



Nordic News

240 Sparks Street, PO Box 55023, Ottawa, ON K1P 1A1

www.canadiannordicsociety.com

CNS 2014 Dates to Remember

Monthly Luncheons

Monday, September 8, 2014

Monday, October 6, 2014

Monday, November 3, 2014

Monday December 1, 2014

CNS EVENTS

Report on the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Nordic Society was held Wednesday May 28, 2014 at the Army Officers' Mess. The following is a brief summary of the meeting, but does not reflect the official minutes which will be produced by the Secretary at a later date.

The meeting was presided over by President George Hynnä. Treasurer Lennart Nylund reported that there were 21 members present and that 5 proxies had been received. Since the requirement was for 24 members or proxies, a quorum existed and the AGM could proceed.

The draft Agenda was approved as well as the minutes of the previous AGM after some discussion regarding Past President vs Councillor.

The president gave his report reflecting on a number of events in the past year, significantly the 50th Anniversary Dinner held last fall. He emphasized the need for members to sign up on the new email system as the existing email approach will not be continued.

The Treasurer presented the financial report. While the financial results showed a small net profit last year of about \$249, this was due to several factors – a surplus from the 50th Anniversary Dinner, an anonymous donation and some prepayments of memberships for next year. His report was approved. Simon Snow, previous Treasurer, commended the Councillors for their efforts to raise membership numbers.

As a result of the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, the Society has to develop and approve new by-laws, and the Council has worked over the past year to complete them. Vice President Bruce Miller led the presentation. The new Bylaw No.1 had been circulated to members with AGM documents but because of concerns received about section 7 (borrowing), Council met immediately before the AGM to amend the Bylaw by deleting section 7. Presented to the AGM for confirmation was the Bylaw without the previous section 7, as amended by Council. There was considerable discussion over the role and responsibilities of the Past President, with the result that changes were made to section 24 on the number of Councillors and a reference to immediate Past-President was removed.

The new by-laws were approved as amended.

The Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act allows small Not-for-Profit organizations to decide to dispense with the need for a professional auditor to conduct a formal audit of the financial records; however, this decision must be made annually at the AGM. The membership approved this provision, and will seek a competent person from the membership to do a review of the financial records.

The finances of the organization are quite tight even with the small surplus, and it was noted that expenses are rising beyond our control. The Vice President introduced a set of possible steps that could be taken. It was decided to introduce a meeting attendance fee of \$5.00 for non-members

to attend CNS Speakers' meetings. It was also decided to raise annual membership fees to \$20 for students, \$30 for a single person and \$45 for a family. The membership also directed the Council to pursue three other potential initiatives and report back at the next AGM on the on-going financial outlook of the society.

Ed Napke urged the Council to investigate lower-cost premises and other cost-cutting measures, but this didn't result in a formal motion.

One of the chairs of the Nominating Committee presented its slate of Councillors. Eric Bawden is stepping down from Council. A slate of 7 candidates was presented and approved. Karin Birnbaum asked what sort of effort had been made to attract Councillors from more of the various Nordic Countries. As the meeting was being conducted under the existing by-laws, only a list of candidates needed to be proposed (under the new by-laws the slate will specify the candidates by position). Carried. Then it was proposed and approved that the following approved Councillors occupy the positions designated below.

President George Hynnä
Vice-President Bruce Miller
Secretary Tim Mark
Treasurer Lennart Nylund
Councillors-at-Large Martti Lahtinen
Lennard Sillanpää
Karin Birnbaum

Eric was thanked for his contribution to the work of the Council and presented with a mug.

The President mentioned a couple of up-coming events and noted that the Society is searching for a new newsletter editor. The President then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carried.



CNS LUNCHEONS

The CNS lunches for 2014/2015:

2014: Sept. 8, Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1

2015: Jan. 5, Feb. 2, Mar. 2, Apr. 13, May 4, June 1

All dates are Mondays. Luncheons will be held at the Army Officers' Mess, 149 Somerset Street W (off Elgin), at noon. Please mark your calendars with these dates.

OTHER CNS INFORMATION

Book Launch – *The Boreal Forest The Boreal Feast: A Culinary Journey Through the North*

Michele Genest will read from her new book *The Boreal Feast: A Culinary Journey Through the North* at the Ottawa Public Library, Main Branch Auditorium; 120 Metcalfe St., on Thursday, June 26 at 7:00 p.m.

The *Boreal Feast* is a cookbook that focuses on feasts that use wild ingredients which grow in the northern forest. Michele Genest is a bestselling author from the Yukon. She travelled to Norway, Sweden and Finland to research this book and consult with chefs there.

