



FÁLKINN

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002

ICCT FÁLKINN, 43rd Year, Number 2



COME TO THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CHRISTMAS FAIR

NEW ACTIVITIES AND A NEW LOCATION

FOR ALL AGES (Babes, Toddlers, 'Tweens, Teens, Young and Young at Heart)

This year's Christmas extravaganza will have more entertainment and activities than ever! In addition to our traditional activities, we aim to have new events that will appeal to the Christmas spirit in everyone.

Come — see and hear the Bifrost Children's Choir and Elfinfólk Theatre Troupe perform Icelandic favourites, including a play about the **Jólasveinar** (Icelandic Yuletide Trolls), directed by Brenda Bjarnason... and our Christmas festivities will also include the popular oral tradition of **storytelling** by Carol McGirr.

We will also hear a presentation by Kara Schuster, who was in Iceland this summer on the 6 week **Snorri Program**. Kara's presentation may inspire all of us to plan a trip to visit this amazing land and its people. Youngsters will learn about the program that can help them make the trip and connect with their heritage.

Socialize and catch up with old friends over refreshments and **Christmas goodies** including **vínarterta**, and Don Gislason's famous **Sætsúpa** (fruit soup).

Gift ideas & stocking stuffers! There will be an assortment of goods including **Icelandic sweaters**, Icelandic Canadian **books**, CDs and videos, **INL heritage calendars**, and more. Thorsteinn Helf will be there with his **folk art**. There will be **crafts**, and we are looking for crafts — If you are an artisan or know someone who is, please let us know and we can make space available for you. Contact Darla McKay at 416-960-0561.

Other activities for all ages that are in the planning include a **trivia game**, and perhaps even some fortune telling (We hope to secure seers and mystics with the powers to **read Icelandic kaffi grounds, tea leaves** and **Norse rune stones**. If you know of anyone with these special abilities please let Darla know as soon as possible.)

There will be **prizes** for the games, decorating the **tree**, and 'hands-on' **craft activities**. Dancing around the tree (**Jólatréskemmtinn**) is an annual favourite and we expect **Santa** to make an appearance.

We are excited to be hosting this year's Christmas Fair in the sun-drenched, high-beamed ceiling of the Parish Hall at Grace Church on-the-Hill. Please be there on time, as you don't want to miss anything.

Date: Sunday, December 15, 2002

Time: 2:30 pm

Grace Church on-the-Hill

Main Floor, Parish Hall

300 Lonsdale Road, Toronto, on the corner of Lonsdale and Russell Hill Road (One block East of Spadina Rd – Two blocks North of St. Clair Avenue)

Admission:

\$5 Members

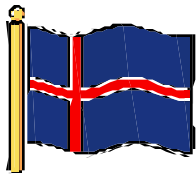
\$6 Non-Members

\$4 Youth 13 – 19 Yrs. \$3 Children 12 & Under

Each family should bring a plate of goodies.

There is metre parking on Lonsdale, free parking on Russell Hill Road, and unofficially (park at risk) parking at Bishop Strachan School across the street. By TTC, take the Yonge line to St. Clair station, then the westbound St. Clair streetcar to Russell Hill Road, and walk two blocks North to Lonsdale.

We look forward to seeing all of you there to celebrate Gleðileg Jól at the Icelandic Canadian Christmas Fair! Information: Call Brenda 416-769-0707 or Darla 416-960-0561.



NEWS FROM ICELAND

POSITIVE REVIEWS FOR SIGUR RÓS



The Icelandic band Sigur Rós received heavy praise from the French cultural weekly, *Télérama*. In an extensive article, the publication called their second album *Ágætis byrjun* (*Goods Beginning*) "the most important album of the decade". The reviewer likens their music to Pink Floyd and classical composer Aarvo Part. The article calls Reykjavik the new world capital of rock.

Meanwhile, the band's third album, *()*, has enjoyed favourable reviews, such as that by New York Times reviewer, Jon Pareles, who says that Sigur Rós "resembles Pink Floyd without the mundane specifics and Radiohead without the jitters".

