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Subject: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Liam E. Gumley](#) on Mon, 18 Apr 2016 16:50:28 GMT  
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Dear IDL Colleagues,

It is with deep regret that I must tell you of the passing of Paul van Delst, a long time user of IDL and contributor to this forum. He suffered a heart attack while biking with friends in Washington DC yesterday and did not survive.

Paul and I were undergraduates at Curtin University in Western Australia in the late 1980's, and we both started using this new system known as "Interactive Data Language" when we moved to the USA in 1991. He went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and I went to NASA GSFC. When I moved to Madison in 1994 to start working at UW with Paul, we fell into a habit of getting coffee every morning and discussing the latest programming tasks we had been tackling in IDL. Paul was the first person who told me "You should write a book on IDL". A few years later, with his encouragement, I did so and he was the first reviewer. Paul was a very careful programmer, and no detail escaped his attention.

Paul was a researcher at the Space Science and Engineering Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1994 to 2007, and from 2007 he was a scientist at the NOAA National Center for Weather and Climate Prediction (NCWCP) in College Park, Maryland. During his time at NCWCP he was the lead developer of the Community Radiative Transfer Model, a Fortran software system for computing the radiative properties of the atmosphere, that is used in the operational numerical weather prediction models run by NOAA. He was always a keen user of IDL for visualizing and analyzing results from CRTM, and he was never able resist chiming in on a discussion in the IDL discussion group when an interesting post caught his eye.

Paul had numerous interactions with the US and international atmospheric radiative transfer communities, and he will be missed by many colleagues and friends.

Sincerely,  
Liam Gumley  
SSEC, UW-Madison.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Russell\[1\]](#) on Mon, 18 Apr 2016 17:45:42 GMT  
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That is very sad to hear. Though I did not personally know Paul, I am familiar with is posts to this forum and others.

-Russell

On Monday, April 18, 2016 at 12:50:32 PM UTC-4, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:  
> Dear IDL Colleagues,  
>

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> Sincerely,

> Liam Gumley

> SSEC, UW-Madison.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [wlandsman](#) on Mon, 18 Apr 2016 18:55:46 GMT  
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Liam,

Thanks for posting this.

This is awful news. I also only knew Paul through this newsgroup but his posts had the qualities one wants in a friend -- generous, full of wit and humor, and always cutting to the heart of a problem. He will be greatly missed. --Wayne

On Monday, April 18, 2016 at 12:50:32 PM UTC-4, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

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> Liam Gumley  
> SSEC, UW-Madison.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst

Posted by [Jim Pendleton](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2016 04:52:13 GMT

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On Monday, April 18, 2016 at 10:50:32 AM UTC-6, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

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>

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> Sincerely,  
> Liam Gumley  
> SSEC, UW-Madison.

Liam,

I am sorry for the loss of your friend. Paul was one of the folks at the core of this online community and I always found his contributions to be of patience, collegiality, and good will, in equal measure to their technical merit.

Jim P.

---

Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Sapna Mishra](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2016 05:08:34 GMT  
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Liam...

This is really terrible to hear, He had reply to my last post.  
May his soul rest into the piece.

---

Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Sapna Mishra](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2016 05:11:57 GMT  
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Liam,

This is really terrible to hear, I am really sorry for the loss, he had replied to my last post, I am feeling very sad.

May his soul rest in peace.

Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [rawahranger](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2016 15:36:23 GMT  
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So, so sorry to hear this. Paul was one of my great IDL newsgroup friends and supporters. Funny, generous with his time and his knowledge of IDL, a true friend of me and of this community. He will be missed terribly.

David Fanning

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [rawahranger](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2016 16:04:56 GMT  
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Just a memory of Paul.

Shortly after my book, Traditional IDL Graphics, came out, I was doing a "book tour" on the East Coast. Paul had offered to set up a lecture for me at the NCWCP in the afternoon. In the morning, I had been dropped off by a friend I was staying with at the Naval Research Lab to do a talk to six people who had apparently been dragged to the talk against their will. After the meeting, I was to rent a car, head over to see Paul and whatever motley crew he could put together for a talk, then drive that night to Hampton, VA for another presentation at the NASA Langley facility in the morning.

