



Nordic News

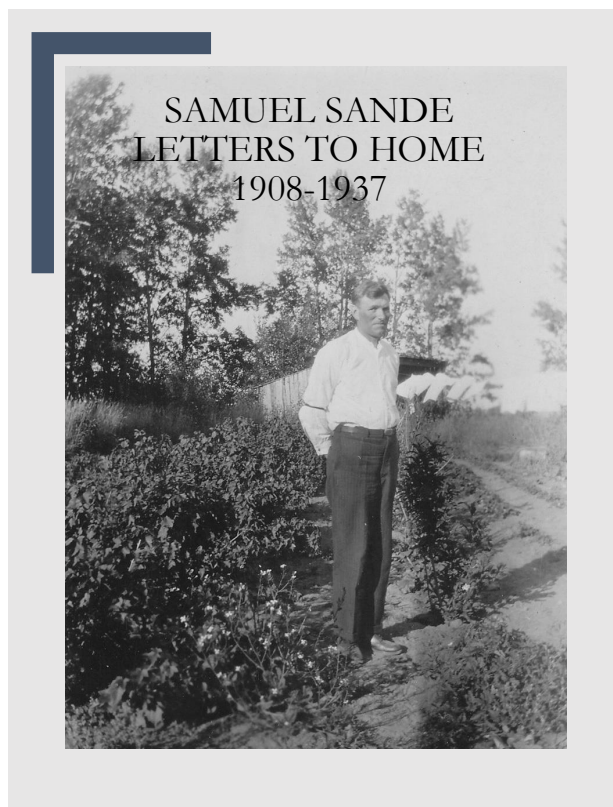
240 Sparks Street, PO Box 55023, Ottawa, ON K1P 1A1

A New and Different Season for CNS!

We are off to a very different start this season. It is still not safe to hold our monthly lunches or meet in person, so for now our Distinguished Speakers Events will be held online, using Zoom. Members will receive a notification via our CNS-announce email distribution system with instructions on how members and their guests may join the Event via Zoom. [Secretary Astrid Ahlgren](#) will be happy to answer any questions you may have about how to use Zoom.

September 23 Distinguished Speaker Jim Marshall on Finally Meeting His Norwegian Grandfather

by Hilde Huus

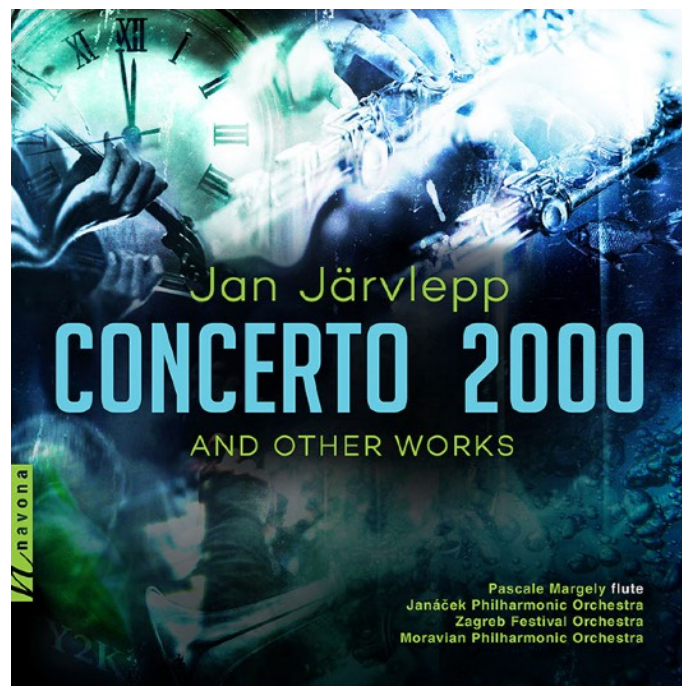


In the spring of 2018, we were contacted by Jim Marshall who was looking for assistance in translating a bundle of Norwegian letters written between 1908 and 1937. Jim had travelled to Norway in May 2018 and was presented with a copy of close to 80 letters, handwritten in Norwegian by his grandfather Samuel Sande, whom he had never known. Samuel had immigrated to Canada in 1910 and has written faithfully to family members in Norway, who kept his letters.

