



Scandinavian Cultural Society Newsletter 2022

The AGM of the Scandinavian Cultural Society

Venue (Zoom or Scandinavian Centre) to be announced.

Monday, 28 February 2022, 7 pm

Agenda

- 1) Consider the directors' reports
- 2) Consider Financial Statements, year ending 31 December 2021
- 3) Elect directors, Group B
- 4) Transact such other Business as may properly come before the Meeting.

Attendance at this Annual General Meeting is open to all group and individual members. Email notification will be sent out before the meeting. Dues may be paid at or prior to the meeting.

Dated 28 January, 2022.

By order of the Board of Directors of the Scandinavian Cultural Society.

Thank you Newsletter Contributors

Photographs: Laila Axen, Bent Østergaard, Dianne Kilback, Carolyn Thauberger, Eric Poulsen

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President's Message
Ed Kuhlman

At the Annual General Meeting of the Scandinavian Cultural Society in February of 2020 I was honoured to be elected President. I was excited about the year ahead and about all of the wonderful exhibits and shows planned for the year. Instead the pandemic arrived and prevented us from hosting any events in 2020 and 2021, though we hope our activities can return to normal in the near future.

Luckily, thanks to Zoom we have been able to continue our Board meetings. After a lively discussion about the Jens Munk Expedition and the active role played by the Federation of Danish Associations in Canada in promoting a re-publication of the Jens Munk Journal, I proposed that the Cultural Society, endowed with a Danish component inherent in our mission to promote Nordic Cultures, become a member of the

Federation. The SCS Board of Directors unanimously agreed and our membership was approved by the Federation.

Our Board is excited about our membership in the Federation and sees it as an opportunity to expand the network necessary for all Cultural Societies to survive and thrive. The waves of immigrants who came to our rich country are all aging and slowly leaving us one by one. Now it is a question of telling the story of those immigrants and getting their 2nd and 3rd generation offspring involved. That is the mission of the Nordic Spirit Exhibits -- to tell of the trials, tribulations, hardships, joys and successes of those adventurers. This mission is also served by the Federation Heritage Books and by the Danish Canadian Museum in Dickson, Alberta. So it is only natural that we should become partners in this mission and cooperate with each other to preserve and tell these stories. The Scandinavian Cultural Society looks forward to working with our new partners in the Danish Federation.

Please stay safe and continue to support the Scandinavian Cultural Society. The SCS Board of Directors is making plans for first-class Scandinavian events and exhibits in 2022.

Hoping to see you soon at the Centre,
Ed Kuhlman, President, Scandinavian Cultural Society



Swedish Cultural Day

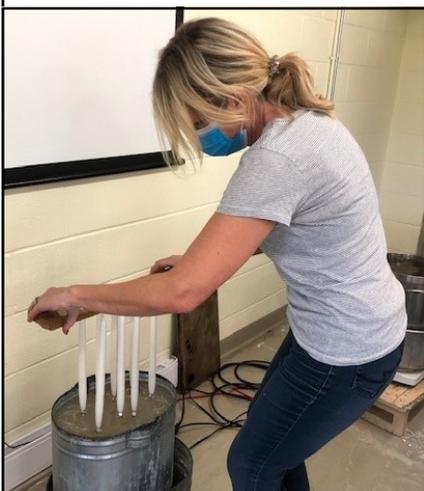


Swedish Heritage in British Columbia organized a Swedish Cultural Day, sponsored by the Swedish Embassy in Ottawa. The event was held December 4, 2021 at the Swedish Canadian Manor in the Swedish Canadian Village.

Festivities started at noon with alcohol-free GLÖGG, gingerbread cookies, and blue cheese. We shared the traditional Swedish delicacies and enjoyed a cup of strong coffee.



After our long isolation due to Covid-19, many enjoyed socializing and meeting friends. It was a congenial atmosphere and everybody seemed to have a merry time.



