

Christmas Gathering

Saturday, December 10th

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Dutch Canadian Centre

Nordic Room

RSVP to info@iccedm.org if you are bringing a child 12 or under – we will have gift bags for them.

POTLUCK treats



Activities: Christmas readings, kids' activities, gift bags for kids 12 and under, Christmas songs, book exchange

Presentations: Ármann Ingólfsson: Traditional Icelandic Christmas

Lunch and refreshments:

Coffee, tea, non-alcoholic drinks. Potluck Icelandic Christmas treats.

Please bring a potluck treat to share and a wrapped book for the book exchange.

Volunteers needed:

- **HELPERS** to set up for the event, including setting out chairs and tables and then putting them away afterwards, along with other small tasks to organize the event.
- **SONG LEADERS** for Christmas carols in English and/or Icelandic. We have song sheets in both languages.

If you can spare a few hours on this day, please contact us at info@iccedm.org or reply to Pat.

Mark Your Calendars

Litlu jól

Nordic Room

Saturday, December 10, 2022

1 PM to 4:00 PM

RSVP for children 12 and under
info@iccedm.org

ICCE Board Meetings

7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday
No meetings: July, August, December

Board meeting dates:

January 10, 2022

February 14, 2023

March 14, 2023

Meetings are open to members and held by Zoom videoconference. To attend, email info@iccedm.org and we will send you an invitation.

* Call Gloria to attend by phone. *

2022 AGM

The club's 2022 AGM was held October 29th. The club's activities for the previous year were presented and a new slate of officers was acclaimed to the board. Allison Boychuk is now the club president. Erla Anderson has stepped down from this role and is fulfilling one of the two auditor positions for the club. Barb Beirnes and Donna Crozier have stepped down from the board. The Vice-President position is now vacant, as well as the social events and casino chairs.



Phoning Committee

The Phoning Committee has been ably chaired by Barb Beirnes now for many years. Most members have heard Barb's friendly voice or the voice of one of the other phoners on a call to provide information on an upcoming event. Barb

has recently retired from this role and sends this greeting out to all members:

I am stepping down from the Board as the Phone Co-ordinator. I have been on the Board for 10 years and 18 years as a phoner. I'd like to thank all current and former phoners who over the years contacted our members to inform them of upcoming events. You all did an excellent job. Also a shout out to all current and former Board members who assisted me whenever needed. Thank you to everyone. Barb Beirnes

As nearly all club members now have access to email, it has been decided to dissolve the phoning committee. However, those members without email access will still be contacted by Board members for upcoming events and club activities. **If you would like to be contacted by phone about upcoming events rather than email, even if you do have email, please call our membership coordinator Gloria and we will put you on a list to be called.** The club warmly thanks all the phoners for their valuable contributions to the club over many years.

Canada's Governor General visits Iceland

Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, attended the Arctic Circle Assembly meeting in Reykjavík, Iceland on October 13-15 this fall. Her Excellency was a keynote speaker at the assembly. Her message was one of reinforcing Canada's commitment to and leadership in the Arctic and other priority issues for Canada in its north. Her visit reinforced the strong historical and cultural ties between Canada and Iceland, who are now marking 75 years of formal bilateral relations.



Left: Governor General Mary Simon and Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, President of Iceland
Right: with Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland

In her keynote, the Governor General said: "I have visited Iceland many times to work with Arctic partners on circumpolar issues. It feels comfortably familiar to be here. Whenever I visit, I am always struck by the beauty of Iceland's landscape and the resiliency of its people—not unlike my northern home in Canada."



She noted the primary issues of the many nations sharing the north: the impact of climate change; the revitalization of indigenous cultures; and the shared desire for sustainable development, defence, and preservation.

The Arctic Assembly is held each year in October at Harpa Concert Hall and is managed by a secretariat located in Reykjavík. It is the largest annual international gathering focussed on the Arctic, and was attended by more than 2000 delegates from around the world. The Assembly was founded by Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, President of Iceland from 1996-2016. He is also the current chair. While in Iceland, the Governor General also met with heads of state, community leaders, and with Canadian delegates at the Assembly.

"It was truly inspiring to see Arctic issues—issues that affect the world—being discussed in such inclusive and innovative ways by nations and allies, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous. In my past work, where I was once alone as the sole woman—Indigenous woman—at the table, I saw these last few days a new generation of leaders and advocates that make me hopeful for the future of the Arctic." – Governor General Mary Simon

75 Years of Iceland-Canada diplomatic relations

In 1947 Iceland appointed Thor Thors to serve as Ambassador to Canada. He was quoted as saying then that Iceland had given to Canada “what to us has meant a great sacrifice and at the same time been a source of great pride. Iceland has been giving Canada many good citizens.”



