



FÁLKINN

November/December 2001

ICCÆKINN, 42nd Year, Number 3

Do you want to go to Iceland? Discover your roots in Iceland? Be a Snorrivivor?



**Tricia Signy McKay,
A Snorrivivor**

On **November 17th**, we will have a guest speaker who will be telling us all about her recent travels in Iceland and about the Snorri program. Tricia Signy McKay hails from Selkirk, Manitoba and she is the president of the newly formed Snorri Alumni Association.

The Snorri program is a great opportunity for young adults of Icelandic descent to discover the country and culture of their ancestors, and to strengthen existing bonds or create new ones with relatives living in Iceland.

Even if you do not think the Snorri program is for you, you may want to come out to hear the adventurous tales, pick up a few travel tips, and see the photos that will be shared with us. We are hoping to have other past participants on hand as well to share their stories. Also, please note that the programs states that it is for those between the ages of 18 to 23+, but we are not exactly sure how far that little plus sign stretches... If there are not many participants signing up, perhaps there will be room for some not-quite-so-young participants (this past year included participants between the ages of 18 and 30). *The ICCT's more general "Travel to Iceland" event will be held in February 2002.*

Too expensive? NO! There are grants available for Snorri participants. Plus, Tricia will share her strategy with us and let us know the secrets of how she successfully managed to get past the cost issue and on to the more interesting challenges to face her in Iceland.

The first two weeks of the six-week program are spent studying the language, art, history, music and the sagas. However, Tricia lets us know that it wasn't all work: "Downtown Reykjavik, that's where the party life is. It starts late and goes on forever." Reportedly, there are parties that do carry on into the next morning. In the land of 24-hour sunshine and midnight golfing, this isn't too surprising.

During the next part of the program participants travel to different areas throughout Iceland to meet their relatives and gain work experience, preferably in the geographical area from where their forefathers came. Tricia was welcomed by relatives in the north-western corner of Iceland and was one of the first Snorri participants to venture into the remote area of the west fjörds. It was here that Tricia gained most of her Snorrivivor experience, including her brushes with the elements and with evil trolls.

In the final segment of the program, participants take part in an adventure tour that starts in Reykjavik and goes on to the most exotic and beautiful destinations in Iceland. Whales, Icelandic horses and glaciers - geysers, white water rafting and snowmobiling - hiking, camping, hot springs and waterfalls. The tour ends in the Blue Lagoon.

It was also very obvious to this year's participants that the program was considered very important in Iceland. Participants had the opportunity to meet dignitaries who took a genuine interest in their visit. They met many prominent Icelanders, including the President of Iceland himself, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson. Press coverage was also indicative, as they were pictured and interviewed in Iceland's major daily paper, *Morganblaðið*, among others.

Hockey -- On the 17th, we will also be discussing the Winnipeg Falcons, "Vikings on Ice", a team comprised of Icelandic Canadians. The Falcons won the first Olympic Gold Medal in hockey, and were

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KIDS CHRISTMAS PARTY!



Hey Kids, you want to have some Christmas fun, the Icelandic way? If so, please check out our back page for details of our Christmas party coming up on **December 2nd!**

Icelandic Snorrivivor - con't from pg.1

acknowledged as winners of the first ever world championship tournament

Don't miss this event! You'll want to make sure that all of the young adults in your family know about this one. For more information on the event or to get copies of Snorri brochures/application forms, contact **Darla McKay (416) 423-0493** or e-mail: demckay@axxent.ca. More information can also be found on the Snorri website at www.snorri.is. *A taste of Tricia's writing can be found on the front page of the October 19th "Literary Issue" of Lögberg-Heimskringla.*

Date: Saturday, November 17th
Time: 3:00 pm
Location: The Tranzac Club
292 Brunswick Avenue
(Just south of Bloor, between Spadna & Bathurst subway stations)

Enjoy the presentation, socialize and perhaps have a few drinks (the bar will be open). Admission is \$4 for members/\$5 for non-members. **Note:** Public transit is highly recommended, as area parking is limited.

NEWS FROM ICELAND

SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH FOR ICELANDIC SCIENTISTS

Scientists working for Icelandic genomic company 'deCODE' Genetics have mapped out the gene for Parkinson's disease. According to 'deCODE' director Kari Stefansson, it has been proved that Parkinson's disease is hereditary. The results of this research are published in the latest issue of 'Science'. According to Stefansson, "This is an incredible discovery for the people who have been researching Parkinson's disease for a long time."

ICELAND LAKE DISAPPEARING

National Geographic News reports that Lake Kleifarvatn, about 20 km from Reykjavik is draining into a volcanic fissure. The lake, which measured about 6 km long and 2.3 km wide last year, has dramatically

shrunk to 3.5 km long and roughly 1.8 km wide. Amy Clifton of the Nordic Volcanological Institute in Reykjavik states "If you put your ear to the ground, you can hear the lake draining. It sounds like water going down the sink."

