



FÁLKINN

Official Newsletter of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto



Linda's Lore

The ICCT is very excited to announce a brand new column in Falkinn called *Linda's Lore* featuring the ever enchanting and always delightful Linda Lundstrom. See *Swimming Back to Iceland* on page 2.

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June 2013

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Á Annan Veg (Either Way) Review by Vicki Wright

"Let's enjoy the silence," says Finnbogi to Alfred who has just asked him a personal question that he doesn't want to answer. Later, Alfred will repeat it back to him, and will get a similar response for the same reason. There is an abundance of such subtle humour as the story plays out.

The film opens with a long distance shot of a seemingly remote and scenic back-of-beyond.

On the left of the screen there is a long ribbon of empty road winding around the edge of the high hills that slope off into deep valleys.

In mid-screen the camera slowly, slowly pulls a white blob toward us, which blob shapes into a small white tent. Two men, one older, one younger, sit on chairs outside of it at a small table.

This spare scene is further impressed on us

by the abbreviated use of sound, action and dialogue. There will be only one more character who appears sporadically and briefly, a trucker who drives the road from time to time. Even though no others appear on screen, by the end of the film we will feel that we've met a number of others who figure hugely in the guys' lives.

As the film unfolds, simplistic actions and activities repeat. Sound



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Sunday, June 16
Independence Day Picnic
- Of Monsters and Men at CBC Music Festival, May 25
- Árstíðir, Epic Rain and Svavar Knútur at NXNE, June 10-16
- Björk at Molson Canadian Amphitheatre, July 16
- Stereo Hypnosis at Musideum, July 25

Swimming Back To Iceland

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Amazing! The fish in the lake at Thingvellir, the site of the oldest democratic parliament in the world, instinctively gather at the place where the mouth of the stream was originally located before it was rerouted by the Icelandic tribes that would meet there.

Hundreds of years later the fish are still drawn back to the part of the shore which was blocked off. Instead of the present location where the water flows into the lake, fishermen know to go to the spot where there are only memories, buried deep in the genetic code of the fish.

How do I know this? When Geologist Kristinn Guðjónsson graciously escorted my mother, Olavia Johnson (nee Edelsteindóttir), my sister Christine and myself to Thingvellir, he told us a lot about the history of the place. He also mentioned about the fish. Years later, it's the behaviour of the fish in the lake at Thingvellir that has stuck with me the most.

Apparently, the original stream was not conveniently located. Maybe the noise interfered with the speeches of the leaders who gathered to discuss territorial issues and share stories. Maybe it



was simply prone to overflowing and flooding the encampment. Perhaps it was moved in an effort to increase the size of the area where the meetings were held. Maybe they simply wanted a better spot to bathe.

I was curious what could possibly have caused this interference with the natural flow of the water through this beautiful valley. I also felt respect for the determination of the fish who would not give up trying to swim upstream, even though the stream was not there.

My grandfather Edelstein, left his home near Húsavík when he was just a child. The volcanoes were erupting and people were leaving for Canada under tragic circumstances. They were relocated to a harsh and unfamiliar country. He and my

grandmother met in Canada and raised their family of 13 children in the Interlake area of Manitoba. Icelandic was the only language spoken in their home. They did not choose to leave Iceland, they had to in order for others to survive, leaving behind family and friends. Apparently, the strongest people were the ones who went, because they would have the greatest chance of making the journey.

Like the fish at Thingvellir, perhaps this is why the original waves of Icelandic immigrants to Canada kept speaking Icelandic. Maybe this is why they kept making the same vinarterta, year after year, as though locked in a culinary time capsule. They kept protecting the memories of their lives in Iceland.

Once a Snorri, Always a Snorri by Sacha Gudmundsson

I was lucky enough to participate in the Snorri program last summer. Among all the incredible experiences I had in Iceland, I met and became friends with a great group of, 'Snorris'.

