

2021 Annual General Meeting Minutes

Call to order

The Annual General Meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto was held on October 3rd, 2021 via Zoom video-conference. The meeting started at 2:11 PM.

Attendees

Ambassador Hlynur Gudjonsson, Carol and Jack Dodds, Peter Norman, Sanchin Verma, Gail Einarson-McCleery, Jennie Garde, Bettyjane Wylie, Rachel Young, Katrine and Elizabeth Handley-Derry, Glen Thordarson, Richard Eriksson, Arden Jackson, Gwen Morgan and Mark Derry, Don Gislason, Kent MacPherson, Janis Johnson, Diana Bristow, Heidi Kinnon, Carol-Anne Albertson, Kathleen McDermott, Rachel Norman, Sachin Verma

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was moved by Gwen Morgan and seconded by Carol and Jack Dodds. It was approved unanimously.

Approval of minutes of the 2020 AGM

Approval of the minutes of the 2020 AGM was moved by Richard Eriksson and seconded by Bettyjane Wylie. They were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

The fiscal year ended June 30th, 2021. Peter Norman presented the report in the context of the last two years. First year was a partial pandemic year, second year was a full pandemic year. Membership revenue was down, in steady decline since 2017, which was our peak membership revenue. The membership chair has been a board position we haven't been able to adequately fill the last few years.

Thorrablót had a negative revenue in the first year, made up in sales of the items. 30 Kinmount books were sold to a touring group last year, though they had to cancel and we refunded them. This year's sales made up for them. Event revenue was strong, almost entirely reflected from Saga Connections events and the travel show, as we charged non-members. Fálkinn advertising was due to the work of our newsletter editor. Movie revenue was strong, and received a substantial amount in donations. 6 regular and 2 additional movies in the past Nordic Nights season. Stronger donations online than in person. We had some revenue from language classes and miscellaneous.

Expenses included website costs and Zoom subscription, board insurance, scholarships, printing and mailing for the newsletter. Some expenses around licensing movies, INL dues, paying language teachers. Relatively in the black year compared to others. As a non-profit we try to come close to revenue neutral.

Kinmount was negative since we spent on upkeep of the monument and book sales were low.

Deposit program: We offered people who bought a ticket to Thorrablót to leave the money with us for a future Thorrablót ticket.

Youth grant fund is where we park money for scholarships. Snorri West program is our one-every-four years hosting of the young Icelanders to stay with us and tour around Ontario. We deposit money in that category every year so that it builds up until it's ready to spend.

We gave out 4 \$1,000 scholarships in 2021. We usually give a donation to the Icelandic kids camp and the Snorri program, which were cancelled this year.

The net proceeds online auction of September 2020 flowed into the scholarship fund. We need to focus fundraising efforts on Snorri West program.

In June 2021, the board discussed the potential of skipping the transfer of funds to the Snorri West program, but we decided to continue doing it.

The movie fund is well-funded.

Thorrablót: We were able to sell off much of the food we had purchased for the 2020 event. We had revenue in this fiscal year of the venue deposit from the last fiscal year. $\frac{3}{5}$ was allocated to expenses from last year, $\frac{2}{5}$ was allocated to the scholarship fund.

Financial reviewer's report to come.

Peter Norman moves to approve the exception from an auditor, and the assignment of a reviewer. Gwen seconds. Unanimously approved.

Peter Norman moves to approve the report, Bettyjane Wylie seconds. Unanimously approved.

Executive Slate

The Incoming president, Gwen Morgan read out the slate.

Gwen is keen on filling the club historian position as members have information as memories and items in their home and our library. It would be interesting to track down documents and other historical information. Don Gislason has been clipping Lögberg-Heimskringla articles from the last 15 years and especially keeping articles about events and news happening east of Manitoba, that is, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritime provinces. He would love to work with someone to make an index, create a research paper, and so on.

Bettyjane Wylie thanks Don for the work he's done on gathering the clippings, something that would be a project that would take a school term if a student were to do it.

Gwen moves acceptance of the slate, Bettyjane Wylie seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

President's Report

This year has been unusual due to the pandemic, and we made the transition to online in the early days of the pandemic.

- Picnic was online in June 2020, and all events after that were online.
- The Christmas event (with a youth talent show, Lindy, visit from Santa Claus).
- We did not hold a Thorraflót in 2021.
- A new event series called Saga Connections to tell the stories of our families and the fortitude of our ancestors. We recorded them, and re-show them with great interest.
- Nordic Nights went online, and will continue online for the next few months.
- Kathleen and Richard hosted a travel show, which was a great success, Katrine and Elizabeth did a lot of work for the Christmas event, and picnic.
- Language classes were held online, Rachel Young hosted a book club and showed movies, and they hope to have some in-person meetings.
- Alyssa Marshall did a marvellous job reaching out to youth, and had more than usual number of applicants, and we gave out 4 grants this year. Thank you to Alyssa, who is stepping down from the position she's held for 5 years, and we express our gratitude for her hard work. She will remain involved in events as a member of the club.
- We have been pleased Junior Chang is continuing to conduct Icelandic language lessons, but we are looking for more support for him by hiring another teacher.
- We are very pleased with the work by Rachel Norman building the newsletter, and we are appreciative of her continuing, as well as Bettyjane Wylie for the very appealing articles.
- Special thank you to Richard Eriksson for keeping records of the meetings and taking care of social media for keeping in touch with members.
- Thanks to Don for supporting board members with his knowledge of the history of the club and work on the Kinmount book.
- Gail is a wealth of knowledge, and has come out of retirement to re-join the board.
- Peter the treasurer, the web manager, and in so many ways vital to the operation of the club and running the events, posting Fálkinn updates, especially setting up the video conferences and hosting them. Appreciated the work in incorporating a commitment to action towards indigenous awareness in collaboration with Linda Lundstrum.
- Appreciate the time and energy of all the board members and the diverse backgrounds that they bring to the table at each meeting.
- Please see Vice President's Report for details with summary of Club activities.

