



FÁLKINN

March/April 2000

ICCT FÁLKINN 40th Year, Number 6

THORRABLÓT IS COMING!



Here is a picture of some of our Thorrablót entertainers – this new choir will be singing in Icelandic! Front row: Tarra Wendover, Maya Gunnarsson, Bryndis and Stefan Blondal. Second row: Taylor Mitchell, Sam and Charlotte Wilson, Hanna El Khatib. Back row: Courtney Mitchell, Maja Sullivan, Snaedis Olafsdottir

Food Still Needed

Merle Oddson is our food coordinator. If you haven't yet talked to Merle and you would like to contribute, please call her at (905) 731-4799, or call Ellen Gilmore at (905) 889-9937. Your contributions are appreciated and help make the night a success – some of the items we still need are *not* difficult to make!

Getting there

Thorrablót will be held in the Burgundy Room of the North York Memorial Hall, Concourse Level, under the library (in the building complex at Mel Lastman Square).

By TTC: Take the Yonge subway to North York Centre station, follow the indoor concourse access toward and under the Library.

By car: North of 401 to Mel Lastman Square at Park Home Avenue, turn left (west) on Park Home to Beecroft Street then left (south) to underground parking and indoor concourse. Note: Due to construction at Yonge & Sheppard, it is better to take Bayview avenue north to Finch and then go west to Yonge street, and then south on Yonge to Park Home.

Date:	Saturday, April 8
Time:	6:00 p.m. appetizers, 7:00 dinner
Location:	North York Memorial Hall 5100 Yonge Street
Cost:	\$30 adults, \$15 for children 7-12

DATES TO REMEMBER:

April 6 Ottawa - A big birthday party for Snorri - presentation of statue to Museum of Civilization
April 8 Thorrablót, North York Memorial Hall
May 28 ICCT Annual General Meeting and Puppet Theatre presentation for Club members
May 29,30,31 Puppet Theatre (in schools)
June 17 Iceland National Day Picnic, Location TBA
July 28 Arrival of Viking Flotilla led by "Islandingur" at L'Anse aux Meadows
July 28 - Aug. 7 "Celebrating our Heritage Through the Arts" - Kinmount Arts Festival
July 31 Kinmount Dedication Ceremony
August 1 Vikings in Canada Gala - Glenn Gould Studio, CBC Building, Toronto
Sept. 19 to October 5 Viking Film Festival Jackman Hall, Art Gallery of Ontario
Oct. 6 to Dec. 3 London, ON Arni Haraldsson - a solo exhibition of his photo-based work

Put on your dancing shoes!

This year's Thorrablót will be a special one as we celebrate the millennium. Along with the yummy foods, entertainment, silent auction, and the chance to socialize with other club members, this year we will also have **dancing**, a **DJ** and **brennivin!**

Here are some of the items on the menu: Síld (herring), Rúllupylsa (spiced lamb), Lax (salmon), Hangikjöt (salted lamb), Hardfisk (dried salted fish), salads and Flatbrauð. Traditional desserts include Pönnukökur, Skyr, and, of course Vinaterta!

NEWS

KEIKO ENJOYS NEW SPACE

Keiko, the 5 tonne killer whale who starred in Free Willy, is enjoying his new-found freedom since his move to a much larger space. Little by little, Keiko has set out to explore the entire Klettsvík bay. The orca's new living space is 22 times larger than his old pen, which was about the size of a soccer field. Keiko can now interact with the ocean floor for the first time since his capture over 20 years ago.

Keiko still has to observe a "curfew" and is kept in the sea pen at night. The next step will be to teach the killer whale to forage for his own food. If all goes well, the animal's trainers hope to release the orca by this summer.



You can follow Keiko's progress at the website:
<http://www.oceanfutures.org>

MOUNT HEKLA

On February 26th, Mount Hekla once again erupted. A 6-7 km long fissure could be seen along the mountain top and the column of steam rose nearly 15 km into the sky! Footage of the spectacle attracted worldwide attention. You can get more information and see some of the pictures here:

<http://www.norvol.hi.is>

TIED BY BLOOD SCREENING

An enthusiastic crowd turned out for our screening of the documentary about David Arnason's search for information about his roots ... although illness prevented David himself from attending. Those present were very impressed with the haunting nature of the story about his great-grandmother who emigrated to Canada alone at age 17 to escape an unwanted betrothal, and died in childbirth three years later. What amazed everyone is how her Icelandic relatives kept her story alive 100 years later. Footage of the fog-enshrouded mountains and beautiful scenery of Iceland served to enhance the film. We liked it so much that we are looking into whether we can get copies to sell so that more people can share the experience.

