



Nordic News

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

The CNS Celebrates Finland's 100th Anniversary of Independence

On December 6, 1917, after over one hundred years as an autonomous grand duchy in the Russian Empire, Finland became an independent state. To mark this commemorative year, Finland created "Finland 100", a celebration open to Finland and friends of Finland. The CNS has been working on some celebratory projects and we are very excited about the events below, which have been submitted for inclusion in Finland 100.

- On **Sept 27** from 12:00 noon until 1:00 PM, **Salute to Finland:** a celebration of Nordic music in honour of Finland's 100th anniversary will take place at [Southminster United Church](#), 15 Aylmer Ave, Ottawa ON. Highlights will include beautiful and poetic songs by Alfvén, Grieg, Merikanto, Sibelius and Sjöberg and expressive instrumental pieces by Grieg and Sibelius. They will be performed by [Trygve John Ringereide](#), tenor; Cecilia Ignatieff, piano; [Jan Järvillepp](#), cello; with Roland Graham as artistic director. The CNS is fortunate to count both Trygve John Ringereide and Cecilia Ignatieff among its members. A freewill offering of \$10/\$20 is suggested. This concert is part of the Doors Open for Music at Southminster series. Information: Trygve Ringereide (613) 744-3650.
- The first talk in our Distinguished Speaker Series this season is entitled **Mannerheim at 150 and the Centennial of Finland.** Baron Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim was a Finnish military leader and statesman who was voted the greatest Finn of all time. The talk will be given by CNS Past President Dr. Lennard Sillanpää, Docent in Political Science, University of Helsinki. It will take place at the Army Officers' Mess, 149 Somerset St. West, on Wednesday, **September 27** at 7:30 PM. Everyone welcome. Non-members \$5. Information (613) 733-1744.
- Finland's Ambassador to Canada, **His Excellency Vesa Lehtonen**, will address the CNS on Wednesday, **October 18** at 7:30 PM at the Army Officers' Mess, 149 Somerset St. West.
- On Saturday, **October 21** at 7:30 PM, a special concert, **Nordic Favourites - A Musical Salute to Finland's 100th Anniversary**, sponsored by the Embassy of Finland, Canadian Friends of Finland Ottawa and the CNS, will be presented at the beautiful [First Unitarian Congregation of](#)

[Ottawa](#) Church, 30 Cleary Ave. Popular Finnish folk songs and classical pieces will be presented by the [Toronto Pelimannit](#), [Trygve Ringereide](#) (tenor), [Shawne Elizabeth](#) (soprano), and the Finnish Singers. A reception will follow, sponsored by Ikea Canada. The concert is organized by Costa Kapsalis. Tickets are \$20 each and are available from any CNS Council member. Tickets are also available for purchase by PayPal on the [CNS website](#). If you use PayPal, please bring your receipt. Information: Trygve Ringereide (613) 744-3650 or Costa Kapsalis (613) 726-1808.

- **A Nordic Salute Gala Dinner and Musical Celebration** to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Republic of Finland. To be held on Thursday, **November 9** at Les Jardins de La Cité Restaurant, 801 Aviation Parkway. 6:00 PM for cocktails, 7:00 PM dinner. Additional information and tickets will be available on the [CNS website](#) shortly. Save the date!

***Don't forget!** Our year begins at the beginning of September, so that is when you should be paying your [annual dues](#). It's very easy to pay [online](#), or you can pay in person at one of our events, including our luncheons. Or use the form at the end of this newsletter to pay by mail.*

September Luncheon

The first luncheon of the new season will take place on Monday, **September 11**, at the Army Officers' Mess, 149 Somerset Street West, at noon. If you haven't been before, now is a great time to start! When you come in the front door, turn to your left to get to the bar and purchase your ticket and a glass of wine or beer if you like. The price of the lunch is very reasonable and includes soup or salad, a sandwich, and dessert and coffee. You can chat with other members in the bar area if you arrive before noon. At noon we head into the dining room and pick up our name tags before sitting down for lunch. You will hear lots of English but some Nordic languages spoken as well. For the schedule of all of the luncheons from September until June, please visit our [website](#).

