



FÁLKINN

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO

February-March 2009

ICCT FÁLKINN 49th Year Number 4

Þorrablót

SATURDAY MARCH 28, 2009

6:00pm Cash Bar

7:00pm Dinner

Our biggest event of the year, Þorrablót celebrates the end of winter and the month of Thorri (actually, it should be in February, but we prefer to wait until the snow is mostly gone!)

This year, we have a new location!

958 Broadview Ave. Toronto M4K 2R6

It is with our friends, the Estonians, at their Estonian House. The location is great, just off the Don Valley Parkway. Take the Pottery Road Exit and go South on Broadview.

And there is lots of FREE PARKING at the rear

Also, their caterer can supply all the non-Icelandic food, lessening the burden of cooking for most of us! Let us know if you can supply Icelandic specialties or sweets . Call Gail 416 762-8627

Don't miss all the fun!!!

~Ólöf Sigvalðadóttir, Attaché, will be representing the Ambassador, Sigríður Anna Þórðardóttir,

~songs led by our Icelandic class; accompanied by Bob Davis on piano

~Live Jazz music

~Snorri presentation by the 2008 Snorri participants

~silent auction

~presentation of scholarships

~crafts for the kids

~fun and companionship for all the family.

~traditional Icelandic food you love (and Canadian food as well!)

BOOK NOW with our Treasurer, Lynne Thorkelsson

1680 Scugog St. Port Perry, ON L9L 2E2 (Order form enclosed)

or by PayPal <http://icct.info>

EARLYBIRD SPECIAL — BOOK BY MARCH 1ST...

\$35 FOR ADULTS, \$20 FOR YOUTH/STUDENTS, KIDS 6 AND UNDER FREE
after that, the price goes up to \$39 for ADULTS, \$22 FOR YOUTH

If you can help out with the Silent Auction or to donate to the auction, or help in any other way, please get in touch with our President, Brian Evolfson at brian.evolfson@sympatico.ca 416 762-9452



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*

ICCT Executive:

*President: Brian Eyolfson
416 762-9452 brian.eyolfson@sympatico.ca*

*Past President/Falcon Editor
Kara Schuster
905-302-9699 karaschuster@rogers.com*

*Vice-President: Heather Prinsloo
dhprinsloo@rogers.com*

*Treasurer: Lynne Thorkelsson
1680 Scugog St.
Port Perry, ON L9L 1E2
mlynnnet@gmail.com*

*Membership: Holly Wirth
wirthh@yahoo.com*

*Secretary: Angie Bjornson
angiebjonson@rogers.com*

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

Phone Committee: vacant

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

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

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

*Webmaster: Darla McKay
demckay@pathcom.com*

*Thorrablot Convenor: Arden Jackson
arden@ardendesign.com*

*INL Vice President & Honorary
Consul of Iceland in Toronto/Falcon Editor:
Gail Einarson-McCleery.
icegem20@cs.com*

*Regional Director INL: Gerry Einarsson
einargk@rogers.com*

*Director at Large:
Mel Johnson
mljohnson@rogers.com*

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

Webpage: <http://icct.info>

The ICCT would like to thank the following for their generous donations to the club.

Michael & Sybil Clapperton,
Orangeville

Barbara Gubbins, Etobicoke

Sturla Gunnarson & Judy Koonar,
Toronto

Eric Sigvaldason, Burlington

ICCT LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Do you have some spare time? Would you like to become more involved with the club? We are looking for a few people to fill some vacancies in our executive.

Merchandise Coordinator

Phone Committee Coordinator

Falkinn Newsletter Editor

Please contact

Brian Eyolfson 416 762-9452
brian.eyolfson@sympatico.ca

or

Gail Einarson-McCleery.
icegem20@cs.com

for more details or to volunteer.