In one of those "small Icelandic world" moments, Esther Broughton and Tryggvi Smith discovered that their families both came from the same small town in Saskatchewan - Tantalton! You never know who you'll meet when you come to an ICCT event!

FÁLKINN - THE FALCON

Fálkinn is the newsletter of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto and is published approximately 6 times a year.

Editor: Darla E. McKay, Ph: (416) 423-0493
e-mail: demckay@hotmail.com

Viking Chatters Editor: Leah Salt (905) 820-2611
Assistant Editor: Evelyn Trites

ICCT EXECUTIVE

President: **Ellen (Sigurdson) Gilmore**
31 Wild Cherry Lane
Thornhill ON L3T 3T3
Ph & Fax: (905) 889-9937

Vice-President: Darla E. McKay
Past President: Gail Einarson-McCleery (416) 762-8627

Secretary: Barbara Doherty
Treasurer: Evelyn Trites

Phone: (416) 444-7355

INL Ont. Representative: Garry Oddleifson (416) 463-1324
Membership Outreach: Don Gislason (416) 489-7737

Membership information: Single: \$20, Family \$25, Senior Couple \$20,
Senior Single \$15.

Webpage: <http://web.idirect.com/~icct/>

CLUB NEWS

Thank you to the following members for donations: Kinmount: Betty Jane Wylie, Carol Peck, Erla Macaulay, Olavia Steinburg (Bellevue, WA); Millennium events: Bjorn Helgason, Beverly Fillmore; General: Helga Stephenson, Brian Laxdal.

welcome to new members:

Sheila McCutcheon, Guelph; Rod Peturson, Windsor.

BOOKS FOR SALE

When thinking of birthday presents, think of a book by an Icelandic-Canadian author. We have copies of Betty Jane Wylie's marvelous new book "Letters to Icelanders".



Marketing Manager Holly Garrett speaking to Honorary Member Esther Broughton at our recent screening of "Tied by Blood" Photo by Eric McCleery

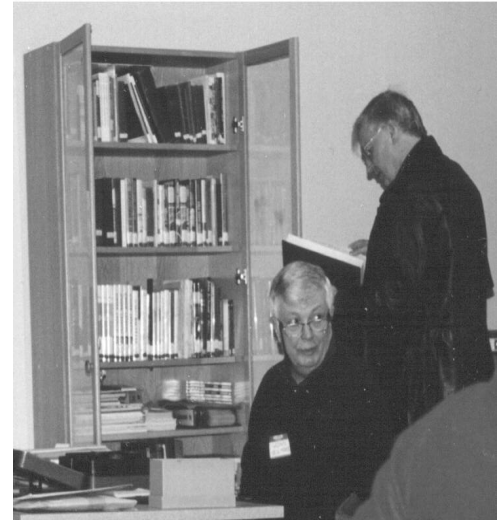
Kristjanna Gunnars in her *Globe & Mail Review*, says, "Wylie writes with ease and, true to the epistolary format, is conversational and casual. There are thoughtprovoking observations along the way, and the presence of the narrator, warm and positive, does actually, as she says in the last and best letter,

"hold up the light, keep the fire going."

New books include W.D. Valgardson's "Divorced Kids Club and other Short Stories", which earned him a Governor-General's Award nomination, and "Frances", which he describes as "the most Icelandic" of his books. This is his first full-length novel for young people and in it he brings all his strengths to bear - eccentric but engaging characters coming to terms with their differences, and a witty and acute observation of relationships, all interwoven with the magic, myth and history of Valgardson's own Icelandic heritage.

NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY:

Thanks to Lillian Ravnsgaard for these recent contributions, which are full of pictures: In English: "Sculptor - Ásmundur Sveinsson" by Matthías Jóhannesson, "Reykjavik - a Panorama in Four Seasons" by Gunnar Hannesson,



Tryggvi Smith examines books in our library, while greeter John Gilmore looks for more customers

"Echoes from the Woods" - Poems and Illustrations by Louise Stockdale, "Iceland and the Icelanders" by Helgi P. Briem. In Danish: "Ferie På en Vulkanø" by Lis Andersen. In Icelandic: "Landsbanki Íslands 100 Ára". In twelve languages: "Iceland" published by Iceland Review (with pictures by Páll Stefánsson).

We have many interesting books in our library, in both Icelandic and English - check our website at: <http://web.idirect.com/~icct/> for a listing.

ICELANDIC PUPPETEER TO VISIT TORONTO

The Pocket Theatre was founded in 1984 by one of Iceland's leading puppeteers, Hallveig Thorlacius, with the purpose of telling old Icelandic stories she loved listening to as a child in her grandmother's kitchen. Iceland has always taken the role of the storyteller in Europe, ever since the first settlers came sailing from Norway in the Viking Age. Now the show "The World's Smallest Giant" has been chosen by the Leifur Eiriksson Millennium Commission of Iceland to introduce Icelandic folklore to American and Canadian audiences. Here in Toronto, it will be shown in local schools May 29th - 31st, and also at a special presentation for all of us on Sunday, May 28th, at the Thornhill Golf and Country Club in Thornhill. In addition, member Marian Johnson of London is looking into having a show there on Saturday, May 27th. So mark the dates on your calendar for this delightful show.

NOTE: Although all the major elements are in place for this event, we need someone to co-ordinate her visit and/or escort her to the various venues. A great opportunity to absorb more Icelandic culture! Call Gail at (416) 762-8627.



**VIKINGS IN CANADA GALA -
TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 2000
FUN, FILM AND FOOD ...**

... but not forgetting the Virtuosity of our Viking descendants when it comes to literature, art and music. It's all going to be part of the show! Last time we told you about the music components of the show - now we'd like to introduce our writers and storyteller:

MAJA ARDAL spent seven seasons as Artistic Director of Young People's Theatre in Toronto and has now returned to her acting career while developing her other interest, writing. Born in Iceland and raised in Scotland before moving to Canada, Maja has taught at the National Theatre School, and directed plays at the Shaw Festival and the Grand Theatre among others. Her years at YPT were very successful, overseeing many successful ground-breaking productions and gaining much critical acclaim. Her latest project is a play set in northern Iceland in 1942 which is in development for presentation in 2001. She will be reading from it at the Gala.

DAVID ARNASON is a Winnipeg writer, editor and teacher. His works include two collections of poetry, four collections of short stories and two non-fiction works as well as five stage plays and numerous film scripts and radio plays. In addition, he has edited several books on Canadian writing and performed in reading tours throughout the U.S. and Europe. He is presently head of the Icelandic and English Departments at the University of Manitoba and has recently completed the documentary film *Tied by Blood*.

W.D. VALGARDSON received his education at the University of Manitoba and the University of Iowa. He is currently the Chairman of the Department of Creative Writing at the University of Victoria. He has written many articles for refereed journals and periodicals – books of poetry, short stories and novels – before turning his hand to children's literature. His many awards include the Mr. Christie Award for “Thor”, the Books in Canada Award for “Gentle Sinners” as best first novel of the year, and a 1999 Governor General's Award nomination for “The Divorced Kids Club and Other Short Stories”.

BETTY JANE WYLIE started her creative life as a poet, before turning to playwriting, journalism and non-fiction. She has published 35 books ranging over a wide area of interest and including biography, self-help, inspiration, cookbooks, plays, children's plays and puppet plays, belles lettres, poetry and financial planning. She was a founding member of the Periodical Writers' Association and the Playwrights' Union as well as Chair of the Writers' Union 1988-89. Her latest book, “Letters to

Icelanders”, explores the theme of the relationship between present day Icelandic-Canadians and Iceland.

CAROL MCGIRR has a long history as a story-teller and has appeared at festivals across Canada including the Lunenburg Harbour Folk Festival and at the Toronto Festival for the last 21 years. She founded Fireside Epic which produces five concerts a year which deal with saga, myth and epic. She is particularly renowned for her telling of the Icelandic sagas.

