



FÁLKINN

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO

January 2008

ICCT FÁLKINN 48th Year Number 3

Skaftafell in Iceland

**A Thousand Years of Change A Presentation/Book Reading by Dr. Jack D. Ives
Sunday, January 27th**

**2:30 pm at the Scandinavian Canadian Club, 91 Stormont (Bathurst/Lawrence)
\$5 members \$6 non members**

Please join us for this enjoyable presentation with coffee and snacks to follow!

For many years Dr. Jack D. Ives has nursed the idea of bringing together under one cover an account of his friendship with Ragnar Stefánsson, an Icelandic sheep farmer, and his family.

He met Ragnar in 1952 on the first of many visits to Skaftafell. As an English undergraduate student he was overwhelmed both by the grandeur and remoteness of the landscape and, by the culture and history of the farmers of the area.

He witnessed the conversion of a remarkable isolated and austere beautiful landscape into a national park together with the transformation of the people and their ways of life.

Indeed, Skaftafell has become one of the primary destinations for the increasing number of visitors to Iceland as well as for Icelanders. Because Jack's career has taken him into many outstanding mountain regions throughout the world, he came to recognize the global significance of Skaftafell's natural and cultural heritage.

Therefore, it is not over-presumptuous to attempt to demonstrate this vital importance. Sometimes the impressions of a visitor can provide a useful and complementary perspective to those of native-born Icelanders.

The book is subdivided into three parts supplemented by eleven appendices. *The first part* attempts to explain Ragnar's own sense of time and place and his relationship with his local and wider region. To do this, it is necessary to go back to Ingólfur Arnason's first landfall in AD 874 under the headland that bears his name, Ingólfshöfði, which could be seen by Ragnar from his farmhouse.

In working through the centuries, using the somewhat unconventional approach to assume perceptions and attitudes of a number of principal characters, some possibly mythical, others startlingly real, the author eventually reaches 1952, the date of his own first arrival. At this point he moves to *the second part*.

This is a narrative of the University of Nottingham student expeditions of 1952–1954, including a detailed account of the fatal accident of August 1953. It also outlines some of the results of their research. It is recounted at some length because it demonstrates how Jack came to be bound to Ragnar and Skaftafell. It is also an example of the influence of Iceland and Icelanders on the lives of visitors from overseas.

The third part is an account of the second half of Ragnar's life that is inseparably linked with the origins and evolution of the Skaftafell National Park leading to the author's presumption of eventual World Heritage recognition. He uses his own extensive experience with UNESCO, the United Nations University, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), as well as his university teaching and mountain research career, to illustrate the many challenges and opportunities that development of the park entails.





FÁLKINN-THE FALCON

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

*Editors: Kara Schuster karaschuster@rogers.com
Gail Einarson-McCleery icegem20@cs.com
G. Tómas Gunnarsson tommigunnars@hotmail.com
Sara Loftson loftson_1@hotmail.com*

ICCT Executive:

*President: Kara Schuster
karaschuster@rogers.com
905 828-1984*

*Vice-President: Brian Eyolfson
brian.eyolfson@sympatico.ca*

*Treasurer: Lynne Thorkelsson
1680 Scugog St. Port Perry, ON L9L 1E2
lynron.futurepast@sympatico.ca*

*Membership: Holly Wirth
wirthh@yahoo.com*

*Librarians: Margret Björgvinsdóttir
maggatoronto@gmail.com
Jon Thordarson
thorco@aol.com*

*Phone Committee: Irene Gibson
gibso20@can.rogers.com*

*Membership Outreach: Don Gislason
416-489-7737
ericgislason@rogers.com*

*Mailing Director: Ellen Gilmore
egilmore.@sympatico.ca*

*Youth Director: Brenda Bjarnason
bbjarnason@rogers.com*

*Webmaster: Darla McKay
demckay@pathcom.com*

*INL Reg. Director & Honorary
Consul of Iceland in Toronto:
Gail Einarson-McCleery.
icegem20@cs.com*

*Directors at Large:
Mel Johnson
mijohnson@rogers.com,
Heather Prinsloo
dhprinsloo@rogers.com*

*Membership information: Single
\$20, Family \$25, Senior Couple \$20,
Senior Single \$15.*

Webpage: <http://icct.info>

New Members

The ICCT would like to welcome the following new members!

