



Scandinavian Cultural Society Newsletter 2023

Winter 2023

The AGM of the
Scandinavian Cultural Society
6010 Kincaid Street, Burnaby, B.C.
was held

Monday, 27 February 2023, 7 pm

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

Agenda

- 1) Consider the directors' reports
- 2) Consider Financial Statements,
year ending 31 December 2022
- 3) Elect directors, Group A
- 4) Transact such other Business as
may properly come before the
Meeting.

Attendance at Annual General
Meetings of the SCS is open to all
group and individual members.

Please see p. 8 for:

- Board members' names and contact
information.
- General membership application
form.

*Thank you
Newsletter Contributors*

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Judith Anderson, Laila Axen,
Rolf Christensen, Steen Larsen.

Photographs: Arne Møller, Bent
Østergaard, Carolyn Thau-
berger.

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A message from our new President, Steen Larsen --

At our February, 2023 annual general meeting I was nominated for the position as president of The Scandinavian Cultural Society and I accepted. It will be my privilege to serve our group in this role and I will do my best to "fill the shoes" of our out-going president Poul Erik Rasmussen, who for many years has been the bastion of our organization. I look forward to work with the board of directors and volunteers during upcoming cultural events.

And a message from the editor – Congratulations, Steen, and many thanks to Poul Erik Rasmussen for his years of creative and energetic leadership! And to our wonderful volunteers, as well – we appreciate all you do, from organizing meetings and events, herding cats, wrangling equipment and display items, grooming the troll garden, vanquishing technical glitches, researching, writing, curating book tables, taking photos, ... And, of course, the *sine qua non* for any event – serving food – both **food to eat** and **food for thought**!



In the food-for-
thought category,
we accomplished a
lot in 2022 as we
recovered from

two years of pandemic shutdown -- regular genealogy sessions, Sámi National Day online, Nordic Spirit "Scandinavian Immigrant Women", Midsummer genealogy table and Troll Garden, and Leif Erikson Day "Nordic Exploration and Indigenous People".

We appreciate the support of our 55 members, Scandinavian Centre organizations, the Danish Canadian Community Centre, the Province of British Columbia, the City of Burnaby, and Burnaby Arts Council.



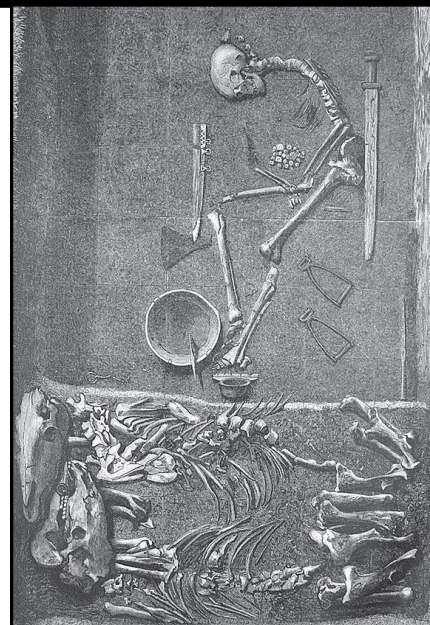
Coming Event — Leif Erikson Day — October 21, 2023

The Scandinavian Cultural Society will celebrate Leif Erikson Day on October 21, 2023, with an afternoon and evening of talks and videos exploring recent Norse and Viking archaeology, an exciting subject!

While much work is currently being done in field excavations, new discoveries and analytical tools allow us see the real lives of the Viking Norse, dating from the 700s to about 1100.

We'll present recent developments, featuring the work of Swedish archaeologist Neil Price, a prominent Norse archaeologist. Soft-spoken but with a wicked sense of humour, he uses information from anthropology, sociology, and historical reports to interpret archaeological evidence.

For example, a grave found some years ago was believed the finest example of a Viking warrior burial—bones, swords, shield, spear, knives—all a Viking man might need in his afterlife. However, using DNA analysis, Price found the bones were those of a woman! A feisty war of words has ensued around this discovery and its interpretation. More recently the bones of dozens of warriors from the early 700's were uncovered in two mass graves in Estonia. DNA testing and historical information suggest they might have been Swedes, but why were they in Estonia? Price, colleagues, and Estonian archaeologists are piecing together the story from the evidence – an ongoing study.



I do tell my children and grandchildren to behave. In Saskatchewan, someone is sure, eventually, to find and report what-all they have been doing! I don't want to be embarrassed, even if their behaviour is discovered by someone looking at evidence a thousand years from now. It has happened!