Trygve Ringereide (then Vice-president) took on the task of co-ordinating the translation of the letters, which he shared with Councillor Kristin Udjus Teitelbaum and myself. This turned out to be an adventure for us all as we gradually got to know and like Samuel. We followed his struggles and triumphs as he strove to establish a farm near the foothills of the Rockies. Join our Distinguished Speaker Series on September 23rd, held virtually, and hear Jim explain how the need to translate these letters led him to the Canadian Nordic Society and to insights into the life of a grandfather he had always wondered about. Members will receive a notification via our CNS-announce email distribution system with instructions on how they and their guests may join the Event via Zoom. [Secretary Astrid Ahlgren](#) will be happy to answer any questions you may have about how to use Zoom.

Jan Järvillepp's "Concerto 2000 and Other Works"

"Maybe someone would be interested" was the subject of an email sent out by Jan Järvillepp in May. Rather a modest introduction to a composition called "Caliente" from his newly released CD "Concerto 2000 and Other Works," featuring Pascale Margely on flute, the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra, the Zagreb Festival Orchestra, and the Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra.



Jan is the son of the late Eric and Leena Järvlepp, who were both active and well-liked members of the Canadian Nordic Society for many years. Eric was Estonian and had met his Finnish wife Leena when he was a young soldier in WWII. They came to Canada in 1951 and three years later Jan was born in Ottawa.

Jan plays the cello as well as the bass guitar and harmonica and played cello with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra for many years. He has also been active in the Ottawa musical community as a freelance cellist, teacher, recording technician, and contractor for chamber music groups. He is now a full-time composer.

To quote his website:

Järvlepp has been delving deeper and deeper into the world of pop-influenced contemporary "classical" composition... He has also taken an interest in Hispanic, flamenco, Arab and Nordic folk styles. The result has been a variety of accessible pieces of music that appeal to a surprisingly wide cross section of the public.

Here is the link to listen to the joyful "Caliente," from his new CD.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_Ur16Qt14o

The CD is distributed internationally by Naxos (<https://www.amazon.com/Concerto-Other-Works-Pascale-Margely/dp/B088B8MFJS>) and digital versions are available online.

Dr. Karin Bjåmer Birnbaum



17th President 1992-1994, 29th President 2017 to present

(by Hilde Huus)

My series of articles on our Past Presidents is progressing nicely and I have now reached our 17th President who, as it happens, is also our current President, Dr. Karin Bjåmer Birnbaum.

Karin Bjåmer Birnbaum was born and raised in Norway, where she mostly lived in a suburb of Oslo called Bærum. She attended high school at Eidsvold Landsgymnas, which is located next to the

small town where the Norwegian Constitution was written and signed in 1814. She then went on to study at the University of Oslo and graduated with a Cand. mag. degree in Science and a Master's Degree in Physical Chemistry. Her next stop was New York City where she lived at the International House of New York, a centre for international graduate students, research scholars, trainees and interns located in Manhattan. She conducted research at the Medical Centre at Columbia University for a couple of years before returning to Europe and earning her Ph.D. in X-ray Crystallography from Glasgow University. (*X-ray crystallography is the experimental science that determines the atomic and molecular structure of a crystal and is an area of study that has been fundamental in the development of many scientific fields. It has revealed the structure and function of many biological molecules, including vitamins, drugs, proteins and nucleic acids such as DNA.*)

After earning her Ph.D., she emigrated to Ottawa, where she worked in research on crystal structures at the National Research Council until her first child was born. She stayed home for several years raising her two children, and then returned to university to get a Master's of Science in Systems Science from the University of Ottawa. The rest of her career was spent at the National Research Council, from which she retired in 2011 as Head, Information Architecture and Data Administration.

Karin has served as President of the Canadian Nordic Society over two separate time periods. The first was from 1992 to 1994. Under her leadership, the Canadian Nordic Society arranged its first live concert which was given on March 4, 1993 by pianist Derek Yaple-Schobert, who performed works by Carl Nielsen, Niels Gade and Edvard Grieg. The concert was so well received that a second concert was given on September 17, 1993 in honour of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Edvard Grieg. In addition to Derek Yaple-Schobert, it featured soprano Jennifer Rasor, cellist Jan Järvlepp (*see article above*), violist Wendy Desserud, and pianist Sonia Descatore. Both of these successful concerts were sponsored by the Norwegian Embassy. These concerts set a precedent for the Canadian Nordic Society and a number of successful concerts have followed over the years, often arranged in co-operation with a Nordic embassy.