Annual Lutefisk Dinner (by Per Talgoy)

Dear Lutefisk Lovers and Others,

It is that time of the year when I am taking reservations for the **10th Annual Lutefisk Lovers and Others Dinner**, booked for Saturday **November 18**, 2017, 6:00-9:00 PM at the New Edinburgh Field House, 193 Stanley Ave.

I supply a dinner of lutefisk, boiled potatoes and peas, as well as coffee and tea. My break-even price this year will be the same as last year- \$15.00/person. I also invite people who may not like lutefisk, but want to socialize with the group. The cost is \$3/person, to cover hall rental. They are welcome to bring their own food. Each year, people bring lovely desserts for everyone to enjoy, I hope that happens again this year!

Also, for the 16th year in a row, I am also selling frozen lutefisk. My break-even price this year is the same as last year- \$22.00 for a 1.75 pound package.

Please send your reply to per.Talgoy@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca in English, I do not read Norwegian. I didn't study hard enough when Hjørdis Weibust gave some evening lessons years ago!

Hilsen,
Per Olav

Jenny Lind Concert a Resounding Success

Every year in early June, the Embassy of Sweden invites two students of classical music to come and perform in the spirit of the great Swedish soprano Jenny Lind. This year for the first time, the CNS joined the Swedish Embassy as co-sponsor of the concert. CNS member Costa Kapsalis was the impresario who organized it. Named "A Classical Treat," the concert featured soprano Ylva Stenberg and pianist Allan Timofeitchik. Swedish ambassador Per Sjögren was in attendance. Our new Vice-President Trygve Ringereide, an accomplished tenor, joined Ylva Stenberg in singing the Swedish "Ack, Värmeland du sköna."

The concert was thoroughly enjoyed, and the National Capital Opera Society gave it a very favourable review in its 2017 newsletter (see [excerpt](#)).

Fourth CNS President Major Gunnar O. H. Poulsen: 1969-70 *(by Hilde Huus and Toni Larsen)*

I (Hilde) had to skip over Major Poulsen in my series about past CNS Presidents until now, simply because I was not able to find any information about him. However, Toni Larsen saw my plea for information in a recent newsletter and came to my rescue. She sent me an email telling me that she remembered this fine man very well, and that he was Danish, not Swedish as I had assumed. Our list of Past Presidents showed his name as "Poullsson," the Swedish spelling, but Toni remembers his name as being spelled "Poulsen" and an article from the old *Ottawa Journal* dated June 6, 1969 confirms it. (Thank you to Rolf Buschardt Christensen, President of the Federation of Danish Associations in Canada, for bringing that article to my attention via CNS Past President Tim Mark.) Below is the paragraph from the *Ottawa Journal*.

Nordic Society Elects Officers Ma. G. O. H: Poulsen heads the Canadian Nordic Society for the coming term. . . . Also elected to the executive were Dr. Olav Løken and Dr. Edward Jul, vice-presidents; Dr. Peter Williams and Miss Liv Lockeberg. . secretaries; Mrs. P. J. Williams, treasurer; Mrs. Wes Blake-and Mrs. Hans Eichorn, councillors. The society has 165 members as well as 11 honorary members. Many of the members live in Canada for only a few years so the Society has a big turnover in membership.

Toni and I met for a cup of coffee and a chat in June and she had quite a bit to tell me about those early years in the Canadian Nordic Society. She knew that Gunnar Poulsen was a Major of the Royal Canadian Air Force stationed at CFB Rockcliffe at the time he was President of the CNS. She remembers him as having been a tall man and very nice.

Toni recalls that the CNS had an annual dinner at CFB Rockcliffe in those years. She remembers attending one with her husband in 1970 and I was able to find a reference to the previous one in the *Ottawa Journal* of January 26, 1969.

