



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO

FÁLKINN

OCTOBER 2002

ICCT FÁLKINN, 43rd Year, Number 1

OUR SEASON OPENS ON A HIGH NOTE



AN ICELANDIC CONCERT: INGA AND GURRY

Ingvel dur Yr Jónsdóttir (Mezzo soprano) and
Guðríður St. Sigurðardóttir (Pianist)



Sunday, October 20
Church of the Holy Trinity
10 Trinity Square
(West side of the Eaton Centre)

ADULTS \$20 SENIOR/ STUDENT \$15
CHILD \$5

Order form for tickets is enclosed. Or call
Ellen Gilmore (905) 889-9937 or
Merle Oddson (905) 731-4799

Reception and Refreshments to follow

GETTING TO THE CHURCH OF HOLY TRINITY

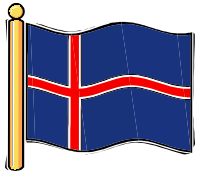
BY SUBWAY:

By Subway is the easiest. Get off at Queen Street and take "Queen St. North Side" exit, turn right on to Queen to James, turn right on James and you are there.

BY CAR:

Parking is nearby also, in three parkades, either from Dundas or Shuter under the Eaton Centre or under the Bell-Trinity building off Bay Street. Costs vary from \$5.00 to \$8.00 flat rate. Handicapped access is available from James or Albert Streets.





NEWS FROM ICELAND

EARTHQUAKE

An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale shook the small island of Grimsey (north Iceland) on Sept. 16. The epicenter was about 45km north of the island. There were about 80 aftershocks, the largest measuring 4.0 on the Richter scale. Fortunately, there were no injuries to any of the island's 95 residents.

ICELAND/US COOPERATION IN PUBLIC HEALTH

The Icelandic Minister of Health, Jon Kristjanson and his American counterpart Tommy Thompson, signed a declaration of cooperation in the public health sector. Scientists from both nations will collaborate on research in the fields of biology, medicine and behavioral sciences.

Iceland has a particularly low number of diabetics, and there is interest in this fact in America, where the disease is regarded as an epidemic.

HYDRO ELECTRIC DAM

A deep and sharp controversy continues in Iceland over the proposal to build a 750 megawatt hydro electric dam. The project is planned for the eastern part of Iceland, where an aluminum smelter is planned, probably at Egilsstadir. There is much opposition from the environmentalists in Iceland, who are concerned that 22 square miles of unspoiled highland wilderness will be flooded by the damming of Jokulsa a Bru. There is also support for the project, as the Icelandic economy begs for this boost. At this time, the Althing has moved to allow the project to proceed, but the opponents are also determined. The controversy will go on.

WHALE WATCHING IN ICELAND



According to the World Wildlife Fund, an association for nature conservation, Iceland is among the top ten places in the world to enjoy whale watching. On WWF's official web page, it says that over

600,000 tourists went whale watching in Iceland last year alone, and that this part of the tourist service

industry in Iceland has expanded the most in the last seven years. It also says that it is an absolute must for anyone interested in whale watching to visit the Húsavík Whale Centre in Húsavík (north Iceland), since there one can see exciting whale exhibitions.

BJÖRK TO RELEASE NEW DVD

In December 2001, Björk and her entourage performed live at the Royal Opera House in London, UK and was filmed for a new DVD. The Royal Opera House DVD will finally be released November 18th. Two weeks later, on December 2nd, Björk is scheduled a release **Volumen 2**, containing all of her music videos to date - including the new recently recorded video for upcoming single 'It's In Our Hands' and also a new animated video for the 1997 'Bachelorette' single b-side 'Nature Is Ancient'.



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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Family \$25, Senior Couple \$20,
Senior Single \$15

Webpage: <http://icct.info>

INGA AND GURRÝ ARE COMING TO ENTERTAIN YOU!

World class musicians Ingveldur Yr Jónsdóttir (Inga), mezzo soprano, and Guðríður St. Sigurðardóttir, pianist, are touring North America and will be in Ontario just after Thanksgiving. They will be appearing at the National Gallery in Ottawa at 7:30 p.m. Friday, October 18th, at the historic Church of the Holy Trinity in Toronto at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, October 20th, and at the charming Arkell Schoolhouse Gallery at 7:30 pm. Monday, October 21st (this is near Guelph).

They're going to be performing some of your favourite Icelandic songs, such as Sofða Unga Ástin Mín, A Sprengisandi, and Draumalandið. In addition, they will include European composers such as Weill, Satie, Poulenc and Sibelius. Two Haida love songs translated into English round out their repertoire.