Admission is free. The event is sponsored by the Canadian Nordic Society, Perfect Books, and the Ottawa Public Library. Treats will be served.

For more information call Perfect Books at (613) 231-6468 or the Canadian Nordic Society info@canadiannordicsociety.com (613) 733-1744

CNS newsletter address list

CNS is in the process of putting the email address list up on the same server as hosts the CNS web page. This will allow the Treasurer handling the membership registration to also update the email address list. Persons on the CNS email address list should have received a message from the “mailing list manager” requesting that they confirm their desire to be registered on the new CNS email address list. If you have not subscribed, you can visit <http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/CNSmailinglist.html>.

On clicking on this link, the member will be asked to enter their email address, twice, click and resend. This will generate an email response that the member needs to read and click on the link that appears. It will complete the subscription process. If a member has already subscribed, they can ignore this request.

There is an unsubscribe option available.

The use of this CNS email address list will be limited to one or two persons to ensure the confidentiality of the membership list.

OTHER NORDIC EVENTS OR ITEMS OF INTEREST

Denmark:

Denmark celebrates the anniversary of its Constitution on June 5, 2014. Congratulations to all Danes and those with Danish ancestry.

Faroe Islands

Ólavsøka is the national holiday of the Faroe Islands, celebrated on July 29. On the day before the Ólavsøka Boat Race is held featuring races with children, boys, girls, men and women.

Iceland:

Iceland also celebrates its National Day in June, on the 17th. This will be its 70th birthday of modern times. The Ambassador, Thodur Aegir Óskarsson will be leaving his post this year. CNS wishes to thank him for his support and wishes him well in his future postings.

Sweden:

Sweden's National Day is Friday, June 6, 2014. The Ambassador, H.E. Teppo Tauriainen is taking his farewell this year. CNS wishes to thank him for his support and wishes him well in his future postings.

Finnish Church Services for 2014

Thanksgiving Service - October 5th, 2014
Christmas carol sing-along - November 30th, 2014
Christmas Service - December 14th, 2014

All the services are held at 3:00 pm at St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 400 Sparks Street, Ottawa.

Other

There is a Scandinavian Crime Fiction night at the Ottawa Public Library Main Branch on Monday, June 9, 2014 at 7:00 pm. Three writers from Norway, Sweden and Denmark are featured. Free admission. 120 Metcalfe Street, Ottawa. A poster has been forwarded to those on the new email system; as the poster is huge (11 megabytes), I have chosen not to reproduce it in this newsletter.

Chamber Music Concert “Northern Lights”

From Leah Roseman

“Please spread the word about our upcoming chamber music concert at Mackay: “Northern Lights” Sunday June 8th at 7:30 pm, MacKay United Church, 39 Dufferin Rd at MacKay St.

“I’m very proud and excited because we’ve unearthed an incredibly beautiful work of genius: the Silflay String Quartet will be performing the Swedish composer Wilhelm Stenhammar’s 4th string quartet, which he finished writing in 1909. I believe this is a Canadian premiere of this piece, which deserves to be performed regularly. This is a concert of Romantic repertoire, and there are also some beautiful songs without words of another Swedish composer, Sjögren, for violin and piano, and some gorgeous short lyric piano pieces of Grieg. We finish the concert with the great Piano Quartet of Schumann. Pianist Dina Namer joins the Silflay String Quartet (Leah Roseman, Mark Friedman, Paul Casey and Karen Kang).

“Tickets \$25 (adults) and \$20 (seniors and students) are available from Books on Beechwood, the Leading Note, MacKay United Church and at the door. The concert is followed by a reception for the entire audience and the musicians.

<http://www.mackayunitedchurch.com/events-and-activities/chamber-music-concert-series>

“Hope to see you there! Leah Roseman (member of NACO)”

Report on Recent Events

Canadian Arctic Expedition – April Speakers’ Event

Dr. David Gray took us on a time trip back a century to the Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918. The expedition started as a voyage of exploration on the part of some Americans to discover new islands in Canada’s north and to determine if Perry’s sighting of a possible new continent was valid, but when the Canadian Government understood what was planned, they took over the project.

The core of the expedition had strong Nordic roots – the leader, Vilhjalmar Stefansson, was born in Canada of Icelandic parents, though he had become an American. There were 5 Norwegians, 4 Danes and a Swede amongst the over 150 persons involved over the period on the expedition, including many indigenous Canadians.

Our time travel started with a 10 minute video clip that interspersed footage from the original expedition along with footage from Dr. Gray’s expedition last summer to retrace some of the places visited by the original CAE. Then he showed a series of slides showing us maps of Bear Island and surroundings, pictures of the major participants on the expedition, equipment and accommodation (tents for sleeping!), artifacts found, grave markers.