After coming back to Canada, all I wanted to do was talk about my experience, share stories from my afi, details about my family and overall tales from my travels. I found myself starting sentences with, "When I was in Iceland," all the time. I feared I was starting to bore the people around me but I couldn't help it: I wanted to talk about Iceland! I know I'm not the only one to have felt this way. I shared this experience with my Snorri group, and speaking with them I realized many of us were having the same feelings.

The Snorri program is unique and something that as much as you try to explain it with friends and family, it's hard to understand fully unless you've participated in the program.



In April, I travelled to Seattle for the INL of NA convention where I had a mini reunion with some of my Snorri group. Not only was I able to meet up with my group, I was also able to meet a number of other Snorri participants. Although we didn't par-

ticipate in the program at the same time we had a number of similar, shared experiences. It's great to know that there is a bigger 'family' of people who, in some way or another, understand the unique experience and can share the memories.

INL of NA Has New Carved Logo

Many of you already are aware that woodcarvers/sculptors Tryggvi Thorleif Larum and Jón Adólf Steinólfsson jointly created a carving of the INL of NA logo that they presented to the Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle, (host of this year's convention), during the Saturday evening gala at the Seattle convention. It was their wish that the Seattle Club present the piece to the Icelandic National League of North America. (Pictures of the presentation are included in the INL website, convention photo gallery).

The carved logo is now hanging safely in the INLofNA office and I have attached a couple of photos for you to share with those that have not yet seen it.

The carving is about 14 inches in diameter. And the detail is exquisite. I can't imagine how many hours of work it took these talented men to produce this treasure.

The plan now is to have this logo on display at all future INLofNA conventions so be sure to take a look when you have a chance (or if you are in the Gimli area...feel free to stop in at the office)."



INL OF NA CONVENTION by Gail Einarson-McCleery



“Best convention yet!” “Fabulous!” “What a lot of nice people I have met!” ... just a few of the comments I heard as the 2013 Convention wound up.

Held for the first time in Seattle, sold out, entertaining, very well organized and a great start to spring, this convention delivered something for everyone.

Alene Thorunn Moris of Seattle brought the crowd to its feet with her impassioned words on the need for women of the world to reach their full potential. Her comparison of the strength of women in Iceland compared to those in North America and the result in terms of quality of life was very uplifting. (Alene was also the recipient of the Laurence Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award, and her sister Ruth and husband Vic Laban of our club were there to see it!) See her speech on UTube via inlofna.org (<http://youtu.be/VwJYIMCBAf4>).

Sunna Furstenuu’s fulsome report on her international visit to 12 destinations in Iceland was illustrated by her beautiful and appropriate pictures, with just the right mix of personal anecdotes and history.

Donald Gislason introduced us to

the Airwaves music festival and played clips of popular Icelandic music and musicians. His vast knowledge of the genre and lucid explanations of why this is the hottest music festival on earth and why young Icelanders produce an endless stream of interesting musical forms was complemented by his appealing sense of humour.

Fred Woods from Brigham Young University brought us an understanding of the origins of the Mormon settlement in Utah and enabled us to see just how those early immigrants found it necessary to leave their beloved country to find a new home free of persecution.

Trish Baer presented, with humour and marvelous pictures, the results of her seven years of thesis work about published illustrations of the Norse gods and showed us the links between them.

Before this, on Thursday we were treated to a tour of Blaine, one of the early settlement areas in Washington state, with a historical presentation by Rob Olason and others, and even a choir singing in Icelandic.

Friday night’s Opening Ceremonies began with a procession includ-

ing Seattle’s Miss Iceland (my niece Margo!), Fjallkona Karen Block of Seattle and Fjallkona Vorna Butler of Victoria. Also featured were anthems by Heather Alda Ireland of Vancouver, presentations of honorary memberships, (including one to our former President Garry Oddleifson), and a keynote speech by Iceland’s Canadian Ambassador Þórður Ægir Óskarsson, greetings from INL Iceland by President Halldór Árnason, all emceed by our President, Ron Goodman. This was capped off by a lively presentation by singer Lowry Olafson.