INL Calendars 2009

The INL Calendars for 2009 are available, featuring visual artists from across the country.
\$10 each plus shipping

To order, contact Lynne Thorkelsson, 1680 Scugog St.
Port Perry, ON L9L 1E2,

mlynnnet@gmail.com

Shipping: \$2 for one; \$3 for two to four,
\$6 for five or six

Icelandic River Coffee

An Icelandic River Heritage Site Fundraiser

On any given evening in Riverton Manitoba you can find a group of dedicated volunteers meeting over a plate of home baking and hot coffee to discuss one of Manitoba's most promising new grassroots heritage initiatives. Icelandic River Heritage Sites Inc. (IRHS), a non-profit, volunteer run-organization, was founded in the fall of 2006 in response to the need for the development and protection of places of historical importance in the Riverton area.

As one of the more northerly Icelandic communities on the Manitoba Icelandic land reserve, Riverton became an outpost of culture, commerce, and transportation, as well as a home to many notable figures - visionaries, poets, musicians, scholars, innovators, adventurers, entrepreneurs, and larger-than-life characters.

The group is currently involved in honouring and preserving two important aspects of Icelandic Canadian history and culture there through the creation of a monument to Sigtryggur Jónasson and the protection of the Nes smallpox cemetery. Jónasson was also widely known as the "Father of New Iceland" for his role in securing the Icelandic land grant in Manitoba and leading Icelandic migrants to Canada. Jónasson's Riverton house became a cultural centre in the community and served as Government House for New Iceland, the district's first school, the post office, and the editorial base of the pioneer newspaper Framfari. The group hopes to erect a life sized statue of Jónasson at the site of Möðruvellir, his original homestead on the west bank of the Icelandic River.

Across the Icelandic River, volunteers are also working hard to protect the resting place of some 30 identified Icelandic men, women, and children and an estimated 50-80 people believed to be members of the Sandy Bar Band who died in New Iceland's smallpox epidemic in the winter of 1876-7. Although the site was neglected prior to the establishment of the IRHS, it still served as a powerful cultural force in the community's imagination. Icelandic poet Guttormur Guttormson, whose home bordered the site, used it as inspiration for his famous poem "Sandy Bar". Winnipeg-based dance artist, Freya Olafson also based her recent performance piece, New Icelander on the site, which she will be performing in Toronto on Easter weekend in April. The site has also inspired several interesting popular "hybrid" ghost tales, stories that exhibit both Icelandic and Canadian qualities. Unfortunately the site has suffered from years of river erosion. The IRHS is currently involved in stabilizing and maintaining the site. In addition to protecting the cemetery from further erosion, members also hope to create an original sculpture and monument for the site as well as interpretive plaques and a walking/cycling path.

The IRHS is using another Icelandic cultural staple, coffee, to help build support for their heritage campaign. The group developed a special blend with Green Bean Coffee Imports of Clandeboye, a custom blender and roaster of fair trade, organic coffee beans. Adorning each bag of coffee is the fundraising campaign's "poster-Amma" (Brú Manitoba's Geirprúður Jónsdóttir) in a farmhouse kitchen holding a coffee pot in one hand and a cup and saucer in the other. The group named their blend Icelandic River Roast: "Tíu Dropar" (10 drops), a phrase used to ask for "just a little more." In exchange for a donation of \$20 to the IRHC coffee enthusiasts and history buffs alike can enjoy their own 1lb bag of "Tíu Dropar" coffee. All proceeds go directly to heritage preservation projects. Ontarians interested in contributing to these projects can also receive their own bag of Tíu Dropar by placing their order by March 15 and picking up their pound at Thorrablót on March 28th. Please contact Laurie Bertram at laurie.bertram@utoronto.ca or 647-344-9038 no later than March 15th to place your order. Cheques should be made out to Icelandic River Heritage Sites Inc. and sent to Box 555, Riverton, Manitoba R0C 2R0

<http://www.irhs.sagapublications.com/>



Laurie K. Bertram



JOE MARTIN HAS A NEW BOOK ABOUT TO BE PUBLISHED

By Gail Einarson-McCleery

Long time ICCT member Prof. Joseph E. Martin's new book is entitled "Relentless Change: A Casebook for the Study of Canadian Business History, and in it he names the incorporation of the Hudson's Bay Company as the No. 1 business event in a Top 40 ranking of business events in Canadian history.