By Carolyn Thauberger

Be part of this exciting event!

Please join the team planning Leif Erickson Day! There are plenty of jobs, small and large, that you can help with — from kitchen creativity to publicity to technical assistance with videos and PowerPoint presentations.

Contact Carolyn Thauberger
cthauer12@gmail.com

IMAGE: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birka_female_Viking_warrior

Runeberg Chorus — Runeberg Day Concert

The Runeberg Chorus practiced throughout January to prepare the February 5th Runeberg Day Concert. Organized by Canadian Friends of Finland, the event at the Scandinavian Centre was a great success. The choir sang compositions by J.L. Runeberg, with an overview of Runeberg's life presented by Lennart Berggren and interesting facts about Fredrika Runeberg revealed by Dianne Kilback. Featured soloists were Austin Doyle, who sang "Så sakta ringde klockorna" (A. Gullstrand/ S. Palmgren) and Kaoru Henry "Men min fogel marks dock icke" (J.L. Runeberg/J. Sibelius). The finale was Sibelius' "Tapiola", played as a piano duet by Janet Mowatt and Austin Doyle. Yasushi Ishimura's projected images of Finnish forests scenes were the perfect background to Sibelius' music. After the concert, traditional Runeberg Tortes were served along with coffee.

— by Dianne Kilback

Runeberg Chorus, led by Janet Mowatt at the piano.



Leif Erikson Day 2022 — Nordic Explorers and Indigenous People

To celebrate Leif Erikson Day 2022, "Nordic Exploration and Indigenous People" we honoured three Scandinavians explorers who worked closely with indigenous people of the North American Arctic.

Presentations by Carolyn Thauberger and Judith Anderson:

Carolyn -- *Gudrid the Far Traveler: The Evidence.*

1000 years ago, **Gudrid the Far-Traveler** journeyed from Iceland to Viking Greenland to Vinland (Newfoundland). Before returning home, she met Vinland's native people and gave birth to the first European baby born in North America.

Carolyn Thauberger,
Photo: A. Møller

Gudrid



Carolyn -- *Fridtjof Nansen: Across Greenland with "Two good men from Karasjok"; Fridtjof Nansen and the Nansen Passport*

100 years ago, the Norwegian explorer **Fridtjof Nansen** received the 1922 Nobel Peace Prize for his humanitarian work with refugees from World War I and other conflicts of the time. In his younger years, Nansen had gained international stature from his explorations in the Arctic. When he crossed the Greenland ice cap in 1888, his team included two Sámi members, and they visited Inuit groups on both coasts of Greenland.

Fridtjof Nansen



Knud Rasmussen

Judith -- *Knud Rasmussen, Arnarlunguaq, and the Fifth Thule Expedition*

100 years ago, from 1922 to 1924, **Knud Rasmussen**, crossed the entire width of Arctic North America, gathering ethnographic information about all the Inuit communities along the way. On this 5th Thule Expedition, he traveled with several Inuit companions, including an intrepid Inuit woman, Arnarlunguac.

Arnarlunguac



Displays – Books and Photos:

Pia Christensen set out a selection of topical books from the Scandinavian Centre library. Poul Erik Rasmussen mounted a display of Bent Østergaard's Arctic images and photos from past Nordic Spirit shows.



Evening program: Happy hour featured 1920s piano music played by Matthew Enns, then a cold supper and pies made by Carolyn. Then we enjoyed Knud Rasmussen's 1934 film *The Marriage of Palo*. Rasmussen wrote the story of life and love in an East Greenland Inuit settlement. It was filmed on location in East Greenland with local Inuit people playing the roles, coached by Rasmussen himself.

Book table; Bent Østergaard & Arctic images

Photos: A. Møller
Text: J. Anderson



Vikings on the Island—the Danes at Cape Scott

The idea of a Danish colony at Cape Scott on the northern tip of Vancouver Island came from Rasmus Hansen, who on an 1894 fishing trip discovered the lagoon which now bears his name. He thought the location was ideal for a settlement and in February 1895 he wrote an article in the Danish-American newspaper *Dannevirke*, proposing the establishment there of a Danish colony. In spring, 1896, Hansen and three others visited Cape Scott. Afterwards they contacted the government in Victoria, which supported the initiative and promised a road to the settlement.