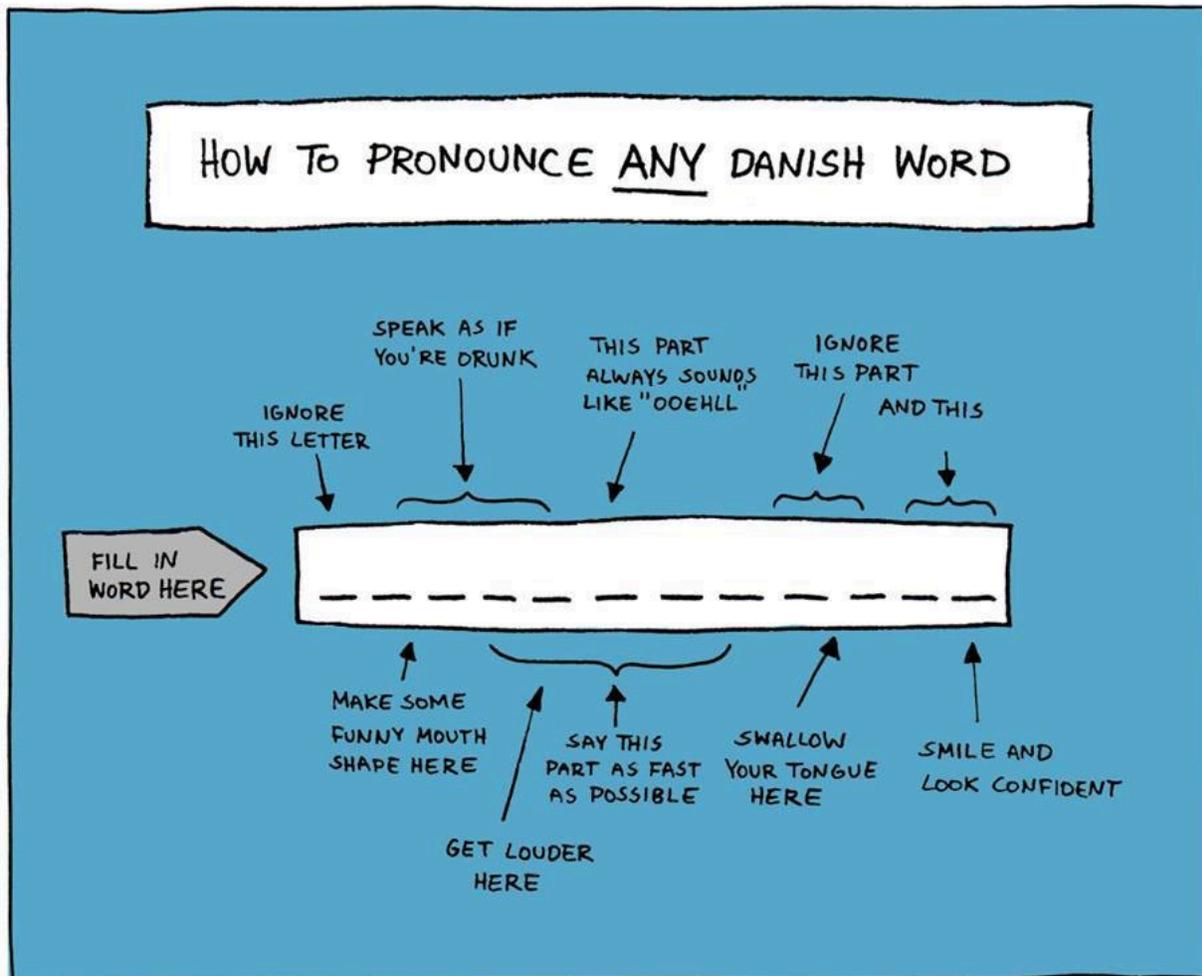
Nordic Society Dinner Dance At CFB Mess Mr. Dan Gibson Harris, president of the Canadian Nordic Society from 1963 to 1968, was honored for his service at the society's annual dinner and dance or "Knuts-bkrt," Thursday evening. Among the 150 guests at the Officers Mess, CFB, Uplands were Swedish Ambassador Per Lind and Mrs. Lind; Danish Ambassador A. Bogh Andersen and Mrs. Andersen; the Charge d'Affaires of Finland, Pertd Raudas and Mrs. Raudas; Mr. Justice J. T. Thorson and Mrs. Thorson and Dean G. C Merrill and Mrs. Merrill. Major G. O. H. Poulsen, society vice-president was master of ceremonies.