Why? HBC was founded 338 years ago, and is now Canada's largest department store retailer. Its assets include HBC, Zellers, and Home Outfitters stores, and it operates in every province and employs 70,000 people. To operate successfully for three centuries is quite an accomplishment.

It started as a fur trading company (given the right to all the lands which drained into Hudson's Bay) and established forts all across the country during its first hundred years. In 1821 it merged with the Northwest Company and its domain then stretched from Oregon to Nunavut to Labrador. Beaver pelts to make felt hats for European dandies were the mainstay of its original business. In 1870 it finally handed sovereignty over its lands to the Canadian government.

Prof. Joe Martin has always had an interest in history, and teaches a course at the University of Toronto which highlights history as a primary component in making business decisions. He was formerly a partner at Deloitte Consulting and is now adjunct professor, executive-in-charge and director of Canadian business history at the Rotman School of Management.

Watch for his new book in early 2009.

DARING AVIATOR RISKS HIS LIFE TO BRING HISTORY ALIVE

By Gail Einarson-McCleery

This headline appeared in the Globe & Mail recently, and refers to our Icelandic-Canadian astronaut, Bjarni Trygvasson! It tells the story of his intent to fly a replica of the "Silver Dart", which made history when pilot and designer J.A.D. McCurdy flew the original in 1909 from Baddeck Bay, in Cape Breton. Among the developers at that time was Alexander Graham Bell.

And a few days ago, Bjarni did indeed fly the replica, in its first test flight out of Hamilton Airport. Now he is looking forward to February 23rd, when he will recreate the original flight exactly 100 years later, in Cape Breton.

Since retiring as an astronaut (he flew on mission STS-85 in 1997), he has worked with a group of volunteers who began the project of creating the replica five years ago in Welland, Ontario. Among them is retired engineer Doug Jermyn, and the Mr. McCurdy's grandson, Gerald Haddon, who spent a lot of time with his grandfather, calling him a "truly unique and gifted man".

In order to improve the safety of the model, Bjarni and the group searched for rare information about the plane and then improved upon some of the more dangerous features. This included moving the fuel source from right behind the pilot's head to a safer location to reduce the chance of fire.

It seems like yesterday that Bjarni was one of the featured guests on my "Vikings in Canada Gala" at the Glenn Gould Studio in the year 2000! Good luck to him on this latest venture!



THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO, AND THE RAGNAR AND MARION JOHNSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Application Deadline: March 6, 2009

Two awards of \$1,000.00 are to be awarded to a student 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, and we are interested in attracting candidates who, in addition to high academic standing, leadership qualities and community involvement, have an interest in their heritage.

Please visit <http://icct.info> to download the application

LOOKING FOR ADVERTISERS FOR 2010 CALENDAR

The INL calendar is sold all across the country and is an excellent vehicle to advertise your business. Business card size ads are only \$75; a large ad on the bottom of a calendar page are \$500. Contact Gail if you are interested in supporting your Icelandic community ... 416 762-8627 or icegem20@cs.com

Iceland Today - by *Tomas Gunnarsson*

It can hardly be an exaggeration to say that there has been a great upheaval in Iceland. The economy endured a serious blow, the GNP is expected to subtract approximately 10%, unemployment is now 7% and on the rise, the financial sector all but collapsed and prices for fish and aluminum – the two main exports - are falling.

And now to add to the mixture there is a political uncertainty and a new minority government has just been formed after the former imploded.

The government formed after the last election by The Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkur) and The Social Alliance (Samfylkingin) ran out of steam amidst increasing public protest and unrest inside the Social Alliance.

The Progressive Party (Framsóknarflokkurinn) had already made a public offer to support a minority government of The Social Alliance and The Left-Green Party (Vinstri græn). And after a week of discussion and a few tense moments a new government was born.

