



Nordic News

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

New Swedish Ambassador H.E. Urban Christian Ahlin



Sweden's Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Urban Christian Ahlin

His Excellency Urban Christian Ahlin was officially welcomed as Sweden's Ambassador to Canada by the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada at the Citadelle of Québec on February 13, 2019.

Ambassador Ahlin was born in Mariestad, Skaraborg County, Sweden. He graduated from the University of Karlstad's teaching program with a Masters of Science in 1990 and taught math and science from 1990 to 1994, when he entered political life as a Member of Parliament. From 2002 to 2006 he was Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Among other positions, he has served as a Member of the War Delegation of the Parliament of Sweden and as Deputy Chairman of the Swedish Parliamentary Delegation to the NATO Assembly. From 2014 to 2018 he served as the Speaker of the *Riksdag*, Sweden's national legislature.

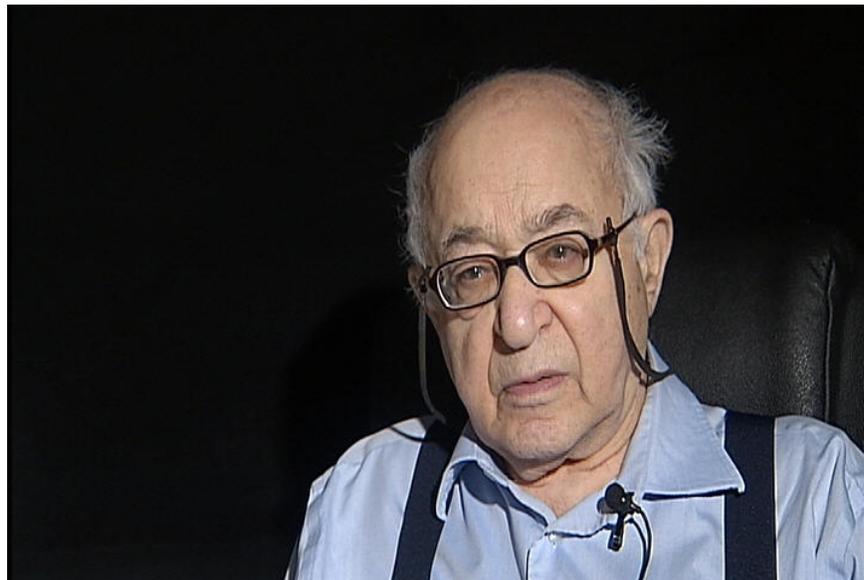
Ambassador Ahlin was a founding member of the European Council of Foreign Relations, a member of the Board of Directors of the EastWest Institute (a "think and do" tank focusing on

international conflict resolution), a member of the International Advisory Board of the James Martin Centre for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California, and a member of the Trilateral Commission (a non-governmental, non-partisan discussion group founded by David Rockefeller in July 1973 to foster closer cooperation among Japan, Western Europe, and North America.)

Ambassador Ahlin has also been engaged in many international mediations and negotiations, including successfully negotiating for the release of Swedish prisoners in Iran; participating in negotiations for the release of Alexander Kozulin, imprisoned presidential candidate in Belarus; and negotiating the release of a Social Democratic Party hostage in Stockholm.

Ambassador Ahlin is married to Jenni Ahlin and has two daughters. The Canadian Nordic Society welcomes him to Canada and we hope he enjoys his stay here!

Dr. Ed Napke, 13th President of the CNS (1983-6)



Dr. Ed Napke

Past President Dr. Ed Napke has been an active member of the Canadian Nordic Society from its early years. He attended our 2018 Annual General Meeting and spoke eloquently to the Society about its long history, commending us on its ongoing vitality and successes. Coming from such a distinguished member with such long experience in the Society, this was greatly appreciated by the current Council and those in attendance.

Among his many other distinctions, Dr. Ed Napke is the only President of the Canadian Nordic Society to have been born in Lebanon. Dr. Napke was born in 1923 and came to Canada with his parents at the age of six months. They were en route to California where his father had a partnership in a tailoring company, but the American quota system based on country of origin prevented the family from entering the USA, and so the family ended up settling in Canada. Dr. Napke went to

high school in Newcastle, New Brunswick and then to the University of New Brunswick where he earned his Bachelor of Science. He was awarded a fellowship to take his Masters and Ph.D. at the University of Toronto before studying medicine there and becoming an M.D. He also obtained a diploma in public health.

Dr. Napke first started his medical career as a replacement for other doctors when they were away. From the beginning, he frequently reduced the drug load on his patients as he believed the potential for adverse reactions of the drugs that were being prescribed was not sufficiently known.

