



NORÐURLJÓS

Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton

SUMMER 2023

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President's Message

Dear Members,

Since our last newsletter ICCE has been busy! After a few years of Covid hiatus, we celebrated a very successful Thorrahlót event back in March, with a full house of nearly 100 people in attendance. The event included great presentations, appearances by not one, but **two** Fjallkonas, an excellent meal that included tasty Icelandic appetizers made by our members, an award to a long time valued club member and most of all, great company! Photos can be found in this newsletter!



A special thank you to all who helped organize the event, our wonderful presenters, our cooks and food providers, and to everyone who came out to celebrate!

In May, I had the pleasure along with a few other ICCE members of attending the first live Icelandic National League of North America convention in three years, in the beautiful setting of Banff, AB. The weekend had perfect weather with a chance to mingle and celebrate our Icelandic heritage, reconnect with old friends and meet new friends and of course eat lots of food! Stay tuned for more on the convention in this newsletter.

Our next event will be a celebration of Icelandic Independence Day on Saturday June 17th. ICCE will not be holding an Edmonton event, but I encourage you to invite your family and friends and take a day trip to historic Markerville the heart of Icelandic settlement in Alberta.

The 2023 Fjallkona will be crowned at the annual picnic, along with other fun activities. More info can be found in this newsletter. The Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary will be this years host. Edmonton hosted in 2022.

Sæl og blessuð! - **Allison Boychuk**

Þorrablot 2023

Highlights from our March 18 event

Alberta Fjallkonas



Allison Boychuk (right) thanked the Alberta Fjallkonas for their service with bouquets of flowers. We were honoured with the presence of not one, but two, Fjallkonas! On the left, d'Arcy Gamble from Markerville was Alberta Fjallkona in 2021, unfortunately a year in which most traditional Fjallkona activities could not take place. ICCE's Donna Crozier (middle) was Alberta Fjallkona in 2022. Traditionally, Alberta's three Icelandic clubs (Leif Eiriksson in Calgary, Historic Markerville, and the Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton) take turns appointing a Fjallkona each year.

The Fjallkona – Lady of the Mountains – is a ceremonial role. She is the personification of Iceland, and is an ambassador for Icelandic culture and heritage in her region. The first Canadian Fjallkona was crowned in 1924 in Winnipeg. The 2023 Alberta Fjallkona will be crowned at the Iceland Independence Day celebration in Markerville on June 17th, 2023.



Lifetime Membership Award

Reverend Olafur Donald Olsen and Catherine Elizabeth Olsen were presented with a Lifetime Membership by Allison Boychuk, club president. Congratulations and thank you for your many years of involvement with the club!



The Olsen family came out en masse to see Don and Beth receive their award. Many members of the family have been board members and active volunteers for the club and two of Don's grandchildren were Snorri participants.



Megan Veldhuis gave an entertaining presentation about her experience as a Snorri in the summer of 2022. Natalie Guttormsson (shown here with ICCE secretary/newsletter editor Pat Dunn), told us about her work and life's passion writing and podcasting about the huldafolk and other mysterious beings from folklore and mythology.



Thank you to the organizers, presenters, food preparers, and everyone else who came out and helped the 2023 Thorraþlót to be a success. It takes many hands and hearts to organize these events and it is greatly appreciated.

Icelandic National Day Celebration and Picnic Historic Markerville Saturday, June 17, 2023



Afternoon events:

- ⇒ Walking Tours of hamlet and Buttermaker House
- ⇒ New Exhibit in Creamery Museum
- ⇒ Activities for children in Creamery Courtyard
- ⇒ Cream can ride
- ⇒ Coffee and ice cream



3:00 p.m.

Program and Crowning of the Fjallkona at Fensala Hall

4:30 p.m.

Pot Luck Supper:

- ⇒ Guests to bring a meat dish, salad or dessert; roast turkey and ham will be provided.

2023 Heritage Festival

Edmonton's annual Heritage Festival (August 5th through 7th, 2023) will see a major change this year: Hawrelak Park is undergoing a two-year renovation and the festival has been moved to the Edmonton Exhibition Lands and Borden Park.

The Scandinavian clubs that come together and host the Scandinavian Pavilion are exploring some new exhibit ideas. They are also looking for volunteers to help welcome visitors to our Scandinavian experience. If you would like to be part of this exciting festival, please contact volunteer coordinator Leanne Boraas for more information (Lboraas@shaw.ca).

