



FÁLKINN

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO

January 2005

ICCT FÁLKINN 45th Year Number 4

January 23rd, at 2:30 p.m. Scandinavian - Canadian Club, 91 Stormont (Bathurst-Lawrence).

A Double - Barrelled Event Meet ICCT Phone-Committee members, and Enjoy Readings by Icelandic Author:

Andri Snær Magnason

Join Us for Wine and Cheese



The phone, and the Phone-Committee is very important to keep ICCT members informed about the club's activities.

Come and see the face behind the voice, which has been calling to let you know of ICCT events. Get to know your local Phone-Committee member, and show your appreciation for their work. Tell Tracy Morrison, the Phone-Com., chairman, of any suggestions you might have, to make their work even more effective.

Enjoy, Andri's reading from "Blue Planet", and his new novel "Love Star".

Andri will also recite rimur, the old Icelandic chanting form, "the rap" of olden times.

\$5 for members, \$6 for non members.

In This Issue:

Interview with Andri Snær Magnason, author of the Icelandic play, "Blue Planet", page 4

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Movie Of The Month: Rare Birds, directed by Sturla Gunnarsson, Plus Special Preview of Beowulf and Grendel, see back page

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Pictures From ICCT Christmas Fair and Bake Sale, see page 3

*

ICE FEST, Kinmount Festival, see page 5

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News From Iceland, see page 6

THORRABLOT IS COMING APRIL 2ND ... THORRABLOT IS COMING APRIL 2ND ... THORRABLOT IS COMING

YOUNG ACTORS NEEDED FOR THORRABLOT

Brenda Bjarnason is writing a new play to be performed at Thorrablot, and is looking for young actors, ages 2 to 16+... the first rehearsal will be January 30th. Call Gail at 416 762-8627 if you want to take part



SILENT AUCTION CO-ORDINATOR

Let us know if you would like to co-ordinate the Auction this year. A good way to get to know lots of interesting people! Contact Leah at cpkexpress@rogers.com or 905 277-5298

FOOD AND HELPERS

After a delicious Thorrablot meal last year, we have convinced Kristin Olafson-Jenkyns and Ellen Gilmore

to convene the meal again ... BUT keep in mind that this is really a huge pot luck, and we know that the entire community will be generous with their food donations and their time. An hour's time is requested to help get the meal on the table. Please contact Kristin at markrisart@hotmail.com or 905 627-6921





FÁLKINN-THE FALCON

Fálkinn is the newsletter of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto and is published 6—8 times a year.

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New Members

As an ever growing club, the ICCT is proud to present its newest members: Halla Thorsteindóttir, Chris Evans, Fjóla and Patrick, Toronto, Ont. Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir and Haraldur Eiðsson, Toronto, Ont. Carol McGirr, Toronto, Ont. Arni Olafson, Elizabeth O'Shaughnessy, Mathew and Emily, Toronto.

Donations

The ICCT's various programs are made possible, by generous donations by its members, here below is the list of people who have made donations to various programs in December and January. Thank you to:

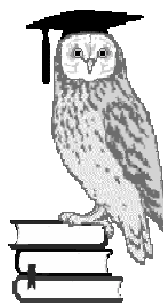
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Dr. Barry Whitney, Tecumseh,
Dr. Steven Cronshaw, Guelph,
Sturla & Judy Gunnarsson, Toronto
Michael Sullivan & Brenda Bjarnason, Toronto,
Carol & Philip Hryhorchuk, Scarborough,

2005 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

It's time once again to apply for the ICCT Scholarship of \$1000, and the good news is that this year again there will be a second scholarship, the Marion and Ragnar Johnson Memorial Scholarship, donated by Consul General Jón Johnson and his wife Pat in honour of Jón's parents.

This year, you can do it online. Go to <http://icct.info>

If you would prefer to have hard copy, please contact President Leah Salt at cpkexpress@rogers.com or 905 277-5298 The deadline for submitting applications is February 28, 2005.



Remember, before February 28th.

Renew Your Membership Online

It's time once again to renew your membership for 2005. If you aren't sure whether you did so last month, take a look at your envelope ... if it says '2005', you're OK. Also, if you receive a renewal slip, that means you haven't renewed yet. You can fill it out and send it in, or try our new ONLINE system.