The original expedition was beset by many problems – the initial vessel Karluk was trapped in ice, carried over to the Russian shore and eventually crushed. There were acts of sabotage, ice jams, deaths in the party. There was even a mailbag with some 500 pounds of mail lost in an attempt to take it to a remote location across a frozen, treacherous sea, with the loss of life of 2 members of the expedition.



Through his extensive research, Dr. Gray has been able to link many people in the north to their roots to members of the expedition. He plans to complete a film on the original expedition and the one he led last year to revisit sites occupied by the original. He also will be going back as, like the original expedition, he was prevented by sea ice from achieving all his objectives.

The original expedition has been documented in books by Diamond Jenness, such as “Dawn in Arctic Canada”.

EDITOR’S SECTION

I don’t particularly enjoy AGMs. But they are a necessary part of organizations so I went on the 28th. There was a lot of spirited commentary throughout the meeting. It will take time, as usual, to see what suggestions prove fruitful. Many thanks to all who turned out, and to the Council for all their efforts this year.

I am relinquishing the position of Newsletter Editor but the Council has not yet been able to identify a new editor. To the readers, I would like to say I appreciate all those who have complimented me on the newsletters I have produced for the Society. It has been a pleasure to serve you.

In the Shadow of Alfred

Readers may remember that I was writing some material on Alfred Nobel. My interest started when I read that Alfred had read his own obituary in a French newspaper. Of course, I wanted to be able to report on the name of the newspaper.

Here are the last parts.

4. Quotes

There is a lot of material written by Alfred in one or other of the 5 languages in which he was fluent. Each of these quotes may have undergone a progression of translations as his biographies

were generally written in Swedish. Sources include the letters he wrote, letters others wrote about him, the poem, play and novel that he wrote.

“If I come up with 300 ideas in a year, and only one of them is useful, I am content.” [Elsewhere I found the quote with 1000 ideas per year]

Of a trusted colleague who caused Alfred much grief: “...conscience that stretches like India rubber...”

On lawyers, patent examiners and politicians (Apologies to George)

“Lawyers have to make a living, and can only do so by inducing people to believe that a straight line is crooked. This accounts for their penchant for politics, where they can usually find everything crooked enough to delight their hearts...”

Lawyers were “blood-suckers who devour fortunes after delivering short-sighted interpretations of meaningless court rulings whose obscurity darkens even darkness itself.”

“Even with the luxury of a patent, protection in most cases is illusionary. I therefore suggest the name ‘Taxation of inventors to encourage parasites’”

“... my co-directors and I will really be in the soup, since we are having to deal with a bunch of crooked lawyers and bloodsuckers.”

On war and peace

“I would like to invent a substance or machine so frightfully effective and devastating that it would forever make wars altogether impossible.”

“For my part, I wish all guns could be sent to hell, which is the proper place for their exhibition and use.

Called war “The horror of horrors, and greatest of all crimes.”

“From the day that two armies are capable of destroying each other in a second, all civilized nations will surely recoil before a war and dismiss their troops.

Re the peace movement, “I don’t think it is money that is lacking but a real program.”

About peace conferences, “I am amazed ... at the absurd and futile efforts of windbags who are capable of thwarting the best of aims ...”

On religion:

He wrote in his play Nemesis, “That God exists, I do not actually doubt, because the Creation speaks wordlessly but eloquently of his omnipotence. ... The institution of the penalty they call hell is an excellent invention, because it allows the priests to fleece all of humanity.”

Alfred often viewed the nationalities that he came into contact with a bit of contempt:

“In the long run I found life in America anything but agreeable. The exaggerated chase after money is a pedantry which spoils much of the pleasures of meeting people and destroys a sense of honour in favour of imagined needs.”

“In England conservatism is too flourishing for counsel to accept anything which has no antediluvian sanction”

“[A]ll Frenchmen are under the blissful impression that the brain is a French organ.”

Germans were “priggishly long-winded and superfluously detailed”

He enjoyed the company of Russian ladies but found “they have an aversion to soap”

5 Origin of the Nobel prizes

My research on Alfred basically started when I read the story of the premature obituary and how it caused him to reflect on how he would be remembered in posterity. But I very much doubt that this event triggered the thought process that caused him to create the prizes that bear his name.

First of all, in 1868 Alfred and his father were awarded the Letterstedt prize by the Swedish Academy of Science “for original work within the fields of art, literature, or science, or for important discoveries of practical value to humanity.” So the seeds were sown early in his life.