In the fall of 1896 Hansen and Nels C. Nelson went to Cape Scott to plan the future colony. Hansen wrote letters to Danish newspapers promoting Cape Scott. He also came up with the idea of a dike, and he later carried the heavy load in constructing it. Rasmus Hansen travelled extensively, going to Victoria, Seattle, and the US Midwest to promote Cape Scott or to help and advise new colonists. He was elected president of the Settlers' Association, and as the unchallenged leader of Cape Scott, he was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1899. Hansen built several boats, and in 1901 he took the lead in building the *Cape Scott*. After its launch he moved to Seattle, from where he thought it would be easier to promote the Colony.

The pioneers at Cape Scott were mostly born in Denmark, over half from Jutland. Most were young families who had immigrated to the United States seeking a better life. They were attracted by Cape Scott's maritime climate and nearby ocean, and the chance to acquire land and to live with other Danes.

Promoting the colony was an uphill struggle. At one point, the same number of people would arrive as well as leave on the monthly boat. The area was a rain forest, and the government never built a harbour or a road to the settlement. Unable to make a living, most of the pioneers went broke and gave up on the project, returning to the United States. Only a handful stayed. Hansen became extremely discouraged and finally gave up himself in June 1902, when he resigned as colony leader and settled permanently in Seattle. The colony leadership then fell to Carl Brinck Christensen, who for the longest time, admirably, tried to sustain the Danish colony at Cape Scott, until he too had to give up.

—By Rolf Buschardt Christensen



Cape Scott. <https://bcparks.ca/cape-scott-park/>

Danish Federation Conference, Nanaimo, BC

Danish Federation Conference, Nanaimo, BC

Thurs May 25 to Sunday May 28, 2023

Coast Bastion Hotel, Nanaimo

—followed by *The Heritage Seminar* Mon May 29 to Fri June 2—

Hosted by The Vancouver Island Danish Canadian Club, the program will include a Cannon Firing Ceremony, visits to Cathedral Grove and Newcastle Island, Dinner/Dance with Det Store Kolde Bord, featuring herring and akvavit. There will be board meetings and AGMs of the Danish Federation and the Danish Canadian Museum, with silent and live auctions. The conference theme is "Vikings on the Island", a tribute to Cape Scott's Danish pioneers. The heritage seminar will explore Danish identity with Pastor Lasse Hultberg from Edmonton.

Contact: Rolf Buschardt Christensen, President, Danish Federation

robuch@ca.inter.net 613-747-9764

<http://www.danishfederation.ca/current-conference.html>



WWII history lesson from the Danish Coast



Despite the disappointment of Cape Scott, it seems that Danes just can't get enough of cold, windswept beaches! Bent Østergaard shared his photos of Denmark's west coast, featuring remnants of German fortifications from WWII. Even on a sunny day, those sandy beaches present a sobering history lesson on the Nazi occupation. The bunkers and artillery at the Hanstholm Bunkermuseum were among 7,000 massive defenses built by the Germans as part of Hitler's "Atlantic Wall", which despoiled coastlines from Norway to the south of France.

that the Germans installed at Hanstholm -- 38-cm guns were 12 to 14 times bigger! The circular bunker (below left) supported one of the 38-cm guns. It included ammunition rooms, the gun position, and crew quarters for 90 men, with a shower room, water works and emergency generators.

In 2008, three enormous concrete bunkers were uncovered by violent storms south of Hanstholm near Søndervig. Buried in sand for decades, these bunkers were almost unchanged from the day the Nazi soldiers abandoned them. They were still completely furnished with beds, chairs, tables, communication systems, and the personal effects of the soldiers who lived inside, including clothing, military stripes, mustard and aquavit bottles, books, inkpots, postage stamps featuring Hitler, medicines, soda bottles, keys, and hammers.



Among the last bunker occupants was a 17-year-old soldier named Gerhard Saalfed, who had been posted there since January 1945. Two days after VE Day (May 8, 1945) he and his fellow soldiers left their station and surrendered at the nearest town, ten miles away.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1041171/Violent-storm-uncovers-Nazi-bunkers-buried-sand-63-years.html>

<https://bunkermuseumhanstholm.dk>

PHOTOS: Bent Østergaard

Celebrating Sámi National Day 2023

In Honour of Sámi National Day February 6th, 2023 Please enjoy Sámi Culture and History



The Scandinavian Cultural Society was not able to hold a formal Sámi National Day event this year. Instead we have prepared a presentation of photos and text on Sámi Culture and History for you to enjoy.