Jörgen Olofsson played guitar and led a sing-a-long of Christmas-related songs with his wife Monica.



Some people took part in making candles. The candle makers got to take home their crafted candles. This is *ljusstöpning*, an old craft in Sweden, which typically took place in the fall before Christmas.

We gave tours of the Heritage Room, which was decorated for Christmas.
— Laila Axen



Nordic Spirit Festival 2022 — Scandinavian Immigrant Women

Our 2022 Nordic Spirit heritage photo show "Scandinavian Immigrant Women" will celebrate the lives and achievements of immigrant women from Scandinavia. Originally scheduled for April 2020, it was postponed owing to the pandemic. We plan to mount the show on **April 23 & 24, 2022** at the Scandinavian Community Centre. "Scandinavian Immigrant Women" will continue the Cultural Society's "Nordic Spirit" series featuring unique heritage photos and stories of immigration to British Columbia and other parts of North America, provided by our Scandinavian Centre community.

Nordic Spirit shows are always a rewarding collective effort, and there's still time to get involved and enjoy the return to normal activity and inspiration.

Share photos and stories (Deadline 15 March)
Suggest a presentation
Help at the show
contact: judithanderson@shaw.ca

The Scandinavian Cultural Society
presents
Nordic Spirit —
Scandinavian Immigrant Women
photos and stories of struggle and achievement

April 23 & 24, 2022
Scandinavian Community Centre
6540 Thomas St., Burnaby, BC



Come and enjoy —

- Heritage photos
- Exhibits
- Presentations

Opening Reception —
Saturday April 23, 11:30
Free admission

Info: scandinavianculturalsociety.org




Feed hens. Dig, water, hoe, pick, can...
Mind kids. Sew clothes. Hang laundry...
Entertain Minister and Congregation...



Wear white apron to tend horses.



Clean house, fill lamp, make curtains.



No hired man. Help saw wood.

Photos: Carolyn Thauberger

Centennial of Knud Rasmussen's Fifth Thule Expedition

Knud Michelsen has written several books about Knud Rasmussen. His new 2021 book, *Knud Rasmussen – Ambassador on Dog Sled*, marks the 100th anniversary of Rasmussen's Fifth Thule Expedition.

“Knud Rasmussen was the greatest Danish polar explorer of the 20th century, in the same league as the American Robert Peary and the Norwegians Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen. In contrast to them, however, his primary purpose was not the exploration of the polar regions' geography, but the people who lived in these distant, cold regions, as well as their way of life, culture, myths, legends, songs and religious beliefs.

Of particular significance was Knud Rasmussen's leadership of the Fifth Thule Expedition (1921-1924) which brought him and his companions into contact with the Inuit in Canada, Alaska and Chukotka in Siberia.

This book has been written on the occasion of the centennial of the Fifth Thule Expedition. While it focuses on this unique and consequential expedition, it is also a book about Knud Rasmussen in general, his background, his other travels and activities, his unique personality and his place and significance in a broad historical and political context.”

