

October 2019

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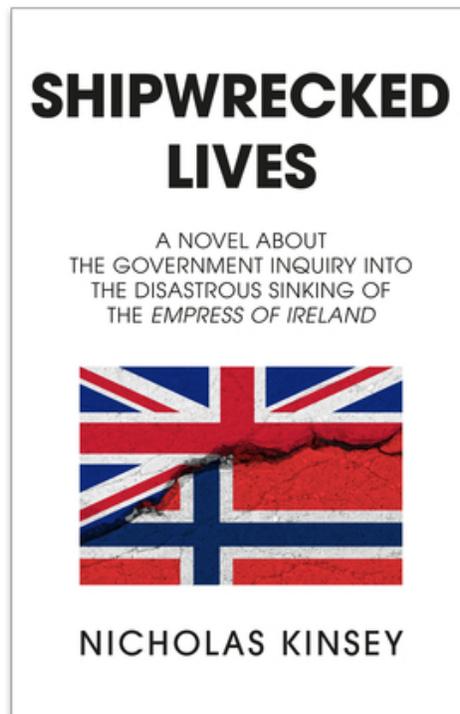


# Nordic News

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

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**Distinguished Speaker Series for October: Book Launch of “Shipwrecked Lives”  
by Nicholas Kinsey**



The *Empress of Ireland* passenger liner collided with the Norwegian collier *Storstad* in the St. Lawrence River on a foggy night in May 1914, sinking in 14 minutes and claiming the lives of 1,012 people. Author and filmmaker Nicholas Kinsey will tell us about the survivors and the government inquiry into Canada’s worst maritime disaster. In addition to the book release, a television mini-series drama is being developed with Nordic Stories in Oslo and the NRK.

The book launch will form part of our Distinguished Speakers Series. It will take place on Wednesday, October 16 at 7:30 PM at the Army Officers’ Mess, 149 Somerset Street West, Ottawa. Free admission for CNS members, \$5 for non-members.

## **New Danish Ambassador H.E. Hanne Fugl Eskjaer**



The Canadian Nordic Society welcomes Denmark's new Ambassador to Canada, Her Excellency Hanne Fugl Eskjaer. Ms. Eskjaer's most recent appointment was as Denmark's Arctic Ambassador & Head of Department for Arctic Affairs and North America. Before that she served as Denmark's Ambassador in Bangladesh. A graduate in Political Science at the Master's level from the University of Copenhagen, she has also served in Danish Embassies in Syria, Turkey, and the U.S.A. She has two children.

We love this brief video from the Embassy's Facebook page showing the Ambassador saying hello as she cycles through an Ottawa neighbourhood: <https://www.facebook.com/denmarkincanada/videos/489764371572213/?v=489764371572213>. What could be more Danish yet Canadian at the same time? We very much look forward to meeting her!

### **A Canadian Diplomat in Sweden from 1984 to 1988**

CNS Council has had member D'Arcy Thorpe in mind for our Distinguished Speakers Series for some time now. We knew that his tenure as a diplomat in Sweden in the 1980's would be an interesting topic for our members, and we were right! His very enjoyable talk on September 25 gave us a glimpse of the life of a diplomat and his family, while also informing us about some very significant events that occurred during their stay there.

D'Arcy began his talk by reminding us of the global political situation at the time he was posted to Sweden. Nelson Mandela was still in jail, the last Shah of Iran had just been deposed, Iraq had just started its war with Iran, the Soviets had invaded Afghanistan, Germany was still divided, East Germany had acquired nuclear arms, Ronald Reagan had defeated Jimmy Carter, and Pierre Trudeau had defeated Joe Clark. The Soviets had just shot down a Korean Airlines flight, killing all 269 passengers and crew. D'Arcy also noted that it was exactly 36 years ago that same evening that Soviet military officer Stanislav Petrov was warned by computer that five nuclear missiles were heading from North Dakota to the Soviet Union. Petrov somehow identified the warning as a false alarm, thereby averting a worldwide nuclear war. D'Arcy was then still at his previous posting in Prague, Czechoslovakia, then part of the Eastern Bloc under the U.S.S.R. He recalled that Prime Minister Trudeau's concern about the Cold War prompted him to visit that city. On the Prime

Minister's arrival in Prague, he was greeted by a little girl at the airport, none other than the young daughter of D'Arcy and his wife Nancy.