By paying online, you can use your credit card on a safe, secure site and pay quickly with less bother. Try it out at <http://icct.info>

ICCT Christmas Fair and Bake Sale

Canadian and Icelandic Christmas Traditions Blend Well together



"Göngum við í kringum", walking around the Christmas Tree.

Our Christmas Fair and Bake Sale was very well attended and a good time was had by all. Lindy and his Gal Sal performed for us and then joined forces with Ann Helga Denny in some great renditions of Christmas favourites. Ann Helga treated us to 'Silent Night' in both Icelandic and English.

The children were well entertained, with quizzes, crafts, games, storytelling, and a visit from the 13 Jólaveinar, followed by dancing around the tree with Santa.

There were great things to eat, as well as Icelandic and Canadian treats to take home for later. Rune readings, shopping, and visiting took up the rest of the time. Thanks to all those who helped out!



Linda Schuster working at the Bake Sale; Greydon Gilmore is showing her one of his magic tricks.

GOOD NEWS ON MOVIE FRONT..

In addition to being able to show Sturla's comedy "Rare Birds" and getting a preview of "Beowulf and Grendel" in January, we are able to announce that "Niceland" will be available for our February movie ... this is Friðrik Þór Friðriksson's newest movie, which was featured at the Toronto International Film Festival last year ... so if you missed it, you have another chance to see it!!!

2004 RAFFLE WINNERS

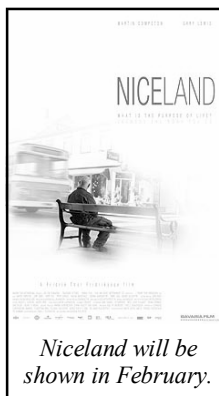
Raffle winners were drawn at our AGM Tuesday, May 18th, and they were:

First prize - \$500 - Signy Stephenson, Knowlton, Quebec

Second prize - Framed watercolour by Margret Sigvaldason Jackson - Gale Bildfell, Toronto, ON

Third prize - \$100 - Art Gudmundsson, Cambray, ON

Congratulation to the winners and thanks to all those who took part.



SNORRI PLUS

Dates for this year's Snorri Plus program (35 and over) will be announced mid January, and the first 15 applicants will be accepted. It is usually planned for late August-beginning September. Check the website www.snorri.is

WE GET A LETTER:

From Garry Oddleifson in Winnipeg

Hello Toronto!

I've really settled into the "Life" (as in "This is the Life" of a retiree. I've almost forgotten what I did for a living before. The Icelandic presence here is substantial, if a bit confusing still. One of the activities I have undertaken is to volunteer a few hours each Tuesday at the Lögberg - Heimskringla office. We've been checking the subscription list, looking for prospects in telephone directories, etc. To my dismay, I noticed how very few subscribers there are in Southern Ontario - only about 40!

I wonder if the Falkinn could mention L-H, this worthwhile publication, in a few newsletters - L-H really does (now more than before) inform us on the activities of all regions. There have been features this year on Icelandic North

American club activities in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario(2), Alberta, BC, North Dakota, Utah, and Manitoba. Soon there will be a feature on Saskatchewan, and I have heard that editor

Steinþór is hoping to get to Toronto for a feature. So, it really has become a great source of information on the entire Icelandic presence in North America. Its new bi-weekly publication has brought the ability to concentrate on higher quality and quantity. So, your readers are missing a good thing if they do not now subscribe.

Garry

Note from the Editor: A great publication ... the website is: www.lh-inc.ca or email is lh@lh-inc.ca

YOUNG JOURNALIST AWARD 2005

With a deadline of February 11, 2005 the Delegation of the European Commission to Canada is launching EU-Canada Young Journalist Award 2005. If you know of a University Student currently enrolled in a Canadian University interested in journalism pass this link to them for a chance to win: <http://www.eucanyja.ca/en/>

Andri Snær Magnason, author of *The Blue Planet*:

It is great to have opportunities to write for a larger world...

...But One Has To Be Careful Not To Think Too Much About It.

By *Tómas Gunnarsson*

As readers of *Falkinn* probably know already, an Icelandic play, *The Blue Planet*, will be on stage here in Toronto from late January until March.

The play, written by Andri Snær Magnason, won third prize in a competition held by The National Theater in Iceland in 1999 and was published as a children's book the same year. In 2000 it won the Icelandic Literary Prize, the first children's book to do so. Andri Snær is a well known author in Iceland, but to introduce him to our readers, we asked him to answer few questions.

