



NORÐURLJÓS

Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton

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President's Report

Dear Members,



Spring has sprung! The Icelandic Canadian Cultural Club of Edmonton has some exciting events coming up soon and we hope you will join us!

In March we enjoyed good food, great company at our annual Thorrablot dinner.

We heard from our newest Snorri alumni and their adventures in Iceland, listened to traditional Icelandic songs and learned about the history of Thorrablot from guest speaker, Professor Natalie Van Deusen. Please check out the photos in this newsletter!

A special thank you to our members, Armann and Erla for hosting Kaffi Rabb – Online Icelandic lessons. Some of us are better than others at learning different languages but in any case, this is an ongoing event and wonderful opportunity to celebrate our culture!

The Icelandic Canadian Cultural Club of Edmonton's mandate is to maintain connections between Iceland and Canada. Our club exists for our members and those with an interest in Icelandic culture and roots. We need support from our members to be able to carry on our traditions.

We have two important events coming up that are crucial for the maintenance and development of our club. **Our fundraising casino will take place on May 28 – 29, 2024 at the Yellowhead Pure Casino, 12464 153 St.** We still need volunteers to help us in this event.

Mark Your Calendars!

ICCE 2024 Casino

Tuesday and Wednesday
May 28 and 29th
Pure Casino Yellowhead
12464 - 153 St NW

ICCE Future Planning

Sunday, June 2
Edmonton Public Library
Capilano
9915 - 67 St

Markerville Opening Day

Saturday, May 18th
Pancake breakfast!

Icelandic Independence Day celebrations Markerville

Saturday, June 15th

Board Meetings

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

2024 Board meetings

June 11
September 17
October 8
November 12

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. *

The casino is by far our greatest revenue source, giving us the wherewithal to sponsor Snorri and Snorri Plus participants, to fund bursaries, and support our cultural activities. Please consider spending a few hours to help with a shift at the casino. Further information in this newsletter includes details on signing up for a shift. As the saying goes, "it takes a village" and all we need is you!

Future and Sustainability of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton – please join us on Sunday June 2, 2024 from 12-3pm at the Edmonton Public Library Capilano location (9915 – 67 Street) for strategic planning session to discuss our club's future.

We want to make sure that the Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton is meeting the expectations of its members and will be functional for many years to come over many generations. Young people are the key to the future. What is the best we can be? Please come and tell us!

The session will be led by an expert facilitator in the field, Angela Anderson.

There is no cost to attend. Just bring yourself, your ideas and a friend or two if you can!

Please consider giving some of your time to these club initiatives. Both are valuable and crucial in different ways to the future of the club.

Icelandic National Day is celebration is Saturday June 15, 2024 in Markerville, AB. We will not be holding a celebration in Edmonton this year but encourage everyone to attend the event at Markerville to embrace your inner Icelandic!

*Many thanks! Take care and hope to see
you out at our events to celebrate what ties
us together – our Icelandic roots!*

—Allison

Let's talk about the future!

The Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton has been getting back in gear post-pandemic but we would like to further increase our engagement levels. We would like a boost from you, our members, to keep our club alive and well! We will be holding a planning session with a professional facilitator to guide us.

Please tell us what you think. Is ICCE relevant to you? Can it be more relevant? What would you like to see? What is our potential?

Let's brainstorm some ideas. The ICCE board invites you to our planning session on Sunday, June 2, 2024 from 12 to 3 pm at Edmonton Public Library Capilano 9915 – 67 Street. A facilitator will guide us as we envision ICCE's future. We are especially keen to hear from our younger and new members!

Coffee and treats will be on hand.



Into what future are we sailing our boat?

Casino Sign-Up Information

We still have a few openings to volunteer at our casino on Tuesday, May 28 and Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at PURE CASINO YELLOWHEAD, 12464 153 Street NW, Edmonton, AB.

To sign up: use the link on our Facebook page, or go to <https://signup.com/go/yAHmWkD>.

INLNA Annual Convention

— Gloria Krenbrenk

The Icelandic National League of North America (INLNA) held its annual convention online on Saturday, May 4, 2024. Thorvaldur Thordarson, Professor in Volcanology and Petrology, University of Iceland, gave a most interesting and informative presentation on the volcanic activity presently going on in the Reykjanes Peninsula. Ashley Torvaldson, outgoing president, conducted the annual general meeting. ICCE's own Erla Anderson was elected to serve on the INLNA Board as a Director at Large.