To prepare for his arrival in Stockholm in the summer of 1984, D'Arcy was sent to live with a Swedish family in Vancouver for six weeks of immersion in the Swedish language. To his disappointment, when he arrived in Sweden, he found that Swedes preferred to converse with him in English. His language training was useful however as he was able to read the local newspapers and other documents. His job included public affairs work such as promoting the upcoming Calgary Olympics, encouraging trade between Canada and Sweden, and reporting on political and economic issues. A steady stream of delegations from Canadian municipalities and provinces who were fascinated by the "Swedish model" visited to investigate the reasons for Sweden's success. The Province of Quebec opened a Nordic office in Stockholm in an effort to attract interest and investment.

D'Arcy's recollections of his stay included some rather unusual applications for immigration to Canada, including the defection of a senior translator from Prague, and a fisherman from the north of Sweden who wanted to start a fish farm in B.C., his assets consisting only of a dog team that was worth \$80,000. Both of these applicants were approved. Political highlights of the period included the 1988 nuclear treaty negotiated in Reykjavik by Gorbachev and Reagan in 1988 - a major achievement - and two Swedish national elections that left the Social Democrats in firm control of the country.

Two key events of D'Arcy's tenure occurred in 1986. These were the assassination of Prime Minister Olof Palme and the nuclear accident at Chernobyl. The Prime Minister was shot at 11:20 PM on the night of October 28. At 11:45 PM, D'Arcy received a phone call from Canada with the news of the assassination. He placed a few calls and within 45 minutes was on the site of the murder. By 4:00 AM, the new Prime Minister, Ingvar Carlsson, was sworn in. Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark was one of about a thousand prominent people who attended Palme's funeral on a very solemn grey day. To date the murder remains unsolved.

On Monday, April 28, 1986, a sudden escalation of radiation levels was detected at a nuclear plant north of Stockholm. This was the first indication of the Chernobyl nuclear accident. By Thursday, the Swedish newspapers were covering the story. It was not until Saturday that the Soviets confirmed that the accident had occurred. Much concern and many notices about what to do and not to do in order to stay safe ensued. We can imagine how this situation must have worried D'Arcy and Nancy.

Overall, D'Arcy and Nancy enjoyed their posting in Sweden, which included attending a dinner for the King and Queen of Sweden hosted by the Canadian ambassador in his beautiful historic residence. They found their quality of life there to be very high, if expensive. They lived in a beautiful home and their children attended good schools nearby.

Following his talk there were several questions and some interesting discussion regarding Sweden's politics, economy, and culture as compared to Canada's. And of course D'Arcy was presented with the much coveted CNS mug in appreciation for a most enjoyable evening! The photos below by Astrid Ahlgren show some of the informal discussion that followed the official event.

