

**Going to  
Graz?**

# PLAIN Matters

**June 2017**

**Guest editor blog:  
Margrethe Kvarenes.**

## *Love, Clearly*

**Keeping with PLAIN's international perspective, our guest editors for the rest of 2017 will be bilingual.**

**We are very pleased to offer you this June newsletter with a blog in English and Norwegian by Margrethe Kvarenes.**

[Read her blog below](#)

## **Nominations open until June 30 for Mowat Award**

Know a plain language star? Honor their work by nominating them for PLAIN's Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award, an international award recognizing an outstanding contribution to advancing plain language.

The Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award recognizes a significant contribution to advancing plain language at the local, regional, national, or international levels.

In 2011, PLAIN recognized the outstanding contribution of past President (pictured above) and former winner of the PLAIN International Award by renaming our award the Christine Mowat Plain Language Achievement Award.

It most often recognizes the long-term achievement of an individual. But it can also recognize an organization or group.

PLAIN generally presents the award every two years, at the international conference. This year, we meet Sept. 21-23 in Graz, Austria.

The Board does not have to present an award at every conference, and may present more than one award.

A person's plain language work can be in any language and take a variety of forms:

- significant research in the field of plain language
- extensive experience in developing and presenting plain language training
- extensive experience in writing or editing documents using plain language
- a body of publications about plain language
- successful leadership in public plain language projects
- significant volunteer contribution to a plain language organization

A nomination for the award should refer to these criteria and the PLAIN Board applies these criteria when deciding on a winner.

Nominations can be sent to [info@plainlanguagenetwork.org](mailto:info@plainlanguagenetwork.org) Deadline is June 30.

Nominations must include the name and email of both the nominee and the nominator.

## PLAIN needs you!

Watch your email for a call for nominations for the PLAIN board. This year, we will have 4 vacancies to fill as board members end their terms.

To stand for election to the PLAIN board, you must:

1. Have been a member in good standing for at least one year;
2. Support PLAIN's objectives;
3. Have no conflict of interest in serving on the board; and
4. Be willing and able to serve as an effective director.

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## - Conference News -

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### **Going to Graz?**

**Here are some important dates for PLAIN's conference in Graz:**

June 30	End of early bird registration
August 31	End of regular registration
September 20	Late registration accepted

### **Join PLAIN in Graz**

Have you registered yet for PLAIN's conference in Graz in September 2017? The conference website is [here](#)

Do you tweet? Look for and use our conference hashtag [#PLAIN2017](#)

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## - Guest Editor Blog: Margrethe Kvarenes

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### Love, clearly

I'll tell you a secret: I didn't always love my job. Ten years ago, when I started as a clear language rookie in Norway's public sector, I easily came to like my job. But was it love? Not at first sight, no. Why not? I guess I lacked the bigger picture. I had not discovered the greater purpose. That clear language matters to people's lives.

### Perspective and purpose

What lit the flame, then? I know exactly what happened. The PLAIN 2008 Amsterdam conference happened. I remember Christine Mowat's poetic speech where she compared clear texts to *inuksuks* – the stone landmarks of the North American indigenous people, which guide travellers and show them the way. And the information designer's "information wheel," a marvellous brochure that in a clear way explained the changes in tax regulation to different groups of taxpayers. Dozens of knowledgeable contributors opened my eyes and showed how clear language increases transparency and makes it easier for people to participate in society.

### Clear language – happier citizens?

Several Nordic countries have permanent, publicly funded clear language programs. AND we are the world's happiest people. I am not joking. According to the last UN World Happiness Survey, the Norwegians, the Danes, and the Icelanders are among the happiest people on the planet. Trust in the authorities is one of the survey's six main factors.

If we agree that clear language is a way of creating transparency in public administration, I don't find it farfetched at all to draw a line between steady clear language

### Kjærlighet, helt klart

Jeg skal fortelle deg en hemmelighet: Jeg har ikke alltid vært forelska i jobben min. Da jeg for ti år siden ble ansatt som statlig rådgiver i klarspråk, var ikke jobben vanskelig å like. Men var det kjærlighet? Ikke ved første blick, nei. Hvorfor ikke? Jeg tror jeg manglet det større bildet. Den overordnede meningen med klarspråksarbeidet. At klarspråk har betydning for menneskers gjøren og laden.

### Perspektiv og mening

Hva var det som ga tenning? Jeg vet nøyaktig hva som skjedde. PLAIN-konferansen i Amsterdam i 2009. Jeg husker Christine Mowats poetiske innlegg, der hun sammenlignet klare tekster med *inuksuk* – den nord-amerikanske urbefolkningens landemerker i stein som viser reisende veien. Og informasjonsdesignerens fargekodete "informasjonshjul", et nytenkende vidunder av en brosyre som enkelt forklarte endringer i skattesystemet for ulike typer skattebetalere. De mange titalls foredragsholderne viste hvordan klarspråk kan skape større åpenhet i samfunnet og gjøre det enklere for folk å delta.

### Klart språk – lykkeligere innbyggere?

I flere nordiske land drives det et fast, offentlig klarspråksarbeid. OG vi er verdens lykkeligste folk. Jeg tuller ikke. Ifølge FNs siste siste kartlegging av verdens lykke (World Happiness Survey) er nordmenn, dansker og islendere blant de lykkeligst på kloden. Tillit til myndighetene er en av kartleggingens seks hovedfaktorer.

Hvis vi er enige om at klarspråk bidrar til større åpenhet i offentlig sektor, synes jeg ikke det er det minste drøyt å påstå at det er en sammenheng mellom organisert, fast

work and happiness. No wonder I love my job.

## Come, share, learn

In September, we have a new PLAIN conference coming up. Clear language practitioners, researchers, information designers and other specialists will meet in Graz, Austria to share their knowledge and learn more about the vital role of clear or plain language in creating the trust, satisfaction and loyalty of customers in private businesses and public administration. Visit the conference website at <http://www.plain2017graz.org/>. I hope to see you there!

### **About Margarethe**

Margrethe Kvarenes is a clear language advocate, lecturer, editor, webmaster and writer at the Language Council of Norway, the Norwegian Government's consultative body on language issues.

She plays a major part in the national initiative "Clear Language in Norway's Civil Service." in partnership with the Norwegian Agency for Public Management and eGovernment. Through a wide range of activities this partnership has set a new standard for public communication in Norway.

Margrethe's resume includes translation, editing, publishing and communications work as well as international relations. She is co-author of both Norwegian and Danish Clear Language manuals, and she is the editor of the Norwegian Clear Language website [www.klarsprak.no](http://www.klarsprak.no).

Margrethe has presented at several international clear language conferences, and she is a member of PLAIN's Board of Directors.

klarspråksarbeid og høy grad av lykke. Ikke rart jeg elsker jobben min.

## Kom, del og delta

I september er det igjen PLAIN-konferanse. Da møtes språkkonsulenter, forskere, informasjonsdesignere og andre fagfolk i Graz i Østerrike for å dele erfaringer og lære mer. Konferansen handler om hvordan klarspråk bygger tillit og skaper bedre relasjoner, både i privat og offentlig sektor. Jeg håper vi ses!

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### **Talk to us!**

Let us know what you think about our newsletter. Do you have a suggestion for a guest editor? Have you won an award? Have you seen an example of good - and bad - plain language you want other PLAIN members to see? Is there some other news you want to share?

Please contact us at:  
[info@plainlanguagenetwork.org](mailto:info@plainlanguagenetwork.org)