



Nordic News

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

Distinguished Speaker Series: Ian Tamblyn on February 21



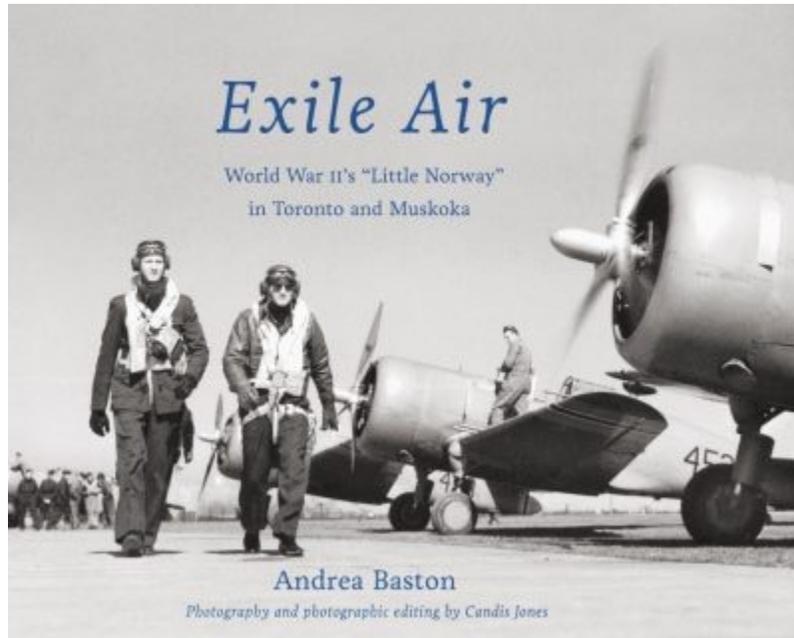
In addition to being a Juno-awarding winning musician, Ian Tamblyn describes himself as an adventurer, and with every justification. He has travelled to such remote places as the north shore of Lake Superior, the Nahanni River in the Northwest Territories, and the Chukchi Sea between Siberia and Alaska. He has also participated in scientific research expeditions to Greenland and Antarctica. Ian Tamblyn will speak to us about these travels and the impact of climate change that he has personally witnessed. He will include some slides in his presentation and will also perform music that was inspired by his travels! A special evening not to be missed!

The Ottawa Senators Host 2017-18 Nordic Night!

Come out on April 2 to watch the Senators play the Winnipeg Jets! Wear or bring your Viking or other Nordic paraphernalia for a fun night out with your fellow Nordic enthusiasts! Cheer for the Nordic players on both teams! Please go to the registration [form](#) for more information and to order.

Andrea Baston's Talk on "Exile Air"

You could have heard a pin drop in the Army Officers' Mess on January 17 as Andrea Baston quietly but clearly told the stories of the young Norwegian men who came to Canada to train as pilots, gunners, navigators, and mechanics, determined to do their part to defeat the Nazis who had occupied their beloved country. Although the story of the WWII training camps known as "Little Norway" was certainly not unknown to the Canadian Nordic Society audience, we were fascinated to hear Andrea explain the events that led up to them and the impact that the young Norwegians had on the war effort. She painted a vivid picture of the young men's lives and their interactions with their Canadian hosts, some of the results of which were evident in that very room!



Andrea grew up in Gravenhurst hearing about Little Norway. A local history enthusiast, she decided to research the whole story and record it so it would not be forgotten. With the help of Candis Jones, who provided photographs and photographic editing, she published "Exile Air: World War II's "Little Norway" in Toronto and Muskoka."

In her talk (as in her book), she set out the events that led to the invasion of Norway by Nazi Germany, and the establishment of locations in Canada to train the Norwegian Air Services. The Toronto Island Airport was selected as the initial location for novice pilots to learn to take off and land their planes and to perfect their flight manoeuvres. A piece of land was available close by on the Toronto harbour front for living quarters and training. Not surprisingly, the heroic young Norwegians soon became a big hit on Toronto's social scene, the officers being invited to an endless stream of cocktail parties while the servicemen socialized at the Royal York Hotel and the Piccadilly Hotel on King Street West, and at the canteens that offered hearty cheap meals and were cheerfully staffed by young women, including many willing volunteers for dancing!