HUNGER STRIKE

The mother of Icelandic pop singer Björk held a hunger strike, lasting 40 days, to protest the plans of Alcoa to construct an aluminum smelter and hydroelectric plant above Vatnajökull glacier. Hildur Rúna Hauksdóttir stopped eating on October 7, has lost 14 pounds, and is encouraged by the support received. Feeling that she has made her point by attracting public attention to her purpose, she has ended her hunger strike.

WOW, POTENT STUFF

A man was arrested on suspicion of drunk driving near Korpúlfsstaðir, and the police drove him to the police station in Reykjavik. His blood alcohol level was 2.23 parts per ml. (Isn't that three times the Ontario legal limit?) The man's explanation was that he had drunk fermented prune juice from a carton while a passenger in the police cruiser. Having taken no statements from any witnesses, and not testing the prune juice, the court decided the police had no case. *Ed note: If this gives any of you ideas, don't say you read it here.*

ICELANDER SINGS FOR HOLLYWOOD

Icelandic singer Emiliana Torrini will sing 'Gollum's Song' on the soundtrack to the second film in the 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy, 'The Two Towers'. She was approached to perform the song after the film's producers heard her CD, 'Love in the Time of Science'.



Oscar-winning composer Howard Shore wrote the song, which will be heard with the closing credits of the movie.



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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Webpage: <http://icct.info>



Christmas in Iceland

The important days are:

**Þorláksmessa – St Thorlakur's Day
December 23rd**

Iceland's major native Saint is heilagur Þorlákur Þorhallsson, or St. Thorlakur Thorhallsson, Bishop of Skálholt. December 23rd commemorates his death in 1193. The main custom for Þorláksmessa is the partaking of a simple meal of skata or skate. The tree is usually decorated on this date.

Although Iceland is now a religious and mostly Christian country, it is interesting to note that there is no reference to Christ or mass in the Icelandic word for Christmas – Jól. This corresponds with the English Yule.

It is certain that a mid-winter festival was celebrated in the Nordic countries well before Christianity took hold – before 1000 A.D. These festivals would revolve around the winter solstice, likely to mark the advent of ever lengthening days. Opinions differ on whether the point was to greet this new ascendancy of the sun or to help bring it about. Regardless, saga sources mention them as lively gatherings at chieftans' estates, where guests were plied with choice food and ale. Iceland was converted to Christianity in the year 1000, and the Catholic church (Iceland became Lutheran in 1550) soon evolved into a strong cultural force. Much of the ancient writings that Iceland is famous for, and which form the cornerstone of it's heritage, were the work of churchmen. However, Icelanders preserved from the past whatever they found worthwhile, and some of the Yuletide (Jólatími) traditions are likely pagan in origin.

In modern Iceland, Christmas is a family affair, and very much centered around children. It is not seen as an occasion for drinking. In fact, there is a good deal of effort to influence against the use of alcoholic beverages at Christmas – though New Year's Eve is an entirely different matter. Christmas means fine food, wearing one's best clothes, decorations inside the house and outside – and most of all, family closeness. A new garment for each member of the family is a tradition, and before the convenience of modern shopping, when clothing was made at home, it was an effort. Tradition has it that any person without some new item of clothing was in danger of being eaten by the Christmas Cat.

In the old tradition, a new day began at 6 p.m. – not midnight. This may explain why the traditional holiday season in Iceland consists of 13 days, never with any reference to Twelfth Night. One by one over this 13-day period, the Jólasveinar, the unwelcome Christmas goblins pull their pranks. They have nothing in common with Santa Claus, who is a relatively recent import. At the end of the period, the goblins go back home to the mountains for another year.

Aðfangadagur – Christmas Eve

Aðfangadagur is the day that all Icelandic children await impatiently, as after the evening meal they can open their gifts. TV transmission stops around 5 p.m. on Aðfangadagur and restarts around 10. The family listens to Evensong on the radio, then partakes of the evening meal. After cleaning up, the presents are opened. It is usually only the immediate family that is together for Aðfangadagur.