On October 28, 1993, the CNS hosted a major event, the "Preview of the Olympic Games." This was an initiative of Vice-President Dr. Charles Nobbe in honour of the upcoming Lillehammer Winter Olympics of February, 1994. Dressed in her national costume, Karin joined Olympic medallist Sue Holloway (*the first Canadian to participate in both the Winter and Summer Olympics, for cross-country skiing and canoeing respectively*) as they processed in to the tune of the Holmenkollen March. CNS member Ingrid Thompson then gave an overview presentation on Norway, and Sue Holloway spoke about the various Olympic sites. The executive vice-president of the Canadian Olympic Association, Mike Chambers, gave a presentation on preparing for the Olympics, and was followed by the directors of the Canadian Amateur Speed Skating Association, Biathlon Canada, and the Canadian Amateur Figure Skating Association, who each spoke about their respective sports. John Shannon and Rod Black of CTV, the Canadian network that covered the Olympic events that year, were also present. This was a very impressive and well-attended event that made the most of the opportunity to celebrate Canadian and Nordic participation in the Olympics.

Karin was later contacted by journalist Gail Cook of the *Ottawa Sun* and asked if she would make a Norwegian dinner for a feature article about Norwegian cuisine in connection with the Olympics.

Karin agreed and invited members Inger Marie and Olav Løken, and Hjørdis and Thorstein Weibust to this special dinner. Wearing her national costume, Karin served shrimp in aspic and venison roast with *rørt tyttebaer* (stirred lingonberries.) For dessert, her delicious *waleskringle* was served with coffee by the fireside, where a pair of cross-country skis had been placed for a decorative Olympic-themed touch. These were pictured in the article in the *Ottawa Sun* by Gail Cook that followed.

The annual Santa Lucia celebration was still held by the Canadian Nordic Society at that time and was a major event requiring a great deal of preparation including rehearsals for the children who participated. The December 11, 1993 Lucia celebration had a record attendance of 215. That year, Karin initiated workshops in making traditional Nordic Christmas decorations following the rehearsals. These workshops became an annual tradition that lasted for many years.

To finish off the 1993-94 year, an elegant dinner dance with a live band was held in May at the National Press Club with 94 people attending.

In 2017, Karin once again took on the role of President of the Canadian Nordic Society following Tim Mark. Tim had initiated preparations for a Viking Gala and Karin and her Council took over this project, which was such a success that it was repeated in 2018 and 2019. The Gala was held at Les Jardins de la Cité college and the meals were prepared by the culinary students under the supervision of their chef. Councillor Hanne Sjøborg took the lead in co-ordinating the meal, working with the head chef to select the menus each year, managing the invitations, attendance, and seating arrangements, and overseeing all the associated details. Vice-president Trygve Ringereide acted as MC. A professionally trained singer, he performed for the guests in his beautiful tenor voice, accompanied by Cecilia Ignatieff on the piano, in 2017 and 2018.

The CNS annual Christmas lunch tradition became increasingly well attended under the previous President Tim Mark and Karin's tenures, and this was certainly due at least in part to Trygve Ringereide's organizing and leading Nordic Christmas sing-alongs, creating a very festive and fun event. The impromptu Nordic choir that formed to lead the singing grew larger and more enthusiastic each year.

Midsummer celebrations had been held in the past and were revived with great success under Karin's presidency when Hanne Sjøberg and Henry Storgaard offered their lovely property by the Gatineau River in Cantley as a venue. This turned out to be ideal for the celebration, which was enhanced by musical entertainment organized by Trygve Ringereide, including Anna Dalvi on the accordion in 2019.

Karin has a great interest in Nordic and Scandinavian culture and sports and is an accomplished cross-country and downhill skier as well as ballroom dancer. In March 1990 she hosted a reception in her home for the Norwegian women's ice hockey team who were participating in the Women's World Ice Hockey championships held in Ottawa that year. She competed annually in the 55 or 50 km Gatineau Loppet, the "greatest international cross-country ski event in Canada." In 2018 she came in 2nd in her age category in the 27 km. course. Karin also enjoys tennis, hiking, music, and swimming.

When the coronavirus pandemic struck in early 2020, Karin, with excellent help from Astrid Ahlgren and her team, ensured that the CNS continued to operate as normally as possible under the circumstances, successfully organizing the annual general meeting and election of Council electronically.

News about our Members

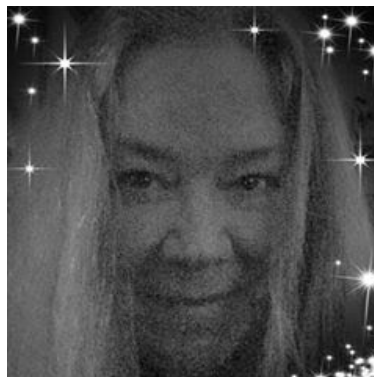
by Hilde Huus

This season I am trying something new and I hope that our members will join me. I'd like to start a regular piece in this newsletter with news about you, our members. This could include accomplishments, milestones, travel and whatever else comes up that would be of interest to our members. You can email me at newsletter@canadiannordicsociety.com or call me at 613-295-9514.