Art illustrating traditional Inuit knowledge at Canadian High Arctic Research Centre

This 75th anniversary was commemorated within the theme of our shared north. The Canadian Embassy in Iceland presented an exhibit called *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit: Art, Architecture, and Traditional Knowledge*. This exhibit showcased artists whose works were integrated in the design of the Canadian High Arctic Research Station in Ikaluktutiak (Cambridge Bay), Nunavut.

Canada and Iceland have also been exchanging books! In keeping with the northern and Arctic focus of the 75th, Iceland has given books to the public libraries of all three

northern Canadian territories (Nunavut, Yukon, and Northwest Territories), with public readings held in the capital of each. Canada gifted books to the Akureyri Public Library last year, and in October this year, hosted an event at the Reykjavík Public Library where 75 Canadian books in both French and English were presented. The most recent event was on November 30, when Hlynur Guðjónsson, Icelandic Ambassador to Canada, was in Yellowknife and presented 28 books to that library. He emphasized the themes shared by the two countries: “... the cultural, scientific, and economic ties and commonalities that link our two countries together, including issues to do with life in northern climates and deep traditions of storytelling between peoples.” According to Lilja Dögg Alfreðsdóttir, Iceland’s minister of culture and business affairs, gifting books has been an honoured tradition in Iceland since the 13th century.

Day of Icelandic Language: 16 November

Íslenska er okkar mál

Á íslensku má alltaf finna svar
og orða stórt og smátt sem er
og var,
og hún á orð sem geyma
gleði og sorg,
um gamalt líf og nýtt í sveit og
borg.

Icelandic is our language

In Icelandic, you can always find
an answer
and to express things big and
small that are and were,
and she has a word that carries
joy and sorrow,
about life old and new, in the
countryside and in the city.

Since 1995, on 16 November each year, the birthday of 19th-century Jónas Hallgrímsson has been celebrated as Icelandic Language Day – *Dagur íslenskrar tungu*.

Anxiety about ancient languages and the heritage they represent are shared by many around the world, and not least by other northern peoples.

First verse, *Íslenska er okkar mál*

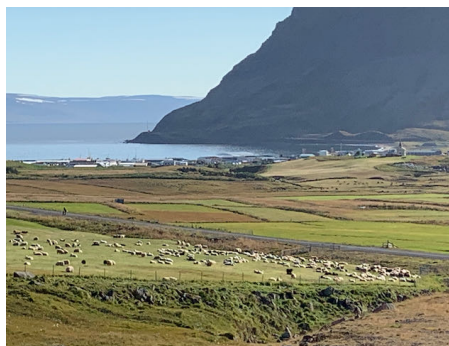
While in Reykjavík for the Arctic Assembly, Governor General Mary Simon told her audience, “Let me repeat in Inuktitut, my mother tongue, because a sign of hope is being able to speak your own language, in Canada and in other Arctic regions.”

While Icelandic is not in imminent danger of disappearing, the electronic world does not support it very well and we are all swimming in an English-speaking social media sea. Aside from the 330,000+ Icelandic speakers in Iceland (about the same population as Saskatoon!), Icelandic is spoken by about 8,000 people in Denmark, 5,000 people in the United States, and an estimated 1,400 people in Canada.

Events are held around the country to celebrate the language and there is even a song for this day, called *Íslenska er okkar mál*. Look for this song online to hear the lovely, and singalongable, melody.

Snorri deadlines for 2023 program

The deadline to apply for both Snorri and Snorri Plus is January 16th, 2023. The Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton helps support participation in both of these programs. Please contact us for further information on this if you plan to apply (info@iccedm.org). More information is also available on the Snorri website, snorri.is.



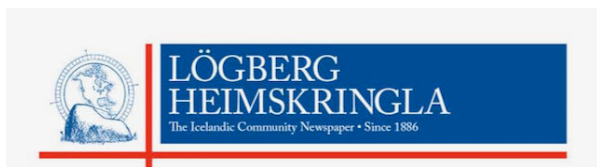
Near Bolungarvík in the Westfjords

Lögberg-Heimskringla: our Icelandic-Canadian newspaper

Lögberg-Heimskringla has been serving the Icelandic-Canadian Community since 1886, not long after the first settlers arrived from Iceland. I recall my Amma receiving the publication for years in Icelandic. While the club used to include L-H subscriptions with memberships, a recent audit by the Alberta Gaming and Lotteries Commission has ruled that ICCE may not purchase these subscriptions for members from casino funds. As a result, as most know, members now need to purchase their own subscriptions.