Their tour starts in Minneapolis, and takes in Winnipeg and Gimli in Manitoba, Elfros in Saskatchewan, Calgary and Edmonton in Alberta and Vancouver in BC. Their first concert actually took place at Salurinn in Reykjavík on September 19th, where they tried out the repertoire before leaving Iceland. It was very well received, setting the stage for a successful tour here.

These are both very accomplished musicians. Inga has been called "Iceland's best singing actress" and started singing at the age of 15 after years of ballet dancing. Her training took place at the Conservatory of Vienna, and Manhattan School of Music in New York. In addition to song recitals, she has had numerous contracts and engagements in the field of opera with renowned conductors. Her career has taken her to London, Paris, and to the Tanglewood Music Festival in the USA among other places as well as her native Reykjavik. She runs her own vocal studios, both in Reykjavik and Loveland, Colorado.

Gurrý began her piano studies in Hamburg at the age of 8. Her studies continued at the Reykjavik College of Music and the University of Michigan, where she won first prize for her playing in the Ann Arbor Society for Musical Arts piano competition. Active as a soloist, chamber musician and accompanist throughout Iceland, her work has also taken her to the U.S.A., Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Since 1983, she has been orchestral pianist with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra; she also teaches piano and is an accompanist for wind and brass students at the Reykjavik College of Music.

These two musicians have many links to North America, especially Gurrý, who is looking forward to meeting many relatives during the tour. As to why they wanted to come here, Inga says, "*Our interest lies in having the two worlds meet; Iceland and North America. Nowadays it is very important that nations co-operate and combine their peoples' talents and strengths. Singing has the ability to reach people directly with words and we want to combine Icelandic music with Canadian and hopefully reach a broad audience of the Icelandic National League as well as introduce*

Icelandic music to new audiences." Gurrý adds, "*In our programs for the tour we have tried to combine works that might be relatively unknown along with better known music, but at the same time tried to create a unity with the hope that our audiences will enjoy themselves and be satisfied. The greatest thing about live performances is that the situation is never the same twice.*"

Their tour is being organized by the International Visits Program of the Icelandic National League of North America and of Iceland and sponsored by their member clubs, with co-sponsorship 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. We acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts which last year invested \$20.8 million in music throughout Canada.

This is your chance to show your friends and relatives the rich culture of your heritage; bring them all along, either to the Sunday afternoon performance in Toronto, or to an evening performance in Ottawa or Arkell!

THE CONCERTS:

OTTAWA: 7:30 pm, Friday October 18
National Gallery
\$25 adult \$15 student
Gerry 613-824-2468

TORONTO: 2:30 pm, Sunday October 20
Church of the Holy Trinity (behind Eaton Centre)
\$20 adults \$15 student/senior \$5 child
Ellen 905-889-9937 or Merle 905-731-4799

GUELPH: 7:30 pm, Monday October 21
Arkell Schoolhouse Gallery, Arkell, Ontario
\$20 Mac 519-856-1449

CLUB NEWS

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



August 2002 saw ICCT member Kristjan Ahronson return to his archaeological dig site in Iceland to wrap up his research for his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Edinburgh. It's been quite a journey for Kristjan who set out to get in touch with his ethnic roots shortly after graduating from high school. His paternal grandmother Claire (Klara) Ahronson (Isfeld) originally from Beachside (near Winnipeg Beach) was convinced there were no living relatives in Iceland. However, the steely determination that drives this young man who grew up in the

Ottawa Valley near the northern tip of Algonquin Park, prevailed and Kristjan now returns regularly via Icelandair to visit "the relatives" in Iceland.

Kristjan joined the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto while studying at the University of Toronto. A former ICCT scholarship winner, he first began to study the language that his grandmother grew up speaking with the club in Toronto. After graduation from St. Michael's University, University of Toronto, a scholarship from the Icelandic Government provided him with the opportunity to live in Iceland and study the language further.

Frequent trips to Iceland to do his research have now allowed him to become as familiar with Iceland as his favourite Canadian playground, Algonquin Park. His expertise in the area of first European settlement was recognized by his being asked to present a paper at the Millennium Conference convened in Newfoundland to celebrate the anniversary of the first settlement of Vikings in North America. Numerous publications of articles in European based journals have continued to raise his profile as an archaeologist.