Toni also told me about the very special Lucia processions that were held for a year or two at Ottawa's National Arts Centre. Major Poulsen was recently widowed and had a blonde teenage daughter who was perfect for the role of Lucia. Everyone gathered at the mezzanine to watch as she processed down the staircase, wearing a crown of real, lit candles on her head. Lucia was followed by a procession of girls carrying candles and all dressed in white followed by the Nisser (elves) in red, carrying their lanterns. Toni's twin boys, Kaj & Sven, who were then five years old, were amongst this group. Several mothers stood by with wet towels on hand, just in case. Quite a sight it must have been! That year CBC filmed the procession and showed it on TV. The fire chief found out about it and that was the end of using the National Arts Centre for the Lucia procession! Toni remembers Major Poulsen as having been a good president. She recalls that he remarried and moved away from Ottawa, likely to a new posting with the Royal Canadian Air Force.

I also learned that Toni herself had served on the CNS Council as Treasurer for a couple of years, starting in the year following Major Poulsen's presidency. In those days, they tried to have one representative of each Nordic country on Council. As outgoing President, Major Poulsen asked Toni's Danish husband Hugh Larsen to join the Council. He replied that he was too busy, and suggested Toni. She ended up on Council for a couple of years along with Ed Jull, Peter Glynn, Ed Napke, and Leena Järvlepp (wife of current CNS member Eric Jarvlepp.)

Toni was born and raised in Ireland and moved to England at the age of 26, where she met and married Hugh. Hugh Larsen was the founding president of the Danish Club of Canada, of which Toni is still a member. She told me she has learned enough Danish to read and understand it quite well, but finds it very difficult to pronounce. I am sure she is not alone in that! I couldn't resist including the little explanation below of how to pronounce **any** Danish word.

Toni is very interested in cooking and says she may not really speak Danish, but she does cook Danish! We really did have a wonderful conversation and I do hope to see Toni at some of our luncheons and events this Fall.



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Lessons from the Arctic

When the Norwegian Embassy contacted CNS Council in late May wondering if we might be interested in hosting a talk by Geir Kløver, the Director of the Fram Museum in Oslo, our response was an enthusiastic “Yes!” All of the Norwegians on Council (and there happen to be several of us at the moment) have visited the Fram Museum at some point in our lives. The Fram Museum is Norway’s museum about polar exploration and honours three great Norwegian polar explorers in particular—Fridtjof Nansen, Otto Sverdrup and Roald Amundsen. “*Fram*” (which means “forward”) is the name of a ship that was used by all three of these men in their polar explorations and the ship itself is on display at the museum. Generations of Norwegian school children, polar enthusiasts, visitors, and tourists have been to the museum since it was first established in 1936.

Fram Museum Director Geir Kløver was in Canada on official business related to the celebration of Norway’s 75 years of diplomatic relations with Canada. At noon on June 1, the bells in the Peace Tower played “Oppå Fjellet” (“On top of the mountain”) by Edvard Grieg. At the same moment, Ambassador Anne Kari H. Ovind presented the speakers of the House of Commons and Senate with

a special edition of Roald Amundsen's expedition diaries freshly translated into English, noting that it was "a fitting symbol to mark both our 75 years of diplomatic relations and the 150th Anniversary of Confederation." The diaries are of particular interest to Canadians because they chronicle Amundsen's expedition of 1903 to 1906 through the Northwest Passage, during which he and his men depended on and formed friendships with the Nettilik Inuit families of the Central Arctic. The lessons learned during those three years were key to Amundsen's later success in winning the race to the South Pole.



*Geir Kløver, Director of the Fram Museum, and CNS President Karin Birnbaum
(photo by Rozanne Junker)*

Councillor Hanne Sjøborg took the lead in organizing Geir Kløver's talk and with just a few days notice, found a place that could accommodate us - the Clarkstown Restaurant on Beechwood Avenue; got a notice out to our CNS-announce subscribers and affiliate organizations; and booked 43 people to attend. The talk and lunch took place at noon on Friday, June 2. It was called "Lessons from the Arctic: How Roald Amundsen Won the Race to the South Pole." And what a story Mr. Kløver had to tell!