In 1961 Dr. Napke was conducting research at Karolinska Institute in Uppsala, Sweden. (His daughter Maria tells me that she always jokes that it was actually the Swedish girls Dr. Napke was researching!) It was in Stockholm that Dr. Napke met Gunvor Svanlund, who was to become his wife. Their daughter Maria was born in Sweden before the family emigrated to Canada. Gunvor had been working for a large shipping company which provided them with their passage to Canada including all their belongings. The family lived in Toronto for a short time before moving to Ottawa.

In 1963 Dr. Napke took on the job of the post-marketing surveillance of thalidomide, a drug that was given to some pregnant women to prevent nausea. It had severe effects on their infants including stunting the growth of their limbs. The thalidomide tragedy dispelled the then-current belief that drugs could not pass through the placenta to affect fetuses.

In 1965 Dr. Napke charted new scientific territory by creating Canada's first adverse drug reaction reporting system. He also created the National Poison Control Program and other adverse reaction reporting programs. His reporting system ensured that not only physicians, but also nurses, pathologists, and the patients themselves were consulted with regard to adverse reactions. This practice of consulting patients was later adopted by other countries and the World Health Organization. His approach focussing on the reaction of the patients to the entire product, including inactive ingredients, was another of his innovations.

Dr. Napke was involved in creating the 1976 "Non- Smoking in Public Places By-laws" in Ottawa, as well as other legislation on environmental issues. As a member of several committees for the Canadian Standards Association, he was also deeply involved in bringing out the first Child Resistant Packaging Standard.

In 1990 he became a volunteer consultant to the Uppsala Monitoring Centre, an independent, not-for-profit centre for international scientific research, dedicated to helping achieve the safer use of medicines for patients everywhere. Dr. Napke is respected internationally as a true pioneer in pharmacovigilance and for his significant contributions to that field.

Dr. Napke believes strongly in being active in one's community. Both he and Gunvor were very active in the Canadian Nordic Society from its early years. In recognition of his work in promoting academic co-operation between Canadian and Swedish universities, the CNS presented him with its Certificate of Excellence. The Society owes a great deal to the sustained involvement of committed members like Dr. Napke and his late wife Gunvor Svanlund.

Events of Interest

- The Learning in Retirement Program at Carleton University is offering a [L'Anse aux Meadows: A Virtual Visit](#) lecture on Wednesday, **May 15**, from **6:00 PM** to 8:00 PM, delivered by Dr. Tom Sherwood. “This illustrated talk will “visit” L’Anse aux Meadows, review the documented facts, and consider some of the outstanding questions: Who were the Indigenous people who met the Norse? Were the Norse Christian? What was life like there?”. Please go to [L'Anse aux Meadows: A Virtual Visit](#) for more information and to register.
- Again this year, CNS members Hanne Sjøborg and Henry Storgaard are inviting us to their home in Cantley to celebrate **Sankthans / Juhannus / Midsommar** on **Sunday, June 23**. Trygve Ringereide is already putting together a fun music program and Henry is starting to pile up the wood for a traditional bonfire. There will be lots of great Nordic food and with any luck, no rain this year! Either way, it is sure to be a great time!

A Musical Treat From Iceland on Friday, June 7

CBC’s “The Sunday Edition” recently broadcast a segment on Icelandic music, entitled “Why tiny Iceland is a global giant in the field of music.” (To listen to it, you may go to: https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thesundayedition/the-sunday-edition-for-april-21-2019-1.5099057/why-tiny-iceland-is-a-global-giant-in-the-field-of-music-1.5099108?__vfz=medium%3Dsharebar&fbclid=IwAR17Vnga-noCdLaomrSNMF74Pxj0bugXIR66iJk0i08Ghnnv6BAdfear3bg.) We are very pleased to offer a unique opportunity to hear two fine Icelandic musicians who will be visiting Ottawa, thanks to the Icelandic Embassy. His Excellency Pétur Ásgeirsson, Ambassador of Iceland, has asked the CNS to assist in organizing a concert featuring renowned mezzo soprano Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir, and pianist Snorri Sigfús Birgisson.

This is an exceptional opportunity to hear such a high calibre of music at the very reasonable price of \$20 per ticket. The program will include Icelandic music as well as Grieg pieces and some familiar operatic arias. A reception sponsored by Ikea Ottawa will follow the concert. Please see poster below for additional information including a link to order your tickets online. Tickets can also be purchased from any Council member.



A MUSICAL TREAT FROM ICELAND

An evening of favourite Icelandic songs and popular opera arias with renowned Icelandic mezzo-soprano Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir, accompanied by pianist Snorri Sigfús Birgisson.