This star-studded event takes place on August 1st at the Glenn Gould Theatre in the CBC Broadcast Centre, starting at 6:30 p.m. In our next issue of the newsletter, we'll tell you more about the other featured artists in the Gala. In the meantime, contact Gail at (416) 762-8627 with any comments or questions.

LETTERS

Dear Gail,

You have organized an exciting and innovative evening of activities! The range of people, ideas and concepts you have included is overwhelming - and an impressive indication of the involvement of Icelanders in Canada. Of course we are already familiar with a number of your guests and presenters, because of contacts through previous activities you have organized.

It will be a wonderful opportunity for the entire community to participate. Of course this is what we expect from your Club, based on our experience with all the things you have organized and presented in the past. I know that a number of us from Guelph will certainly attend the gala. The timing of your Gala is perfect, of course, but the content is what impresses me the most. Until you see all the names, the people, and their contributions you don't really appreciate the contributions of Icelanders to Canada.

Your gala project is of particular importance to us here at the University of Guelph because of the Academic Exchange Agreement we have with our sister universities and colleges in Iceland. The active participation of the Icelandic Canadian Club in our activities under our Exchange Agreement has been an essential feature of this program. In particular, we appreciated all your contributions to the Icelandic Canadian Symposium held at the University of Guelph in June 1998 on the occasion of the awarding of an honorary doctoral degree to Vigdis Finnbogadottir, the former President of Iceland.

We look forward to continued collaboration and wish you every success in your program for this millennium year.

Sincerely,

*David L. G. Noakes Professor
College of Biological Science, Department of Zoology
University of Guelph*

IT'S A GREAT YEAR TO BE AN ICELANDER - CELEBRATIONS EVERYWHERE!

ICELAND:

Reykjavik has been named one of the Cultural Cities of Europe ... their festival opened on January 29th. It has a varied agenda with about two hundred events, many of which extend abroad.

In addition, Iceland is celebrating the 1000th anniversary of the conversion of Iceland to Christianity, with about 130 events all around the country. The main event is the celebration at Thingvellir on July 1st and 2nd, but there are also other aspects, including the premiere of an opera in March, ecumenical festivals, outdoor festivals and much more.



NORTH AMERICA:

All over this country and the U.S.A., people are paying tribute to the 1000th anniversary of Leifur Eiriksson's arrival in North America - Iceland is sending many cultural envoys, including the Gudridur play (about the first European woman to give birth in North America), the Puppet Theatre, the Icelandic Symphony, choirs and dance groups. Wherever you travel this summer there'll be something interesting going on in the Icelandic community. And don't forget about the arrival of the replica Viking ship at L'Anse aux Meadows on July 28th, followed by our Kinmount Dedication Ceremony on July 31st and our Vikings in Canada Gala August 1st.

Check the millennium website for details on these events:
<http://www.iceland2000.org>

**** Notice of New Date ****

- APRIL 6, 2000 -

OPENING OF ICELANDIC CANADIAN MILLENNIUM CELEBRATIONS

On April 6th, 2000, Davíð Oddsson, The Prime Minister of Iceland, will present a statue of Gudridur Thorbjarnardottir as a gift from the people of Iceland to the Canadian nation. The Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, will accept this gift on behalf of Canada at the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa ON/Hull PQ.

Gudridur Thorbjarnardottir was the first European (Icelandic) woman to travel to North America, nearly 500 years before Christopher Columbus. Upon her arrival she gave birth to her son, Snorri Thorfinnsson – the first European child born in North America.

This event will mark the launch of the Icelandic Canadian Millennium Celebrations, which will include over a hundred events throughout Canada during this year. In attendance will be five hundred Ottawa school children, along with Icelandic Canadian astronaut Bjarni Tryggvason and Icelandic soprano soloist, Diddú.

ICELAND IN CANADA 2000

CELEBRATE WITH US!