Jóladagur – Christmas Day

This day usually is reserved for the extended family. There is much visiting, and feasting. Traditional Christmas foods are Hangikjöt- smoked mutton, Kjötsupa- mutton soup, Rjúpa- rock ptarmigan, and Laufabrauð- leaf bread (this is dough in very thin sheets, cut into intricate patterns and fried).

Annar Jóladagur – Boxing Day

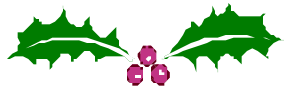
Another day of visiting and feasting, usually siblings and close friends enjoying some more sumptuous food and pastry. The period of recuperation between Christmas and New Year's begins.

Gamlárskvöld / Nýársdagur New Year's Eve / New Year's Day

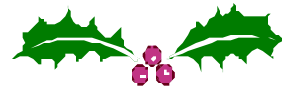
One of the most magical nights of the year is the night when the old year changes into the new. This night was also the eighth night of Yule. Cows gain human speech, seals take on human form, the dead rise from their graves, and the elves move house. Elfin gold could be obtained from the elves by sitting at a crossroads waiting for them to pass by. Bonfires on New Year's Eve have been lit in Iceland since the late 18th century. In this century the tradition of "sprengja út árið", "blowing out the year" has been observed by the detonation of fireworks, and many families spend a small fortune on them. Dances start a little before midnight, and young people usually go to a dance.

Þrettándinn: Twelfth Night (Epiphany) – Jan 6th

The last day of Yule, celebrated in later years with bonfires and elfin dances.



CLUB NEWS



TOM BJARNASON ART SHOW

by Gail McCleery

Although time is getting short, Tom is having his first major Art Show at the historic Victoria Hall in Cobourg, Ontario until November 28th.

Our May 2002 issue includes a comprehensive biographical piece on Tom, but the step from a commissioned illustrator (and a very excellent one, at that) to an artist having his first major show, is worthy of our attention. At the age of 76 – his first show – after a full and fulfilling artistic career! Imagine! Tom is not showing work done on demand or from a ‘work order’. Tom Bjarnason is showing his art. We are thrilled for him.



When Tom somewhat backed away from the busy career he had in Toronto and moved to the small town of Port Hope, he acquired a large studio with commanding views over Lake Ontario, the Moira River, and the town’s main street. He began to indulge in a bit of whimsy, “for himself” as he puts it. He started experimenting with large works of mixed media, using three-dimensional pieces as elements in the overall canvasses.

Aðalsteinn Ingólfsson, former Curator of the National Gallery of Iceland and now Director of the new Museum of Design and Applied Art in Iceland, met Tom some years ago and visited Tom’s Port Hope studio when he came to Canada (as a participant in the International Visits Program of the Icelandic National League). Tom was standing in the studio amidst a heap of all manner of junk, meticulously sorted, and said, with a devilish grin “I haven’t a clue what I’m doing but I’m having such a good time doing it”.

Aðalsteinn returned for the opening of Tom’s current show on October 22nd, wrote the catalogue for the exhibition, and spoke about Tom’s work. Aðalsteinn said, “All seem to be motorized, all seem to be able to take off...they have an engine, which suggests rotation, things moving. It seems as if you can press a button and they’ll start to go, to take off”.

The show in Cobourg has a serendipitous connection for Tom. The first time he went to the Art Gallery of Northumberland

in Cobourg, a show was on of the work of Frank Armington and his wife. They became famous for their interpretations of Parisian landmarks. But before they moved to Paris, they had given art lessons to Tom’s mother in Winnipeg in 1905.

We extend congratulations to Tom on his new show and on being able to indulge his fantasies. The show continues to November 28th.

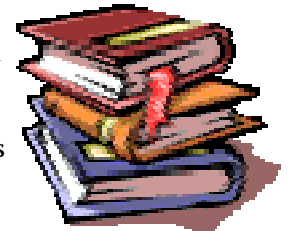
Art Gallery of Northumberland
Tuesday to Friday 10 to 4; Saturday 1 to 4
Tom Bjarnason: “*From Illustration to Accumulation*”
Victoria Hall, 55 King St. West Cobourg, ON
Phone: (905)-372-0333

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to us! Great news! Leah Salt now occupies the long-vacant position of Vice-President. We welcome her to this new position, and look forward to giving her our support when she assumes the office of President.