The earthquake thought to be responsible occurred last year on June 17, about 80 km east in the South Icelandic seismic zone. Earthquakes in this region would not be expected to affect the surface in the Reykjanes Peninsula, where Lake Kleifarvatn is located. Clifton and her colleagues think the water may have "lubricated the fault lines, allowing them to slide quietly and slowly, preventing the shock waves that would normally accompany an earthquake."



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

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CLUB NEWS

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Enclosed with this issue is your membership form and an addressed envelope for your convenience. Your money is necessary to sustain the normal operation of your club, including the production and mailing of this newsletter. Last year our paid membership was \$500 down from 1999, and this is money that was badly missed, because costs are fairly static, or increase through inflation. So, don't leave it up to someone else. Please support us with your membership cheque. For membership purposes, our club year matches the calendar. Many of us are involved in many different organizations, and we can easily lose track of membership status. Your address label denotes the year for which you last paid membership. Thank you.

INL HERITAGE CALENDARS

The 2002 INL Heritage Calendars are available. The theme is "Poets, Authors & Playwrights" and includes 3 ICCT members: Maja Ardal, Katrina Koven, and Betty Jane Wylie. They are available at club events, or by mail. An order form is included with this Fálkinn issue. Don't wait too long, these will sell fast. They are also available for purchase at club events.

CONDOLENCES

Our sympathies to Elaine Rutherford and to Helen Amason-Fertuck in the recent loss of their father and uncle, Bjorn Nicholas Amason, who passed away in Vancouver just short of his 100th birthday. Often referred to as the 'spiritual father' of the credit union movement in Saskatchewan, he was a long time civil servant after whom Arnason Street in Regina was named.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

- Brian Eyolfson, Toronto
- Peter Oddleifson and Kay Wallace, Rochester, NY
- Ragnhildur Skeoch, Glenburnie, ON (a returning member)

THANKS FOR DONATIONS FROM:

Gordon Brown, Toronto

KINMOUNT UPDATE

Gudrun Girgis and Don Gislason advise that the fourth plaque that lists the patronymic names of all the Icelandic pioneers of Kinmount is now successfully completed and is now in place. There had been

some problems in production with the accuracy of the plaque. Your editor had the chance to visit the site in early September. I am pleased to report that the site remains well kept, clean, and well landscaped – a real nice site to visit. A big THANK YOU to all those involved, but especially to Gudrun and Don. Don's great little masterpiece "The Icelanders of Kinmount" is still selling.

CLUB MILESTONES

December 22 will be the Golden Wedding Anniversary of John and Ellen Gilmore. They were wed in Winnipeg in 1951. Fortunately for us, they made there home here and became active ICCT members. Congratulations to Ellen and John!

NEWS FROM FRIENDS

NEW INL CHAPTER

A new club has been formed in Winnipeg. The second Icelandic club in Winnipeg will be known as 'Framfari' The President is Brian Gudmundson, 241 Wildwood Park, Winnipeg, MB R3T 0E4 (204) 475-3048. Welcome to the fold.

SCANDINAVIAN-CANADIAN CLUB

Nov. 3 – Craft Show and sale at Finnish Agricola Church, 25 Old York Mills Road (Yonge & York Mills) 10am to 3pm. Lunch available. Information available from Astrid at (416) 635-9645

Dec. 15 – Christmas Dinner Dance at the Clubhouse with live music. Members \$20 Non-members \$25

The Scandinavian-Canadian Club is looking for a caretaker/tenant for their clubhouse near Bathurst and Lawrence. Reduced rent in exchange for caretaking duties. Contact Grethe at (416) 239-4689

"LITTLEST GIANT" IN OTTAWA

We remember the performance here last year of "The Littlest Giant" by Hallveig Thorlacius and her delightful 'Pocket Theatre'. Gerry Einarsson of Ottawa (Friends of Iceland) reports that on Sept. 27 Hallveig gave performances at 4 Ottawa area schools. The puppet show entranced young children from junior kindergarten to grade two. Congratulations to Gerry for organizing this event. He extends his thanks to Hjálmar W. Hannesson for making the event possible.

UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

TRAVELS TO ICELAND

In February we are organizing another "Travels to Iceland" event. This was very popular topic last year, so we are going to do another one. Our Program Director, Gail Einarson-McCleery will surely put forward another great programme. If you want to tell about your trip to Iceland, please give Gail a call at (416) -762-8627.

E-mail: icegem@compuserve.com.

THORRABLÓT

Mark this one on your calendar. Our popular dinner dance event will be on April 6, 2002 at the North York Memorial Hall. Icelandic food, including those great desserts, entertainment, and really great fellowship. Let's make this one the best ever. We intend to have another great silent auction. If you have anything to donate, or if you can offer to help organize it, please call Darla – (416) 423-0493.