Allison Boychuk and Lorraine Ilnicki represent ICCE on the Heritage Festival committee.

2023 Snorri Program

ICCE is once again sponsoring Snorri participants to go to Iceland on what is sure to be the trip of a lifetime. This year, ICCE will sponsor Georgia Hladysh from Sherwood Park and Emma Kaliel from Edmonton. They go to Iceland June 11 and return home on July 15.

ICCE received a Facebook shout-out from The Snorri Programs for the generosity of our club's support for Snorris over many years. The program is hugely valuable for creating and strengthening the connections between Iceland and Canada and ICCE is proud and delighted to be able to help people take part. We also say, *Takk fyrir!* to The Snorri Programs for making this program happen and creating such wonderful experiences for participants.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Both ICCE and the Canada-Iceland Foundation offer support for students. Check these opportunities out if you are a post-secondary student or if you know one.

ICCE Bursaries – deadline August 1st

Once again, ICCE will be offering bursaries this year! Please fill out the application form from the website (<https://iccedm.org/319/>) and send it to Tanya Hofforth, along with all the supporting documents, **by August 1st**. If you have any questions, please contact Tanya at info@iccedm.org.

Canada-Iceland Foundation - September 30.

Applicants fill out a general application to be considered for any of a number of scholarships. Go to: CanadalcelandFoundation.ca for more information.

Mark Your Calendars

Iceland Independence Day

Markerville

Saturday, June 17, 2023

Edmonton Heritage Festival

August 5th – 7th, 2023

Edmonton Exhibition Lands
and Borden Park

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

Board meeting dates:

June 13, 2023

September 12, 2023

October 10th, 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. *

Icelandic National League of North America

2023 National Convention, May 11-13 2023

The Icelandic National League of North America (INLNA) was founded in 1919 in Winnipeg and held its first convention that year. Thus, this year's convention was its 104th! It was held at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity and hosted by the Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary.

ICCE sponsored one former Snorri participant, Jennifer Graham, to attend the convention. Jennifer was able to meet up with other Snorri alumni for events specially organized for them. Edmonton Snorri alumnus Sydney Veldhuis also attended.

The convention provided opportunities to connect with Icelandic culture and Icelanders, to make new connections and even to find relatives! The convention theme was the power of the arts to connect us to heritage. Following are accounts from several club members of their experience at the convention.



Allison Boychuk, ICCE President

There were lots of interesting guest speakers to listen to as well as updates from the Snorri program and the INLNA AGM.

A few of the speakers were:

Dr. Birna Bjarnadóttir, former Chair, University of Iceland, spoke to us over lunch on Friday and shared her thoughts on the creative power of literature in the North American Icelandic heritage. [Birna Bjarnadóttir - vigdís.hi.is](https://birna.bjarnadottir.vigdís.hi.is)

Asa Helga Hjörleifsdóttir, Icelandic writer and director talked about the challenges in funding an Icelandic film with collaboration with other countries. Asa shared her experiences as director of the film, "A Letter from Helga". It was an interesting dialogue with others in the session that had seen the film, to listen to the process from the beginning to the final product for the audience. Asa is also a teacher and the founding member of the film department at the

Iceland University of the Arts. [Ása Helga Hjörleifsdóttir - IMDb](#)

Dr. Christopher Croker spoke about the first English translation of the Sunshine Children's letters. Based in Winnipeg, this scholar specializes in medieval and modern Icelandic literature and works as an Icelandic translator. He has worked at the University of Iceland, Manitoba and Winnipeg. He shared a sample of his work, "The Sunshine Letters".

I encourage you to check out the link to read for yourself:

[Letters from the North American-Icelandic Children's Newspaper Sólskin – Simple Book Publishing \(openedmb.ca\)](#)

Overall the weekend was very enjoyable. Capping it off with the Gala Dinner, where many photographs were snapped to capture memories. Icelandic Canadian singer, Lindy Vopnfjörð, performed a concert, to close out

the evening. His music can be found on Apple Music and other streaming services. We enjoyed it so much that we listened to more on the drive back to Edmonton.