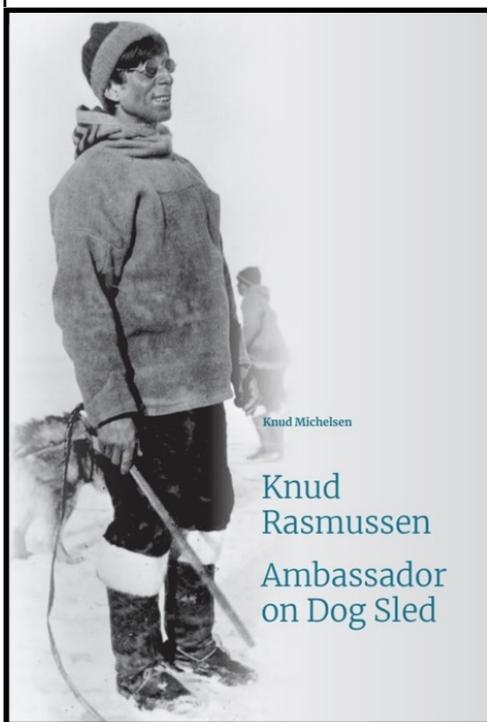
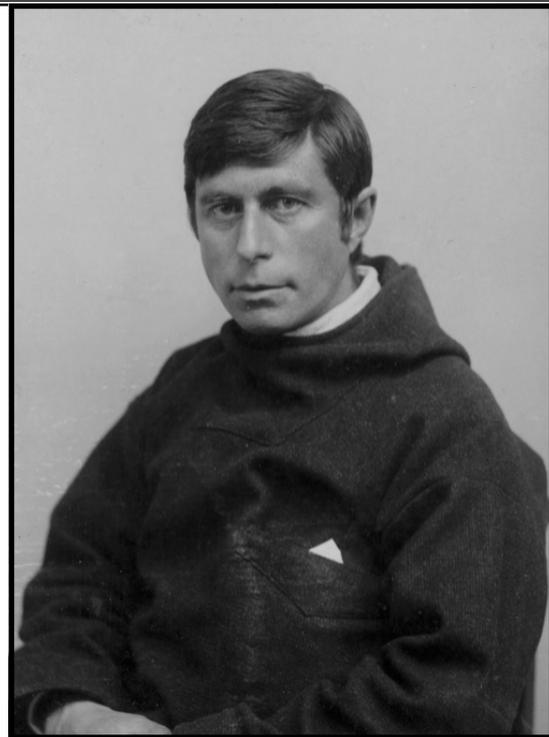
— *Quoted from the back cover*

Rasmussen's contribution in documenting the culture of Inuit people all across the North American Arctic is unparalleled. He was totally at home with the indigenous people of the region and fluent in their language. At the time of his explorations, Inuit cultural practices were rapidly being lost through disruptive contact with Europeans. Rasmussen's collections of their myths, stories, and beliefs are of inestimable value to all who wish to understand human history and culture. The Scandinavian Cultural Society hopes to organize an event during 2022 to recognize this important centennial. Our plans will depend on the state of pandemic restrictions later in the year.

This captivating book, with about one hundred illustrations, is published by the Federation of Danish Associations in Canada. You can order a copy for \$20 through the Scandinavian Cultural Society, and \$5.00 of the \$20 price goes to the Society. To order, please contact: Ed Kuhlman — kuhlman@shaw.ca

You can also borrow *Knud Rasmussen – Ambassador on Dog Sled* from the English-language library at the Scandinavian Community Centre. The library offers a fine selection of books about Rasmussen and other Scandinavian explorers of the Arctic and Antarctic. For library inquiries, please contact: Pia Christensen — pia.christensen@ubc.ca

Above: Signed portrait of Rasmussen presented to RCMP officer Stuart Wood, who hosted the Rasmussen expedition on Herschel Island. Kindly provided by Erik Poulsen, Wood's grandson.
Left: Book cover



Thatched roofs—an old Danish craft with lasting appeal



Traveling in Denmark recently, Bent Østergaard photographed some fine heritage houses with beautiful straw roofs, evidence of an old trade that arose out of necessity. It was the only roofing material that farmers could afford, and they produced the rye straw on the farm. Today the “Taekkemands” trade lives on, mostly using reeds to produce handsome roofs for heritage and recreational buildings. They are expensive roofs in both materials and labor - and certainly

fire insurance. Reeds may be imported from Hungary where they are grown in large wetlands and commercially harvested.

Note the ridge caps made from barley straw, held in place with chicken wire which, in the case of the Hvide Sande house, is tied down with strings or wires through the roof. In the two other pictures the ridge caps are held in place with “Kragetraer” (Crow-woods).