THE VIKINGS AND FINLAND – A SYMPOSIUM

The speakers will be Professor Thomas DuBois "The Finns Meet the Vikings", followed by Dr. Birgitta Wallace- "L'Anse aux Meadows and Vinland – the Vikings in North America".

This will be a slide presentation. This event will take place on Sunday, Nov 11, 1pm to 5pm at St. Michaels College – Carr Hall, St. Joseph St. Call to reserve (416) 730-8350. Cost for the afternoon is \$30.00, The event is also to be followed by a dinner, at which the keynote speaker will be the Ambassador to Canada from Finland. Additional cost for the dinner is \$45.00.

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT:

WANT TO CONNECT WITH YOUR HERITAGE?
TRY LÖGBERG-HEIMSKRINGLA NEWSPAPER!

Are you familiar with Lögberg? Let me tell you a little about it. Back in pioneer days, the Icelanders established two newspapers – Lögberg (meaning Law Rock) and Heimskringla (Globe). They often had different viewpoints and competition was fierce, but finally in 1959 they realized that they would need to merge to survive. Since then, Lögberg-Heimskringla has been spreading the news around in Canada, the U.S.A. and Iceland. Much of the content was originally in Icelandic, but this has changed as fewer of us spoke the mother tongue. Now it contains headlines in both English and Icelandic, as well as Icelandic lessons, while the rest of the content is in English. Lögberg-Heimskringla is the oldest ethnic newspaper in North America.

This is the place to learn what is happening in your own and other Icelandic communities, as well as in Iceland. Recently, Acting Managing Editor Ken Howard established a new column - "My Career as an Icelandic-North American", and many interesting people have been featured in it. The current Editor, Lillian Vilborg MacPherson, President Julianna Björnson, the staff and board members have introduced other new features and the paper has never been so lively. There are now correspondents and representatives from various regions, a website (<http://www.logberg.com>), "Yggdrasil, The Tree of Life" column and lots of news of people and places including a Calendar of Events.

Logberg Heimskringla is currently on a subscription drive and is offering a \$10 commission to our club for each new subscription ... so you can help yourself and us at the same time by subscribing. 44 issues a year for only \$48.15 a year! That includes four large "special" issues.

Send your cheque for \$48.15 to Evelyn Trites, ICCT Treasurer, 7 Wax Myrtleway, Don Mills M3B 3K6, and then sit back and enjoy the paper while learning more about your heritage! Bless, bless. GAIL

"TORONTO'S MANY FACES 2001" LAUNCHED

Tuesday October 16th saw the launch of MPP Tony Ruprecht's latest version of "Toronto's Many Faces 2001" in a gala ceremony at Queen's Park. The lobby was filled to overflowing with Consuls and representatives of the 65 ethnic communities profiled in the book, along with politicians and media.

Surrounded by the flags of many of those nations, a Maltese choir opened the proceedings. The event then started with a tribute to the firefighters of New York, and included the presentation of a donation from Toronto Firefighters to a representative from New York. Prominent ethnic leaders who had been instrumental in the production of the book were presented with a copy of it, after which various speakers congratulated Mr. Ruprecht on this achievement. To celebrate the book's release, a feast of ethnic foods followed.

Don Gislason and Gail Einarson-McCleery represented the Icelandic community... and within the book, many prominent Ontario Icelanders are mentioned. It is published by Quarry Press, features 69 different ethnic cultures, and is available for \$24.95 in bookstores and through Mr. Ruprecht's Queen's Park office (416) 325-7777. It is a comprehensive guide to multicultural metro, a reference book for history buffs, and a guide to the traditions, festivals and foods which make up Toronto's many faces.

VIKING SAGAS GIVEN TO ONTARIO LIBRARIES

Iceland's Ambassador to Canada, Hjalmar W. Hannesson, was in Toronto on Tuesday, October 9th to deliver a gift from the people of Iceland ... the new English translation of all 40 sagas plus 49 tales ... 2300 pages in 5 volumes in a beautiful boxed set.

"In addition to receiving the **The Complete Sagas of the Icelanders** for our library, I learned so much about Iceland, about Icelanders in Canada and about the Sagas themselves. A thoroughly enjoyable event!" ... *a representative of one of the recipients.*



Ambassador Hannesson with Saga recipient, club member Meredith McFarquhar of Toronto District School Board (photo by John Gilmore)

500 sets of the Sagas have been donated to the North American Canadian Club of Toronto presented some of these to twenty Ontario universities, libraries and school boards. Other recipients will receive their sets in special ceremonies to come.

The event included saga telling, music and art by Canadians of Icelandic descent, followed by a

delicious dessert reception, including that Icelandic Canadian staple, vinarterta!