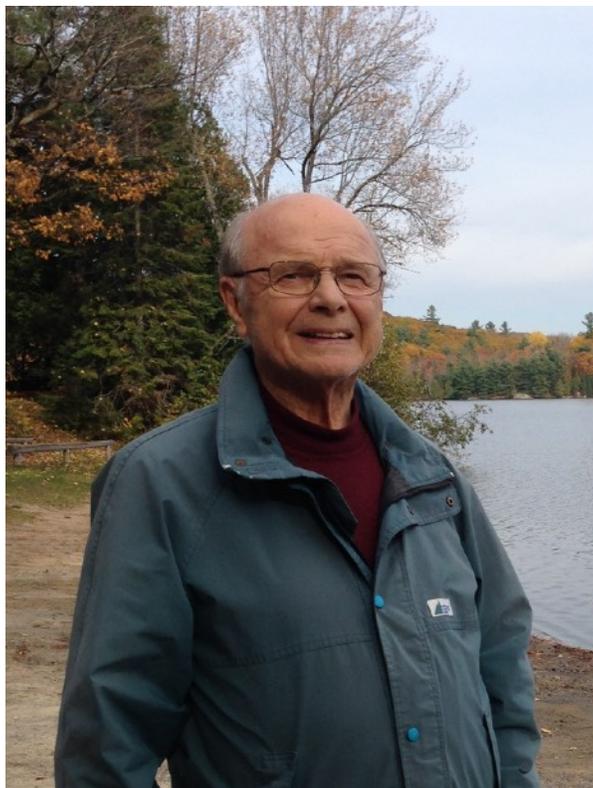


*D'Arcy Thorpe, left, in conversation with John Gilbert*



*Ross Francis, left, was Canada's Ambassador to Finland when D'Arcy was posted to Sweden*

## Y. A. George Hynnä, 15th and 27th President of the CNS (1987-89 and 2013-15)



I had the pleasure of sitting down for an interview with Past President George Hynnä in mid-June. Of course I have chatted with George often at various CNS events, but I was soon to discover how little I actually knew about him. George has always struck me as a rather low-key, unassuming gentleman but I soon realized that his manner betrays hidden depths.

George, he told me, is the English form of the Finnish name “Yrjö.” (I took a few stabs at pronouncing it but I don’t think I was able to roll the “r” well enough.) George used to torment his new high school teachers at the beginning of each year by giving Yrjö as his name. That high school was Port Arthur Collegiate in what is now Thunder Bay.

George was born in Lappe, Ontario, a small settlement about 13 km northwest of what was once Port Arthur. Lappe was an all-Finnish community. His parents had immigrated to Canada separately from the same area in Finland, his father in 1925 after completing his obligatory military service and his mother in 1927. They married in 1930 and raised their family of six children (of which George was the fifth) by farming and working in the lumber industry.

George received his eight years of primary education in a one-room school house and, like his classmates, that is where he first learned English. The pupils chatted in Finnish among themselves outside of the classroom but spoke English in class. George’s primary school education must have been perfectly adequate because he apparently had no difficulty with his secondary education at Port Arthur Collegiate. In his senior years there, he branched into language studies, learning Latin,

French, and German. Grade thirteen students all wrote a final exam at that time and George earned the highest mark in Northern Ontario. This meant that he was able to enter the University of Toronto on an entrance scholarship and an I.O.D.E. scholarship. He spent four years studying Modern Languages and Literatures (English, French and German), as well as some Near Eastern Literature, at University College, going back home in the summers to earn money driving heavy machinery and working as a labourer.

After graduation, he was named an Exchange Fellow by University College, which allowed him to go to Germany for a year of post-graduate studies. He first attended university in the famous old university town of Freiburg but after visiting West Berlin, decided to transfer to the Free University of Berlin. As it turned out, he was to become a witness to one of the key events in its history, the construction of the Berlin Wall and its attendant impact on the city's citizens. To read about his experiences during this tumultuous time, you may visit these blogs on the subject:

<https://gdobjectified.wordpress.com/2016/08/13/at-the-berlin-wall-may-27-1962/>

<https://gdobjectified.wordpress.com/2017/01/16/divided-berlin-in-1962/#more-4742>

Following his stint in Germany, George commenced studies in Toronto at Osgoode Hall Law School, graduating with his LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws) after three years. He articulated with a small firm in Ottawa, returned to Toronto to take his Bar Admission Course, and was called to the Bar of Ontario in 1967. It was in the Bar Admission Course that George met his wife Martha and they were called to the Bar at the same time. The couple had fallen in love with Ottawa and decided to settle here. Martha went on to have a very successful and varied career as an executive in the Federal Government.

After his call to the Bar, George sat down one Tuesday morning for a 45-minute interview with the prestigious Gowlings law firm. He started his 41-year career with them the following Monday. For the first ten years, he worked closely with senior partner Gordon F. Henderson (President of the Canadian Bar Association, 1979–1980; Chancellor of the University of Ottawa, 1991-1993), going to Court, seeing clients, and writing briefs. In 1977 he began to specialize. While focusing his practice in administrative law, the branch of law affecting individuals dealing with the state, he also dealt with immigration cases, not-for-profit corporations and charitable corporations.