*If we begin with *The Blue Planet* which is both a play and a children's book, how did the idea originate with you, did you write it as a play or book?*

It started as a series of ideas and feelings that found their way through one story.

The story was first in my mind. I performed it orally on stage before it became words on paper and I told it to my child over and over again. Then I started writing the book; halfway through I saw the theatre contest.

The prize was full production of a play in the National Theatre. So I decided to participate and have the next children's play on the main stage of the national theatre.

*To simplify things for our readers, could you put the message in *The Blue Planet* into a few sentences?*

Many messages can be read from the story and it is quite symbolic. The youngest children only see it as an exciting fairytale. Older children see resemblance with our own world. It touches issues like war, democracy, manipulation, consumerism and environmental issues. They are not stuffed into the story but part of the flow and the excitement and interwoven into the drama. Just like a crime story is about the thrill of finding the solution but not just an anti-crime book.

I told people that the book was a study on planets, if a planet was a good idea in the first place. The horizon is very small and it is hard to imagine that something on this side might be killing something on the other side. It is a very short time since the earth became a planet. Maybe a pancake was a better idea after all!

*When you wrote *The Blue Planet*, did you have any particular society in mind? For instance Iceland, or is it just our times in general?*

Our times in general. The wild children in the book could be based on my grandparents who turned into wild children each summer, moved up to the north coast and ate seals, trout and seagulls. Iceland is kind of a planet in itself and like a test tube. We for instance believed for a few years we were different from other humans, more peaceful and kind to nature. But Iceland was for the war on Iraq and mass destruction of the beauty of our highlands is going on at this moment. That is our contemporary and future tragedy if not stopped. In this issue all the elements of war and manipulation have come up and it has been a sad but valuable lesson.

*And one classical question, the great success that *The Blue Planet* has enjoyed, did it take you by surprise, or did you have some feeling for the potential?*

I was very confident with the story. It might sound arrogant but when I was writing the book my family asked what I was doing. I told them I was writing a classic children's story that would be reprinted for 200 years. When they asked if I had a publisher I said I had no worries, I could find a publisher anywhere in the world.



Andri Snær Magnason

Iceland is known as a society that has a strong book and reading culture, I believe that a bestseller in Iceland and a bestseller in Canada, sell approximately just as many copies, how does this strong culture affect one as a writer in Iceland?

Yes I have been told that a best-seller in Iceland and Canada are

similar in copies. Writers can have quite an influence and writers are quite well known

and you meet people on the streets that have read your work. Then we have models such as Halldor Laxness, the Nobel prize winner. He was a major figure in politics and art and could recreate history by writing about it in a different view. That is still possible.

You, and other Icelandic writers are published more and more abroad, in various countries, how important is it to have a bigger "audience" than Icelanders? Have you started to take foreign markets into consideration when you write?

It is of course great to have opportunities in writing for a

Continued on next page

Announcements:

The Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE and the Book of Life Vestur-aettir are pleased to announce the launch of the Veterans of Icelandic Descent World War II database. The web address of the database is <http://www.bookoflifeonline.com/ww2.htm>

This free internet resource contains over 1,600 photographs and more than 2,100 biographical records of people of Icelandic descent who served in the Canadian and American armed forces during the Second World War. The majority of the information is drawn from the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter IODE's 1990 publication 'Veterans of Icelandic Descent World War II' and the 1993 'Supplement'.

However, approximately fifty new photographs, not included in either book, have been added as part of the database project. Members of the public are encouraged to help complete the database by sending in new photographs and records. Lists of missing photographs can be found at <http://www.bookoflifeonline.com/ww2missing.htm> For details on how to submit information, email: veterans@bookoflifeonline.com I invite you to search the databases, and I look forward to receiving your comments, questions, and feedback.

Ryan Eyford, Project Coordinator

ICELANDIC CAN. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEETS IN HALIFAX JAN. 17

Iceland's Ambassador to Canada, Guðmundur Eiríksson, has sent us the following announcement:

"We're pleased to announce that the Annual Meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Chamber of Commerce will be convened in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on January 17 2005 in the Prince George Hotel. The Embassy of Iceland, on behalf of the Board of Directors, is inviting companies and individuals throughout Canada who share our interest in promoting deeper commercial ties between Iceland and Canada.