ICCT LIBRARY

We are looking into various possibilities for the relocation of our bookcase to a more readily accessible location. Hopefully, we’ll have an announcement soon. Our Librarian, Margaret Van Hamme, has undertaken this effort. She is re-listing all of our Library assets, and reminds us that donations of books and periodicals are greatly appreciated. To donate, call Margaret at 416-690-0528. We also plan to commit funds for the acquisition of new publications, and need another bookcase. The membership remittance form, included with this issue of Fálkinn, includes a space for the inclusion and designation of a donation. Either the bookcase, or the acquisition fund are examples of how a donation to the club could be designated.



DIRECTORSHIPS VACANT

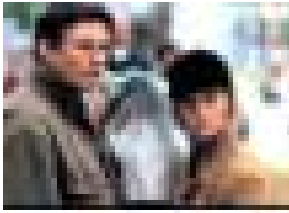
If you are able to give some time to your club, there are still vacancies on your board. Those of us that have been part of the board for years can vouch for the fact that it is always great to see a new face in the group, and to hear fresh ideas. If you are interested, speak to any officer or director, and we’ll make sure that you are welcomed with open arms.



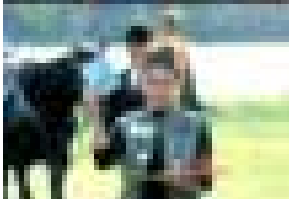
CLUB NEWS



VIRGINIA'S RUN



ICCT member Leif Bristow is President and CEO of Knightscope Entertainment in Toronto. The firm's first feature film, *Virginia's Run* appeared recently in theatres across Canada and the United States. Leif attended the University of Denver on an opera scholarship, and then studied theatre at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in Pasadena, CA. Born in Toronto, he grew up mostly in the United States, but would spend summers in Gimli with his grandparents, George and Dolly Bristow. Leif recalls, "Many nights in Gimli were spent around a bonfire, singing with my family. There is a need for kids and their families to have films they can watch together. The most endearing and enduring films of all time are the ones we remember watching with our parents or the ones we watch with our children. At the end of the day, that's what it's all about."



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Knightscope's second feature, *Kart Racer*, starring Randy McQuaid and Will Rothhaar will be out next spring, and their third movie, *Blizzard*, starring Christopher Plummer and Whoopi Goldberg, will appear for Christmas 2003.

PASSINGS

Eileen Jorunn Elvina (Grenke) Martin

(February 1920 – February 2002)

We are saddened to hear of the passing of long time ICCT member Eileen Martin. Not residing in Toronto, Eileen could not attend many of our functions, but was a steady member and supporter of our club. Eileen was born at Hekkla, Muskoka District to Emil Grenke and Jakobina (Bena) Einarson. They had been married in 1919, and Eileen was their first child.

She was raised on the farm owned by her grandparents Gustav and Elvina Grenke, who had purchased the property from Ásgeir Helgason, one of the early Icelandic settlers. Emil and Bena had six children, but in 1931 Emil died. For a short time the family moved to Rousseau, then to Bracebridge, where Eileen and Audrey, the oldest children, could attend High School.

Eileen attended Shaw Business College in Toronto. In 1939 she joined the family, which had relocated to Milton. Eileen worked for P.L. Robertson Mfg. Co. and for many years with the Halton Board of Education as a school secretary. She was a member of St. Paul's United Church in Milton, a volunteer for the

Canadian Cancer Society, and a tireless worker for the John Milton Chapter of the I.O.D.E.

She is survived by her children Paul (Margaret), Sherry Martin-Currie of Milton; her sister Dawn (Grenke) Crawford of Hamilton; brother Murray (Donna) Grenke of Lion's Head. Also her 5 grandchildren, many nieces and nephews and friends. She was predeceased by her mother (1976), her husband Dick (1979), brother Vernon (1997), and sisters Merle Hogan (1999) and Audrey Brush (2001).