Saturday night we were entertained by Icelandic singer Guðrún Ingimarsdóttir, who then did a duet with emcee Jon Palmason (who was the funniest emcee I have seen). Iceland’s American Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson’s keynote speech was thoughtful. Our Canadian Ambassador paid tribute to our outgoing Consul General in Winnipeg, Atli Ásmundsson, and his wife Þrúður Helgadóttir for all their outstanding help and support these many years.

There was much more... art, displays, sales tables, Seattle’s Pike Market, kleinur and other Icelandic

Et, drekk og glaðr! By Arden Jackson, Caledon, ON.



Þorrablót 2013

Edible Sagas = Eat, drink and be happy! Et, drekk og glaðr!

Asked for and delivered: a community gathering of Icelandic Canadian enthusiasts and their families; abundant sharing of great Icelandic Canadian food, music, entertainment; fundraising for scholarships and groaning boards full of happy experiences to tell again and again. We ate, we drank, we sang, we spent, we laughed, we listened and we shared community and quality experiences infused with the yummy joy of being together.

Lynne Thorkelsson, ICCT Treasurer, responsible for Þorrablót Registration and Ticket Sales, shared her experience.

“Last night I had around 15 people come up to me on their own to tell me what a great event it was and especially how much they enjoyed themselves. It really impressed me that in the end what they remembered was what a fun time they had. I spoke to Art Gudmundson. I told him that we look for comments from those who have not been part of the organizing group and asked him for feedback. He said that at one time he and his family had dropped out of the club and now had rejoined and their main reason for rejoining is all of the

Icelandic food at Þorrablót. They still eat Icelandic food (as much as possible) at home and love the chance to go out for a great meal featuring Icelandic food. During the evening one fellow reported that he came especially for a chance to taste the fermented shark.

As for me I saw a fabulous event run by a skilled, efficient, friendly, helpful group whose attitudes contributed to everyone's fun. I saw so many good examples of how to deal with the crowd that I almost hesitate

to single any one thing out (but of course I have to try). Was that Mike Smith who took Stella Hansen (one of our founding club members) on his arm to get her food for her? Did you see Einar with the iPad taking thousands of dollars in payments so efficiently? Did you see Meredith passing appetizers while keeping her team on track? Did you see Arden ensuring every single thing went flawlessly while singing too? Did

Þorrablót continued on page 8



INL Reads—The Young Iclander

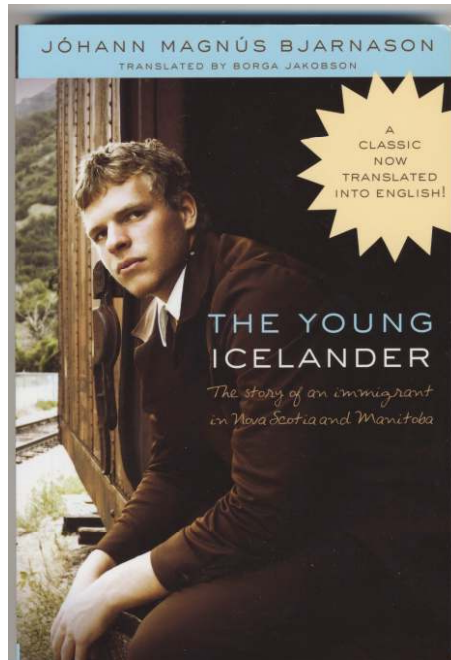
By Rob Olason, Bellingham, WA,
reprinted with permission from Log-
berg-Heimskringla

While the INL of NA was busy chewing through the topics on the agenda of the AGM at the recent Seattle Convention, meeting participants were also taking a moment to select the next candidate for INL Reads!

This year the selections included David Arnason's Baldur's Song, Yrsa Sigurðardóttir's Ashes to Dust, Christine Sunley's The Tricking of Freya, and Nancy Marie Brown's Song of the Vikings

When the voting concluded, the runaway favorite was Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason's *The Young Iclander* - The story of an immigrant in Nova Scotia and Manitoba. Bjarnason wrote the novel in the Icelandic language. Originally published in serialized form, the installments appeared from 1899 to 1903. Bjarnason titled this largely autobiographical work *Eiríkur Hansson*. The story follows the life of Eiríkur who comes to America with his grandparents as a child. They settle in Nova Scotia, but the story follows his life journey across late 19th century Canada, as this young immigrant seeks to find his place in his new homeland.