In addition, we invite you to explore the ICCC homepage currently being created by the IT wizards of the CashStore at <http://www.icelandccc.com/temp> The homepage should be up and running by January 1st and will be developed piecemeal as information becomes available.

We invite you to send any comments, suggestions or questions to my colleague, Mr. Thor Jonsson, who will be supporting the ICCC from the Embassy.

larger world. I guess a writer has to be careful not to think too much about it, you might stop making deep references to history or language or become afraid of being "untranslatable" or try to be too universal. On the other hand a writer has to be in close contact with the world and bring influences back home. The most translated books from Icelandic are books that might seem untranslatable, like "101 Reykjavik" by Hallgrímur Helgason and books like "Independent People" by Laxness. Both of them are under strong international influence but very Icelandic at the same time.

And as a follow up to the last question, if you ever considered writing in another language than Icelandic, English would then probably be the natural selection?

I lived in America from age 3-9 so I was bilingual up to 9. I have some kind of a commitment to the language. I think it is good to show Icelanders and the world that you can

ICEFEST

A CELEBRATION AT MOONLIGHT MANIA

KINMOUNT ONTARIO

Icelandic-Canadians and the Kinmount community share a history beginning in 1874. In 2000 with the installation and dedication of the settlers' sculpture, the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto recognized this shared history. We wish to continue our relationship by celebrating ICE FEST which we hope will become an annual event.

The ICCT invites you to join us in this celebration of food, fun and fanfare in Kinmount, a village lying along the Burnt River and a recreation corridor, formerly a railroad bed.

Saturday July 16th 2005

2:00 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Kinmount Heritage Park

We have many ideas for activities for young and old and we will share these with you. However, we would be glad to hear from you if you have any suggestions that would make this a successful event. Please refer to forthcoming editions of Falkinn for word of our progress. We hope that when your help is needed you will respond to our call.

Gudrun Girgis,
Chair, ICE FEST
gudrun@on.aibn.com

Diane Austin, Kinmount Resident
Holly Garrett, V-P, ICCT
Fran Moscall, ICCT Member hegilles@connection.com

write something and think in a language like Icelandic and have it translated and published in 14 languages.

You are a poet, writer, play writer and you have issued a CD, in collaboration with the music group MUM as well, could you tell us what project you are working on right now? Is it important for an artist to be able to try and experience different things and switch between different art forms?

I have been surfing a bit between art forms, maybe I am looking for the form I like the most, each idea or feeling has called for a new form but the difference is perhaps not so dramatic. The core drive is quite the same. I have some books in my head, the next to be released is a book of ideas, the next project is hopefully a Happening in February.

The city lights of Reykjavik will be turned off and an old astronomer will tell us about the stars in the sky for half an hour on national radio.

News from Iceland

Based on and edited from mbl.is, visir.is, ruv.is and icelandreview.com

Fischer to Iceland?

Iceland has offered a residency visa to former world chess champion Bobby Fischer. Mr Fischer is in jail in Japan and is wanted in the United States for violation of international sanctions against the former state Yugoslavia in 1992.

A brilliant but mercurial player, Mr Fischer became a grandmaster at 15 and shot to fame in 1972 when he beat Boris Spassky of the then Soviet Union in a match for the title of World Champion. The match was held in Reykjavík, and Icelanders have from that time, always considered Fischer, a good though eccentric friend of Iceland. Foreign minister Davíð Oddson, who brought the offer forward, said it was made in the name of humanity, and Fischer's offence were not punishable by Icelandic laws, because the time frame is beyond the statute of limitations.

When Fálkinn went to print, the end in this matter was not clear, as the Japanese government had not made a decision.

The Most Romantic Place on Earth?

Swimming pools in Reykjavík are the best place to propose, and the right time is at sunset, according to a recent poll that was done for a British travel agency. British men are not as adventurous, the biggest share of them choose a Venetian gondola, as the right place for proposing, but the women choose Reykjavík as the most romantic place on earth. As a reason they cited the constant play between heat and cold.

The travel bureau suggested 5 places for a romantic proposal at sunset, and the top spot was given to the Blue Lagoon.

To this one can add that Iceland came in 69th for the word the British searched the most for on the internet, so it is obvious that Iceland is getting to be quite a hit with the British.