Ernest Niemiec, Guelph
S. Nicolaison, Ajax
Marlene Gordon & Barbara Mintz, Toronto
Joseph Murray & family, London

Donations

The ICCT would like to thank the following for their gracious donations:

Torfi Bildfell, Webb & Elaine Charette, Sybil & Michael Clapperton, Jean Davis, Ed & Margaret Eggertson, Lynn & James Friesen, Dr. W.S. Goodman, Jill & David (Tomasson) Goodwin, Sturla Gunnarson & Judy Koonar, William & Laufey Hart, Gunnar & Lynda Helgason, Gunnar Byron and Kimmi Helgason, Rita Hiorth, Sheryl Hoshizaki, Philip & Carol Hryhorchuk, Karen & Bill Hurst, Brian & Donna Laxdal, Dr James & Alda MacKenzie, Heather McNamee, Marlene Mintz, Garry Oddleifson, Dorothy (Kristjanson) Purchase, Valerie Rogers, Kay Sigurjonsson, Lillian & Bob Sparkes, Joan Waterous, Don & Norma (Johnson) Young

Announcements

Stefan J. Stefanson of Gimli passed away January 2, 2008 at the Gimli Hospital with his family in attendance. Stefan lived a long and active life, and was in his 94th year. He was very active in the Icelandic National League and in Icelandic Canadian affairs generally for many years, and paid many visits to Iceland, including his most recent one for the INL Iceland convention in the fall of 2007. He will be missed by many. Please visit <http://bookoflifeonline.com/StefansonStefanJ1.htm> for a full biography.

Fredrickson, Herbert Kenneth, P. Eng. - Passed away peacefully at home on December 27, 2007, after a long but spirited battle with cancer. Herb, with his sense of humor, fairness and determination, leaves a great void in the lives of his wife Sharon, brother Ivan (Edie), children Kurt (Heather predeceased), Carl (Gail), Karen (predeceased), Eric (Cathy), Lara, stepchildren Susan (Jamie), Andrew (Ingrid), many grandchildren, great grandchildren and extended family. Herb was born in Winnipegosis, Manitoba, a small fishing community, on January 26, 1928. A proud graduate of Queen's University, he worked his way around the world as a respected mining engineer with stops in New Caledonia, Nicaragua and Ireland and across Canada in four provinces and two territories, before finally settling happily in Owen Sound.

Letter From the President

I am hoping everyone has had a very joyous holiday season. We have an exciting year of events to look forward to and I hope to see many of you out in the new year. We are always looking for volunteers to help out at our events so please get in touch with me if you would like to help out or have any suggestions! All the best in the new year!!! Kara Schuster

Congratulations are a Must!

Congratulations to Donald K. Johnson, member of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto, who was named the Globe & Mail's Nation Builder of the Year.

"He is a fellow from small-town Manitoba whose tireless, 12-year campaign for more generous tax treatment on charity donations has opened the philanthropic floodgates from coast to coast. Billions pour into charities .."

Among the Icelandic causes he has helped recently are the University of Manitoba and Logberg-Heimskringla.

Go to www.theglobeandmail.com and search for "Nation Builder 2007 Don Johnson" for the full article.

Don is truly an Icelandic-Canadian we can all be proud of! See our next issue for a full profile!

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT!!!!

Tinna Gunnlaugsdottir (Anthropologist) gave birth Nov. 28th, and says "she is a beautiful girl. It all went well - great birth. She has been given the name Æsa - an old Icelandic name. Ragnheidur Kolka is thrilled being a big sister. Now I am working on my dissertation about the relationships between Iceland and Icelandic North Americans, for which I interviewed so many people in Toronto"



Icelandic Consul's Corner

**INFO. FROM CONSUL
GAIL EINARSON-McCLEERY**

THE DREADED 3 MONTH RULE

I was reminded by an item in a Consular newsletter, that people need to be careful when booking out of country travel that their passports have at least three months to run (and recently I have even heard of countries requiring six months!)

One case involved an American tourist who had not been allowed to board a connecting flight from Miami and then to Iceland, because his passport's validity was less than three months. The man was going to stay only for a week and was in possession of a return ticket. Upon checking with border control in Iceland, the Consul, whom the tourist contacted, was told that the three month rule was really not being enforced at this time, so the airline in question did eventually allow the American on another flight. It is always better to err on the side of caution, so make sure you check what the requirements are now ... three months or six months.

ICELANDAIR FLIGHTS

A reminder that Icelandair will start direct flights to and from Toronto on May 2nd! And not only can you get to Reykjavik, but also to London, Paris, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm, Glasgow, Frankfurt, and in the summertime also to Barcelona, Milan and Manchester. Call Icelandair at 1-800-223-5500 or go to the website at www.icelandair.com Because this is a new gateway, flights are already filling up. Book soon!