Little Norway's commanding officer from 1941 on was the famous Norwegian Olympic athlete

Ole Reistad. A hardy outdoorsman, he began to worry that the men were becoming distracted by the lures of city life and thought they would benefit from some clean, country living. He had a special camp constructed north of Toronto in the Lake of Bays area of Muskoka, to be used for training and also as a place for pilots to rest after returning from combat. It was christened “Vesle Skaugum” or “Little Skaugum”, Skaugum being the name of the royal residence outside of Oslo at the foot of Skaugumsåsen mountain.

Toronto and its Island Airport continued to be used but the city’s residents were becoming increasingly concerned about the daringly low flights over the city by novice pilots. They flew from morning to evening, with varying degrees of accuracy in their flight paths and manoeuvres. After a couple of fatal accidents, the decision was made to create a new training camp at the Muskoka Airport. In one sense the move was already too late. Many relationships and a few marriages between the Norwegians and young women of Toronto had already been established. Andrea told us that the train that brought visitors from the city to Gravenhurst on Friday nights was soon nicknamed the “passion train.”

I learned many things from Andrea’s talk (and even more by reading her very thoroughly researched book.) I had not known that Norway’s government-in-exile financed the entire cost of its own Air Services, including the training camps in Canada. This was largely through income flowing in from the Allies for their use of Norway’s merchant marine, the third largest in the world at that time. As noted in “Exile Air”, “Until 1942, half of the fuel and one-third of all the other supplies delivered to Britain arrived on Norwegian merchant marine vessels.”

I had certainly never fully appreciated the significant contribution Norway’s Air Services (officially named the Royal Norwegian Air Force in 1944) made to the War effort on reconnaissance and secret missions, patrols, and in combat. Although they were organized under British command, separate Norwegian squadrons were manned by Norwegians flying under the Norwegian flag. Norwegian squadrons shot down 15% of the planes that were destroyed at Dieppe, and played a major role in protecting Allied soldiers from enemy aircraft in the days following D-Day. But of course there was a heavy price in human lives that went along with these accomplishments. 309 Norwegian Air Force members were killed during the War, and we will never know how many young Norwegians died trying to escape occupied Norway and make their way to Canada to train.

I was astonished to learn that a full 10% of the Norwegians at “Little Norway” married Canadians, but perhaps I shouldn’t have been. Past President Haakon Aas was one pilot from “Little Norway” who married a Canadian and ended up settling here. Past President Sirkka Omholt-Jensen, although Finnish herself, met her Norwegian pilot husband Edvard Omholt-Jensen in Toronto when he was at Little Norway. Edvard was already a good friend of Little Norway’s commanding officer Ole Reistad before the War. He had served as General Secretary of the *Norsk Aero Klubb* at the time that Ole Reistad served as its President. In 1986, Edvard Omholt-Jensen wrote a book about his friend called “Ole Reistad, The Spirit of Little Norway.” First published in Norwegian, it was then translated into English. The book contains what he described as an “unofficial list” of all personnel who were part of Little Norway.

Past President Per Talgøy is the son of a Norwegian who met his Canadian wife while at “Little Norway,” and so is our current Vice-President, Trygve Ringereide. Both Per and Trygve were

present for the talk and both seemed to greatly enjoy and appreciate it. Thank you to Trygve's wife Marian McLennan for the great photo of her husband with author Andrea Baston, below!



CNS Vice-president Trygve Ringereide with author Andrea Baston

If you were not able to attend Andrea Baston's talk but would like to order a copy of her book, you can do so through her publishing company, [Old Stone Books](#).