High Tech Knee of Össur Among Most Interesting Inventions

Time magazine chose The Rheo high tech artificial knee as one of the most interesting inventions of the year 2004. The Rheo knee was also included in Forbes "The 25 Best Products of the

Year". The Forbes article opens with:



"In the world of product design, there is perhaps no greater challenge than that of mimicking human anatomy. Recently, however, designers have begun catching up with nature...".

These accolades shows that Össur is really in the forefront in its field and are of course a great honor for the company. For those who want further information, we recommend www.ossur.com

Good Year for the Króna

The Icelandic króna increased its value 10 percent on average in the year 2004. The Canadian dollar fared a little better than some other currencies against the króna, but even so, in the beginning of the year 1 Canadian dollar bought 55 Icelandic krónur, but in the end, you got only 51. The US dollar lost the most, went from 71 krónur in the beginning of the year, to 61 in the end.

The bad news is of course that this makes it slightly more expensive to visit Iceland, but none the less enjoyable.

Order of The Falcon

Sixteen Icelanders received the Order of The Falcon on New Years day: Ásmundur Jónsson, Manager, for contribution in music, Sr. Auður Eir Vilhjálmsdóttir, pastor, for contribution to church and religious life, Birgir D. Sveinsson, teacher, for contribution in the field of music, Björgólfur Guðmundsson, entrepreneur, for contribution in the field of business and culture, Edda Heiðrún Backman, actress, for contribution to acting and theater, Eiríkur Smith, artist, for contribution to arts/painting, Kristján Þór Júlíusson, Mayor, for work in the municipal government, María Th. Jónsdóttir, President of Society of Relatives of Alzheimer Patients, for contribution to welfare and well being of people with memory sickness, Markús Sigurbjörnsson, President of The Supreme Court, for work in the civil service, Már Sigurðsson, tourist entrepreneur, for initiative in the travel

industry, Ragnar Bjarnason, singer, for contribution to Icelandic music, Sigurður Björnsson, chief physician, for work in cancer therapy, Sigurveig Guðmundsdóttir, former teacher, for work in the field of education and social affairs, Valgerður Sverrisdóttir, government minister, for work in civil service, Dr. Þóra Ellen Þórhallsdóttir, professor, for work in science, Örylgur Kristfinnsson, curator, for work in establishing The Herring Era Museum.

President The Man of The Year in Iceland

Icelandic President, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, was chosen "The Man of the Year" by listeners of Channel 2. Second was Kristín Rós Hákonardóttir, swimmer, who won gold at the Olympics for the disabled, in third place came the Foreign Minister, Davíð Oddson, and fourth was Þórólfur Árnason, the former mayor of Reykjavík, who resigned in the year 2004.

Earthquakes in Iceland

Rather strong earthquakes were felt in Iceland on the 5th of January. The earthquakes originated close to Grímsey, off the north coast of Iceland,



and were clearly felt on the north-east corner of the country, e.g. Akureyri, Húsavík, Dalvík, Ólafsfjörður and of course in Grímsey itself. The biggest earthquake measured 5.5 on Richter, and was followed by many smaller quakes.

No danger is believed to stem from these earthquakes, and the inhabitants took the shaking calmly, as very little damage was caused.

Lazytown Screens in Canada

YTV began screening the Icelandic series Lazytown in December. The program, which combines actors, dolls, and computer drawn backgrounds, will be screened on the station at 9 in the morning. The program is made in English, but the production is all in Iceland.

DAYS TO REMEMBER: CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thurs. January 27

Toronto, ON: Movie RARE BIRDS directed by award-winning Ice-Can director Sturla Gunnarsson. A comedy in English, set in Newfoundland, starring William Hurt, Molly Parker, Andy Jones. **PLUS:** Sturla will give us a preview of part of BEO-WULF AND GREDEL, based on the epic Anglo-Saxon poem, which he shot in Iceland this fall. National Film Board, 150 John St. 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. \$8 adults \$6 st/sr/NFB members

Sat. January 29-Sun. March 20

Toronto, ON: Blue Planet at Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People by Icelandic writer Andri Snær Magnason. What happens when you nail the sun to the sky and chase away all the rain? A brilliant and whimsical adventure fantasy. Previews Jan.29 & 30; Sats. at 12:30 and 4 and Sundays at 2 \$19 to \$29 ... to book 862-2222; quote Code ICE201 for 20% discount. Book any day or on special ICCT day Feb. 6th (also see enclosed brochure and interview on page 4)

Sun. February 20

Toronto, ON: Opening of ICCT Lending Library featuring Ice-Can. Author Kathy Arnason "Falcons Gold". 2:30 p.m. Scandinavian-Canadian Centre, 91 Stormont (Bathurst/Lawrence).