In 1977, another of Henderson's juniors was acting for one of the Canadian musical works performing rights societies and when he left, George took over his files and, as he puts it, became an instant copyright lawyer. For 35 years he specialized in public performance rights. He eventually represented the two societies that merged in 1989 to become SOCAN (the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada), which administers in Canada the performing rights in the musical works of the world's songwriters, composers and music publishers. George was the lead counsel on some landmark cases regarding composers' rights to tariff income from private tv and radio broadcasters, the internet, and re-transmissions from American to Canadian broadcasters, successfully representing their case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. For the first hearings before the Copyright Board on the performance of music on the internet, George arranged for an M.I.T. professor to appear and explain how it worked! I understood how much SOCAN valued George's conduct of their legal affairs when he showed me the beautiful wooden box containing a pair of professional conductor batons that SOCAN presented to him on his retirement.

Beginning in the 1980's and particularly in the 1990's, George was also a member of the Joint Copyright Committee of the Canadian Bar Association and the Intellectual Property Institute of Canada, reviewing copyright legislation and making representations for amendments to the government and the House of Commons Committees. The amendments created new rights and clarified existing ones, leading to judicial cases to interpret and apply them.

George was a member of the Canadian Nordic Society Council for a few years before being elected President from 1987 to 1989. He was elected for an additional term in 2013. Part way through that term he underwent heart surgery and Bruce Miller took over as acting President.

George recalls that they had some excellent speakers during his tenure, and is particularly grateful to the Nordic ambassadors for their participation. The Symposium at Carleton University under the direction of Past President Gurli Woods stands out in his mind as an exceptional achievement for the Society. George took pains to recommend increasing the number of women on Council. In 2015 the Society awarded him the Canadian Nordic Society Certificate of Excellence in recognition of Distinguished Leadership in Promoting Knowledge of Scandinavian National Cultures. In presenting the plaque at the CNS annual general meeting, Councillor Lennard Sillanpää pointed to George's long and exemplary service to the Society and notably his exceptional contribution in drafting the CNS by-laws, which each succeeding Council relies on and appreciates.

## **Viking Gala Date Changed to Thursday January 16**

Please take note that we have changed our reservation at Les Jardins de la Cité for our Viking Gala to Thursday, January 16, as some of the Nordic ambassadors were unavailable on our previous October date. This year's gala will celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Canadian Arctic explorations by Jens Munk, the Danish navigator and explorer. Last year some people had trouble getting a parking spot close to the restaurant, so this year we will be providing a free shuttle service in case the parking lot closest to the restaurant is full. Official invitations with more details will be issued in due course.

## **Upcoming Events**

- The Danish Harvest Church Service will take place on **Saturday, October 5** at **2:00 PM** at St. John Lutheran Church, 270 Crichton Street, Ottawa.
- Thanksgiving church service in Finnish/English on **Sunday, October 6**, St Peter's Lutheran Church, 400 Sparks St, at **3:00 PM**. Entrance through side door by the parking lot, don't forget your free parking permit slip. Doors are locked during the service.
- The Danish film *Den Skyldige* (The Guilty) was the winner of Sundance IFF 2018 Audience Choice Award. It will be shown from **October 8 to 10** at the [Mayfair Theatre](#) as part of the Ottawa Film Society's International Film Series. Please go to (<http://www.filmfilmfilm.ca/international.html>) for details.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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

September 1 is the beginning of a New Membership Year. 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. If you prefer, you can pay in person when you attend one of our luncheons or speaker events. Please speak to any one of our Council members.

### 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



# Canadian Nordic Society

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

[www.canadiannordicsociety.com](http://www.canadiannordicsociety.com)

**Membership Application/Renewal\***  
*(Membership year starts on September 1)*

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone (home):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone (work):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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>**