Like all publications these days, competition from electronic media is fierce. Many advertisers have abandoned print media and moved to online platforms, making budgets still tighter as inflation continues to increase.

We hope that members will continue their subscriptions to this valuable community newspaper. Lögberg-Heimskringla can issue a tax receipt for donations received beyond subscriptions. If you are making end-of-year charitable donations, please consider supporting them. You can donate or renew your subscriptions at lh-inc.ca, by phoning 204-284-5686, or by writing to 835 Marion Street, Winnipeg, MB, R2J 0K6. Let's keep our community connected!



Gleðileg jól!



In countries where darkness prevails in winter, the annual festive season following the solstice is one of the highlights of the year. Yes, we are looking at you, Iceland -- and Canada! But Iceland adds mystery to the magic with the skulking troll family, the Yule Lads – Jólasveinarnir. The sons of Grýla and Leppalúði live in the mountains and descend on human dwellings around Christmas. And see below for more on Grýla's horrific cat, Jólakötturinn, the Christmas Cat, who provides incentive for everyone to get new clothes at Christmas.

The Icelandic Yule Lads



Kjastaur (Sheep-Cote Clod)
Hides in sheep, impaired by his stiff peg-legs



Giljagaur (Gully Gawk)
Hides in gullies, waiting for an opportunity to sneak into the cowshed and steal milk.



Stúfur (Stubby)
Abnormally short. Steals pans to eat the crust left on them



Þvörsuleikr (Spoon-Licker)
Steals Þvödur (a type of a wooden spoon) to lick. Is extremely thin due to malnutrition



Pottasleikr (Pot-Licker)
Steals leftovers from pots



Isleikr (Bowl-Licker)
Hides under beds waiting for someone to put down skur* (a type of bowl), which he then steals



Hurðaskellir (Door-Slammer)
Likes to slam doors, especially during the night



Skyrgámur (Skyr-Gobbler)
A Yule Lad with an affinity for skyr



Bjúgnakrækir (Sausage-Swiper)
Would hide in the rafters and snatch sausages that were being smoked



Gluggagægir (Window-Peeper)
A voyeur who would look through windows in search of things to steal



Lapefur (Doorway-Sniffer)
Has an abnormally large nose and an acute sense of which he uses to locate laufabraud



Ketkrókur (Meat-Hook)
Uses a hook to steal meat



Kertasníkir (Candle-Stealer)
Follows children in order to steal their candles (which in those days was made of tallow and thus edible)



Grýla
The mother of the Yule Lads. Icelandic parents did scare their children from misbehaving by telling them that Grýla could come and abduct them



Leppalúði
The husband of Grýla. Not that evil, but a lazy one.

Jólasveinarnir – the Yule Lads

Each night for the thirteen days before December 24, children leave their shoes by the window so that the 13 Yule Lads (Jólasveinar) have a place to leave small gifts – or potatoes if the children have been naughty. But each Yule Lad brings unique mischief: slamming doors, stealing meat, stealing milk, eating the candles. Yule Lads traditionally wear early Icelandic wool clothing but are now known for the more recognizable red and white Santa Claus suit.

Icelandic Christmas Traditions

The Venerable Vínarterta

More than a few people have been surprised to learn that vínarterta is rarely seen in Iceland! In my family vínarterta was the iconic Icelandic treat, only seen at Christmas. And we didn't call it vínarterta: it was Amma's Icelandic Christmas Cake. While you will have trouble finding it in Iceland anymore, it has become a cultural symbol of the Icelandic diaspora, served on special occasions and telling you without words, "A proud Western Icelanders was here!"



The Christmas Cat

The Christmas Cat or Yule Cat is an ancient legend, of Grýla's giant cat that stalks villages on Christmas Eve and eats people who did not get new clothes for Christmas. It was known from the Middle Ages and is thought to have been meant to encourage people to work hard to earn their new clothes, provided by their employers, at Christmas ... OR ELSE ... the Christmas Cat would get you. You could also avoid the cat by giving someone else new clothes. Even one little sock would keep the cat at bay. A large Christmas Cat is put up in Lækjartorg Square in Reykjavík each year to remind us all, perhaps, to be generous in this season.



Jólabókaflóð

What a wonderful tradition this is! The "Christmas book flood" takes place each December when Iceland's publishers distribute a catalogue with the year's new books. Everyone (or nearly everyone) runs out and buys books for their loved ones for Christmas. Then the recipients curl up with chocolate and their new books for a cosy Christmas Eve.

Gleðileg jól og farsælt komandi ár!

With very warm wishes from the board of Norðurljós, the Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton. We look forward to seeing you at Litlu jól and in the New Year! Blessings upon you and your families.