A Most Memorable Evening

Our January 25 the "Finland 100 Gala Celebration" at Les Jardins de la Cité was a great success thanks to the organizing committee, the staff and students at La Cité, and the musical talents of Trygve Ringereide and Cecelia Ignatieff. Special recognition must be given to Hanne Sjøborg whose inspiration, organizational skills and attention to detail resulted in a most memorable night that was greatly appreciated by the Nordic ambassadors, CNS members, and their guests. The evening got off to a great start with the delicious "Blue Viking cocktail", invented especially for the occasion by Hanne's son William after a great deal of devoted and conscientious scientific experimentation in collaboration with Hanne's husband, CNS member Henry Storgaard. Here is the recipe: 1 part Finlandia vodka, 1 part Elderberry liqueur, 1/2 part Ikea blueberry syrup, 1 part soda water. Decorate with frozen blueberries. Worth a try, I assure you!

Hanne has posted some photos of that evening on our CNS Facebook page, which you can view at <https://www.facebook.com/hanna.sjoeborg/posts/10155135189646630>

The Twentieth Day of Christmas

It was while I was working on my article about the twelve days of Christmas for the January *Nordic News* that I discovered that some Scandinavians count one extra day, the “thirteenth day of Christmas”, as the official day for taking down the Christmas tree. Since then, I have learned from my mother that in the area where she grew up, on the east coast of the Oslo fjord, they went so far as to recognize the “twentieth day of Christmas!” She told me that it was considered acceptable to participate in Christmas-related events, for example a school Christmas concert, right up until that date, which is January 13. But after that, Christmas was really and truly over (except for the eating of the seven kinds of cookies baked for Christmas Eve, which often lasted until Easter.)

By sheer coincidence, the day after my mother told me about the twentieth day, Hanne Sjøborg came across an [article](#) in the *Local Sweden* about “St. Knut’s Day”, also known as the “Twentieth Day of Christmas.” It said that “Celebrating the end of Christmas on January 13th is a tradition restricted to the Nordic countries, primarily Sweden along with parts of Norway and Sweden.” Some Nordics really know how to make Christmas last!

Recommended Books of 2017

Two books from the American National Public Radio’s (NPR) end of year “Best of” lists caught my eye. I haven’t read them yet, but plan to. They are:

- “Arabia Felix: The Danish Expedition Of 1761-1767” by Thorkild Hansen, translated by James McFarlane and Kathleen McFarlane. NPR’s website had this to say about it: “This tale of an 18th century scientific expedition gone awry (first published in Danish in 1962 and back out in a new English edition) is a brutal, beautiful story of human ideals – and all the clever ways we manage to muck them up. Part history, part fiction, part travelogue, this book balances its central tragedy with some winks and smirks.”
- “Norse Mythology” By Neil Gaiman. NPR wrote: “Gaiman's take is a funny and accessible account of how these Norse deities succumb to greed and vanity, how they are blinded by their self-righteousness and entitlement, and how, time and time again, they persist through – yup, you guessed it – trickery and force. In the way of myths, these ancient stories speak enduring truths about our time.”

Other Items of Interest

- “**Tom Of Finland**,” the official selection for Best Foreign Language Film from Finland, is playing at the [Bytowne Cinema](#) from **February 2 to 7**. “Handsomely photographed and sensitively acted, Dome Karukoski’s Tom Of Finland situates Laaksonen’s personal story within the larger context of gay life in mid-century Europe and the United States and makes clear how much his illustrations helped shape the now archetypal image of the gay leather man...it’s difficult to imagine the U.S. postal service issuing a stamp series featuring gay cowboys and Native Americans, but Laaksonen’s homeland issued a popular Tom of Finland set in 2014.”
- **Bright Nights: The Baltic Nordic Film Festival.** Coming up this month. Watch for a CNS-announce with a listing of the Nordic films.

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, 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>

And the CNS has its own, very active, [Facebook](#) page.

Join CNS or Renew your Membership

You can join CNS or renew your membership online, by mail, or in person. We encourage you to pay online using PayPal. This is the quickest and most efficient method.

Online

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.

By mail

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

240 Sparks Street, PO Box 55023, Ottawa, ON K1P 1A1
www.canadiannordicsociety.com

Membership Application/Renewal*

Date: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone (home): _____ Phone (work): _____

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Family Membership \$45, Individual Membership \$30, Student \$20

****To apply for membership online or renew online using PayPal, please go to:***

<http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com/register-renew-member.php>