

ICCT Annual General Meeting 2021 – Zoom Online

2 pm October 3, 2021

Vice President (incoming President) Report:

Introduction of the Ambassador:

We would like to welcome Ambassador Hlynur Guðjónsson, from the Embassy of Iceland in Ottawa, who has generously given us some time on his Sunday to speak at our AGM. Ambassador Gudjonsson is Iceland's new Ambassador to Canada. He comes to Ottawa from New York where he was the Consul General and Trade Commissioner at the Consulate of Iceland in New York for the past 15 years which included acting as the managing director of Iceland Naturally. He was co-founder and chairman of the Nordic Innovation House New York and Nordic City Solutions. Overall, Ambassador Guðjónsson has 30 years' experience in international trade and investments. We look forward to working together to build stronger connections during his term here in Canada. Welcome, Ambassador Guðjónsson.

Vice-President's Report

On behalf of the President, I would like to thank everyone for their support and contribution to the ICCT club this past year. We had to move events to an online format and the many worked very hard to make this a smooth and successful transition.

This past year has truly been unusual for all of us as the pandemic, lock-downs and social isolation continued throughout the year. We made the transition to online in the early days of the pandemic (March 2020). Our June picnic was online again. The Christmas event was held online with a Youth Talent Show, visit from Grimla singing an original song about the Yule Lads, songs with Lindy and his children and an appearance from Santa Claus. There was no Thorrablot in 2021.

However, after the AGM last year we initiated a new online seminar series we called Saga Connections, to connect with each other, with our Icelandic roots and to be inspired by the resilience and fortitude of generations past. Saga Connections has been a great success, with six online events last year and was well received across Canada and United States. Nordic Nights continued online and had very large audiences attending online. Both Saga Connections and Nordic Nights will continue online this year and into the Spring of 2022. Most of all, we had some fun times and stayed connected despite the 2020-2021 CoVid pandemic. The following is a summary of activities:

Jolavidburdir was organized and hosted by Katrine Handley-Derry and Elizabeth Handley-Derry. This fun online event opened with a Talent Show, and included a visit by Gryla singing about the Yule Lads, online trivia games, songs with Lindy and his family, and culminated with a visit by Santa Claus. Many thanks to Katrine and Elizabeth.

Travel Show: Kathleen and Richard hosted a most excellent and interesting Travel Show online.

Thorrlablot 2021 was cancelled due to the continuing pandemic lockdown restrictions on social gatherings.

National Day Picnic, June 17, 2021 happened online. The Icelandic Ambassador to Canada, Hlynur Guðjónsson opened our celebrations with a talk on the history of Icelandic independence and national day. The ICCT Club had had a gift basket of Canadian food items sent to him as a present as his term was ending. The Youth Directors, Katrine and Elizabeth, hosted The Great Iceland-Canadian Hotdog Challenge and a KAHOOT Trivia game. Alyssa presented awards to our youth grant winners and then Peter opened Gallery view on Zoom for people to chat.

Nordic Nights:

Nordic Nights continued throughout the year online to great success. Ryerson film students showcased their film projects. ICCT continued its collaboration with the Finnish consulate through Laura McSwiggen. More people attended online than when it was in person at Ryerson. Easy access and being in the comfort of one's home is a bonus for movie watchers. The discussion with Ryerson professor Pierre Tremblay and University of Toronto Anu Muhonen added so much to the depth of appreciation of the Icelandic and Finnish films.

Saga Connections 2020-21

Saga Connections, the ICCT new online seminar series was well received by members and supporters across North America. The seminars were hosted live by Gwen Morgan, tech support by Peter Norman, and Peter prepared YouTube recordings that were viewed online by many and are put up for viewing periodically on the website.

- **Icelander in Kinmount: An Experiment in Settlement** with Don Gilson, Gail Einarson-McCleery and Guy Scott, December 3, 2020
- **Those Highly Creative Icelandic Canadians** with W.D. Valgardson February 3, 2020
- **Rediscovering Kinmount: Part 2 of the Icelandic Settlement Story** with Gundrun and Don Gislason, March 3, 2020
- **Lessons Learned on Bay Street** with Donald K. Johnson in Conversation with Joe Martin, April 7, 2021
- **Our Stories May 5th, 2021** with Naya Davidson-Lindfors, Jasmine Goodman, Katrine Handley-Derry, Richard Erikson and Peter Norman
- **In Conversation with Andri Snaer Magnason** (film maker and author of *On Time and Water*), June 2, 2021

Book Club: Rachel Young hosted the Book Club which continued to meet online and this year has another excellent list of books on offering. The Book Club also includes watching films together. Both activities have made the transition to online quite well. Rachel planned a program and she will provide details for the record.

