

INTERNATIONAL FORUM OSLO

NEWSLETTER

December 2025
Issue No. 513



Coming Events:



January Monthly Meeting, January 12, p. 11

Dr. Marte Roa Syvertsen:

The Brain in a Digital Age. How to Master the Digital Challenge.



Special Events, January 27, p. 12

Guided Tour of the Famous Grand Hotel on Karl Johans Gate 31.





INTERNATIONAL FORUM

P.O. Box 1505 Vika, 0117 Oslo, Norway

Website: www.iforum.no Email: info@iforum.no

Bank account number: 1600 40 36631

VIPPS to: 591747

Board 2025-2026: Elizabeth S. Rasmussen (President), Sylvia Krämer, Trine Westborg, Elizabeth Kolby, Adina Badescu and Lia Rendòn (Board Members), Trudy Brand-Jacobsen, Sissel Lindeman, and Andis E. Faizasyah (Deputies)

Office: Please send inquiries by email.

Email: info@iforum.no

Editor: Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

Editorial Team: Elspeth Walseth, Robin Wittusen and Renate Scapin

Forum Secretary: Sylvia Krämer

Treasurer: TBA

Auditor: Verena Krienke

Committee Leaders:

Monthly Meetings: Gunnel Anita Solheim

Special Events: Mona B. Reinboth

Art Committee: Jane Steenbuch

Activities: Gunnel Anita Solheim

Nomination Committee: Åsny W. Walters, Berit Lindstrøm and Wenche Mohr

If you wish to become a member of International Forum, please contact us by email, and we will send you an application form.



IN THIS NEWSLETTER

FEATURES/EVENTS	DATE	TIME	PAGE
-----------------	------	------	------

FROM THE BOARD

The President's Page			4
From the Monthly Meeting Committee			5
Closing Statement by the Interim Board			8
			9

COMING EVENTS

January Monthly Meeting

Dr. Marte Roa Syvertsen:

*The brain in a digital age. How
to master the digital challenge.*

Jan 12 17:45 11

Special events

Guided Tour of the Grand Hotel Jan 27 11:30 12

REPORTS

October Monthly Meeting

Dr. Karen Greve: 'The Power
of the Voice.'

14

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES

For the **January Newsletter**, the deadline is **December 12**. Please send your contribution to Elizabeth S. Rasmussen by email to [Elizabeth Rasmussen](mailto:Elizabeth.Rasmussen@iforum.no) and to info@iforum.no. The Editorial Team reserve the right to edit ***all*** material.



THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE



Dear Members,

As your newly elected President, I thank you for your confidence in me! It is a daunting task with great responsibility that I take on. The new Board shall do its very best to ensure that the running of the Forum will continue smoothly. I think we have a great team with both experienced and new members.

The first of December marks the beginning of Advent and the beginning of the festive season with Christmas lights and candles. When you live in the North, you learn to compensate for the darkness. In my house, we light candles even for breakfast! Our Christmas Meeting is another opportunity to come together, to meet new people, strengthen old friendships, and maybe for a while forget about the turmoil and confusion around the world.

In the months ahead, the Board needs to find a new Treasurer and replace the very expensive contract that we have with Styreweb Regnskap AS until the end of January. We must decide whether or not we will be able to continue with the plan that we had before December 2024; i.e using only Styreweb and someone from the Forum or an external consultant who can monitor and extract the monthly financial statements and other essential documents that we need to function properly.

We do have a great team of competent committee leaders and dedicated members who will help us promote friendship and understanding among cultures. Being together and sharing experiences is key to that. The committees are the backbone of our organisation, and they have a super line-up for us in spring! As your President, I will try to participate in as many activities as I can.

Please note that the first Monthly Meeting of 2026 will start on the *second* Monday of January, which will allow members to come back and recuperate from their holidays. As we all know, holidays – albeit great fun – can be rather exhausting.

Best wishes for a joyous holiday season!

Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

COMING EVENTS

JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING

Dr. Marte Roa Syvertsen: *The Brain in a Digital Age. How to Master the Digital Challenge.*



Monday, January 12

Dr. Marte Roa Syvertsen is a research physician at the Department of Neurology at Drammen Hospital. Through more than ten years of dedicated research, she has explored the mysteries of the brain.

She is the author of books such as *The Human Brain – Dangerous and Fantastic* and *The Adolescent Brain – Wild and Visionary* – which have made the intricacies of the brain accessible to a broad readership. She is also the founder and leader of EpilepsyNett, a national research network that has received support from the Research Council of Norway.

Her latest book is *The Brain - a Biography: How Life Gets in Your Head - and Everything You Can Do to Take Control* (2025).

Our world is constantly changing. Digital tools are developing and providing new opportunities and new challenges, and have changed the way we buy goods, communicate with banks and authorities and travel collectively. The increased risk of online fraudsters, hackers and identity thieves warrants greater vigilance. We constantly deal with manipulated images, ‘fake news’ and conspiracy theories. Artificial intelligence is being presented as a potential challenger to the human brain. How do we deal with this? What resources do we have at our disposal? How do we cope with the digital challenge?