The walls of the Hvide Sande house are made of large clay bricks on a footing of big rocks. The Odder house walls are “Bindingsvaerk” (half-timbering) with brick infills, on a concrete foundation. The Gilleleje house is “Grundmuret”, parched brick walls on a concrete foundation. —Poul Erik Rasmussen



Above left: From Gilleleje in Northern Sjaelland.

Above right: From Odder south of Aarhus.

Right: From Hvide Sande in Western Jutland.

SCS/BCGS Genealogy on Zoom

During this pandemic, the Scandinavian Genealogy Group has been meeting online, offering assistance and sharing tips, ideas and resources. We are happy to help anyone searching for their family members in the past, or even sometimes, the present. Online genealogy events and databases have expanded over this time so we continue to be busy in co-operation with the British Columbia Genealogical Society and the Scandinavian Cultural Society.

We have members researching in all the Nordic countries, as well as in North America. This year some participated in the Virtual Nordic Genealogy Conference organized by the US National Nordic Museum in Seattle. We plan to be at other events this year as usual, if possible.

The Genealogy Group will continue meeting monthly in 2022, usually the second Saturday of the month from 1-3 pm Pacific time. Visitors are always welcome. Contact us for details or your genealogical queries:

Poul Erik Rasmussen—sonofrasmus@shaw.ca

Diane Rogers—diane_rogers@shaw.ca

New Year postcard sent from Burgsvik, Gotland, Sweden, to Brockton, Mass. USA, December 1906. Private collection.



Two Anniversaries: Runeberg Chorus and Scandinavian Dancers

100 years ago, the original Runeberg Chorus was active from 1920 to 1926, founded by Swedish-speaking immigrants from Finland. Swedish-speaking Finns all over North America formed similar choirs dedicated to Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804 - 77), a Finnish priest and poet, and a national treasure of Finland. He created the Swedish lyrics to "Maamme/Vårt Land", which became the Finnish national anthem.

The second Runeberg Chorus was organized with 35 singers, making its debut on December 26, 1950. By 1951 the chorus had 50 singers. Gunnar Abbors was the conductor for 30 years. Linda Szentes conducted several seasons, followed by Janet Mowatt, who is still with us today. Pianist Marian Rinta grew up with the choir and until recently was our accompanist.



The chorus has always promoted Scandinavian culture in British Columbia. In the early years, our repertoire was mostly Swedish with some Finnish and English songs, but we now include Norwegian and Danish music. We have joined other Runeberg choirs and the Norwegian, German, and Russian choirs in concert.

Over the years the chorus has brought Scandinavian music to many community events. Vancouver's 1986 World Exposition was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, while the Scandinavian Midsummer Festival has been an annual highlight. Seasonal concerts have celebrated Christmas and Spring Songfests and the birthdays of Johan Runeberg and Jean Sibelius. At Christmas, we have visited seniors at various rest homes.

Today the Runeberg chorus has 10 to 12 members. We are keeping the choir active with a dedicated group of singers led by Janet Mowatt. For the last few years, we sang with the Danes at their Christmas events and Spring concerts. Since the pandemic, our activities have been restricted, but this Christmas we sang with masks at the Scandinavian Seniors lunch and the Danish Church Concert. The chorus is determined to continue singing and we hope to perform at events in 2022. —*Dianne Kilback (Thanks to Nancy Snickers for choir history)*

Mere whippersnappers by comparison with the Runeberg Chorus, the Scandinavian Dancers of Vancouver celebrated our 50th anniversary in December 2021. In 1971, several Scandinavian folkdance groups amalgamated, as their Nordic-immigrant membership was dwindling. The Scandinavian Dancers of Vancouver was soon a going concern, enjoying regular evenings of teaching and social dancing. Special events have included the annual Spring Equinox Ball and workshops with visiting teachers. Over the years, we have performed at the PNE, Kits Showboat, Midsummer Festivals in Vancouver and Seattle, Nordic national day celebrations, care homes, and community festivals both here and around the Pacific Northwest.