Beverly (Peterson) Fillmore

(April 1937 – July 2002)

Beverly was born in Piney MB, the daughter of Gunnar and Mary Peterson. Gunnar had been born in Iceland and immigrated to Canada. Her father served in WWII with the Canadian forces, was wounded and never fully recovered. Beverly graduated from College in 1958 and moved to Toronto. She worked most of her adult life for the SCM Bookroom, and then later at the Ryerson University Access Centre, until her retirement two years ago.

Beverly was a soprano in the Annex Singers Choir and an active member of Bathurst Street United Church. She is to be greatly missed by her husband David, her daughter Christine and Christine's partner Mike Verissimo. Beverly was a loving sister-in-law to Carol Rogers and Cathleen Fillmore, and doted on her nieces and nephews.

Verna (Rognvaldson) Tatton (1929 – 2002)

We also pass on the sad news of the death of Verna Tatton, who was earlier involved quite a lot with our club. Verna passed away on June 9, at Louise Marshall Hospital in Mount Forest. Verna was the beloved wife of Jack Tatton: dear mother of Brett (Donna) of Port Elgin, Peter (Kirsten) of Inisfil, and Craig (Kelly) of Acton. She is also survived by grandchildren Sara, Kristen, Madeline, Kezia, Trevlyn and Kent; and brother Jack (Louissette) Rognvaldson of Elliot Lake. Verna is also fondly remembered by Richard (Ruth) Tatton of Courtney, BC and Peg (Tom) Allen of Winnipeg, MB.

CONDOLENCES

To Gunnar and Lynda Helgason and family. Gunnar's father Sigurður (Sig) Helgason passed away recently. He had been residing in Winnipeg. He had met some ICCT members at club picnics at Gimli farm. We wish peace for him and condolences to Gunnar and Lynda.

CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

NEXT ICCT MEETING

Sunday, February 16th, 2003 – Our ever-popular TRAVEL SHOW will be held again at Swansea Town Hall Community Centre – 95 Lavinia Street. This event is back by popular demand and so far promises to be better than ever. If you have had a recent trip to Iceland, maybe you can share its high points with us by your participation in this program. If so, contact Gail Einarson McCleery at



416-762-0627

THORRABLÓT

Thorrablót this year will be on Saturday March 22nd. We will once again be holding our Super Silent Auction. You may start thinking about something neat to donate, because you may be getting a call. If you already have an item, or if you'd like to offer to assist, please call Darla at 416-960-0561.

Mark down these dates. We'd like to see you all at these events!

SNORRI 2003

When you attend our Christmas Fair, you will hear of the experiences of a Snorri participant in 2002. Kara Schuster will tell us about her adventure. Be sure to attend if you think you may consider yourself as a Snorri candidate. Snorri 2003 starts on June 15, and is followed by 6 weeks of participation and 'participaction'. The cost may appear intimidating, but do not be discouraged. Grants have in the past covered more than half the cost. (Snorri participants who are Club members have received grants from ICCT in the past.) Simply go to www.snorri.is to learn more. You can obtain complete details and even apply over the net. But you must hurry — applications are closing on Jan. 10, 2003.

Some highlights: You will learn about Icelandic language, culture, history — visit museums as well as historic and interesting sites. You will work for 3 of the 6 weeks, preferably in the geographical area from where your forefathers originated (you will find relatives). The final week is an Adventure Tour, when the Snorri group 2003 will reunite and take a fantastic tour. Finally, you will end up at the Blue Lagoon and evaluate your experiences. We will also have some Snorri information at the Christmas Fair for anyone that cannot access the site. Or, call Garry at 416-463-1324 and I will fax or mail information to you.

NEWS FROM FRIENDS

CULINARY BOOK AWARDS

Congratulations to Kristin Olafson-Jenkyns, who received two awards for her book *The Culinary Saga of New Iceland*. Cuisine Canada's Culinary Book Awards are presented annually to honour books published during the previous calendar year. This year's event, the Fifth Annual Cookbook Awards Ceremony, was held October 6 at the University of Guelph. In the Special Interest Food and Beverage category, Kristin received the gold award, and she received a silver award in the Canadian Food Culture category for books that best reflect Canadian food history and culture.