Alfred was against war throughout his life even though he produced material that could be used by armies. He was in St. Petersburg during the Crimean war and presumably learned of suffering and death of the soldiers. One of the earliest writers he respected was Shelly, a liberated and consistently Utopian pacifist. He discussed peace with a lady he briefly employed, Bertha von Suttner (Nee Kinsky) in Paris in 1876. In 1893 he wrote to her “I should like to leave a part of my fortune to a fund for the creation of prizes to be awarded every 5 years ... to the man or woman who has contributed the most effective way to the realization of peace in Europe.”

To me, Alfred was trying to foster a change in the way nations behaved towards each other rather than create a memento to his memory. In fact, Alfred never named the prizes, though given his forethought, perhaps he could have expected them to bear his name.

I haven't accepted that the premature obituary was the trigger for the decision to create the Nobel prizes. The on-line Encyclopedia Britannica states “We can only speculate about the reasons for Nobel's establishment of the prizes that bear his name. Perhaps Alfred Nobel established the prizes to avoid precisely the sort of posthumous reputation suggested by this premature obituary.” This speculation ignores the probability that his will wouldn't become available until well after his death but his obituary would be published immediately.

6 Alfred's Posthumous Laugh?

The part of the story about Alfred reading his own obituary is possibly true though I have never found the name of the French magazine. One biographer talked about the world's press; other sources imply a single magazine. Different stories put Alfred in his house in Paris, in his lab outside Paris, or in Sweden when he read his obituary.

There were lots of attempts to overturn the last will of Alfred. The basis behind some of these challenges was the question of jurisdiction based on his place of residence. He died in Italy; he lived longest in Paris, but he retained his Swedish citizenship. He wrote his last will in Paris, but in Swedish, signed it in the Swedish Club, witnessed by two Swedes, and deposited it in a Swedish Bank .

Some of his relatives contested his will in a French court on the issue of his place of residence. The suit was to have Nobel's residence determined to be in France, where his hand written will would not meet French requirements, and therefore would his will would be judged invalid. The court finally decided that his place of residence was in Sweden, on the basis of a French law that specified that a farmer's place of residence was where he stabled his horses, and Alfred had his three Russian horses in Sweden!

Now, for the readers, what was the name of the French Court ...?

NORDIC RESOURCES

Just a reminder that there is a list of Nordic Resources located on our website:

<http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/resources.html>

including the Nordic Embassies, the Ottawa-based social organizations, and links to newspapers and museums in Nordic Countries. The list is on the Nordic Resources tab on the general web site, or use the link above.

MEMBERSHIP

The CNS membership year is from September 1 to August 31 which means that it soon will be time to renew your membership for the 2014-2015 year. (The fiscal business year runs from April 1 to March 31, so that an audit can be completed in advance of the AGM in May). The membership dues have been increased this year: \$30.00 for an individual membership; \$45.00 for a family membership, \$20.00 for a student membership (dues structure as approved at the Annual general Meeting, May 28, 2014). Please fill in the form on the page below, enclose a cheque and mail it to the CNS mail box indicated in the letterhead or give it to one of the Board Members listed below. Unfortunately, the form cannot be completed or submitted electronically.

It is the membership dues that enable us to have the Speakers' Series which has been one of the distinguishing aspects of the Canadian Nordic Society program since CNS was established in 1963. While it works in close co-operation with the five Nordic embassies situated in Ottawa, CNS does not receive any financial support from any embassy or other organization.

CNS depends on its membership to enable it to continue carrying out a program of activities that promote a better understanding of the societies and cultures of the Nordic countries.

Canadian Nordic Society Council Members – 2014-2015

President:	George Hynnä	613-730-9074	george.hynna@gmail.com
Vice President:	Bruce Miller	613-745-1151	nordic@brmiller.ca
Treasurer:	Lennart Nylund	613-829-8602	lnylund@sympatico.ca
Secretary:	Tim Mark	613-733-1744	timmark@rogers.com
Councillor:	Martti Lahtinen	819-827-0899	mlahtinen_13@hotmail.com
Councillor:	Karin Birnbaum	613-746-0676	Karin@birnbaum.ca
Councillor:	Lennard Sillanpää –	613-837-1641	lennard.sillanpaa@sympatico.ca

Honorary President: Lars Öhman -
Newsletter Editor (but not a Council member:)
Open

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Membership Application/Renewal

Date: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone (home): _____ Phone (work): _____

Email: _____

Family Membership \$45, Individual Membership \$30, Student \$20
Dues structure as approved at the AGM, May 28, 2014.

RECEIPT FROM CANADIAN NORDIC SOCIETY

Received From: _____

The amount of: \$ _____ For the year: _____

Date Received: _____

Received by: _____ Title: _____