[LINDY VOPNFJÖRÐ \(lindymusic.com\)](https://lindymusic.com)

In 2024 the convention will be virtual but in 2025 the convention will take place in Gimli, Manitoba (New Iceland)! --- Allison

Donna Crozier (past president and 2022 Fjallkona)

My excitement was great as I drove towards the magnificent Rocky Mountains and the community of Banff, nestled amongst the mountains. The sun shone, snow glistened, and the scenery could not have been more breathtaking. The INLNA convention was held at Banff Centre for the Arts, a destination for artists, writers, and anyone who enjoys the arts of any kind.

The lineup of speakers included Icelandic dignitaries, storytellers, poets, artists, genealogists, and members of the Markerville Club. They shared the history of the Markerville Club; the acquisition of the various buildings and their recent ambitious restoration of the Buttermaker House. This gem is finished and will offer a unique opportunity for tourists to visit and for artists to come, stay, and create. There was a good selection of vendors to visit during the breaks with offerings of books, t-shirts, dolls, and information.

The well attended memoir writing workshop, hosted by Sverrir Sigurdsson and Veronica Li, was not only interesting, but it was also inspirational. They talked about the steps in

writing a memoir and how to make it interesting, so the reader is left wanting more. They shared snippets of their lives travelling the globe as well as life in Iceland. The genealogy session, hosted by Icelandic Roots, allowed audience members free access to their own personal genealogy and explored how almost everyone in Iceland is related in some form. Other sessions included a poet, a professor of political science, and visual artists. It was wonderful to hear from the various Snorri participants and how the experience has changed their lives and their appreciation for and ties to Iceland.



ICCE delegates at convention: from left, Sydney Veldhuis, Donna Crozier, Lorraine Ilnicki, Allison Boychuk, Barb Beirnes, Jennifer Graham

My most important takeaway was how significant these conventions are to renew and strengthen the ties between Iceland North Americans of Icelandic descent, allowing us to reflect and honor the courageous people who chose

to venture here to seek a better life for themselves and their descendants.

‘Like the branches of a tree, we all grow in different directions. Yet our roots remain as one.’ H. Ruston

--- Donna

Barb Beirnes (past phoning committee chair and longtime club member)

I attended the 2023 INL of NA Convention in Banff which was held May 11 – 14, 2023. I attended many sessions as well as attending the Annual General Meeting which was held Saturday May 13th. The Convention was a

success and I would like to congratulate the Leif Eiriksson Club of Calgary for hosting the convention. The setting in Banff was gorgeous with the mountains surrounding us at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

A surprise encounter with two guests at my table for breakfast one morning proved to be quite a learning experience. The two ladies, Alfreda Erickson Duffy from Calgary, and her sister Alice Erickson Atkinson from Lundar, Manitoba, turned out to be 5th cousins. Another lady, Ellen Sigfusson Gleich turned out to be a 6th cousin according to my nephew, Gregory McNeil from Winnipeg, Manitoba. We are related to Sunna Furstenau, Icelandic Roots, as well as Cathy Josephson.

I am also planning an Icelandic trip in July, 2023 with my two nephews and their wives. I will be meeting more relatives as there are two celebrations being held. This trip is to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of my great-great grandfather's birth.

His name is Jóhannes Frímánn Runólfsson who was born March 27, 1823 in Gottorp, Þverárhreppur, V-Húnavatnssýsla. He died March 23, 1917 in Gimli, Manitoba.

I am so excited to go to Iceland to meet more cousins. I thoroughly enjoyed the INL of NA Convention in Banff. It was so nice to see friends again as well as finding new cousins.

---- Barb



Barb's newfound cousins: from the left: Sunna Furstenau, Barb Beirnes, Alfreda Erickson Duffy, Alice Erickson Atkinson, Cathy Josephson. Missing is Ellen Sigfusson Gleich.

Lorraine Ilnicki: Longtime board member and Heritage Festival coordinator for ICCE

It was an honor to be able to attend this Convention in Banff. I found the persons receiving Honorary Lifetime Awards this year were very amazing people who gave many years of their lives supporting their various clubs.

Bev Arason-Gaudet from our club has been involved with the ICCE for over 20 years, holding many positions in our Club, (President, Past President, Treasurer and Auditor) and for many years holding executive positions on the INL of NA board. In 2019, she was recognized by the President of Iceland, when she was awarded the Knight's cross of the Order of the Falcon at a ceremony at the Consulate General of Iceland in Winnipeg. What dedication she has!