Part of the deal and a condition on behalf of the Progressive Party was a election which will be held on 25th of April, so the new government will only be in power for about 80 days.

The biggest news regarding the new government is the first woman prime minister, Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir, a 66 year old former stewardess, with a long parliamentary experience. She is in fact the longest serving MP, was first elected to parliament 1978. She is a member of the Social Alliance and served as a Social Minister in the former government.

The Social Alliance has 4 minister, The Left Green Party 4, and two ministers are not from the group of MP's.

This new government is the first time in 18 years that Iceland has a government without the participation of The Independence Party.

But Iceland has interesting times ahead, the election campaign will without a doubt be fierce, and it is already established, that the political parties will renew a lot of their candidates and likely there will also be some new parties.

Snorri Plus: The Trip of a Lifetime

by: Sara Benediktson

When I signed up for the 2008 Snorri Plus program I was excited beyond words. I must confess though that I was more than a little dubious about the prospect of travelling on a set tour with so many strangers. I was very concerned that the tour would be boring, and that I wouldn't relate to my fellow travelers. What I didn't know then was how fantastic, exciting and well planned the tour would be, and that I'd be travelling with such wonderful people. Great credit goes to our guide, Ásta Sól. She had a real talent for keeping us all entertained and satisfied in spite of our diverse needs and interests.

The short drive from Keflavik to Reykjavik passed quickly, especially thanks to the interesting commentary from our guide, Ásta Sól, and my general fascination with the landscape. It was bare, and spotted here and there with horses. I swear my camera was glued to my hand for the entire trip and even though by the end a few horses grazing in a field by the side of the road was a more or less typical site, I felt compelled to try to capture every last one. They say there are over 70,000 horses in Iceland, and I figure I must of seen at least fourteen hundred and three.

Now here's a thought to ponder: a modern society, fond of technology, with 320,000 people, 70,000 horses, 200,000 sheep on an island the size of Ohio dotted with mountains, volcanoes, and a bit of glacier. Doesn't take long to understand why Reykjavik is the hub of activity and the most populous city in the country.

Bold, beautiful Reykjavik. The brightly covered rooftops of the 101 district almost an echo of the dare to be daring displays of fashion and art so unabashedly typical in the city. Reykjavik. Not bare, but not crowded out with trees or overflowing with buildings where trees used to be. There's everything about Reykjavik that makes it a 'must be' place. The shopping is exhilarating, art and culture ooze into the streets, the museums are fascinating, and the people watching is at its best.

As part of the Snorri Plus adventure, we were treated to numerous memorable events in Reykjavik. I am hard-pressed to pick favourites, there were so many highlights: receiving our genealogy reports and meeting long lost relatives; organized tours of the 871+- 2 Settlement Exhibit, and Surtsey (the Volcanic Island) at the Culture House; fine dining at the O restaurant; wine and cheese with the Canadian Ambassador; coffee and danish with the Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs; and a casual question period with a cabinet minister from the Left Green party from seats in the Althingi.

Another great part of the program was the opportunity to meet with someone in our field of work or general interest. For me that meant meeting with a few people from Skýrr, the largest IT (Information Technology) shop in Iceland. In simple terms, they provide web hosting and computer services for over 80% of the country, including specialized support and development in Windows, UNIX, and Oracle, to name a few. The people at Skýrr were very welcoming and gave me a good overview of their operation. I was quite impressed and very much enjoyed the experience.

Each stop on the tour was fascinating and memorable in its own way. Some of my favourite moments however, were not at the sites themselves, but the journeys between. I've always been a sucker for stories and we were in no shortage. One of my favourites was about the magic of the glacier, it is said you can still feel it, even if you can't see it. Which is good, as it was a very foggy day. Lots of rain and wind gave us a good introduction to Iceland. Other favourites have to do with stories surrounding Drangey Island. We met the Earl of Drangey and he took us out on his boat. We learned of the formation of the island and the small pillar of rock to the one side. It is really the plug of an ancient volcano, but I prefer to think of it as the Troll cow turned to stone, and the stone woman troll standing to the side, trying to lead the cow. (She had a partner on the other side, but he fell down in an earthquake sometime in the 1970's.)

