthusiasm and skill. By the time he handed over the Directorship and returned to the Agricultural University of Norway (as it then was), EFI was already firmly established as a centre for European cooperation in the field of forestry research.

I only found out precisely what qualities were needed to achieve this success in the autumn of 1995, when EFI was invited to undertake a study, sponsored by the Government of Norway, on the long-term trends and prospects in world supply and demand for wood and implications for sustainable forest management¹. Birger was placed in charge of the project and assembled a small team consisting of David Brooks, Heikki Pajuoja, Philip Wardle and myself to carry out the work. The output was to be a report to be presented to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, the next session of which was scheduled to meet in just a few months time. The timing represented a major challenge, and frankly some of us were sceptical about whether a study of this scale and complexity could possibly be finished in time. This, however, was without taking into account the resourcefulness, drive, enthusiasm and sometimes sheer bloody-mindedness of the project leader. With a judicious mixture of exhortation, pleading, threats and flattery, he managed to extract from each of us drafts of the different sections of the study for circulation to a wider group of experts around the world for critical review; then to get us to revise our texts; and finally to sit down together to thrash out a final cohesive version. Given the often widely differing opinions between the five of us, it required all of Birger's skills, not least patience and ability to occasionally knock heads together, to force us to come up with a result that we all could agree on (and which was subsequently well received by the IPF). Remarkably, all this was achieved according to schedule, and the final report came out on time!

Throughout, Birger handled the process with such gentleness and understanding that we – the slaves – not only accepted but respected what he – the slave master - was doing. This demonstrated Birger's unparalleled gift of leadership, the fostering of willing cooperation and the ability to get the best out of people.

Luckily, Birger is 60 years young, so we can expect the international forestry community to continue to benefit from his experience and dynamism for many years to come! Happy anniversary, Birger!

¹ EFI Research Report No. 6, 1996.

**"It's better to be old than dead"
(Brigitte Bardot)**



Chris Risbrudt's comment:
A successful hunt for woodcock in Wisconsin, USA.

TENNIS ROUND THE WORLD WITH BIRGER

Risto Päivinen

During the first years of EFI, I found a common denominator with Birger also in the field of sports. That was tennis, which I learned at quite a mature age, in early 1990's when I was working in Thailand. It is one of the few sports you can successfully practice in a hot and crowded place like Bangkok, so I started there. Birger's tennis court skills were of earlier origin, which I soon found out during our tournaments in Joensuu and other locations on the globe.

We started in Joensuu with Olli Saastamoinen and sometimes with Peter Glueck. Outdoors in the summer, indoors in the rainy and snowy period. We also conducted a remarkable world tournament, which continued also after Birger left EFI. We agreed that whenever and wherever we have a meeting we both will participate, we would pack our tennis rackets and shoes with us. If we forgot, we hired the equipment. We played during the Tampere IUFRO World Congress, in Antalya, Turkey during World Forestry Congress 1997, our private Marco Polo tournament in Florence 1998, in Gmunden, Austria, probably 1998, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 2000, and in many other places. In Monte Verita, Switzerland, we could not play even if the weather was perfect, as the court was closed. It was 1st October and the season had ended in September.

I do not remember the results of the games. Probably because I lost most of them. Birger's first serve is very effective, if it is successful. Sometimes the net was a bit low, and if the surface was fast, there was little time to catch his quick hits. He was often able to force me back-court and then kill my returns by attacking to the net, where he was effective.

Well, I still dream about practicing more and beating Birger three times in row. But I'm afraid that with my present practice frequency his longer term tennis skills and sportsmanship will outweigh my efforts.



Ilpo Tikkanen's comment:
You may remember this famous hill...



Ilpo Tikkanen's comment:
Next to Russian wilderness! But are you
still angry because I urged you to cross
the river... I admit that the log was
slippery...