The novel was inaccessible to the English reading audience until 2009, when Borga Jakobson published her translation and renamed the work *The Young Iclander*. The book of-



fers a wonderful exploration of what life was like a century ago in the Icelandic settlements in Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

Check with your local Icelandic club which may already have a copy, or you can search online, or better yet, order one from Tergesen H P & Sons (tel: 204-642-5958) in Gimli, MB.

INL Reads! seeks reader's input throughout the year for the program. If you would like to nominate a selection, you may do so on the INL Reads! blog which is on the INL website at www.inlofna.org. Note - If you would like to join a discussion group in the Toronto area to discuss the book, or to borrow a copy, contact gaileinar-sonmccleery@gmail.com

Either Way

Continued from page 1

never overtakes the action although at times punctuates it, and dialogue wastes no words.

From beneath this minimalist surface profound themes emerge - themes such as the aloneness and loneliness of each human being; the urge, the need for love; the difficulty of making right decisions; accepting loss.

There are NO too-loud symphonic bursts alerting us to take note because something important is being said or is about to happen. It is the silence, the simplicity that speaks to us.

The landscape grand and seemingly lonely, parallels the inner lives of Finnbogi and Alfred. At times they are at loggerheads or they bug each other or they are a team, but when it matters they are there for each other. Their emotions know every up and down as they each face their own inner selves, just as each one of us has to do at some point.

The marvel of the film is how unexpected and clear these themes are, conveyed through the simple, painful and sometimes playfully told stories of and by the two guys who are unsung road repairmen.

Hafsteinn Gunnar Sigurðsson, the director of this gem trusts and respects his viewers.



Welcome New Members
Sharon Taylor
Douglas Vidalin, Mississauga

Thanks for Your Donations
Nancy Hummel, Eagle Lake
Richard & Rita Thorlacius,
Georgian Bluffs

Music in the City by Sacha Gudmundsson

During Iceland Naturally's "Taste of Iceland" festival in March, Torontonians were treated to inspiring Icelandic music. The Hoxton played host to Reykjavik Calling on March 23rd with Iceland's Apparát Organ Quartet, Sóley and Ásgeir Trausti and Canadian groups Revelstoke and Cai.ro.

Since my trip to Iceland last summer I've been expanding my music knowledge through the help of friends and family. After being

sent a song by Ásgeir Trausti in the fall I had been hoping I'd get a chance to hear him perform live. I was enchanted by his voice, even though I barely understood a single word.

The showcase didn't disappoint. There's something special about being able to see music performed live. You can hear the mistakes, the embellishments and watch the interactions among band members and the audience.

Hoping to catch some Icelandic music in Toronto this summer?

Mark your calendars!

- Of Monsters and Men at CBC Music Festival, May 25
- Árstíðir, Epic Rain and Svavar Knútur at NXNE, June 10-16
- Björk at Molson Canadian Amphitheatre, July 16
- Stereo Hypnosis at Musideum, July 25

Growing up with Pönnukökur by Sacha Gudmundsson



Ever since I can remember, whenever my grandparents would come for a visit, grandma would make a batch of pönnukökur. Grandma would pack her pönnukökur pan and we'd roll up pancakes with sugar until there were none left. Growing up, this special treat was my constant taste of Iceland.

Over the years I've tried to give my grandma a hand. I would take on the delicious "quality control" role,

but I've recently been trying to take on the process myself. I've had my grandma teach me and write out the recipe.

With my very own pönnukökur pan in hand, I volunteered to make 100 pancakes for this year's Thorra-blót. I gave it my best, but nothing compares to grandma's.

Do You Have an Icelandic Accent?