Among other achievements, this past year the INLNA provided the first \$3,000 annual grant to the Buttermaker's House Artist in Residence Program in Markerville.

Next year will mark the 150th anniversary of the founding of New Iceland in North America and many communities are planning celebrations. The INLNA annual convention in May 2025 will take place in Gimli in person and will also celebrate this landmark year. All are invited.



Learning ICELANDIC with Kaffi Rabb

Kaffi Rabb is still taking place into June. We have had a number of great sessions over the winter introducing participants to Icelandic language and culture. The classes were given by club members Erla Anderson and Armann Ingolfsson. Armann is Icelandic and it is really helpful and beneficial to have an authentic Icelandic speaker helping us learn.

The class focussed on teaching beginner conversation skills and Icelandic culture, including songs and poetry (and even “Dad jokes” - *pabbi brandari*), rather than grammatical structure, and accommodated different levels of learners.

The class used an online language resource as well as songs and poems.

We are very grateful to Erla and Armann for their expertise and for the work they did to put this class together! The Icelandic language is daunting but beautiful and we all enjoyed this excellent introduction to it.

If this opportunity interests you, you can get on the list to be kept informed by emailing: iccekaffirabb@gmail.com.



Kaffi rabb = coffee chat



Íslendingamót Icelandic Independence Day Celebration SATURDAY, June 15, 2024 Markerville

SPECIAL EVENTS will include the crowning of the 2024 Fjallkona, Kathleen Raines from the Markerville Club. The Ulfrændi Vikings, formerly the Sons of Fenrir, will be back again.

GUESTS ARE ASKED to bring a meat, salad or dessert dish for the potluck supper. Roast turkey and ham will be provided by the Calgary and Edmonton Clubs. **The event is rain or shine.**

EVENT SCHEDULE:

12:30 P.M. Family Program in the Park. If it rains, activities will move to Fensala Hall.

3:00 P:M PROGRAM: Crowning of the Fjallkona

Potluck supper will follow the program.



SNORRI WEST



Snorri West coming to Edmonton in June

Contributed by Jodine Chase

The Snorri West youth cultural program will bring three young Icelanders here to the Edmonton region June 20-25 to follow the trails of their ancestors who emigrated from Iceland to North America. Hildur (Hilla) Sigurbergisdóttir, Mars Baldurs and Unnar Ingi Sæmundarson will arrive earlier in June in Calgary, and will be hosted by the Markerville club before heading north to Edmonton. You can learn more about the three and check for ancestral ties [here in this Icelandic Roots article](#). We last hosted Snorri West in 2017, and many of us have fond memories of the activities and excursions spearheaded by Donna Crozier.

This time, Jodine Chase and Jennifer Graham are the local organizers. Plans are shaping up for a Snorri alumni gathering, exploring one of Edmonton's many summer festivals, and urban river valley hiking, before the trio heads by Via Rail across the prairie to Wynyard. We are working towards May 20 for a draft itinerary, and to have billets and key driving responsibilities in place. We are looking for volunteers. If you are interested in billeting, driving, or accompanying the Snorri West folks on their excursions, or if you would like to share past hosting successes and ideas about activities for the Snorri West folk, please reach out to Jodine via email at chase.jodinechase@gmail.com. If you are a Snorri Alumnus, please email Jennifer at jenngrhm@gmail.com to be involved in planning for the alumni gathering.



Past Snorris at þorrablót 2024:

From left:

*Georgia Hladys, Snorri
2023*

*Maddie Garneau -
Snorri 2023 and 2024
Snorri Intern*

Emma Kaliei, Snorri

75th Anniversary of NATO: Iceland and NATO

On April 4, 1949, less than four years after the end of World War II, and five years after achieving its own independence, the young nation of Iceland was among the 12 nations from Europe and North America that signed the Washington Treaty. It is this treaty that gave birth to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - NATO. This year, 2024, marks the 75th anniversary of this historic alliance.

Controversy on joining NATO

The question of joining NATO divided Icelanders. Critics of joining NATO included Icelandic nationalists, who feared that the presence of foreign troops would dilute Icelandic language and culture; and Icelandic Socialists who wanted Iceland to develop a closer relationship with the Soviet Union rather than with the Western Allies.

Iceland was the only Ally to have a riot in its capital city on the day that its parliament voted to join NATO.

On 30 March 1949, opponents organised a rally and marched to the main square in front of the Althingi building (Iceland's Parliament) only to be met by NATO supporters. The riot lasted for several hours, with rocks being thrown at Althingi's windows, and continuing even after the vote had concluded.