Peter Norman encouraged those at the meeting to visit the website, where we are hosting the previous season's Saga Connections webinars. We put together a list of the past presidents as well.

Other Business

Richard Eriksson made note of our move to Google Workspace as a way to more efficiently collaborate and has been responsible for the Club's social media. He encouraged members to contact us if they see something of interest to post.

Gwen: I would like there to be a Kinmount committee. Met the sculptor, Gudrun Sigursteinsdottir Girgis and helped clean the statue, met Fran Moscall, will be going up again in two weeks to finish cleaning the statue. It is our responsibility to maintain the monument. Gwen showed photographs of the cleaning. We can power-wash the base, but not the monument itself. There's been a re-organization in the area, Kinmount no longer has a council, now governed by Kawartha Lakes. Three perspectives: Mother and child, man looking back to Iceland, ship.

- Arden Jackson: I nominate Fran Moscall to be head of the Kinmount Committee. Happy to be a part of the Kinmount Committee.
- Hoping to be able to host a picnic in Kinmount in 2022.
- Kara Schuster, a past president, had suggested to Gwen that we update our bylaws, job descriptions, committee list, terms of reference for the digital age, recreating the position of Club Historian.
- Planning to hold "Tea with the President", half an hour meetings with Gwen and small groups.
- Planning for a live Thorrablót next year.
- We are reviving the membership position.
- Gwen is hoping to call on Arden Jackson for advice for Thorrablót and help with historical documents. Acknowledged the amount of work that goes into organizing Thorrablót.

Guest Speaker: Ambassador Hlynur Gudjonsson

Gwen: The ambassador comes to us from the consul general and the trade commissioner for Iceland in New York since 2006. Acted as the manager of Iceland Naturally. Founder of Nordic Innovation House and Nordic City Solutions. Welcome to Canada, looking forward to building stronger connections.

- He has travelled fairly widely in Canada, from West to East, visited most of the largest cities.
- Started with Taste of Iceland first in Toronto, then in other cities in Canada.
- Toronto has been an important market for not only Icelandic sea food but also culture and food and restaurant promotion. Media has always been interested in Iceland.
 - One year had 13 pages of coverage in the Winnipeg newspaper after an event there.
- Long-standing relationship with Gail, and the Icelandic Canadian Chamber of Commerce events. Some focus will shift towards trade, investment with sea food and tourism.
- Canada was the 3rd largest market for Icelandic tourism pre-pandemic, 100,000 passengers to Iceland in 2019. It is a valuable market for Iceland, including seafood and sea technology.
- After the 2008 financial crisis, Icelandic companies and entrepreneurs did not just sit down and give up.
- Canadian investors have shown interest in Icelandic tourism. The largest investor in Sky Lagoon in Kópavogur is Canadian. We will see more interest in the Canadian side, working with the Canadian ambassador in Reykjavik to maintain investment relationships.
- Next year is Nordic Bridges spearheaded by Harbourfront Toronto, which will be a national project for a full year starting February 2022. Events in Manitoba and British Columbia as well as other provinces. Supported by the Nordic Council. Mid-late November 2021 we will see their agenda published.

- We will have an abbreviated Taste of Iceland at the beginning of December. Next year it will be in the first two weeks of November.
- Next year is the 75th year of diplomatic relations between Iceland and Canada, 20th anniversary of the embassy of Iceland in Ottawa. First event will be about the R&D in the Arctic, also an event on gender equality in the Arctic. 3 more presentations after that, one about Iceland-Canada relations, one with a focus on literature past and present. We should know November/December more about that.
- New employee at the embassy, of Norwegian descent. Also Swede. Only need a Finn to make it completely Scandinavian!
- Gail asked how he likes Ottawa: Lots of experience in New York, some experience in Montana, had only been to Canada ever in the months January/February, when it was cold but did not throw him off. This year was the first year in Ottawa with warm weather. Will be buying cross-country and downhill skis, so will be spending time outdoors.
- Don Gislason: What are his qualifications for staff? Political and trade officer, lots of international work for different governments. He has done quite a few projects and is well-connected. We needed someone like him to build the platform for Icelandic companies doing business with Canadian companies. In the year 2000, Iceland exported 20,000 tons of fish to Canada in 2000, down to 2500 tons ten years later. We brought a trade delegation to Iceland, held a trade event at the Drake hotel in 2013 seafood trade convention, saw 50% increase in trade after that, now at 18,000 tons/year of trade. Projects like that trade show helps both Icelandic and Canadian businesses.

Gwen: Thank you for coming on! Exciting to hear about the upcoming plans for Icelandic events in Toronto and Canada. Really looking forward to the Taste of Iceland coming back.

Adjournment

Adjournment was moved by Gwen, seconded by Peter. The meeting adjourned at 3:52 PM.



Secretary



Date of approval