His language proficiency has progressed to the point where his father, who only ever knew a handful of Icelandic words, watched in awe as Kristjan conversed comfortably with Ambassador Hjalmar Hannesson in Icelandic at a recent Nordic event in Ottawa. Kristjan was delighted to be able to connect with Gail Einarson McCleery of the ICCT at the Museum of Civilization event and remembers fondly his association with the Club and other members like Gary Oddleifson.

Kristjan Ahronson's academic and vocational journey is by no means complete and in many ways is only just beginning as he most recently was awarded a fellowship

from Oxford University's Jesus College to assist him with his research for this academic year. Yet who could have known how great an impact discovering one's ethnic roots as a high school graduate on a year off would have on Kristjan's career?

Ed note: Thanks to Kristjan's parents Ken and Jo Anne Ahronson of Nepean, ON for the article and photo. We recently had seen Kristjan on a report on Icelandic TV News. The current dig in Iceland has unearthed items from as far back as the 11th Century. It is very gratifying to know that our scholarship money turns out to have been so properly placed.

2003 CALENDARS



The 2003 calendars are available. This year's edition includes splendid photographic illustrations of old artifacts that remain in the possession of descendants of early pioneers. The artifacts are expertly described as well. Toronto is well

represented with entries from the families of Etty Green, Vern Austman, and Don Gislason.

An order form is enclosed that may be used to purchase your calendars.

CONGRATULATIONS – NEW ARRIVALS

September 7 saw the arrival of Valdimar Sigurdur Brandson. Proud parents are Brandur Olafson and Terril Lee Calder. Brandur has been one of our teachers at Iceladic classes at various times over the years.

On April 17th, Freya Stella was born to Gudrun Haraldsdottir and Gregg Chapman.

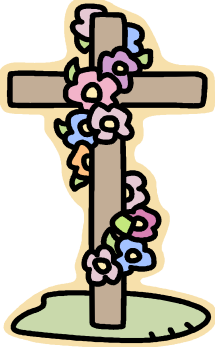
PASSINGS

Gytha (Johnson) Hurst

We pass along news of the death on August 7 of Gytha Hurst, 3 days after her 93rd birthday. Two years ago, she was predeceased by her beloved husband William Donald Hurst. Born in Winnipeg, Gytha was the daughter of Gisli and Gudrun Johnson who had emigrated from Iceland and settled in Winnipeg in 1903. She was also predeceased by her brother

CLUB NEWS

Passings: Gytha Hurst—Cont'd



Professor Helgi Johnson of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and her sisters Bergthora Robson of Toronto, Ragna St. John of Winnipeg, and infant Unur Johnson. She is survived by her two loving children Marilyn Ragna White (Paul) and William Helgi Donald Hurst (Karen), both of Toronto; her five grandchildren Leslie White (Edwin Cass), Cynthia Heyd (Roderick) and Valerie Soper (Phillip), all of Toronto, Andrew Hurst (Gillian Mann) currently of Tanza-

nia, and Christian Hurst of Toronto. Also fortunate to have known her were six great-grandchildren. Mr. and Mrs. Hurst had spent their lives in Winnipeg, moving to Toronto in 1996 to be close to their family. Gytha actively participated in community life in Winnipeg, giving of her time to the Women's Committee of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and the McKinnon Guild of the Winnipeg Children's Hospital, to name only two. She was also a talented violinist, water colourist, and needlepoint artist. She was keenly interested in her Icelandic heritage, and visited Iceland with her sister Bergthora. She was supportive of the Icelandic communities in both Winnipeg and Toronto.

JILL (Haralds) MITCHELL

Born in 1962 and raised in Coquitlam, BC Jill passed away suddenly on September 16 following a lengthy illness. She is survived by her husband Mark, their three children, sons Bryce and Taylor and daughter Courtney. Her two brothers, Drew (Karen), David (Tiffany) and their families, her mother Sue Haralds-Towsley, and stepfather Ralph Towsley. Mark and Jill moved to Toronto and made it their home in 1986. She was a good friend to the ICCT, being of great assistance in the organization of our children's choir Bifrost, and had been very helpful with the Vikings in Canada Gala in 2000. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends.