Svavar Gestsson, Consul General for Iceland,
Millennium Office of Iceland, 650 – 5 Donald St.
Winnipeg, E-mail: iceland@iceland2000.org

More details of the celebrations come from David Gislason, Chair of the Millennium 125 Commission:

“The program now looks like this: April 6th, Grand Hall, Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec

10:00 am - ceremonies begin with singing of National anthems by “Diddú”, Sigrún Hjámtyśdóttir

Prime Minister of Iceland, Davíð Oddsson will speak, and formally present the statue to the Canadian people. Prime Minister Jean Chretien will accept the statue, and will also speak. Bjarni Tryggvasson, Canadian astronaut, will speak to the assembled crowd, including 500 school children from the Ottawa - Hull area. I anticipate that Hon. John Harvard, and Sen Janis Johnson will be masters of ceremonies, and I will bring the formalities to a close on behalf of the Millennium 125 Commission.

10:45 am - formal ceremonies close, Prime Ministers and their retinue will take their leave to continue with their

meetings. Kathy Arnason will take over, to direct the balance of the program, the "birthday party".

It is our hope that you will all be able to attend this very significant event, I sincerely hope the change of date has not caused problems for you. Hope to see you in Ottawa-Hull"

David Gislason

The people in Ottawa who are organizing these events are the Friends of Iceland, and Gerry Einarsson of that group has also written us, "I am interested in establishing a list of people with Icelandic and Icelandic Canadian heritage living in and around Ottawa, Ontario.

As you are aware, we are planning a celebration at the Museum of Civilization in Hull Quebec for the Ottawa area, and I want to be sure information regarding the event is given to as many locals as possible.

Please get in touch with me if you are in the area, or know someone that is.

I would also like to assemble a list of people that might be travelling to Ottawa for the event. This would particularly apply to the Toronto and Montreal organizations, but I understand that people as far as away as Calgary are coming, so please get in touch with me if you haven't already...

Gerry Einarsson Friends of Iceland 24 Wedgewood Crescent Gloucester, ON, Canada, K1B 4B4

Ph (613) 248-3961 Fax (613) 248-3923 Home (613) 824-2468 email: einargk@navcanada.ca; ai907@freenet.carleton.ca"

One of the interesting things about this event in Ottawa is that it is being used as a springboard for political talks between and Prime Minister Oddsson and Prime Minister Chretien and other officials. Trade issues and the EFTA treaty will be discussed, as well as other matters of import to both countries, such as transportation and maritime matters. Although these matters will not directly affect our committee, they are very important to future relations between our countries, and are precisely what we hoped the millennium celebrations would lead to.

INL RAFFLE TICKETS AVAILABLE

Here's your chance to win some cash - the Icelandic National League Raffle offers prizes of \$500, \$250, and \$100. They cost \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The draw takes place in September. Call Ellen at (905) 889-9937 for your chance to win.

HEY KIDS

- Wanna Go to Camp? - Tell Your Parents or Grandparents about This!

The Club is again sponsoring a \$500 grant for a child to attend Icelandic Language and Cultural Camp near Gimli, Manitoba this summer. This is an excellent opportunity to give a child a sense of his/her roots and have fun while doing it. The dates this year are July 21st to 28th, and the themes include the Millennium of Leif Eiriksson's landing on North American shores, the 125th Anniversary of the return of the Icelanders to Canada, and the Millennium of Christianity in Iceland. Included will be story and song, crafts, sports and all those things which make camp fun. An application form is enclosed.

REMINDER: CHARITABLE STATUS FOR MILLENNIUM EVENTS

Any donations to any of our millennium events, including Kinmount, Vikings in Canada Gala, Viking Film Festival, or the Puppet Show can get a charitable receipt. Simply make your cheque out to Millennium-125 Commission Inc. with a note making it clear it is for an ICCT Millennium event and mail it to us: Evelyn Trites, Treasurer, 7 Wax Myrtleway, Don Mills, ON M3B 3K6 A receipt will be mailed to you.

WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS WANTED

If you are interested in becoming involved with the newsletter, please call Darla E. McKay at (416) 423-0493.

RETURN THOSE RAFFLE TICKETS!

Don't forget to return your ICCT Raffle tickets, sold or unsold (preferably sold!!!) Don't forget you can win a trip for two to Iceland, a hand-knit afghan, or \$300 in cash. If you need more books, call Evelyn at (416) 444-7355.