Recently published by Leifur Eiriksson Publishing Ltd., **The Complete Sagas of Icelanders** are the greatest contributions of the Nordic nations to world literature. They describe people and events which took place in Norway, Iceland, Greenland and during the discovery of North America at the height of the Viking Age. Based on oral traditions from the ninth and tenth centuries, they were written down in the 13th and 14th centuries. Now, after 4 years of painstaking work by 30 translators, they are available in modern English.

"The Icelandic Sagas remain one of the great marvels of world literature, a great human achievement"
Ted Hughes, UK Poet Laureate

"Critics have often considered the Sagas of Icelanders (or Family Sagas) as the single range of mountains in the literary landscape that intervenes between the slopes of Greek drama and those of Shakespeare" Dr. Jenny Jochens (Journal of English & Germanic Philology)



The recipients of the Saga sets with Hjalmar in the middle - they came from all over Ontario - Lindsay, Waterloo, Guelph, St. Catharines, London, Hamilton and Toronto. (Photo by Kathleen McDermott)



Musicians Sig Martin from London and Steve Koven from Toronto (Photo by Kathleen McDermott)

Garry Oddleifson, Ontario Regional Director for the Icelandic National League spoke of the importance of the Sagas in world literature. In his first Toronto appearance since becoming Ambassador for Iceland in Canada, Hjalmar Hannesson touched on a number of subjects, including how pleased he was to be visiting his Toronto friends again, how diverse he found our culture on his quick walking tour of the city, and how he hoped this would be the first of many visits. On the subject of the Sagas, he reinforced the idea that one of the main purposes of the Icelandic nation (only 282,000 people) was to keep alive the ancient Norse language which the Sagas were originally written in. With this translation, he hopes that many more people across Canada will have access to them. Afterwards, club members had a chance to chat with the new Ambassador.

To highlight Icelandic culture, art by ICCT members Katrina Koven, Tom Bjarnason, Thorsteinn Helf and Gudrun Sigursteinsdottir Girgis was on display during the presentation. Resident story teller Carol McGirr told a portion of the Laxdaelar Saga and musicians Sig Martin from London, Ontario and Lindy from Toronto provided lively entertainment; jazz pianist Steve Koven joined them for an impromptu session which brought the house down. The Bifrost Children's Choir rounded out the evening with an amusing rendition of the Vinarterta Song, written by choir director Brenda Bjarnason.

Ontario libraries are now much richer with this treasure of Icelandic literature on their shelves.

On Wednesday, Honorary Consul Jon Johnson hosted a lunch for the Ambassador with people from the business community, and in the evening President Darla McKay and the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto executive entertained Mr. Hannesson at dinner. The Ambassador wound up his visit to Toronto by meeting with the speaker of the Ontario Legislature, the Honourable Gary Carr, on August 11th.

JOLATRÉ SKEMMTUN

Eighth Annual Kids' Christmas Party

Sunday, December 2nd is the date of the ICCT's Annual Kids' Christmas Party.



We have plenty to offer this year, including traditional Icelandic decoration ideas, craft activities for all ages, games, and a special Icelandic tale will be told. We also will be singing both Icelandic and English Christmas carols and it's rumoured that Santa may even drop in for some dancing around the Christmas tree!

Sunday, December 2nd at the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church
230 St. Clair Avenue West (2 blocks east of Avenue Road) **2:30pm - 5:00pm**
Admission: \$4 Adult Members, \$5 Non-Members. CHILDREN UNDER 12 ARE FREE! Each family should bring a plate of goodies!

Adults can do some Christmas shopping while the kids are having fun. There will be tables with an assortment of Icelandic-Canadian books, videos, T-shirts, pins and more. Please reserve your craft tables with **Jill Mitchell** by calling her at **(416) 767-9872**.

Lights on the Christmas Tree in Reykjavik, Iceland

In almost half a century it has been tradition in Reykjavik to celebrate when the lights are turned on for the first time each December on the Christmas tree in the centre of Reykjavik. This tree is from Norway - the country that the settlers of Iceland came from 1125 years ago. It is a gift from the City of Oslo to the City of Reykjavik. The Christmas tree from Oslo is always in the square Austurvollur. The Dom is to the left and the Parliament House to the right.



Christmas Cards, The Icelandic Way!!

Are you always the type who has good intentions, but never seems to find the time to write Christmas cards to family and friends? This year, log onto <http://www.simnet.is/gardarj/cards/cards.htm> as send them an Icelandic Yule card via e-mail! These beautiful cards are actual scans of authentic Icelandic Yule cards sent from 1910 to 1930. Enjoy!

Christmas in Iceland:

If you'd like to learn more about Icelandic Christmas traditions, please visit Yule In Iceland on the web at the following address:
<http://www.simnet.is/gardarj/>