Remember our webpage:
<http://icct.info>

GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND SCHOLARSHIP

North American students of Icelandic descent, studying language and literature, are invited to apply for a Scholarship to study Icelandic language and literature at the University of Iceland in Reykjavik for the 2008 - 2009 term.

The scholarship is approximately \$13,500.00 CAD and covers tuition, room and board.

Deadline for submissions of all application material to the INL office is Monday, March 17, 2008.

For application forms and further information please contact: /

Rosa Johnston
Executive Secretary
Icelandic National League
#103 - 94 1st Ave, Gimli, MB, Canada R0C 1B0
Phone: 204-642-5897 Fax: 204-642-9382
Email: inl@mts.net
Website: www.inlofna.org

The Icelandic Canadian Club Of Toronto Scholarship, and the Ragnar & Marion Johnson Memorial Scholarship

Two awards of \$1,000.00 each are available to students of Icelandic descent. They are the annual ICCT Scholarship, and the Ragnar and Marion Johnson Memorial Scholarship. These two scholarships are each offered to a student who is in or about to enter post secondary education or training. We are interested in attracting candidates who, in addition to high academic standing, leadership qualities and community involvement, have an interest in their heritage. The applicant or applicant's family must be a member in good standing of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto. Please visit <http://icct.info> to download the application.

Deadline for applications is March 1st, 2008

Grants for ICCT Snorri Participants

Grants are available to people of Icelandic descent participating in the Snorri Program in 2008. These grants are offered to assist in the funding of your travel expenses. The amount awarded may vary from year to year, and will be subject to Board approval based on the number of applicants for the year and the funding available. We are interested in attracting candidates who, in addition to their Icelandic heritage, leadership qualities and community involvement, will be active and involved members of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto upon their return. The applicant or applicant's family must be a member in good standing of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto. Please visit <http://icct.info> to download the application. Deadline for applications is March 1st, 2008

INL CONVENTION 2008 ***CALGARY***

OUR FUTURE: NOW AND THEN

CALGARY, ALBERTA

APRIL 24 TO 27, 2008

Visit <http://www.inlofna.org/> for all the details

“OUR FUTURE: THEN AND NOW”, the Theme for the 2008 INL Convention, gives us an opportunity to look at the past and plan for the future. Keynote Speakers, Jonas Thor and Dr. Roger Gibbins, will address the Past and Present. You, as a registrant, will then be invited to look at the Future. Come and hear inspiring speakers, share your opinions in a Discussion Session, learn from the “How-To” Concurrent Sessions, the Poster Presentations, the Snorri and Website presentations. We have a full, exciting Program planned, which will be informative and fun. There is something for everyone!

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

*Before Feb. 8/08 \$145.00 Canadian

*Regular after Feb. 8/08 \$165.00 Canadian

Registration includes breakfast and lunch on

Friday and Saturday and Saturday Banquet

Saturday Banquet only \$ 55.00 Canadian

Final Deadline Hotel, Convention, and Banquet

is March 25/08 before 5:00 p.m MST

Convention facility: The Westin Hotel 320 –

4th Avenue S.W. Calgary, AB T2P 2S6

www.westin.com/calgary

To register at the Westin Hotel, Calgary, mention the

Icelandic National League Convention

Call toll free 1-800-937-8461

Please let Kara (905-828-1984) know if you would like to go and represent the ICCT as we may have some spots available.

ICCT London Chapter

*****Sunday, February 17th*****

Betty Jane Wylie will be doing a reading from one of her books, More details soon

Please join them at 2:00pm

First St. Andrew's United Church

Corner of Queen and Waterloo in London

Call Nancy Johnson (519-657-3994) for details

SNORRI DEADLINE IS NOW!!!

Applications must be received by January 15th.

Visit www.Snorri.is for all the details.

The Snorri Program is an opportunity for young people (18-28) of Icelandic origin living in Canada and the United States of America, to discover the country, culture, nature and language of their ancestors, and to create or strengthen bonds with relatives living in Iceland. The Snorri Program offers an exciting six-week adventure starting in mid June to the end of July. The program offers a unique experience of the country, its' culture and nature.

SNORRI PLUS PROGRAM

The Snorri Plus deadline is March 1, 2008. Maximum of 16 individuals will be accepted. They have already started reserving spots, so don't delay as they have 14 spots booked so far!

Please visit www.snorri.is for more details.