When I got to the rental car place I discovered that while I had been hiking on the Pacific Crest Trail that summer (the inspiration for writing the book!) my driver's license had expired. No car for me! Shit! I called Paul with a great deal of frantic desperation in my voice. He couldn't come get me, since he always rode his bike to work. But, there was a Metro line nearby that would drop me off close enough for me to still make the meeting, if barely. I could worry about how to get to Hampton later.

When I got to NCWCP, Paul had already been at work on a "plan" that involved catching a "special Chinese bus" on some street corner in Washington that would get me down to Virginia Beach later that night. Grateful, I walked into the meeting, which was absolutely overflowing the room. I don't know how many people were there, but they were packed into the hall outside, too, and they were EXTREMELY interested in buying my book. Wow! Best organizer I EVER worked with!

Later, we took the Metro downtown together because Paul was worried I would screw up the rendezvous with the Chinese bus, too. We had a short meal with a lot of laughter, as I remember. Then he dropped me off on the corner where I was to meet the bus. He offered to stay with me, but I told him I was pretty sure I could get on a damn bus by myself. We shook hands and he left.

Twenty minutes later, I saw a bus full of Chinese people pull up on the opposite corner. I damn near missed that, too. I still hear Paul laughing when I told him later.

I will miss him a lot. Fond memories.

David

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Mark\[1\]](#) on Tue, 19 Apr 2016 22:53:19 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

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I am very sad to hear this. Best wishes to his family and friends.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [markb77](#) on Wed, 20 Apr 2016 10:59:30 GMT  
[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

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Sad news. Very grateful for Paul's contributions to this community.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Wed, 20 Apr 2016 11:36:59 GMT  
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This is indeed very sad news. So sorry for the loss. We will miss him.

On Monday, April 18, 2016 at 12:50:32 PM UTC-4, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

> Dear IDL Colleagues,

>

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> Paul had numerous interactions with the US and international atmospheric radiative transfer communities, and he will be missed by many colleagues and friends.  
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> Sincerely,  
> Liam Gumley  
> SSEC, UW-Madison.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Jeremy Bailin](#) on Wed, 20 Apr 2016 14:28:23 GMT  
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On Monday, April 18, 2016 at 11:50:32 AM UTC-5, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

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> Sincerely,  
> Liam Gumley  
> SSEC, UW-Madison.

To echo the many fond rememberences here, I am very sad to hear this -- although I never met him, I felt like I knew him well through this community and always in a positive way.

-Jeremy.

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Wed, 20 Apr 2016 22:40:01 GMT

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On 4/18/16 10:50 AM, liam.gumley@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

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> atmospheric radiative transfer communities, and he will be missed by  
> many colleagues and friends.

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> Sincerely, Liam Gumley SSEC, UW-Madison.

>

Though I never met Paul in person, I truly appreciated his presence in

this newsgroup and the IDL community. His knowledge, helpfulness, and wit will be greatly missed.

Mike

--

Michael Galloy

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

Modern IDL: A Guide to IDL Programming (<http://modernidl.idldev.com>)

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst

Posted by [penteado](#) on Thu, 21 Apr 2016 18:00:01 GMT

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Really sad. Like many others, I never met Paul in person, but I will miss presence in this newsgroup.

Paulo

On Monday, April 18, 2016 at 9:50:32 AM UTC-7, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [ronn kling\[1\]](#) on Fri, 22 Apr 2016 18:25:31 GMT  
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Very sorry to hear that, I also always enjoyed his posts...

-Ronn

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst  
Posted by [Dick Jackson](#) on Fri, 22 Apr 2016 19:54:04 GMT  
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My heartfelt condolences to all who were close to Paul, and thanks to those who shared their stories. It's heartening to remember that Paul's kindly and cogent answers (and questions!) here will continue to shed light for future wanderers.

Best regards,  
-Dick

Dick Jackson

On Monday, 18 April 2016 09:50:32 UTC-7, liam....@ssec.wisc.edu wrote:

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Subject: Re: Farewell to Paul van Delst

Posted by [ameigs](#) on Tue, 26 Apr 2016 14:25:01 GMT

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Sad, very sad to hear this. I too enjoyed his posts and used a few of his tricks and some of his idl routines.

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