Eric Armstrong teaches voice and speech at York University's Department of Theatre. He specializes in teaching actors how to do accents, and this summer he is working with a number of accent coaches from around the world. In July, he will present a workshop on Scandinavi-

an accents for the Voice and Speech Trainers Association conference. He has chosen to focus on Icelandic accents in, e.g., British, Canadian, Australian, American, Irish English. Eric hopes to gather samples of speakers' accents that could be shared on the *International Dialects of Eng-*

lish Archive site (<http://dialectsarchive.com>) which currently has only two samples for Iceland. If you have an Icelandic accent, or know someone who does, please email e.r.armstrong@gmail.com.

Þorralót continued from page 5

you see Holly welcome people and with a warm smile tell them about the place card as if it was new when she had just said the same thing 50 times? And all those tall young men impressing and enchanting the crowd? And Karen as MC, what a hit! She made us all look good. What a team we make! And the food was completely fabulous! And Lindy singing! And Linda Lundstrom as Auctioneer & Maria Reyndal leading the Icelandic Class Choir and the crowd in singing *Á Sprengisandi* were enchanting.”

More than 45 team members, 1500 hours, (150 hours making desserts including 300 pön-nukökur). Our guests were filled and filled with memories of Icelandic Canadian and Þorralót food and drink and experiences to

fill up their hearts and minds. We celebrated Scholarship Award winner Sacha Gudmundsson and Snorri Grant recipient Madeline Pekary. With Halfred from Vinland, L’Anse aux Meadows, NFLD, Lindy Vopnfjord singing to the gods, Sigrun Stella Bessason gathering family and voices, Linda Lundstrom spiriting dollars into dream experiences with Iceland Air, Glacier Explorations, Ski Experiences, Bed and Breakfasts, Art and Troll Statues and more, we all left so happy and grateful for each and every person and moment and more and more stories to tell and tell again and again.

Yes, we ate, drank and even more than before, are extremely happy!

INL of NA continued from page 4

treats, and lots of opportunities to enjoy the theme of ‘Heima’ (home) and to trade stories with old friends and meet new ones. An excellent job was done by David Johnson and his team, with help from the clubs in Blaine and Vancouver. (For full coverage, get your hands on Logberg-Heimskringla, 1 May issue).

Our club was well represented by President Karen Helena, Holly Ralph, Sacha Gudmundson and myself.

Next year – Winnipeg is promising a lively time for all of us in May.

Celebrate Iceland's Independence Day & Father's Day!

SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMANCE by **SVAVAR KNÚTUR**, SINGER, SONGWRITER, ALL THE WAY FROM ICELAND

OTHER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

SOCCER, FRISBEE, HULA HOOP CONTEST, FACE PAINTING, FUN TATTOOS, ICE A CUPCAKE FOR YOUR DAD. HAVE A FATHER'S DAY VIKING PHOTO TAKEN OF YOU AND YOUR DAD. THE WADING POOL MIGHT BE OPEN SO BRING A BATHING SUIT.

Bring something to eat and drink, chairs and/or blankets, relatives, friends and neighbours. Óðinn has promised good weather!

Parking available on side streets (check signs for length of time) and in Dufferin Mall parking lot.

COME JOIN IN THE FUN! SEE YOU THERE!

SUNDAY, JUNE 16 FROM 2:00 - 5:00 (or longer if you wish)
DUFFERIN GROVE PARK
 (east side of Dufferin, south of Bloor, opposite the Dufferin Mall.)



Vinarterta.ca

MADE WITH PURE LOVE AND PIONEERING SPIRIT, MY BAKING IS TRUE TO THE VIRTUES OF MY ICELANDIC CANADIAN FAMILY. MY GOAL IS TO CREATE HAND-MADE, HEALTHY, DELICIOUS AND DISTINCTIVELY DIFFERENT ALL NATURAL TREATS WHICH CONNECT, NOURISH AND INSPIRE THE BODY, HEART AND MIND WITH GOOD AND HAPPY EXPERIENCES.

- ARDEN JACKSON