Language Classes: Junior Chang taught full classes of Icelandic language enthusiasts online, both Beginners and Advanced. This despite the pandemic, working from home, kids in the house and a new baby. Thank you Junior. Junior needs to step away from teaching over the next few months. The ICCT needs to look for a new language instructor.

Youth Grants: Alyssa Marshall yet again did her marvellous magic in reaching out to youth and reading and assessing the applicants for the Youth Grants. There were four grants given this year. The recipients were: **Naya Davidson-Lindfors, Jasmine Goodman, Magna Goodman and Leif Norman. Each received a \$1000.00.**

Alyssa is stepping down from this role and the Board after serving in this position for five years. Thank you so much, Alyssa. Besides the work she does for the Youth Grants, Alyssa is the one who creates these amazing gift baskets for the Thorrablot Door Draw and other special occasions. Alyssa assures us that she will be continuing to support the Club events. Once again, thank you, Alyssa.

Falkinn Newsletter: Rachel Norman took on being the Editor of the Falkinn newsletter this past year and will continue in this role, doing an excellent job and very much appreciated. Many thanks for the hard work in putting together our all-important newsletter. A special thank you also to Betty Jane Wylie who regularly writes appealing articles on a variety of topics, and all others who contribute.

Kinmount Memorial: The Kinmount monument was cleaned by Gudrun Girgis, Fran Moscoll and Gwen & Mark went up to Kinmount and assisted. This involves a gentle acid wash over the stone followed by gentle scrubbing. The statue was noticeably cleaner after the day of cleaning. Regular yearly maintenance of the site and monument is needed.

Thank you to Board and club volunteers.

To the Board members, thank you very much for all your volunteer work over this past year.

A very special thank you to Richard Eriksson for his continuing commitment to being Secretary of the Board and for all the social media posts: so important in this day and age for keeping in touch with Members.

Don Gislason continues to be a powerhouse of ideas and incredible support to myself and all the Board members. Besides being a key member of Saga Connections, Don has put together historical materials for the Club including

organizaing old newspaper clippings. Don (and Gail) as members of such long standing in the Club, are invaluable and your works is greatly appreciated.

Of Peter Norman, Treasurer and Web Manager, enough cannot be said about all the work he does in the background to make this Club the great organization it is. Peter keeps the finances in order and prepares monthly reports, helping to set realistic goals. On a weekly basis, Peter prepares and posts Falkinn Updates, as well as all the webpage advertising for events. For an accountant type he has a very creative streak in him! Thank you very much, Peter. We in the Board are all very appreciative and know how much Peter ensures the smooth running of the club and all its activities.

I wish to thank all the club members and Board who have volunteered and participated ideas, time and energy to keep the Club alive and vibrant during these difficult times. Thank you Board members, and thank you Club members for your support and commitment.

A special thank you to past President Kathleen Murray for her commitment, cheerful enthusiasm and hard work being the President of the ICCT for the past five years. Kathleen became unwell during the pandemic and is not with us today. Our thoughts and prayers are with her.

Incoming new President - Intentions for upcoming year:

- Review of By-laws and updating the governance files for the club.
- The Vice President elect, Gail Einarson McCleery is initiating an update on the job descriptions/ terms of reference for Board positions, as well as Committees.
- Create (or recreate) position of Club Historian and Club History Committee which will collect archival materials relating to Board/Committee/ICCT activities to have an online and hard copy of 'collected wisdom, information and experience' from past years for future reference.
- Membership needs to be revitalized to recover from the effects of social distancing and lock-downs during the pandemic; Don Gislason has had many suggestions on how to do this in terms of phoning past members, making this a manageable goal. The club needs a person dedicated to this task
- Library, having a goal cataloguing of 5- 10 library items per month as a way to move on long time goal of cataloging the library. Kara Schuster who has been housing the library for several years has asked that the library be moved to another location. Hope to move forward with plans to find a place which allows access to the library and preserves books.

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- Find a new teacher for Icelandic language classes. Junior Chang who has been teaching the language classes for many years now is very busy and does not have the time to teach. Junior is continuing on the Board to support the new persons coming in to take on this role.
- **Create a Kinmount Committee** for the annual upkeep of the Kinmount Monument.
- **Tea with the President** - This is new. I would like to invite members to Tea with the President. For the present, as the pandemic continues, this will be online, on Zoom. The intention is to get to know new members of the Board, and for Board members to get to know each other.
- **Events and programming:** I am very proud and grateful to all the Board members who worked very hard over this past year of pandemic to continue programming for the Club. This coming year, we will continue with our enjoyable Club programming including Nordic Nights, Saga Connections, Reading Club. We are hoping and planning for events to go back to live and in-person in 2022 including a live Thorraþlót.

Gwen Sigrid Morgan
October 2021