



# FÁLKINN

February 2003

ICCT FÁLKINN, 43rd Year, Number 3

## Book Now...



### **ÞORRABLÓT (Thorrablót)**

Saturday March 22nd, at  
North York Memorial  
Community Hall  
5160 Yonge St

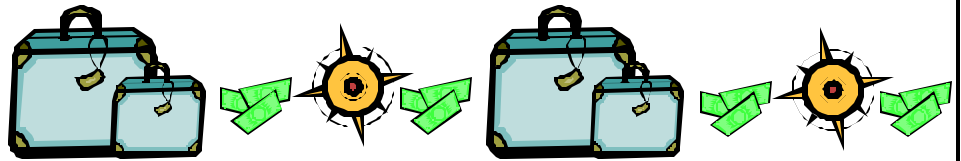
We will once again be holding our Super Silent Auction. You may start thinking about something neat to donate, because you may be getting a call. If you already have an item, or if you'd like to offer to assist, please call Darla at 416-960-0561.

## ICELANDIC CLASSES



Our intrepid group continues. Dangerously self-taught at this point, we are presently asking ourselves "Does grammar matter?" And we have heard that there may be some interest in starting a new beginners group. This could very likely happen, if enough of you are interested.

So, if you want to try it out, call:  
Gail Einarson-McCleery at:  
(416) 762-8697  
Fax: (416) 762-7107  
Email: icegem@compuserve.com



## ANNUAL ICCT TRAVEL PROGRAM

**Sunday, February 23 – 2:30 pm**  
**Swansea Town Hall Community Centre**  
**85 Lavinia St. (Bloor & Runnymede vicinity)**

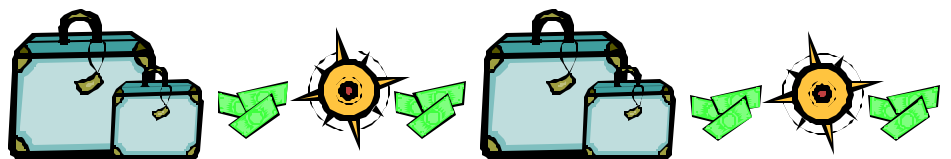
Films, slides and stories – the experiences of those who have traveled to Iceland recently. Share in those experiences.

Brochures will be available — You can pick up information on tours, hotels, prices, websites.

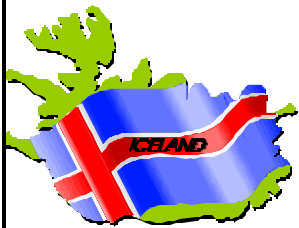
Iceland is so interesting – this is always a great event.  
Don't miss it.

**Coffee & goodies as usual**  
**Members \$4 /Guests \$5**

(The date for this event was originally announced for Feb. 16<sup>th</sup>)



## NEWS FROM ICELAND



### ICELANDIC STAMP MOST BEAUTIFUL IN THE WORLD

An Icelandic stamp, which Íslandspóstur published, has received first prize in an international competition of the world's most beautiful stamps for the year 2001. The Icelandic winning stamp was published in May 2001. It was part of a special stamp series, which included a coordinated theme of the Association of European Post Companies. The theme was "Water: a Natural Resource." The Icelandic stamp pictures human hands in sea-breakers.

The competition was held by the Asiago Art Academy in Italy, which has for decades held many competitions on the artistic design of stamps with illustrations on environmental issues, nature, culture, and travel. From around the world, postal companies that published their own stamps sent stamps to the contest.

It was graphic designer Hany Hadaya who designed the stamp for Íslandspóstur. Icelandic stamps have received numerous international awards for artistic design.

### GENEALOGY ON THE WEB

A new database encompassing the genealogy of Icelanders, 'Íslendingabók' (The Book of Icelanders), was recently launched on the web. There was an immediate and overwhelming response. Within a week, over 20,000 (8% of Iceland's population) had already registered as new users. The web site was launched by the Minister of Education, Tómas Ingi Ólrich at a press conference at the Culture House museum in Reykjavík. This database contains information on 95% of all Icelanders, starting in 1703. However, for access to Íslendingabók, users must register with their Icelandic national social security number. Since so many Canadians will be anxious for this access, we will try and get more information.



## ALUMINUM PLANT

It looks as though the protests that have tried to stop the establishment of a new aluminum plant in the east fjords will not be successful. Only the funding remains to be arranged. Alcoa spokesperson Jake Siewart states that the factory, Fjarðaál to be built in Reyðarfjörður in east Iceland will be the most environmentally friendly aluminum factory ever built by Alcoa. It could also become the most expensive plant that Alcoa has built, with a budget of US \$1,100,000.