Program dates: August 21 - September 3, 2008

CALL FOR ARTISTS, MUSICIANS, SUPPORTERS AND VENDORS FOR N O R D I C F E S T J U N E 2 7 - 2 9 , 2 0 0 8

We will be joining with the other Nordic and Baltic communities for a big festival in June (Friday June 27 - Sunday June 29) at Mel Lastman Square in North York. All events in the Square will be free. There will be entertainment, food for sale, tables/tents for vendors and supporters. There are also halls available for ticketed events.

Let us know if you would like to take part in this ground-breaking event. If you have music or art to offer, please contact Gail Einarson-McCleery to arrange to have a cd of your work mailed for review. If you would like to be a vendor or supporter, please contact Gail at icegem20@cs.com, 416 762-8627. The sooner the better in order to make room for you. Planning has begun and there will be an hour each day for Icelandic entertainment!

WE GET LETTERS...

Ljósanótt ("Evening of Lights") In Honor of Dr. Ken Thorkalson

Dear Friend;

Lögberg-Heimskringla is organizing Ljósanótt ("Evening of Lights"), a tribute dinner on January 26 to honour a member of the Icelandic community. The inaugural honouree is Dr. Ken Thorkalson.

Dr. Thorkalson is well-known in the medical and Icelandic communities. His leadership in fundraising in recent years has seen two campaigns succeed beyond their goals: one to support the Department of Icelandic and the Icelandic Collection at the University of Manitoba, and the other to stabilize and support *Lögberg-Heimskringla*. The Icelandic community in Manitoba and Canada can attribute the continuing survival of these important cultural institutions to Dr. Thorkalson's efforts.

Please join us at Ljósanótt on January 26 in Provencher Room at the Fort Garry Hotel. In addition to dinner, there will be musical entertainment including singing in both English and Icelandic by Peter John Buchan. Dinner sponsor Icelandair will give away a trip for two to Iceland, including accommodation.

Tickets are \$100 per person; a tax receipt will be issued for a portion. Please contact Karen Bowman or Audrey Kwastica at (204) 284-5686 for tickets.

We look forward to seeing you there. Please join us as we "light up the night" at this special celebratory dinner.

Sincerely,

Grant Stefanson
Chair, *Lögberg-Heimskringla*

ICELANDIC HERITAGE SOCIETY OF CANADA

Dear Sirs/Madams:

The Icelandic Heritage Society of Canada was formed in the Spring of 2006 and was granted charitable status by the Canada Revenue Agency in February of 2007. It was established as a medium to raise money for the purpose of supporting the study, preservation and promotion of the Icelandic heritage enjoyed by many of us in Canada and the United States.

One of the first initiatives undertaken by the Charity was to look at ways that it could provide assistance to the Icelandic Emigration Centre at Hofsos. This came at the request of the operators of the Centre. It has been decided that we can best assist by raising money for the creation of specific projects at the Centre. We have had discussions with representatives of the same concerning an exhibit which would explore and pay homage to the Icelanders in Manitoba and in particular Winnipeg. We have also had discussions concerning an innovative museum-style installation on "Icelanders in the Pacific Northwest." We have enclosed a brochure prepared in connection with these plans.

Our Charity is also open to supporting, and making our charitable status available, to a variety of different ideas and projects that have been undertaken by others. That is subject, of course, to the project falling within the purposes stated above.

In addition to the ICE initiative, the Society is also presently assisting a newly formed non profit organization in Manitoba by the name of Icelandic River Heritage Sites Inc. This Society is in the process of commissioning the creation of a life size sculpture of Sigtryggur Jonasson, "Father of New Iceland", for installation at Modruvellir (Sigtryggur's farm) near Riverton.

If anyone is interested in making a charitable donation to any of the above projects please contact us by email address: . You may write to us at 402 – 707 Fort St., Victoria, BC V8W 3G3. We also have a web site which can be found by following the links at: <http://victoria.tc.ca/Community/Icelanders/> (Thank you to the Icelanders of Victoria for allowing us space on their web site).

Yours truly,
Craig Beveridge



Annual Travel Show Sunday, February 24th,

2:30pm

Swansea Town Hall - 95 Lavinia Avenue

Come and get the latest news, prices, brochures and have all your travel questions answered. Hear first hand from people who have traveled to Iceland in the past year and see all their beautiful pictures. This event is not to be missed if you are looking to plan your next adventure to Iceland.

WE NEED YOU!!!

OUR EVENTS ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP MAKE THEM HAPPEN.