Amundsen had wanted to be a polar explorer since his childhood but appeased his mother's wishes by entering medical school. When she died, he dropped out and dedicated himself to learning everything he could about polar exploration. He started out by studying earlier expeditions such as Franklin's to learn from their mistakes, and he got his master mariner's license, thus becoming "Captain Amundsen". His first polar exploration adventure was as First Mate for the Belgian Antarctic Expedition of 1897-99. It was the first ever to winter in the Antarctic region, their ship having become frozen in the thick sea ice. Scurvy was a serious problem and Amundsen learned from the ship doctor that diet was key to preventing it. Unlike some of the others, Amundsen was ready and willing to eat everything that came from the sea, including seal and penguin.

Amundsen then decided to take on the challenge of being the first to get through the Northwest Passage. He also wanted to find the current location of the North Magnetic Pole and went to Germany to study with the leading expert on magnetism, learning German in the process. Then he purchased a 70 x 20 ft herring fishing boat called the “*Gjøa*”, and assembled a crew of only seven men. (Compare this to Franklin’s large ship and crew of 129 men.) Amundsen knew that a small boat would be easier to pass through the shallow Northwest Passage, and that the fewer mouths he had to feed, the better. Amundsen chose his small crew very carefully. He made sure it included men who knew how to live off the land - experienced hunters, trappers, and pilots.



The Gjøa

Amundsen made meticulous preparations for the voyage, researching maps of the Canadian Arctic and speaking to whalers who were familiar with the conditions of the area. He had a 13-horsepower marine paraffin motor installed on the *Gjøa*, which had previously been powered only by sail. He mapped out his route in advance, filed it, and stuck to it as he and his crew sailed across the North Atlantic and past Baffin Island. On September 9, 1903, they reached what is now called Gjøa Haven on King William Island. They emptied the ship and set to work building houses out of wooden crates.

Amundsen knew there were Inuit living on King William Island and had brought items to trade - tools, wood, and other items. His first meeting with them was on October 29, 1903, and from that moment, everything changed. Amundsen’s interest and focus switched from studying the North Magnetic Pole to making an ethnographic study of the Inuit. The group he encountered had never seen white men before. Only a few days after their first meeting, Amundsen spent his first night with them in an igloo. Determined to learn their language, he began by using signs and gestures. Over the course of 13 months, he learned it to the point of fluency. This made it possible for him to understand their unique world view including the nuances of their view of life and death. He was

also able to find out what they knew about the *Franklin* expedition and its final tragic end. Among their possessions, the group had some knives from that expedition.



Amundsen (left) and the crew of the Gjøa

Using the items he had brought along to trade, Amundsen was able to procure a sample of pretty much everything the Inuit had, all of it very worn from daily use. He put together what amounted to an extremely valuable time capsule of their way of life. Amundsen also persevered with his magnetic studies and was successful in pinpointing the location of the Magnetic North Pole. His meticulous observations are still useful to scientists today.

Amundsen and his men spent two winters at Gjøa Haven before completing the first successful navigation of the Northwest Passage, spending a third winter in the Arctic before finally sailing to Nome, Alaska. Those three years of living in Arctic conditions plus the survival skills he learned directly from the Inuit would be invaluable to him later in planning his expedition to the South Pole. For example, he learned how important dogs were to the Inuit and how they used them. In the vast, unmarked open spaces of the Arctic, sled dogs needed someone to lead them in the right direction. (When Amundsen put together his crew for his South Pole expedition, he recruited the fastest skier in Norway for that job.) He learned that a large number of dogs were needed because they tended to die off of various diseases. And he learned how to ice the runners of the sleds so they would run smoothly over the extremely cold, dry snow.

Amundsen also came to appreciate the properties of the clothing worn by the Inuit. Made of caribou hair, each strand of which is hollow, it was very light yet extremely warm. A layer of inner clothing was worn with the hair next to the skin, and the outer clothing was worn with the hair on the outside. The style was loose, with good circulation. The long “tail” at the back was great for sitting on and the tassels at the bottom kept the wind from blowing up the back.

Amundsen and his men learned to eat what was available locally, in season. And after a great deal of practice and many sorry-looking results, they finally learned how to build igloos, the ultimate proof that they really had learned from the Inuit how to live off the land in Arctic conditions.