There are plans to employ 450 people at the factory, and it is anticipated that a further 300 jobs will be created in related industries and services in the future.



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

#### Editors:

Garry Oddleifson  
416-463-1324, e-mail: eoddleifson@rogers.com

Leah Salt  
905-277-5298, e-mail: oceanroses@yahoo.com

#### ICCT Executive

President: Darla E. McKay  
e-mail: demckay@pathcom.com, 416-960-0561

Vice-President: Leah Salt

Past President: Ellen (Sigurdson) Gilmore  
905-889-9937

Secretary: Barbara Doherty

Treasurer: Evelyn Magnusson Trites  
416-444-7355

Membership Outreach: Don Gislason  
416-489-7737

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

Webpage: <http://icct.info>

# CLUB NEWS

## A PLEASANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland, Mr. Halldór Ásgrímsson has, upon receiving a proposal to that effect from the Ambassador of Iceland to Canada, appointed Gail Einarson-McCleery Honorary Consul of Iceland in Toronto. At the same time Jón Ragnar Johnson was promoted from Honorary Consul of Iceland in Toronto to Honorary Consul General.

At a ceremony in the Consulate General in Toronto on December 10th, Ambassador Hjálmar W. Hannesson handed the two Consuls their official papers documenting their new status.

Jón Ragnar Johnson has served in Toronto first as Vice Consul from 1971 and subsequently as Consul since 1983. He is one of the longest serving Honorary Consuls of Iceland.

The ambassador said, "After your long and much appreciated service, you deserve a promotion to Honorary Consul General of Iceland in Toronto. It is my great pleasure and honour, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iceland, to now hand over to you the official documentation to that effect along with our sincerest congratulations."



Jón Ragnar Johnson, Gail Einarson-McCleery & Ambassador Hjálmar Hannesson posing for a picture after the ceremony.

Gail Einarson-McCleery has been active in the Icelandic National League of North America and has been the Director of its International Visits Program from its beginning in 1997. For her work she received the Order of the Falcon from President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson in 2000. She has had a long and distinguished career at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, both in radio and television. And at the ICCT, we all know of her hard work and contributions at the local level.

"Now with two Honorary Consuls in Toronto, as well as the establishment of the Embassy of Iceland to Canada in Ottawa twenty months ago, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iceland is hopeful that Icelandic relations with the Greater Toronto Area will be deepened and widened." Congratulations to Jón and to Gail for these well deserved appointments.

## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to new members:

- Jeannie(Arnason) Hollebone & family (Ottawa)
- Dr. Georg Bjarnason & Dr. Ragneidur Hlynsdottir (Toronto)
- Kathleen Kajioka (Toronto)
- Daniel Thorkelson (Ottawa)

## DONATIONS

We are grateful to the following people for their generous donations: Anne Brydon; Ed & Margaret Eggertson; Tom & Adrienne Einarson; Marlene Mintz; Don & Norma (Johnson) Young; William & Laufey Hart; Dorothy Purchase; Daniel Thorkelson; Peter Erlendson (for a bookcase); Garry Oddleifson (for Snorri); Vern & Fran Austmann (for Falkinn). And thanks also to Geraldine Shepherd for the valuable books which she thoughtfully donated to our Library.

## 2004 INL HERITAGE CALENDAR

The suggested theme for next years Heritage Calendar is "Traditional" Icelandic Food. So if you can come up with an idea, and a professional quality photograph of a food dish, let us know by calling Garry at (416) 463-1324 or Darla (416) 960-0561.

## LOCAL TALENT FEATURED ON WEBSITE

February, 2003: Katrina Koven's work is on the IceCan home page this month as featured artist. Here's the link:

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/icelandic/icecan/>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE CONFERENCE

This year's INL Conference will be in Edmonton, at the famous West Edmonton Mall, from May 1st through 4th. Our club is allowed 6 or 7 registered delegates. The ICCT pays the Conference registration fee and will partly subsidize airfare and hotel expenses (subsidy is \$150 this year). If you are interested in being a Conference delegate, contact Darla at (416) 960-0561.