Find the presentation on our website at

[https://www.scandinavianculturalsociety.org/Sámi National Day](https://www.scandinavianculturalsociety.org/Sámi%20National%20Day)

Or look on the Scandinavian Community Centre website: scancentre.org under Associated Clubs and further under Scandinavian Cultural Society. Click on "Sámi Culture and History".

Sámi people call their home territories "Sápmi". These lands lie across the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula. There are 100,000 Indigenous inhabitants in this area. Ancestors of the present-day Sámi have inhabited the area since the birth of Christ and likely much longer. At least 30,000 people of Sámi ancestry live in North America.

The Sámi are a people with a rich and powerful culture, which they have maintained for thousands of years. They are noted for their skill in living successfully in a cold environment and for their cooperative and peaceful social connections (at least before the deliberate introduction of alcohol by politicians wanting to control the Sámi lands and gather taxes from a weakened population).



Some believe Sámi people may even have come to the Sápmi areas just after the last Ice Age, 10,000 years ago. Archaeological evidence is limited for a nomadic people but studies of language and culture seem to support this. Considering their success there is likely much we can learn from the Sámi about living in a northern climate and about peaceful social organization.

By Carolyn Thauberger

IMAGES (from top) Anna Maia Sorensen in traditional costume; Map of Sápmi territory; Traditional drum, Sorensen family collection; Canadian reindeer rancher Lloyd Binder with family.



Genealogy — Scandinavian Cultural Society & BC Genealogical Society

Despite the challenges, the Scandinavian Genealogy group continued to meet to encourage and assist with members' and others' family history in 2022.

Most of our 2022 meetings were on Zoom. Lately, we have been together for 'real' but with a hybrid meeting via Zoom so that members who need to can join us online. We attended Midsummer 2022 at the Scandinavian Centre and one member represented our group with EuroFest in Maple Ridge at the CountryFest in July.

Our members are researching in numerous places and we love challenges. Many of the sources we use regularly are online but one thing we've missed was access to resources available in local archives, libraries and research centres as many were closed or access limited. On the bright side, a few archives added new online resources. And some of us are now back researching locally too.

We will be represented at the Abbotsford Family History Day in April, and we'll be at Midsummer again this year. But don't wait if you have a research question, do come to a meeting or contact us.

The Genealogy Group continues our meetings at the Scandinavian Centre in 2023, usually the second Saturday of the month from 1-3 pm Pacific time. The March 2023 meeting will be Saturday, the 11th.

Visitors are always welcome.

Contacts: Poul Erik Rasmussen -- sonofrasmus@shaw.ca

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PHOTO - The Danish training ship "Danmark" at Esquimalt, BC, Canada, 1946. Major James Skitt Matthews collection, City of Vancouver Archives, AM54-S4-2-: CVA 371-1078 - Public Domain.

For more about the "Danmark", see MacFarlane, John M. (2016) Visit of the Sailing Ship *Danmark* to Esquimalt BC 1946. *Nauticapedia.ca* 2016. <http://nauticapedia.ca/Gallery/Danmark.php>



Genealogy — Swedish Heritage Society



The Swedish Heritage Society also offers help with family genealogical research online through sites such as Ancestry, FamilySearch, etc. The Museum has a subscription to

ArkivDigital, which allows access to Swedish archival records. Michelle Mikacevich is available, by appointment, to guide/teach people how to use the archive and to do their own searches.

You can reach Michelle at: appointmentsswedishheritagebc@gmail.com

Scandinavian Cultural Society

6540 Thomas St., Burnaby, BC V5B 4P9

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, PROVINCE: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Membership - 2023

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 the Scandinavian Community Centre and its associated organizations, especially our membership hosts, Danish House Society and the Icelandic Canadian Club of BC. We also acknowledge the assistance of the Danish Canadian Community Centre, the Province of British Columbia, the City of Burnaby, Burnaby Arts Council, and our Members. Thank you.

Scandinavian Cultural Society CONTACTS 2023

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Diane Rogers

Scandinavian Cultural Society CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

14 January, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
30 January, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting
11 February, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
27 February, 7:00 pm. AGM
11 March, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
27 March, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting
22 April, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
24 April, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting
20 May, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
29 May, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting
24 – 25 June, Midsummer Festival
Genealogy Room, and Troll Garden
16 September, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
25 September, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting
14 October, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
21 October, Leif Erickson Day
30 October, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting
25 November, 1:00 pm. Genealogy Session
27 November, 7:00 pm. SCS Meeting

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