ICELANDIC CLASSES

A small but determined group has been attending classes. We are thankful to our young teachers who are also (thankfully) determined. They are Sigrun Haraldsdottir and Iris Halldorsdottir, and for a short time their friend Dagny. She has returned to Iceland, Iris is returning very shortly, and Sigrun's evenings are now occupied with work and school. So, our determined little group is once again hunting for a teacher. If you are one of those who are Icelandic speaking, don't be surprised if you get a call one of these days. We are determined.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Heidi Williams (London, ON)
John Bildfell McRae (Carp, ON)
Linda Stromberg (Toronto)
John & Donna Laevens-Van West (Brampton)
Lisa Jonsdottir

THANKS FOR DONATIONS FROM:

Merle and Bob Oddson
John Bildfell McRae

NEWS FROM FRIENDS

RECOGNITION FOR W. D. VALGARDSON



Well known Icelandic Canadian writer, Bill Valgardson has been named as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He will be inducted in a ceremony at Rideau Hall on November 22. Valgardson has written several volumes of short stories, as well as nov-

els such as *"Gentle Sinners"* and *"The Girl With the Boticelli Face"*. More recently, he has achieved success with children's literature. Some of his successes in this genre are *"The Divorced Kids Club"*, *"Frances"* and *"Thor"*. We in Toronto remember this last title as the play presented at the INL Annual Conference here in 1999, Bill adapted his book for this play, and wrote the script. He has also appeared as a guest at several of our meetings, giving us the pleasure of readings from his work. He has been a professor at the University of Victoria since 1974, and is a strong supporter of the Victoria Icelandic Club. We extend our sincere congratulations to Bill.

ÍSLENDINGADAGURINN

It was a distinct pleasure once again for those of us that were able to attend this year's Icelandic Festival in Gimli. The weather was fine this year, and nobody was missing the oppressive heat of last years Festival. It's a plain and simple treat to see folks that you know and only see once or twice a

CLUB EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

ISLENDINGADAGURINN—*cont'd*

year. Everyone is encouraged to give it a try. How about next summer? There were, as usual, some official ceremonies and speeches. This year, Timothy Samson, QC was selected to give the "Toast to Iceland". His speech was reprinted in *Logberg-Heimskringla*. It is a very thoughtfully drafted speech, and we are inspired to quote from it. The context is with reference to the earliest emigrants:

"This group of one hundred and fifty faced the rigors of a 19th Century voyage across the Atlantic to an unknown place, in a land of which they knew so little. Such was their sad compulsion to leave their beloved homeland. At home in Iceland, they and virtually all Icelanders in 1873, faced poverty, unfavourable weather, natural disaster and a general feeling that, to some extent because of the lack of success of the independence movement, they had little control of their own destiny. Notwithstanding feeling the compulsion to leave, all the emigrants carried with them memories of the stark beauty of their beloved homeland, their character, so decidedly Icelandic, and their language and literature and the memories of their families left behind."

TOM BJARNASON ART SHOW

Tom, a member of and good friend to the ICCT is having an exhibition of his work Saturday, October 26 to November 20. It will be at the Art Gallery of Northumberland, Victoria Hall, 55 King St. West, Cobourg, ON.

At the official opening, Saturday 2pm, there will be a Lecture/Talk by Adalsteinn Ingolfsson. Adalsteinn is a friend and supporter of Tom, and is a noted art critic from Iceland. He was here as part of the International Visits program a few years back, and this will be an opportunity to renew acquaintances. And, Victoria Hall is a wonderfully restored Example of Upper Canada 19th Century architecture – alone it is worth the visit. Add to that the main purpose for the show – Tom Bjarnason. Sounds like a must see.

VIKINGS, THE NORTH ATLANTIC SAGA

There is still time to visit this magnificent exhibition at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, but only until October 14. Follow this extraordinary people who set out from their homelands for unknown lands beyond the horizon, over 1,000 years ago. For the first time, Vikings: The North American Saga brings together over 300 precious artifacts from Viking homelands and settlements, some from as far back as 800A.D. Canadian Museum of Civilization, 100 Laurier St., Hull, QU www.civilization.ca

Nordic Midsummer Fest

Our bus trip to Ottawa for the Nordic Midsummer Fest was a success! A wonderful time was had by all, and we thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality of our friends in Ottawa. The Friends of Iceland Club in Ottawa represented the Icelandic Canadian community very well at the event, which was held on the beautiful grounds of the Museum of Civilization. Seeing the Icelandic horses down by the water, with the Parliament Buildings in the background, was an experience appreciated by all. Thanks to the Friends of Iceland club for the refreshments, and to Gerry Einarson, President of FOI, for also acting as a tour guide on Sunday morning. Thank you also to Ambassador Hjálmar W. Hannesson for providing us with Icelandic spring water and the Iceland brochures (Discovery– Iceland's Amazing Adventure).



Pictured above are the ICCT and friends during the Sunday tour.

**Watch for your next
copy of the Fálkinn for
information on the
Snorri program and the
Christmas Party!**