Thurs. February 24

Toronto, ON Movie NICELAND - Friðrik Þór Friðriksson's first

feature in English ... a hit at the 2004 Toronto International Film Festival "Visually stunning, Niceland argues that innocence and its corollary, the ability to hope, are virtues we have both overvalued and lost touch with. This is a surprisingly adult fairy tale." (Steve Gravestock, TIFF) Sponsored by Bill & Karen Hurst, National Film Board, 150 John St. 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. \$8 adults \$6 st/sr/NFB members

Sun. March 13

Toronto, ON: Annual Travel Show ... ICCT members Margaret and Doug Van Hamme, along with Kathy Hannesson, share their trips to Iceland last year. Plus latest brochures, tours, info. on prices. 2:30 p.m. Scandinavian-Canadian Centre 91 Stormont (Bathurst/Lawrence)

Thurs. March 31

Toronto, ON: Movie ONE POINT 0 ... A thriller in English by Icelander Marteinn Thorsson National Film Board, 150 John St. 6:30 and 8:30 p.m. \$8 adults \$6 st/sr/NFB members

Sat. April 2

Toronto, ON: THORRABLOT ... annual ICCT dinner-dance featuring fabulous food, a new Viking play with the children, presentation of scholarship, and entertainment. 6:00 p.m. North York Memorial Hall North Yonge St. To book: Mel Johnson: mljjohnson1@aol.com

U of G and Iceland enhance ties

The University of Guelph announced on November 22nd, it is creating a new institute aimed at enhancing and promoting collaborations with Iceland's institutions of higher learning. The Iceland-Guelph Institute will build on long-standing relationships between Guelph and Hólar University College, the University of Iceland, University of Akureyri and Hvanneyri Agricultural University. It will provide faculty, researchers and students with additional opportunities for exchange programs, distance education courses and interdisciplinary research.

"I am very pleased to be formalizing what is already a highly successful partnership", said U of G president Alastair Summerlee during a special event at the University attended by Gudmundur Eiriksson, the Icelandic ambassador to Canada; Gail Einarson-McCleery, the honorary Icelandic Consul in Toronto; and Skuli Skulason, rector of Hólar University College. U of G has been collaborating with Hólar and other institutions in Iceland for the past 20 years, said Summerlee, who visited the country this spring and met with university and government leaders. "We have been sharing knowledge and

learning experiences for a considerable amount of time. We learned not only about interrelations between our two countries but also about how we approach environmental, scientific, cultural and ethical issues in our home countries. It is a relationship with even more potential. "

Skúlason, who received his PhD in zoology from U of G and was one of its first Icelandic students, added, "We have been looking for ways to provide students, faculty and staff with more opportunities for learning and growth. We hope the new Iceland-Guelph Institute will heighten interest and participation at both ends."

The Iceland-Guelph Institute will develop joint activities and programs in both countries that will be delivered via exchange and distance education and allow students to study at both institutions. It will also raise funds to support initiatives such as a lecture series. Skulason and his former graduate adviser, Guelph zoology professor David Noakes, were instrumental in establishing the institute and in the earlier collaborations. In 1995, they started an interdisciplinary academic ex-

change program with U of G and Iceland's four universities and colleges. It has provided teaching and research opportunities in areas ranging from history to industrial psychology and from zoology to fine arts. "The great strength of our exchange has been the considerable breadth of interests of people involved," Noakes said. In the past decade, some 200 undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff have participated in field courses and research projects. Psychology professor Steven Cronshaw, co-ordinator of the Iceland-Guelph exchange program, will be the institute's interim director. He said there is a commonality of interests between the countries and universities, especially in the environmental and natural sciences.

In addition, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the former president of Iceland, received an honorary doctorate from Guelph in 1998, and two scholarships were established in her name for Icelandic students pursuing graduate degrees at Guelph. On November 22nd, U of G also awarded its most prestigious graduate award, the Brock Doctoral Fellowship, to Icelander Bjarni Kristjánsson, who earned an M.Sc. degree at Guelph and is returning for his PhD.