Our stop in Akureyri also marked a surprising change in weather, thanks to warm ocean currents. I couldn't believe the variety of plants thriving at the Akureyri Botanical Gardens. I mean, here we were, way up there at the top of the world and there flowers blooming that would have no chance in my garden back home. Just to reinforce, there was even a bee.

Now, you really haven't seen Iceland unless you've passed through a fishing village. We saw a few, including Grundarfjörður and Hofsós. The latter having the claim to fame as the town with the Emigration museum. Who knew that the Icelanders would have so much information on *us*! There were several buildings to the museum and all kinds of photographs and stories of the people who left. It was rather interesting, though unfortunately for me, it was also mostly written in Icelandic.

After dinner in Hofsós we had our introduction to Hákarl, i.e. rotten shark. Just a tiny piece on the end of a toothpick. They said not to smell it, but who was I to pass up the chance? My head snapped around so fast from pungent odour. I mentally avoided the flavour as much as possible, though it was a lot better than it smelled. The tough part was in getting used to the odd texture, and then convincing my mouth to swallow. The Brennivín (the Black Death), was a delightful aperitif to wash it down. I tried to explain this to my friends when I served it to them on my return to Canada, but somehow, without the shark, they displayed a complete lack of appreciation and threatened to never visit again if insist on bringing it out every time.

As the trip drew to a close we were treated to a day of relaxing at the Blue Lagoon. Truly, it was just one more reason why it was so hard to leave, and one more reason I'll need to go back.

Iceland. There's something in the essence of that rugged place with its beautiful resilience and distinct personality that changes the space around it. I went there for a tour, and I came away with a longing. Part of me is still there, it's the part that breathes the clear air, runs with the horses, listens to sheep while warming up in Grettir's pool, climbs all the mountains, reminisces over coffee, and serves Brennivín to friends. (Skáll!)

SNORRI PLUS 2009 Application deadline: **February 26, 2009**

A fantastic opportunity for people over 30! We meet the needs of both those who want to go for the first time and people who have been to Iceland many times. The program consists of the same components as the Snorri Program; nature, culture, genealogy and lectures. 68 individuals have participated since 2003.

It has never been as reasonable to travel with Snorri Plus! The program fee and Icelandair flight quotes are lower than ever seen before. We have also added Lake Mývatn to the schedule!

Anyone living in Canada or the United States can apply for the program. As long as you are over 30 (no age limit) and healthy you are eligible to participate. For more information, application form and prices please go to: www.snorri.is/snorri-plus.htm or mail to: info@snorri.is

Arrival: August 20, 2009 (Departure Aug 19) Departure: September 2, 2009

Iceland's deCODEme on The Martha Stewart Show

On February 5, 2009, deCODEme was featured on the Martha Stewart show to discuss how deCODEme provides genetic risk testing for disease prevention. Topics included how deCODEme uses genetic risk scans and genetic risk testing to help you calculate your risk for common diseases like heart attacks, cancer and diabetes. In addition, to these services, deCODEme DNA testing allows you to explore your ancestry with a simple DNA test.

Visit <http://www.decodeme.com/discussing-genetic-risk-testing-on-martha-stewart> for the whole story and to watch the episode

Sko! (everything happens all at once) Contemporary Works of Art by Svava Thordis Juliusson

On until March 22, 2009 @ Brayham Contemporary Art, Fri: 2-7pm, Sat & Sun: 12-4pm
1318 Queen St. East, Toronto M4L 1C5 647-435-7367
www.brayhamcontemporaryart.com



Icelandair offers service to Iceland from Boston, New York-JFK, Minneapolis/St. Paul (seasonal), Orlando Sanford (seasonal), Halifax (seasonal) and Toronto (seasonal). Connections through Icelandair's hub in Reykjavik are available to more than 20 destinations in Scandinavia, Great Britain and Continental Europe. Additional information about Icelandair services, fares and packages is available at www.icelandair.ca or by calling (877) I-FLY-ICE.