Crew of the Fram

After his successful Northwest Passage expedition, Amundsen embarked on a world-wide speaking tour in multiple languages, this being an important part of financing his expeditions. Then he started planning a trip to reach the North Pole. He obtained the use of the *Fram* ship, raised the necessary funds, and put together an experienced crew of 19 men. When a couple of other explorers claimed to have reached the North Pole already, Amundsen changed his mind about his destination. He and his crew left Oslo on June 3, 1910, and it was only once they had reached Madeira, off the coast of Portugal, that Amundsen informed his men that his true goal was the South Pole. It is a testament to his extraordinary leadership that the entire crew agreed to the drastic change in plan.

The trip to the South Pole was arduous, with many setbacks along the way. Amundsen knew that it was crucial to manage morale among his men and had planned carefully for that too. The ship's provisions included alcohol and tobacco, which were passed around on all special occasions. There was a record player on board, gifts for Christmas, and even a steam bath so each man had a hot steam bath and a shave once a week.

The diaries and accounts of the South Pole voyage by many of the crew members have now been published and each one naturally provides a slightly different perspective on the expedition, while at the same time revealing something about the personality of the writer.

Geir Kløver had a great deal more to tell us about Amundsen's expedition to the South Pole, the meticulous and painstaking preparations that ensured its success, Amundsen's ability and willingness to learn from his mistakes, and his enlightened attitude towards his crew. The best way to find out more would be to visit the Fram Museum in Oslo yourself. But if that's not possible, there are good books on the subject; for example "The Last Viking: The Life of Roald Amundsen" by Stephen R. Bown, and "The Last Place on Earth: Scott and Amundsen's Race to the South Pole" by Roland Huntford. The CNS was honoured to receive from Mr. Kløver a copy of the newly published "The Roald Amundsen's Diaries: the Northwest Passage 1903 to 1905". Council will make this book available for members to examine at some of our events this Fall.

Upcoming Events of Interest

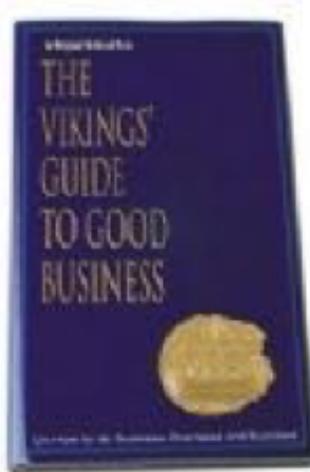
- **The Danish Club of Ottawa** will once again have a table at the **New Edinburgh Community Sale** on Saturday **September 16**, from 8 AM to early afternoon. They will be in front of St. John Lutheran Church Hall, 270 Crichton Street, Ottawa. Danish and other items for sale.
- **Finnish Thanksgiving Church Service** on Sunday, **October 1**, 3:00 PM at St Peter's Lutheran Church, 400 Sparks St. Ottawa. Everyone is welcome! Note:
 - enter from parking lot side door only
 - don't forget the parking permit for your car
 - doors are locked for safety reasons during the service
- **The Danish Club of Ottawa's Harvest Church Service** Sunday, **October 1** at 2:30 PM at St. John Lutheran Church Hall, 270 Crichton Street, Ottawa. Pastor Kenneth Berg to deliver the sermon. "Hyggeligt samvær" in the Church Hall afterwards with home-baked delicacies. All welcome.
- The National Arts Centre **Ideas of North Festival** runs from **October 3 to 14**. "Morning to night, explore perspectives on the North through music, architecture, digital installations and the culinary arts. Enjoy both free and paid events in this immersive festival in celebration of Canada's 150th and Finland's 100th birthdays. Make yourself at home in Canada's living room." For information on the exhibits, concerts, parties, and more, and to book tickets, go to <https://nac-cna.ca/en/orchestra/packages/ideas-of-north>

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

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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:

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

In person

You can pay in person when you attend one of our luncheons or speaker events. Please speak to any one of our Council members.



Canadian Nordic Society

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www.canadiannordicsociety.com

Membership Application/Renewal

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