We need volunteers for Thorrablot (Saturday, March 29th). We need a Food Convenor, people for set up and take down, kitchen help, youth servers, children supervisors/crafts assistants, silent auction organizer and monitor, kitchen help and entertainers. The more volunteers we get, the more people can enjoy the event!! So please contact Gail (416-762-8627) or Kara (905-828-1984) if you would like to help out.

NEWS FROM ICELAND

4 More Years for Ólafur Ragnar?

The Icelandic president, Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, announced in his New Year speech, that he would seek re-election in the summer, when his 3rd. term comes to an end. As of now nothing is known about possible contenders, but an elected president has never lost an election in Iceland.

The Holy Grail in Hrunamannahreppur?

A group of scientists believes that the Holy Grail and other artifacts prominent in Christian mythology, are hidden in Iceland, in Hrunamannahreppur.

“There are strong indications that the solution to this mystery may be found in Iceland,” architect Þórarinn Þórarinsson wrote in a letter to the local authority of Hrunamannahreppur, requesting permission for himself and Italian cryptographer Giancarlo Gianazza to search for the treasure in the region.

The theory is that the Knights Templar came to Iceland in 1217 to find a hiding place for their treasure and that Snorri Sturluson, the author of *Prose Edda* and other mediaeval scripts, helped them create the underground dome in Iceland’s central highlands.

A permit for excavation has been given.

On Top of the World – in Prices

Iceland is by far the most expensive country in the world, according to a recent study by the World Bank on pricing and quality of life (data from 2005), comparing economic systems in over 140 countries around the globe.

The price of 1,000 products and services was compiled in each country and then compared between countries. The US, which ranked number 20, was used as a standard price index for comparison with 100 points.

Iceland had 154 points, with 54 percent higher prices than the US. Iceland was considerably higher than the next country below, Denmark, which had 142 points. The Nordic countries were all in the top ten.

Almost a Million

Almost a million people travelled through Leifur Eiríksson airport in the year 2007, or to be more precise, 946.000. This is an 9% increase from the previous year.

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

Film of the Month - January:

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

“Cold Trail” (Köld slóð)

– English subtitles - Film by Björn Br. Björnsson

Wednesday, January 30, 7:30 p.m.

The National Film Board, 150 John Street, Toronto
Admission: \$6 for NFB members, seniors, students,
\$8 others.



Dir: Björn Br. Björnsson. Script: Kristinn Þórðarson. Cast: Þróstur Leó Gunnarsson, Elva Ósk Ólafsdóttir, Helgi Björnsson, Anita Briem, [Hjalti Rögnvaldsson](#), [Tómas Lemarquis](#)

Iceland 2006. 95 min.

An Icelandic thriller. Baldur, a reporter, gets to know who his father was, shortly after the father dies in strange circumstances while working as a security guard in a hydro power plant. Going undercover the reporter soon finds out that nothing is as simple as it seems, the past is still alive in the present and his coworkers hide almost as many layers as an onion. →



Film of the Month - February:

Presented by the Finnish Consulate and the National Film Board.

Wednesday, February 27th, 7:30pm: free @ NFB

Private Eye (Vares)

- English subtitles - by Aleksis Makela

Jussi Vares is partial to cold beer and hote women, as any self-respecting private eye would be. Chivalry gets him involved in an action-packed chase around Finland.

DAYS TO REMEMBER: CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 27th: Skaftafell in Iceland - A Thousand Years of Change -A Presentation/Book Reading by Dr. Jack D. Ives

2:30 pm at the Scandinavian Canadian Club, 91 Stormont (Bathurst/Lawrence) (see pg 1)

January 30th: Cold Trail, 7:30pm National Film Board, 150 John Street.

Feb 17th: London Chapter event 2:00(see pg 5)

Feb 24th: Travel Show. 2:30 Swansea Town Hall Community Centre, 95 Lavinia Avenue (see pg 7)

March 29th: Thorrablot: More details to come in the next newsletter (see pg 7)

The hydro plant is located in the highlands, very isolated in winter time and rough and unpredictable weather along with his strange coworkers make Baldur’s surroundings inhospitable.

“Cold Trail” is the first full length feature film by director Björn Br. Björnsson, but he is well known for his work in advertising and for television. The film is professionally made but suffers, as so many other Icelandic films, from a weak and in some parts confusing script. The actors all put in a reasonable performance, though some have a little difficulty in hiding their stage origins.

But good cinematography along with good music build up suspense and with some help from the fantastic Icelandic winter landscape make “Cold Trail” an interesting and enjoyable movie.

Reviewed by Tomas Gunnarson