The SDV has encouraged the development of several Scandinavian folkdance bands. In addition to the familiar fiddle, accordion, guitar, bass, and keyboard, the dancers are treated to more exotic sounds ranging from traditional Hardanger fiddle and nyckelharpa to ukulele and trombone.

We have been unable to dance in person for the pandemic period, but we have expanded our horizons by dancing in our living rooms, virtually together on Zoom. Our Zoom sessions include people from all over North America, and we enjoy virtual workshops and live music from afar – a serendipitous result of Covid. Nonetheless, we look forward to dancing together again sometime soon. —*Judith Anderson*

Above: Midsummer Festival 2007 - Runeberg chorus & singers from Norwegian and Danish Choirs.

Left: Scandinavian Dancers celebrate Denmark's national day at Peace Arch Park, 2007.



Karen Sorensen 1944 - 2021



Karen Sorensen, with her sparkling mind, passed away in September after some years of cheerful struggle against debilitating illness. She supported the work of the SCS in all of its Sámi related enterprises with ideas, encouragement, and personal participation. She repeatedly lent us numerous priceless artifacts and heritage photos, together with names and fascinating stories. She knew most of the people in the hundred-year-old photos from Canada's North, or at least she was personal friends with their



children. Even more valuable, she loaned us her own grandchildren as couriers, organizers, presenters, technical experts, and even as décor in their colourful Sámi clothes.

In her own words, Karen led "a typical Sámi nomadic life", moving between Canada where she was born to parents of Sámi descent, and Norway's Sapmi lands where she owned a herd of reindeer. A skilled typesetter, she worked in several languages for prominent Canadian publishers. With her publisher husband, she supported Sámi nationalism by encouraging the early publication of Sámi folktales and literature. In Sapmi she participated in the famous Alta Dam protests, which led to the development of political power among Norwegian Sámi. Today the Sámi are recognized as an independent nation within Norway with their official Sámi flag and Parliament. Karen helped.



— Carolyn Thauberger



Above right: Karen's Sámi drum and tapestry of colourful little Sámi fish swimming in a wild sea of danger.

Right: Anne Maia Rannes Sorensen, Karen, and Dr. Troy Storfjell of Pacific Lutheran University



Scandinavian Cultural Society

6540 Thomas St., Burnaby, BC V5B 4P9

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, PROVINCE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Membership - 2022

Dues:

Individual \$15

Family \$ 20

Donations are always welcome!

Help us by volunteering as:

- Board Member
- Event Organizer
- Event Worker

We appreciate the cooperation and support of other organizations at the Scandinavian Community Centre, and acknowledge the assistance of the Province of British Columbia, the City of Burnaby, Burnaby Arts Council, and our Members. Thank you.

Scandinavian Cultural Society CONTACTS 2022

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www.scandinavianculturalsociety.org

Bookkeeper: Riitta Huttunen

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Genealogy: Poul Erik Rasmussen & Diane Rogers

Scandinavian Cultural Society CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2022

15 January, 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
31 January, 7:00 pm, SCS Meeting
19 February, 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
28 February, 7:00 pm, Annual General Meeting
19 March, 1:00 pm Genealogy Session
28 March, 7:00 pm, SCS Meeting
9 April 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
23 - 24 April, Nordic Spirit -- Immigrant Women
25 April, 7:00 pm, SCS Meeting
21 May, 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
30 May, 7:00 pm, SCS Meeting
25 - 26 June, Midsummer Festival
17 September, 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
26 September, 1:00 pm, SCS Meeting
1 October, Leif Erickson Day (To be confirmed)
22 October, 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
24 October, 7:00 pm, SCS Meeting
26 November, 1:00 pm, Genealogy Session
28 November, 7:00 pm, SCS Meeting

Events are subject to change during pandemic restrictions, and meetings may be conducted on Zoom.

Confirmation and info: www.scancentre.org
www.scandinavianculturalsociety.org