DATE/TIME: **Monday, January 12 at 17:45 (for 18:00)**

PLACE: Majorstuen Seniorarena, Slemdalsveien 3a, 0369 OSLO

SIGN UP: To Gunnar Anita Solheim by email: before Thursday, **January 8.**

PRICE: **NOK 105.-** Please sign up to Gunnel Anita before you pay. Please make your payment **preferably by VIPPS** to 591747 or pay by bank transfer to the Forum account: 1600 40 36631. Please **state the event and your name** in the transaction in the dialogue box for VIPPS and in the KID-number box for bank payments.

Guests are welcome.

Cancellations and no-shows after the deadline will be charged.

For last-minute cancellations, please call Gunnel Anita Solheim on mobile phone.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Pre-announcement

Tour of the Famous Grand Hotel on Karl Johans Gate



Tuesday, January 27

The Special Events Committee organised a similar tour in January this year. It was so popular that we had a long waiting list. Hotel Manager Toril Flåskjer, who guided us around the hotel, has very kindly agreed to do another tour on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. We hope that those of you who did not get a place last time will join us on this wonderful tour.

The historical Grand Hotel opened in 1874. The hotel comes into focus every year on December 10, when it hosts the celebrations of the Nobel Peace Prize. We have all seen on television the Laureate on the hotel balcony, waving to the crowds holding torches in the street below. However, the walls of this hotel have seen and heard many other things, too. Come have a look around this truly unique and beautiful hotel and get to know its history.

Possibility for lunch in the 'Hall of Fame' in Palmen restaurant after the tour.

DATE/TIME: Tuesday, January 27 at 11:30

More information in the January *Newsletter*.

REPORTS

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

Karen Greve, Speech Therapist

'The Power of the Voice'



Around 40 members had come to listen to Karen Greve on November 3. She is an Accent Method Breathing Instructor and an opera singer. Unfortunately, due to problems with the projector, she was unable to show her slides but bravely delivered her lecture without them. She was witty and instructive, and she guided us through some of the peculiarities of the human voice. We were given examples and smaller exercises to illustrate what she was explaining.

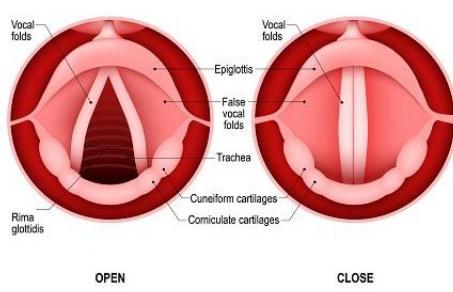
She started by talking about the *sound* of humanity, and explained that no individuals have identical voices, not even identical twins. Our voices are our vocal

'fingerprint'. The voice depends on the size and the shape of the larynx and on the movement of the vocal folds. The voice can convey emotions, identity and relations to others. The quality of the voice depends on the situation we are in and with whom we are communicating. Some voices are more agreeable than

others. Some voices we like, others we don't. Harsh or shrill voices, or the tiresome squeaky voices some people have.

We all tend to pass judgment on the voices we hear. If an adult has a 'childish' voice, we may not take that person seriously. Sometimes we

VOCAL FOLDS



are overlooked by others if we have a high-pitched and soft voice. Have you ever had trouble attracting the attention of a busy waiter?

The two primary roles of the lungs are a) to inhale oxygen to the lungs and exhale carbon dioxide, and b) to make the vocal folds vibrate. The primary function of the larynx at the top of the trachea is to protect the airways and the lungs.

Anatomy of Larynx



There are many strong muscles around the larynx, so if you swallow into the wrong tube, you will have a violent uncontrollable cough. The vocal folds are also muscles. When they vibrate in a wave-like fashion, they create sound. Strangely enough, the trachea and the larynx do not have nerves, and we cannot *feel* our vocal cords.

The way we breathe can reveal our emotions or connections to others. Everything inside and around us will have an impact on our voice. The pressure of our exhalation tells us something about the mood of a person. The pressure can be applied consciously or unconsciously to produce a pleading voice, or an excited voice. Anyone who has lost their voice knows that it is stressing and frustrating not to be able to communicate.

So, how do you care for your voice? Honey, lemon, ginger and other ‘remedies’ do not help at all, because they do not reach the vocal folds, which are protected by the larynx, as we have seen. However, warm liquids tend to relax the body and this is of course good. And anything that relaxes you is good for your voice. Water is the magic word. Water, water, water. Being dehydrated is not good for the voice. And don’t clear your throat unless you have a cold or the flu’ when clearing the throat and coughing is an impulsive involuntary action! Clearing your throat is a bad habit that you should try to avoid, because it is a violent act on the vocal folds. If you are sick, don’t speak! Let the vocal folds rest.

Dr. Karen Greve managed to make us laugh at regular intervals during her very informative lecture, especially when she physically demonstrated her points.

There were several questions at the end. Unfortunately, and partly due to the technology not working, we forgot to take pictures. I have compensated by finding illustrations of where exactly the vocal folds are located and what they look like.

Elizabeth S. Rasmusn

INTERNATIONAL FORUM



Org.no: 994 566 806

President: Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

Editor: Elizabeth S. Rasmussen

Editorial Team: Elspeth Walseth, Robin Wittusen and Renate Scapin

The Editor and the Editorial Team reserve the right to edit **all** material.

Dispatch: December 1, 2025