The theme of the Conference will be 'Unity and Communications in the Icelandic Communities' Edmonton has a strong Icelandic Club, which has recently had a large increase in membership. They are sure to offer a fine experience for anyone that attends the Conference. They have managed to retain the entertainers "Halla's Travels" – they are dynamic, talented, and different. Those of us who have seen them perform before (Gimli 2000) will be looking forward to seeing them again.

### ICELANDIC CANADIAN CONDUCTOR

Keri-Lynn Wilson, who hails from Winnipeg and has some Icelandic heritage, will conduct the Toronto Symphony Orchestra at Roy Thomson Hall on Feb 26 (8pm) and Feb 27 (2pm). The piano soloist will be another Manitoban, Emanuel Ax.

The Concert:

John Estacio: "Frenergy"

Mozart: Piano Concerto #14 in E Flat Major

Franck: Symphonic Variations

Brahms: Symphony #2

Keri-Lynn Wilson was already a prize winning flutist when she took up conducting at New York's Julliard School and soon landed a plum summer job as assistant to Claudio Abbado at the Salzburg Festival. She was hired by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra as associate conductor. At 29, she turned freelance as has steadily moved up the ranks ever since. She appeared as a guest conductor with the TSO last February.

### BILL BOURNE TOUR

Juno award winning folk musician Bill Bourne, great grandson of noted poet Stefan G. Stefansson is on a gigantic solo tour "Voodoo King Tour". These are the Ontario dates and venues:

Thunder Bay, February 8  
Unitarian Hall  
(807) 344-5980

Sault Ste. Marie, February 9  
Lone Star Bar & Café, Ph: (705) 649-2880

London, February 12  
Chaucer's, Ph: (519) 473-2099

Toronto, February 13  
Hugh's Room, Ph: (416) 531-6604

Port Dover, February 14  
Lighthouse Theatre, Ph: (519) 583-2221

Ottawa, February 15  
National Library Auditorium,  
Ph: (613) 230-8234

Greenbank, February 22  
Brenbank Centennial Hall, Ph: (905) 985-8351

Fergus, February 23  
House Concert, Ph: (519) 843-6536

### Speaking of Music...

Those of you who have been anxiously awaiting your chance to next see Lindy will be happy to hear that he will be performing for us at this year's Thorrablot.

Lindy's other upcoming concerts include:  
Toronto, Wed., Feb 19th at the El Mocambo, 10pm.  
London, ON, February 21st, Call The Office, 10:30pm  
And a Maritimes Tour in March!

[www.lindymusic.com](http://www.lindymusic.com)

## TEAM DIABETES CANADA GOES TO REYKJAVIK



Picture yourself this: August 16<sup>th</sup>, relaxing in one of Reykjavik's outdoor thermal baths. It is evening, but the sun is still shining. You are tired but feel good. You have accomplished something extraordinary and important. You have just completed a marathon with Team Diabetes Canada, joining 100 other Canadians in getting fit and raising money to find a cure for diabetes.

In the past two years, members of Team Diabetes Canada have raised \$1.3 million for the Canadian Diabetes Association, and this year, will raise another \$1 million. In Reykjavik, participants can choose to either run or walk a half marathon (21.1 km) or to run a full marathon (42.2 km). In addition to completing the marathon, each member raises \$5,000 to assist the over 2 million Canadians affected by diabetes. Participants may also join the team as partners – they do not walk or run, but they are vitally important to the Team Diabetes Canada experience, and to the fight against one of the leading causes of death by disease in this country.

This is the first year that Team Diabetes is going to the Reykjavik Marathon, which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003. However, the Team looks forward to being the single largest group participating in the event, which also offers 3K, 7K and 10K fun runs, in addition to a 10K in-line skating course. The marathon course proceeds westward out of the city center for about 3 km, and then turns eastward along the seashore with a spectacular view of the mountains north of Reykjavik

After about 15 km, the course turns again west towards the city center, completing the loop. It is 60% flat and 40% rolling.

The marathon is unique in that it is allied with Reykjavik's annual Cultural Night, which shows cases the city's fantastic nightlife, in addition to its many artistic and cultural attractions. Reykjavik is definitely the most exotic and adventurous destination on the Team Diabetes Canada roster for 2003. The Team is also going to Amsterdam on October 19, 2003, and Bermuda (walkers only) on November 16, 2003.

Participants receive return airfare, 3 nights accommodations, ground transfers, a Welcome Reception, carb-loading dinner, marathon breakfast and Victory Dinner as part of the program for each of the destinations.