Movie of the Month: Watching "Rare Birds" Strongly Recommended

National Film Board , Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto, Icelandic Consulate and Icelandic Film Center present:

"Rare Birds" A comedy by Sturla Gunnarsson

PLUS "Beowulf and Grendel" A short sneak preview!

Thursday, January 27

6:30 and 8:30 p.m.

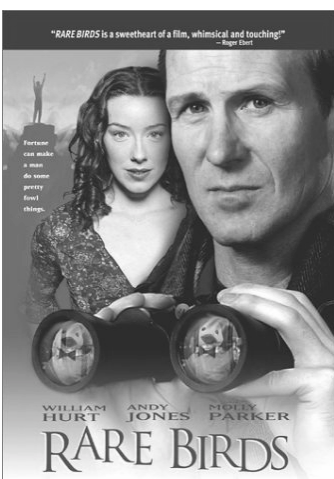
The National Film Board
150 John Street, Toronto

Admission: \$6 for NFB members, seniors, students, \$8 for others. Director Sturla Gunnarsson will be present and will answer questions after the screenings. Join us for coffee around 8:20 ... at NFB, second floor, right beside the screening theatre.

There is much interest for these screenings, so seats could be scarce. If you want to reserve seats, contact Gail: 416-762-8627

"Rare Birds"

A Lions Gate production, 2001, 101 min. Producers: Paul Pope, Janet York. Screenplay: Edward Richie Director: Sturla Gunnarsson. Cast: William Hurt, Andy Jones, Molly Parker, Cathy Jones, Vicky Hynes, Greg Malone, Maggie Myer, Lawrence Barry, Sheila McCarthy, Leah Lewis, Michael Chaisson, Matthew Clarke, George Jonas



Middle aged Dave Purcell (William Hurt) finds his pathetic life slipping through the cracks when his restaurant is loosing business and his long distance marriage falling apart. To save the business, his strange neighbor Phonse Murphy (Andy Jones,) convinces him to fabricate the sighting of a rare bird close to the restaurant. The plan is such a success that Dave asks Phonse's alluring sister-in-law, Alice (Molly Parker), to help him run the show. Every-

thing begins to unravel when a huge parcel of cocaine, a recreational submarine, and mysterious thugs from the Winnebago Company, enter the scene and the result chaotic. Great performances from Hurt, Parker, and Jones, and director Sturla Gunnarsson brings a wacky touch to this unpredictable and gently dark comedy.

BEOWULF AND GRENDEL

Sturla will be giving us a short preview of this new film



Director Sturla Gunnarsson

(Here is an excerpt with permission from an interview with Sturla in "Take One", Edition #40)

Take One: Are you talking about "the" Beowulf?

Sturla: Yes, that's right, Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon epic poem upon which every single Western you have ever seen is based. Beowulf was written in the eighth century by Christian Anglo-Saxon monks in England, but it deals with events that took place in the pagan Norse culture of the sixth century. It imposes a Christian morality on essentially a pagan tale. What we're trying to do is reclaim the tale's pagan roots. In our story, Beowulf is a hero who discovers his quest is not so noble. It's about the function of a hero in a culture.

Sturla's official biography, courtesy of the Beowulf website:

Sturla Gunnarsson was born in Iceland, raised in Vancouver, has made films in India, South Africa, Mexico, Central America, the United States and Canada and been dubbed 'Canada's resident Viking, sailing the high seas of naturalism'. His feature films, documentaries and television movies have won a multitude of awards including Emmy, Genie and Gemini Awards, a Prix Italia, the Prix Villes de Cannes and an Oscar nomination. Though diverse in form and content, they all share a thematic commitment to the exploration of the human condition in all its complexity.

His feature films include the comedy, "**Rare Birds**", starring William Hurt, Andy Jones and Molly Parker and the Bombay epic, "**Such A Long Journey**", starring Roshan Seth and Om Puri, both of which were among the top grossing Canadian movies in the years they were released. Documentaries include the cinema verite classic, "**Final Offer**" and the post-apartheid love story "**Gerrie & Louise**". He has also directed films for broadcasters in Canada, the UK and the United States and his last two films for television, "**Scorn**" and "**100 Days In The Jungle**" each won Gemini (Canadian Academy) Awards for 'best television movie' in the years they were telecast.

Gunnarsson is currently in post-production on "**Beowulf & Grendel**", a feature film loosely adapted from the Anglo Saxon epic poem, "*Beowulf*". He lives in Toronto with his wife and two children.