RACING WITH TIME

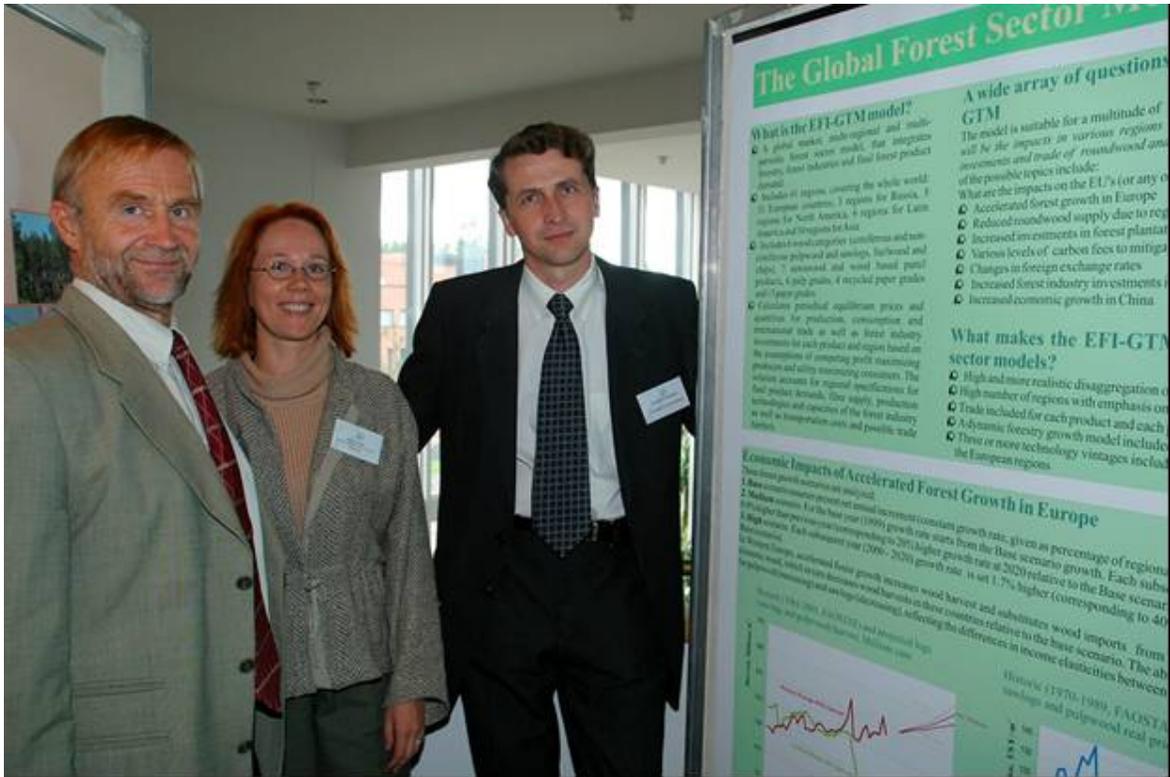
Anu Ruusila and Leena Roihuvuo

Birger's time as the Director of EFI surely did not lack action and speed. One good example of this was the infamous departure from EFI 'procedure':

Secretaries and other staff members would gather around the lobby with piles of papers for yet one more signature. 20 mins before the flight departure Birger would appear from his office in a brisk manner, and while he was sorting out his luggage, making sure he has all he needs for the trip, and pulling his coat on, he would sign and even comment papers. The secretary usually had to keep track of time and voice the final countdown – 18 mins before the flight departure Birger was in the EFI car, loyally chauffeured by a Russian modeling specialist Alex Moiseyev. Each time the staff was certain that Birger would miss his flight – that never happened thanks to Alex's love for racing, lack of speed traps on Joensuu roads, and Birger's courage...

Each time, after his departure, a silence would settle over the headquarters. The hustle and bustle would die down a bit until his voice would ring through the building again next week.

The Model. Always the Model...



Courtesy of Alexander Moiseyev

ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY

Peter Glück,
Vienna, June 2006

In the summer term 2007 the Forestry Faculties of the Universities of Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb will open their doors for outstanding students from the Western Balkan region who have enrolled in the master programme "Forest Policy and Economics". It is part of the Finnish project "Forest Policy Education and Research in the Western Balkan Region (FOPER)" financed by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by the European Forest Institute (EFI) under the responsibility of Ilpo Tikkanen in concurrence with other partners. When the first courses will start, Birger, Ilpo and I will be pleased that an idea developed at EFI became reality.

Under Birger's directorship at EFI from 1993 to 1996 Ilpo and I were senior researchers in forest policy at EFI. During winter time the working days ended often in the sauna with subsequent discussions in front of the fire place. One agreement of these discussions was the significance of forest policy and economics in the forestry curricula of the Faculties of Forestry in Europe. This conviction was in particular supported by forest issues of that time such as forest pollution, forest conservation or forest degradation. The conviction grew among us that the Western European countries are well equipped to master these challenges, not least because of their traditional education in forest policy and economics. But what's about the European countries with new democratic political systems and economies in transition? We decided to supply seminars and summer schools in forest policy and economics, among them in Joensuu, Santarem, Jelgava (1995-1996) and Belgrade (2002). Furthermore, Birger, Ilpo and I decided to edit an EFI series on "Forest Policy and Economics" of which Max Krott's book "Forest Policy Analysis" (published 2005) is the first volume; it will be a valuable basis not only for the FOPER master programme.

Sometimes Pentti Hyttinen, Olli Saastamoinen and Risto Päivinen joined our fire place meetings. Independent from the topics our discussions benefited from the different scientific disciplines represented by us. Birger and Olli argued in economic terms, Ilpo and I held the stake of political science. Each side tried to convince the other side about the superiority to explain forest policy issues by its discipline. In these discussions we detected the chance of forest policy to deliver inexhaustible empirical cases for the collaboration of both disciplines. Although we supported the utility approach shared by both economists and public choice theorists we dreamed of an overarching approach that overcomes the limits of both disciplines by combining their strengths and diminishing their weaknesses. Unfortunately we were not able to test this belief in a common research project. But in the meantime the idea of interdisciplinarity has expanded and achieved many adherents. The probability has increased that also this idea becomes reality some day.



Chris Risbrudt's comment:

While I was away, the Professor tries to take over my desk, and my job! (The Forest Products Laboratory, in Madison, Wisconsin).



Chris Risbrudt's comment:

Here is how big "the one that got away" was! The professor demonstrates his exaggerating abilities!