It always amazes me the number of couples who are also involved with their clubs, Lorie, and Don Dobson, from the LEIC Club of Calgary, Alfred, and d'Arcy Gamble, from Stephan G. Stephansson Club of Markerville.

Moorea Gray also of the LEIC club of Calgary has also been involved helping her club in many ways. Emilia Jonsdottir Anderson of IHMC of Albertville, MN, has also helped her club.



Donna Crozier, former president of ICCE, presents Bev Arason-Gaudet, also a former president of ICCE among other positions, with her lifetime membership award from INLNA.

I was very impressed with the winner of the Joan Inga Eyolfson Award Recipient. This award was established in 2017 to recognize individuals who have been outstanding in promotion of Icelandic Culture by way of Literature, Arts, or media. It was established in honor of Joan Inga Eyolfson, an adventurer, journalist, and weaver of stories, possessed of strong ethics and a deep faith. Betty Jane Wylie, a member of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Ontario, received this award. She is a distinguished non-fiction author, playwright, who has published over 35 books and plays. At 92 she is still writing articles, a blog, and working on a new book.

She has published books on a wide range of topics and genres, including self-help, biography, finance, inspiration, diaries, film and screenplays, libretti for operas and musicals, poetry, children's books and cookbooks.



Betty Jane Wylie

The last award issued was the Lawrence S. G. Johnson Lifetime Achievement Recipient Award. This award was initiated in 2003 to be bestowed upon a recipient for significant and

diverse contributions not only to the Icelandic Community but also to the community at large. Gwen Mann, a member of the Leif Eiriksson Club of Calgary received this award at the 2023 INL of NA convention. Wanting to learn more about her Icelandic Heritage she joined the LEICC in 1994. She has held many positions on the LEICC club, and has also been involved in many community activities.

Many great members of INL of NA were honored this year. We are so lucky to have these great people involved in our Icelandic Clubs. Great job.

---- Lorraine

Historic Markerville



The 2023 INLNA Convention finished up with a bus tour to Markerville. In 2017 the Stephan G. Stephansson Society purchased the Buttermaker's House to add to the historic structures it manages in Markerville. Since then restoration has taken place and a grand opening and celebration is being tentatively set for September 15, 2023. The plan is to have the Buttermaker's House as an Artist's Residence, available to artists looking for a place to reconnect with themselves, nature, and a vibrant small-town community. An exciting future for this little house, and to continue supporting the arts in this community that was once the home of a great artist, Stephan G. Stephansson.

Volunteer Needed: Casino Chairperson

ICCE has been given a casino slot to take place in April, May or June, 2024. We are looking for a volunteer who can coordinate our participation in the casino.

This is a short-term volunteer position that makes a hugely valuable contribution to the club. Funds earned by volunteering at casinos enable us to deliver our main cultural programs. If you are interested or would like to find out more, please email us at info@iccedm.org. Thank you!

More highlights from the INLNA Convention

INLNA Honorary Lifetime Membership Award for Beverly Arason-Gaudet

ICCE submitted a nomination for a Lifetime INLNA Membership for Beverly Arason-Gaudet. Beverly has been involved with the Icelandic community all her life. She has served in many positions with both ICCE and INLNA. She is currently on the INLNA and Lögberg-Heimskringla boards. Beverly follows in the footsteps of her parents, Beulah and Walter Arason, who also volunteered with the club and where her father had also served as president. In 2019 she was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon by the President of Iceland. Her energy and skills exemplify the volunteer spirit that allows the Icelandic community to continue to offer programs and events that encourage connections between Canada and Iceland. Congratulations Beverly and thank you for your many contributions!



Snorri Reunion

Two Snorri alumni who had been supported by ICCE attended the convention and opportunities were provided for the group to come together.

ICCE is immensely proud of the support it has been able to give the Snorri and Snorri Plus programs over the years through its fundraising efforts. Our members strongly believe in maintaining and strengthening ties with Iceland.

Next year (2024) the convention will be virtual, making it possible for all to participate. The following year, 2025, will mark the 150th anniversary of Icelandic settlement in North America. The 2025 convention will be held in Gimli.

Ambassador Hlynur Guðjonsson and Mark Petursson

