Author Kenn Harper to Address CNS on Knud Rasmussen on April 17

The title of Kenn Harper’s talk will be “Knud Rasmussen – A Canadian Perspective on a Danish-Greenlandic Explorer.” Knud Rasmussen personifies Denmark’s interest in Greenland and its people, but the crowning achievement of his extraordinary career was the Fifth Thule Expedition, which took place in Arctic North America, most of it in Canada. Kenn Harper will trace Rasmussen’s early interest in Canada, a misunderstanding with the Canadian government with almost tragic consequences, and the accomplishments of the Fifth Thule Expedition.

CNS member Kenn Harper is a writer and historian who has written extensively on Arctic history. Kenn is the author of Minik, The New York Eskimo; Thou Shalt Do No Murder: Inuit, Injustice, and
Very Informative Talk on Henry Larsen’s “Ugly Duckling”

The Canadian Nordic Society is indeed fortunate to have Doreen Larsen Riedel as a member and one of our Past Presidents. The daughter of Arctic explorer Henry Larsen, she is currently devoting herself to the eventual publication of her father’s memoirs. This has required a lot of research and there can be no doubt that she is the ultimate expert on her father’s voyages and explorations in the Canadian Arctic.

Her March 20 address to the Society focused primarily on the 104-foot wooden ship, the St. Roch, that took him through the Northwest Passage from west to east in 1940-42, and by the deep water route from east to west in 1944. Doreen explained that the ship, now on display at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, has changed a great deal from its construction when it was first built, and in fact was constantly being modified for most of its career in the Arctic. She described the many significant improvements that her father made to it over the years to overcome major limitations in its design. These limitations had caused severe difficulties for its crews, most of whom had little or no previous experience at sea.

Henry Larsen was a boy when news of Roald Amundsen’s navigation through the Northwest Passage reached Norway. He vowed that he would go to the Arctic himself one day. Living on the Hvaler Islands, off the southeast corner of Norway, he had plenty of experience at sea, starting with rowing boats as a boy before officially going to sea at age 14 and then earning his international navigation papers at the Oslo Navigation School.

The St. Roch was an RCMP vessel, and Doreen gave us a brief history of the Mounted Police’s presence in the North. It began in response to complaints from missionaries about the behaviour of whalers who were overwintering on Herschel Island. Eventually the Mounted Police set up stations across the North where, in addition to policing, they served as representatives of numerous federal and provincial departments. The stations required supply vessels, which also came to serve as “floating detachments” along the Arctic coast. There were no qualified seamen in the Mounted Police at that time, so they encouraged Henry Larsen to join their organization. In addition to his global sailing experience and navigational qualifications, Henry Larsen had served two years in the Arctic with Danish whaler Christian Klengenberger on the Maid of Orleans, where he became familiar with the North and was in contact with Inuit. He joined the Mounted Police in 1927, while the St. Roch was still under construction in Vancouver.

Henry Larsen closely observed the construction of the St. Roch and offered his opinions on its antiquated design and inadequate equipment, but he was disregarded. At its one trial in English Bay, local fishermen did not think it would ever see the Arctic. As Doreen outlined all the shortcomings of the ship and the lengths her father and his inexperienced crew had to go to in order to navigate it,
the hardships involved became very clear. With his extensive sea experience, Henry Larsen had a feel for what could be done to improve matters, and many modifications ensued. Doreen has carefully documented these changes by researching her father’s memoirs and other records to put together a complete picture of what was done to the *St. Roch* over the years to improve it, much of it by hand by Henry Larsen himself.

In 1954, the *St. Roch* was decommissioned in Halifax and returned to Vancouver. In 1958, she was placed in dry dock at Kitsilano Point for restoration and was restored to its original 1928 configuration. It has since been returned to its final condition as modified by Henry Larsen, and is on display at the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

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Doreen Larsen Riedel receives the coveted CNS mug from Treasurer Lennart Nylund

(*Photo: Astrid Ahlgren*)

**Painting Canada: Thom Thomson and the Group of Seven:**

**Exhibition in Oslo January 26, 2012 - May 13, 2013**

*Kari Rogstad enjoyed Rita de Ruyscher’s talk on “Painting the North” and shares with us some information about Canadian art and Norway, starting with the 2012-13 “Painting Canada” Exhibition in Oslo. This was the largest exhibition of Canadian art in history to travel to Europe and featured 122 famous landscape paintings.*

Queen Sonja of Norway opened the Exhibition in Oslo. Charlie Hill, curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery of Canada, travelled with the Exhibition to Oslo.
At the time, I was a volunteer at the National Gallery’s *Looking at Pictures* program and I met with Charlie Hill on a different matter and, being Norwegian, I asked him about the Exhibition in Oslo. He was very impressed with Queen Sonja’s thorough knowledge of the Group of Seven. The Queen told Mr. Hill that she herself likes photography and taking pictures of nature. The Queen said she enjoyed seeing how these artists had been able to get the lights and perspectives exhibited so fantastically well in their paintings.

The **Queen Sonja International Print Award** is handed out every second year to a young emerging graphic artist to promote contemporary print making today. Queen Sonja has a degree in Art History and has been a practising visual artist for many years.

**Canadian Artist Emma Nishimura**, Toronto, was awarded the **Queen Sonja International Print Award** in 2018 and it was presented to her by Queen Sonja at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in November, 2018.

![Queen Sonja presented the Award to Emma Nishimura. (Photo: Nina Rangøy / NTB scanpix)](image)

Charles Hill retired from the National Gallery in 2014 after 47 years, the final 35 of which were as curator of Canadian art. Mr. Hill was happy to learn that Norway will soon be getting a new Museum of Art. The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo **closed temporarily** in early 2019 and will open again when the new National Museum opens in 2020.
Events of Interest

• Need a happiness lesson? You can get a **free trip to Finland**, ranked the happiest country in the world again this year, by filling out an online application form and preparing a three-minute video. Deadline is **April 14, 2019**. See [article](#) for more information.

• The **Finnish Easter Service** will be held on **Sunday, April 14**, at St Peter's Lutheran Church, 400 Sparks St, at **3:00 PM**. Entrance is through the side door by the parking lot, don't forget your free parking permit slip. Doors are locked during the service. Coffee social provided by the Finnish Church Committee after the service.

• 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.

• Mark you calendars for a special concert sponsored jointly by the Icelandic Embassy and the Canadian Nordic Society on **Friday, June 7** at 7:30 PM at **St. Andrew’s Church**, 82 Kent Street, Ottawa. Mezzosoprano **Hanna Dóra Sturludóttir**, will be accompanied on piano by **Snorri Sigríður Birgisson**. Tickets are $20 per person, and include a wine and cheese reception. They are available from any Council member and [online](#). (Note that you do not need to have a PayPal account to purchase online. The process will take you to a credit card/debit card option.)

Preparing for our Annual General 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](http://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](http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/council.html)

And the CNS has its own, very active, Facebook page.
Join CNS or Renew your Membership
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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.

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

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