Big accomplishments require big support. Team Diabetes Canada delivers, making sure that participants have the tools they need to reach their goals. Included in the program are 18 weeks of training, provided by the Running Room Canada Ltd., regularly scheduled group runs, and information sessions on nutrition, proper footwear, biomechanics, and running physiology and psychology. Members also receive motivation and support from the team at pre-race get-togethers and training runs, an official of Team Diabetes Canada team t-shirt and race singlet, and guaranteed free entry into the marathon. Of equal importance is the fundraising support given to participants through one-on-one assessments and coaching, in addition to the fundraising tool-kit. Experience something extraordinary!

For more information on Team Diabetes Canada, and the Reykjavik Marathon, or to register for the program, please contact Louise Mussio at (416) 363-0177, Ext. 310. You can also visit the Canadian Diabetes Association website at

[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca). Click "Programs and Services," then "Team Diabetes Canada," then "Marathons." The registration deadline for Reykjavik is Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>.

## NEWS FROM FRIENDS



### **CHARTER FLIGHT TO ICELAND**

The Great Canadian Travel Company has a charter flight to Iceland from Winnipeg, departing on July 25 and returning on August 6<sup>th</sup>.

The fare is \$1288 including cancellation insurance. Contact Donna Singbeil, Tour Programmer, at The Great Canadian Travel Company Ltd. – Phone (204) 949-0199 or [donna@gctc-mst.com](mailto:donna@gctc-mst.com).

### **DIRECT FLIGHTS BETWEEN CANADA AND ICELAND**

Canadian charter company HMY Airways have received approval from the authorities in Iceland to fly between Iceland and Canada. HMY Airways flies between Vancouver and Calgary to Manchester in England, with a stopover in Iceland. The fares are low at US \$300, including airport taxes. The fare will be higher for the summer schedule, which begins May 1, when the airline will have five weekly flights. We don't know much more at this time. The airline has a website address:

[www.hmyairways.com](http://www.hmyairways.com), or you can call them toll free at 1-866-248-6789.

### **EMMY AWARD**

More congratulations to Guy Maddin, a Winnipegger with Icelandic roots for adding an Emmy award to his trophy cabinet. The International Academy of Television Arts and Sciences awarded him an International Emmy for best Arts Programming. This is in addition to the 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*.

The Toronto International Film Festival also honoured Guy's film, including it in their list of Top 10 films of 2002. A 10-member panel consisting of filmmakers, producers and critics picked productions for the list.

### **THE ICELANDIC-CANADIAN FATHER OF CANOLA**

Baldur Stefansson is credited with turning yellow into gold – that is, he turned rapeseed, a crop primarily used to produce oil for lubrication, into an edible oil called canola, which has become a crop grown around the globe.

The “father of canola” died, at age 84, on Jan. 3, 2002. Amazingly, the man who created this worldwide, multi million dollar industry, considered his work to be a part of the world domain, and has not received a cent for his work, other than whatever cash award was given as part of the many awards he received.

Stefansson was born in Vestfold in the Manitoba Interlake region. After a military stint in WW II, he enrolled in the University of Manitoba faculty of Agriculture and Food Science, receiving his BSA in 1950, MSc in 1952, and attaining PhD in 1966. He was then employed by the U of M to test edible seed crops to develop a variety suitable to the prairies. Among those he tested was rapeseed, which he believed would eventually yield the best results. In ancient times, rapeseed oil had been used as lamp fuel was found to be a good lubricant during the Industrial revolution, but by the end of WW II the world was looking for edible oils. The problem with the early varieties of rapeseed oil was that its fatty acid content was of the wrong type – eicosenoic and erucic acids that are not considered essential for human diet. It also had little value to livestock producers because of a low protein content and sharp taste caused by its glucosinolates, or sulphur compounds. By 1974, Dr. Stefansson was the first to develop a “double low” variety, reducing both erucic acid and glucosinolate levels. His variety became known as *Brassica napus*, or Tower. This greatly improved product became commonly known as canola, from “Canada oil”. The name Canola was registered by the Canadian Oilseed Processors Association.

Canola is now one of the world's great “healthy” edible oils. Stefansson is a household name in the world of plant research and on farms from Australia to the United States.

# ICCT POT POURRI

## THE ICELANDIC-CANADIAN FATHER OF CANOLA (cont'd)

Stefansson received 18 awards for his work and has been inducted into the Order of Canada, the Order of Manitoba, the Order of the Buffalo Hunt, and the Order of the Falcon, Iceland. Among his many honours is the prestigious Royal Bank award for “outstanding achievements that contribute to human welfare and the common good.”