Toronto Schedule

April 1 - April 24 - Wednesday, Friday, Sunday

April 27 - May 3 - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday

May 6 - May 24 - Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday

May 26 - Jun 19 - Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday

**Finnish Film: Jumalan morsian/
A Bride of the Seventh Heaven**

February 25, 2009 at NFB
150 John Street (at Richmond) 7:00pm

Screening of 2004 film by Anastasia Lapsui and Markku Lehmuskallio. Filmed in the Yamal peninsula, north-west Siberia, where Lapsui is originally from, providing a breathtaking backdrop to the story. Lapsui is a Nenets, who are a nomadic people, and the story is based on a tradition of theirs, where even a baby girl can be designated a bride of the god Num, for seven years at a time. Syarda, who spent many years of her life as the bride of Num, opens up to a small blind girl who visits her regularly, and gives a touching account of the lonely life that befell her because of her status. The film is spoken in Nenets with a haunting sparse soundtrack by Jaana Joutsenlahti and Anna-Kaisa Lieder, known for her expertise in folk music.

Anastasia Lapsui has made Finland her home for almost 20 years now and has worked with Markku Lehmuskallio on many other projects. Many of her films deal with the Nenets or other indigenous people. The Nenets are a Finno-Ugric nation, who are mainly scattered in Northern Russia. The Southernmost home of a Finno-Ugric nation is Hungary and it is speculated that they simply wandered there from the Ural Mountains to settle in central Europe. The common denominator for Finno-Ugrians is language, which over centuries has developed from dialects to independent languages, some disappearing as numbers of native speakers dwindle. Subtitled in English. Admission is free

DATES TO REMEMBER

Now until March 22: "Sko" Svava Juliusson Art Show (page 6)

Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7pm: Finnish movie (above)

Thursday, Feb. 26: Snorri Plus Deadline

Sunday, March 1st: Early bird deadline for Þorrablót tickets (page 1)

Friday, March 6th: Scholarship deadline (page 4)

Wednesday, March 25, 7 pm: "My Winnipeg" Toronto screening (see right) NFB, 150 Richmond (at John)

Thursday March 26: 7pm: "My Winnipeg" London screening (see right) Museum London

Saturday, March 28:
ÞORRABLÓT: see page 1 for details

GUY MADDIN'S FILM "MY WINNIPEG" WINS \$10,000

The Toronto Film Critics Association chose Guy's latest film as the winner of the inaugural Rogers Best Canadian Feature Award in January. The award was announced at a dinner in Toronto, and came with a \$10,000 cheque from Rogers Communications Inc.

'My Winnipeg' is a film in Maddin's usual idiosyncratic style, and blends the city's history, flights of fancy, and Guy's own family history. It also won the Toronto City Award for Best Canadian Feature Film at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival and was on numerous 2008 top 10 lists, including those in Time Magazine and Film Comment.

It has just been nominated for a Genie as well!

"My Winnipeg" Screenings

TORONTO: Wednesday March 25 7:00 p.m.

LONDON: Thursday, March 26 7:00 p.m.

The **Toronto** screening is part of our Nordic Nights series at the National Film Board ...

Wed. March 25 7:00 p.m.

National Film Board, 150 John St. (at Richmond)

\$8 ICCT members, seniors, students \$10 adults

For more information, Call Gail at 416 762-8627

The **London Chapter** of the ICCT will meet at Museum London on Thursday March 26, to screen the film.

Please come for 7 for a meet and greet.

Film Starts at 7:30pm. Admission \$10.00

Museum London is located at 421 Ridout St. North at the Forks of the Thames. For more information call Nancy Johnson (519)657-3994, or Ardath Finnbogsdon-Hill (519)657-3000.

Unconfirmed at press time, but we are hoping that Guy Maddin will attend both screenings.