GEMINI AWARD

More congratulations — this time to Guy Maddin, a Winnipegger with Icelandic roots for winning a Gemini award for Best Direction in a Performing Arts Program or Series. He directed the CBC production of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet performance of *Dracula: Pages From a Virgin's Diary*.

MORE AWARDS



Martha Brooks, the multi talented Winnipegger of Icelandic descent, who is a writer and performer with several published works to her credit, and is an accomplished jazz

singer, garnered two diverse awards recently. She won the Prairie Music Award in the category Most Outstanding Jazz Recording 2002 for her latest album *Change of Heart*. She topped this by winning the prestigious Governor General's Award in the Children's Literature category for her latest novel *True Confessions of a Heartless Girl*. A remarkable achievement: having two distinct careers in the Arts, and making your mark in both.

Seasons Greetings

INGA AND GURRY-SUPERB CONCERT!

The INL International Visits Program brought two talented performers from Iceland to Toronto for a concert on October 20th. It was truly special. Those in attendance were blessed to hear an event of International stature. The venue, the historic Holy Trinity Church, offered an intimate ambience – friendly, but also with an appropriate degree of solemnity. Mezzo soprano Ingveldur Ýr Jonsdóttir and her accompanist, pianist Guðrídur St. Sigurðardóttir — Inga and Gurry — performed a thrilling concert.

The first half of the concert was Icelandic repertoire; surprisingly diverse and evocative, considering the tiny country from which it originates.

The final number in the first half, the traditional song “Sofðu Unga Ástin Mín”, was beautifully sung *a cappella* from the back of the unlit church by Inga. When sung as well as rendered by Inga, it is the kind of mournful song that will bring tears to your eyes, even for those who may not understand the lyrics.

Gurry’s piano playing was very supportive and complementary, and it was readily evident that it was coming from the hands of a first class pianist. There is little doubt that we could very well have heard a very fine piano concert if Gurry had been performing alone.

After the intermission, the repertoire became International – Canadian music by Jean Coulthard, and a haunting song by the Finn, Grieg, as well as French cabaret music by Poulenc, Satie, Weill and Offenbach. Inga’s command of the French lyrics was excellent, and her acting abilities were very apparent, portraying the naughty dilettante with ease.

The only negative was that, while the performances were easily heard without amplification, the verbal introductions were not.

After the performance, and the three encores, Inga and Gurry were thanked by Gail Einarson McCleery and were presented with pieces carved for them by Guðrun Sigursteinnsdóttir Girgis. They were Brazilian soapstone pieces — a treble clef with



Guðrídur St. Sigurðardóttir & Ingveldur Ýr Jonsdóttir with Gail McCleery, proudly showing off their carvings (made by Guðrun Girgis)

hints of Canadiana — beaver, trees, islands. Our gratitude goes to Guðrun for creating the carvings.

Afterwards coffee and goodies followed, a magnificent spread including Pönnokukur and Vínarterta. Thanks for this to Merle Oddson and Ellen Gilmore.

The following evening the tour closed out at the small, charming Arkell Schoolhouse Gallery near Guelph. A cathedral ceiling and an excellent piano combined to produce a very good sound balance and an excellent concert was once again the result for the capacity crowd. The Guelph concert was a co-production of the ICCT and Mackenzie Kristjon Jenkyns of Coastline Publishing. Kristin Olafson-Jenkyns, whose recent prize-winning book “*The Culinary Saga of New Iceland*”, was published by Coastline, provided a marvelous buffet for the reception.

The concert was co-sponsored by the Cultural Exchange Fund, Canada Iceland Foundation Inc.; Icelandair; the Bank of Iceland; the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of Iceland, as well as the Canada Council for the Arts.

This tour was well-received across Canada and received positive media coverage, including a very good review by Geoff Chapman of the Toronto Star.

ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS FOOD AND RECIPES!

Not everyone reading this newsletter is of Icelandic descent, and even if you are, perhaps you haven't tried a delicious traditional Icelandic recipe recently. Now's the perfect time to bring a little Iceland into your kitchen. Enjoy!

ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS CAKE

1/2 cup + 3 Tbsp. lightly salted butter at room temperature
1 cup. sugar
5 large eggs
1 2/3 cup flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 cup chopped dates
1/2 cup dark seedless raisins
2/3 cup semisweet chocolate chips



Grease a 9 inch tube pan. Heat oven to 375.

In a large mixing bowl, beat butter and sugar until light and creamy. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix flour and baking powder and stir into butter mixture, stir in the dates, raisins, and chocolate chips. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan.

Bake about 45 minutes until a cake tester inserted in the centre comes out clean. Remove pan from oven and place on a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes. Turn cake onto rack and let cool completely.

Keep 1 day before cutting. Makes 10 or more servings.

ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS FOOD

Icelanders will use any occasion to eat and drink and celebrate. This is very apparent when Christmas starts approaching. We have adopted several Christmas or pre-Christmas traditions from other nations, especially ones that involve food and drink.

Jólahlaðborð = Christmas Buffét. Christmas-time in Iceland is very much a boon for restaurants and caterers. The bufféts have become so popular that some restaurants start taking orders months in advance, and the Xmas buffet season is now starting as early as mid-November. It isn't uncommon for a person to attend three bufféts before Christmas: one with the people from work, one with friends, and one with family. This buffet tradition is probably derived from the Scandinavian *Julefrokost*.

Jólaglögg. This is something people mostly do at work. *Glögg* is a Scandinavian term for hot spiced wine, and in Scandinavia and Germany it is a traditional warming winter drink. For some, this is unfortunately a wonderful excuse for over-drinking. The Jólaglögg is something that happens shortly before Christmas, sometimes on the last workday before the Xmas holidays. Glögg can be a warming, refreshing drink, made with red wine and spices, or it can be a potent, extremely intoxicating brew, equal parts wine and vodka. Unfortunately, the latter version is more common.

ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE

The Icelandic National League (INL) in North America is a long established organization (established in 1919), which was very much Manitoba centred for many years, for fairly obvious reasons. It has played a leading role in public spirited and cultural activities among the Icelandic people in Canada and the U.S.

The INL strives to contribute to North American culture through the preservation and promotion of the positive aspects of Icelandic heritage which was brought to this continent by Icelandic pioneer forefathers and their descendants, through the strengthening of cultural bonds and kinship ties with the people of Iceland and through the promotion of cooperation among Icelandic cultural groups here in North America.

This group has tried in recent years to perform as an umbrella organization for the many various local clubs throughout the North American continent (ICCT is a member club of the INL). For the most part, the INL has accomplished this, as many of us now have friendships that originate from INL events. The INL bring out the Heritage Calendar each year, they support and promote the weekly publication *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, as well as the Icelandic Chair at the University of Manitoba, and the museum at Gimli. They currently have a fund raising effort under way, a raffle for which the first prize is a trip from Edmonton to Yellowknife. These tickets will be available at our Christmas Fair. We know that this is a complicated gift for a Torontonion to win, but the INL needs the money – you might think of it as a gratefully received donation.



HELP WANTED — The saga distribution program undertaken over a year ago is still very much incomplete. I am finding that, having so many things to do, this program has been too long on the back burner. This is a very worthwhile project involving the distribution of saga sets to libraries throughout Ontario. If you would like to get involved in this project, please contact Garry at: 416-463-1324, e-mail eoddleifson@rogers.com

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT — In November 2002, Coastline Publishing will launch "Falcons Gold: Canada's First Olympic Hockey Heroes", a children's book written by Kathleen Arnason and illustrated by Luther Pokrant. Falcons Gold is an exciting book that celebrates the story of the Winnipeg Falcons hockey team-Canada's (and hockey's) first Gold medal Olympic champions in 1920. We expect to have these available at the Christmas Fair.

TRAVELING TO ICELAND? A reminder: If you are planning to travel to Iceland in the future, you may be able to help the club at the same time. The Icelandic National League has an arrangement with The Great Canadian Travel Co. Ltd. If you book your trip through them and mention that you're a member of our club and an INL affiliate, a cash payment is given to the INL and shared with the club. Great Canadian Travel is at 204-949-0199 or toll-free at: 1-800-661-3830, website:

<http://www.greatcanadiantravel.com>.