In 1998, Stefansson shared the Wolf Foundation Prize in Agriculture, an international award worth \$100,000. The awarding committee gave the award to Stefansson “for his contribution to the environmentally safe development of world agriculture through innovative approaches in breeding and biocontrol.” Stefansson was a professor at the University of Manitoba until his retirement in 1986.

This past November, he was posthumously inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame at a ceremony at the Agricultural Hall of Fame Association at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto. Baldur Stefansson was represented by his widow, Sigríður (Westdal) Stefansson, and grandson Stefan, who witnessed the induction, as well as the unveiling of a finely painted portrait of him, which is exhibited at the Hall of Fame.

## Christmas Fair—Big Success!!

Many thanks to Brenda Bjarnason and Darla McKay for organizing a very successful, very enjoyable Christmas Fair and Jólátréskemmtun. The many people that were able to attend were treated to a wide array of merchandise, information, entertainment, and of course, food. The Elfinfolk Theatre Troupe and the Bifrost Children's Choir added a real flair to the festivities with their entertainment and their unique costumes.

Thanks to spoken word artist, Carol McGirr for treating us to her talents again. The kitchen was very ably managed by Ellen Gilmore and Merle Oddson, who had Don Gislason, our sætsúpastjóri, working with them. A lot of fun, it was sad to see it end. Great job, Brenda and Darla, and all the supporting cast.



Ellen & Merle doing a fabulous job keeping all the goodies tables full and coffee warm. The treats were extra yummy this year!!



Don Gislason, serving his world famous sætsúpastjóri



The Elfinfolk Theatre Troupe and the Bifrost Children's Choir presenting their story on the Icelandic Christmas elves.

## Scholarships & Grants

### ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO SCHOLARSHIP

The application form for our annual \$1000 scholarship is enclosed with this issue of your *Falkinn*. We urge all eligible applicants to try for this scholarship. Your chances are probably better than you may think. We don't usually receive dozens of applications, so the odds are not long. **Go for it!** The deadline is April 15, with the scholarship to be awarded at our Annual General Meeting in May.

Last year's Scholarship winner was Jessica Bolehood.



Jessica is continuing her science (pre-vet) program at Trent University. She is doing very well in her studies and thanks the ICCT for their support.

"My Icelandic connection begins way back in my roots. My great, great, great grandparents, "Thorgrimur Jonsson & Steinunn Johannsdottir" were among the earliest pioneers of the Icelandic River settlement. They arrived in 1876 with the "large group" and homesteaded 1 mile south of Riverton on the Icelandic River at a homestead named "Akri". My great, great, grandmother, "Sigrun (Runa)", was also born at Akri. She married Jon Sigvaldason, also a native of Skagafjorður, Iceland. He arrived in Canada in 1892 at age 26. Jon had studied at an agricultural college in Olafsdalur, Iceland. Jon died at Riverton in 1948, and Runa died in 1966.

One of their daughters was "Thorbjorg Aurora", my great grandmother, who was born at Akri in 1907. I have some very fond memories of her. She was a teacher and taught for many years before getting married and having three children, one of whom is my grandfather, "Barry Stinson".

At the present time, I live on a farm in Hampton, Ontario, where I enjoy horseback riding and working with animals. We have horses, and we breed and show dogs. My family and I soon plan to acquire an Icelandic horse and, after having done some initial research, may begin breeding the Icelandic dog. We already breed Pomeranians, which is a miniature type of Nordic breed. I have always loved animals and am currently attending university in a pre-vet program, hoping to be accepted into the veterinary program there.

My extra-curricular activities have also included rowing, tennis, playing in a band and Scottish highland dancing. I have volunteered for three years at a vet clinic, sell daffodils every year for the Canadian Cancer Society, Christmas gift-wrap for the Salvation Army, serve meals at the St. Vincent's Soup Kitchen in Oshawa, and helped with the Adaptive Rowing program for the handicapped at our rowing club. I consider academics to be of extreme importance and have been on the Honour roll for each year of high school. In 1996, my grandparents visited Iceland and brought me back some wonderful photos. In the near future, I would like to visit Iceland and see and experience the country of my heritage."

### ICELANDIC LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL CAMP

The camp will be held this year in Gimli, Manitoba from July 27 to August 2. The Icelandic Canadian Club supports this camp. We will again hold a competition for a \$500.00 grant to help a young person to attend this unique gathering. The application will be included with your next *Falkinn* issue. Please watch for it.