Friday, June 7, 2019, 7:30 pm
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church,
Kent & Wellington, Ottawa
(Free parking at Supreme Court, across Wellington)

General admission: \$20
(Concert and reception)

Tickets can be obtained online at:
<http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/upcoming-events.html>
(Any remaining tickets will be available at the door)

Sponsored by the Embassy of Iceland
In collaboration with the Canadian Nordic Society
Organized by Costa Kapsalis

To view an example of Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir singing please visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-DcX9jORPA>

Kenn Harper on Knud Rasmussen

(by Hilde Huus)

I enjoy reading the stories of those intrepid explorers who over the centuries have risked life and limb to reach the North Pole or traverse the Northwest Passage. They are stories of courage, perseverance, and endurance but also in some cases of foolhardiness and treachery - human nature put to the test in the most extreme conditions. But I admit I was not familiar with Knud Rasmussen, as became very obvious when I misidentified him in a photo in the April *Nordic News*. My sincere apologies to Kenn Harper for this error. He was not involved in the selection of the photo and I did not consult him before publishing the newsletter.

Knud Rasmussen is very well known in Greenland, where he was born in 1879. His father was a Danish missionary and his mother was part Greenlandic Inuit. Rasmussen's first language was Greenlandic, the language spoken by the indigenous Inuit. He was educated in Denmark and attended the University of Copenhagen before returning to Greenland to study Inuit culture.

Unlike most of the Arctic explorers, Rasmussen's motivation was not to claim new territory, navigate uncharted waters, or establish new records. Rather, his goal was to learn about the Inuit who lived across the Arctic, while at the same time mapping northern Canada as completely as he could. He believed that the Greenlandic Inuit had originated inland before migrating to their coastal home, and he hoped to find support for his thesis. He was also intrigued by Inuit religious beliefs and folklore, and especially in how they explained them - the "why" behind their beliefs and practices.

In 1910, Rasmussen set up an ingenious plan to subsidize his explorations. He established a trading station for the Inuit of Northwest Greenland and named it Thule. The presence of the trading station served to preserve northern Greenland for Denmark, which otherwise did not have a presence there, as well as to fulfill a need for the Inuit, who had no other access to trade goods. Ultimately, Rasmussen was able to use the profits from the station to finance his scientific explorations. In all he made seven trips through the heartland of the Inuit during which he performed his ethnological studies and collected Inuit artefacts. In so doing, he became the first patron of "Eskimology," now known in Canada as Inuit Studies.

His Fifth Thule expedition is considered his greatest achievement. It took place from 1921 and 1924 but planning had been underway for about a decade before that. Bureaucratic bungling and miscommunications nearly derailed the expedition when the Canadian government became suspicious that Rasmussen was trying to claim new territory for Denmark. However, reason finally prevailed and he was able to proceed. His great sled journey, accompanied by two Inuit, took him across the roof of North America to Nome, Alaska, making him the first European to cross the Northwest Passage by dog sled.

His legacy include around 15,000 to 20,000 Inuit objects that he donated to the Danish National Museum. His recommendations to the Canadian government resulted in legislation that protected the Inuit in their territory. It turned out that his collection of objects and documentation of Inuit culture was in the nick of time. The Inuit culture was about to undergo massive changes.

Councillor Hanne Sjøborg thanked Kenn for his interesting and informative talk and presented him with the much coveted CNS mug.



Kenn Harper addressing the Canadian Nordic Society

Preparing for our Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 15 at 7:30 PM at the Army Officers' Mess, 149 Somerset Street West, lower level. Proxy forms are available online at: <http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/proxy-form-2019-2020.pdf>. They may be submitted at any time before the opening of the meeting.

Contributions to *Nordic News*

We appreciate receiving your articles and news to include in the *Nordic News*. Please email them to the editor, Hilde Huus, at communications@nordicsociety.com

Canadian Nordic Society Co-ordinates

Our website is www.canadiannordicsociety.com, and you can contact us by email at info@canadiannordicsociety.com.

The CNS council list, including email addresses and phone numbers, is available at:

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

And the CNS has its own, very active, [Facebook](#) page.

Join CNS or Renew your Membership

You can join CNS or renew your membership online, by mail, or in person. We encourage you to pay online using PayPal. This is the quickest and most efficient method. If you prefer, you can pay in person when you attend one of our luncheons or speaker events. Please speak to any one of our Council members.

Online

To pay online, go to the CNS website (<http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/join-cns.html>) and complete the membership form . Payment may be made through PayPal.

Note: it is not necessary to have a PayPal account.

By mail

Please print and complete the membership form below, enclose a cheque payable to the Canadian Nordic Society and mail to:

Canadian Nordic Society
240 Sparks Street
Box 55023
Ottawa, ON
K1P 1A1



Canadian Nordic Society

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

www.canadiannordicsociety.com

Membership Application/Renewal*

Date: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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

Email: _____

Family Membership \$45, Individual Membership \$30, Student \$20

****To apply for membership online or renew online using PayPal, please go to:***

<http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/register-renew-member.php>