- Councillor **Kristin Udjus Teitelbaum** is a retired radiologist. She was recently named an Emeritus member of the medical staff at CHEO in recognition of four decades of dedicated clinical service. Her daughter Mari is CHEO's Chief Innovation Officer and VP of Quality.



- New member **Christina Sather** lives in Princeton B.C. She is an illustrator, designer, photographer, editor, and publisher and operates a web studio. Her Nordic roots are on her father's side, and include Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, and Saami. Welcome Chriss!



- We are also happy to welcome new member **Victor Silvestrin-Racine**. Victor is a student in a Nordic Master's Degree Program. He grew up in Montreal and has worked in the energy sector. His very interesting article below gives some background about the Nordic Master's Program and why he chose it.



Nordic Master's Degree Programs: a unique way to learn and discover multiple Nordic Countries

By Victor Silvestrin-Racine

As I was exploring master's degree opportunities across Europe, I stumbled upon one of the well-kept secrets of Nordic countries for which I didn't hesitate to sign up. Last August, I started a degree in Innovative Governance and Public Management in three Nordic universities: Tampere University (Finland), University of Agder (Norway) and KTH Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden). Each semester, my cohort and I move to a different university to explore public administration in each of these countries and learn about the leadership and governance which these countries are built on.

For over a decade now, the Nordic Council has sponsored universities from all of the Nordic countries to team up and create joint programs. This allows for a more comprehensive Nordic approach which brings better learning outcomes to the students and helps create a Nordic sense of belonging. As of now, there are 18 different programs offered in English, which propose this Nordic approach to their students with the opportunity to move every semester or year to a different university and country to pursue their degree. Programs are offered in multiple fields such as social work and welfare, cold climate engineering, urban planning, marine bio-resources, intelligent software systems and environmental law (See the full list on the link below).

So far, this program has been nothing but eye-opening for multiple reasons. First, being able to explore Finland and Norway (so far) has been fantastic because of the sight-seeing experiences. Second, studying in each country immerses you in the culture and if I didn't experience Finland, I would not have learned about Alvar Aalto's views on the links between the creation of the State of Finland and the creation of a distinct Finnish national architecture or how the Academy of Finland determines the country's scientific research priorities. In Norway, I wouldn't either have learned how the country has managed its oil resources in the past decades and all the traditions around May 17th celebrations. These are the kind of discoveries that make these programs interesting not only on the educational level but also on the cultural level.

I'm so grateful for these wonderful opportunities that I have had so far, and I hope my little text will inspire you to consider one of these programmes or that you will talk about it to your relatives or friends that may be interested.

For more information: nordicmaster.org

Dissolution of Finlandia Association in Thunder Bay

On May 20, 2020, the Finlandia Association of Thunder Bay voted to dissolve and liquidate all of its assets. The association faces more than one million dollars in debt, largely tied in to its operation of the Hoito restaurant, a landmark in Thunder Bay. The Hoito was established in 1918 as a co-op restaurant providing inexpensive hearty meals for Finnish bush workers,. It was located in the basement of the original Finnish Labour Temple, built in 1910 and now designated a National Historic Site of Canada. In 2015, the Finlandia Association warned that the restaurant was facing financial struggles and expensive maintenance costs. Fund-raising efforts ensued which allowed the restaurant to continue operating for a time. Thunder Bay's Heritage Advisory Committee has noted the property's cultural importance as well as its physical heritage and has been in contact with the Finlandia Association in this regard.

If you would like to read more about the Hoito and the Thunder Bay area in general, Council members Lennart Nylund and Astrid Ahlgren recommend ""Breakfast at the Hoito and Other Adventures in the Boreal Heartland" by Charles Wilkins, published by Natural Heritage Books in 1997. For more information about his book, go to: https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/676846.Breakfast_at_the_Hoito

Contributions to Nordic News

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

September 1 is the beginning of the new membership year. You can join CNS or renew your membership online or by mail.

Online

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

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

We encourage you to pay online using PayPal. This is the quickest and most efficient method.



Canadian Nordic Society

240 Sparks Street, PO Box 55023, Ottawa, ON K1P 1A1
www.canadiannordicsociety.com

Membership Application/Renewal*
(Membership year starts on September 1)

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>