The pandemonium was eventually reined in by the Reykjavík police, who had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd. Tear gas would not be used again until 2009, during protests about the financial crisis.

Iceland and NATO

Iceland has a unique relationship to NATO. It is a small nation with no standing armed forces, in a



highly strategic location. It contributes to NATO operations financially and with civilian personnel.

Iceland's security policy relies on its alliance with NATO and the 1951 Bilateral Defence Agreement with the United States of America. The Bilateral Defence Agreement was negotiated in 1951, when Iceland and the United States of America made arrangements regarding the defence of Iceland and for the use of facilities in Iceland to that end. The US operated a naval air station at Keflavik from 1951 and although it closed its base in 2006 the agreement remains in force.

Iceland operates an Air Defence and Surveillance system (IADS) which is part of the NATO integrated Air Defence System, composed of four radar sites and centrally controlled Air Command and Control System. IADS supports NATO air surveillance missions in Iceland in order to maintain air sovereignty.

Iceland also stresses the important role of NATO in implementing Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, and the High North; and supports participation by all European countries that share the values of the Alliance and fulfil its conditions for membership.

NATO's goals of peace, prosperity, and security are as important as ever to our increasingly interconnected world. Iceland's contributions and strategic position make it a valued and valuable member of the alliance.

In his talk commemorating NATO's 75th anniversary on April 4, 2024, Secretary General of NATO Jens Stoltenberg reminded his audience: "Because together we represent 50 percent of the world's economic might and 50

percent of the world's military might, so as long as we stand together, no one can threaten us; we are safe."

Web sources:

government.is/diplomatic-missions

nato.usmission.gov

[NATO.int](https://nato.int) - NATO declassified

www.nato.int/...162083



Photo from BBC: Women's History Archive

The Day Iceland Stood Still – Recommended Viewing

When almost all the women of Iceland walked off the job and out of their homes one fall morning in 1975 refusing to work, cook, or take care of the children, they brought their country to its knees and catapulted the island nation to its status as one of the best places in the world today to be a woman. (Film trailer)

This excellent documentary played at Metro Cinema in Edmonton on Sunday, May 12. Attendees at the most recent INL convention held in Edmonton will remember producer Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdóttir was one of the speakers from Iceland.

I've been waiting for the film to come out and here it is — an informative and entertaining documentary. Interviews with the women involved, interspersed with photos of them as young organizers, dramatic landscape shots of Iceland, and delightful animation. We move through the process of what life was like for women in the 60's, through the beginnings of the women's movement in Iceland, the idea and organization of "Women's Day Off", to the significant but not yet entirely complete improvement in the status of women in Iceland. Definitely see it if you have the chance. — *Contributed by Gloria Krenbrenk*

THE YÚKONFARAR

In 2005, Nelson Gerrard researched and created an exhibit to tell the story of the Yúkonfarar. The following article is based on the talk he gave to introduce the exhibit and the story. The exhibit is still in the keeping of ICCE. The text of the full talk is available on the ICCE website.

In August of 1896, George Washington Carmack, together with friends Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, struck gold on Bonanza Creek in the Yukon, launching the greatest “gold rush” of all time. Like wildfire, word spread across North America and around the world, galvanizing tens of thousands of adventurers into action. This historic event became known as the Klondike Gold Rush.

Over 50 Icelanders are known to have joined the gold seekers. The saga of these adventurers — known to their countrymen as ‘Yúkonfarar’ - the Yukon Farers — is an all but forgotten chapter in our history. Their letters home and poems tell a poignant tale, in Icelandic, of extreme hardship and sheer dogged determination. Nelson gathered these writings to put together a picture of their experience.

The vast majority of gold seekers travelled to Dawson by the Alaska route, taking ship to Skagway and walking inland over Chilkoot Pass. Among the gold seekers in Canada’s Yukon who travelled to Dawson by the Alaska route were no fewer than 40 Icelanders from as far afield as Manitoba, North Dakota, Utah, Washington State, and Iceland itself. At the same time, boosters in Canada sought to promote an “all-Canadian route” starting from Edmonton. Another 12 Icelanders set out for the goldfields from Edmonton on the “All-Canadian” route. The All-Canadian route was touted by promoters hoping to see Edmonton develop as a supply depot. Both routes were



“Chilkoot Steps” - By Cantwell, George G. — Public Domain, commons.wikimedia.org

arduous but promotion of the all-Canadian route was downright deceptive, ignoring the appalling reality of this journey of over 3000 kms through wilderness to Dawson City. Nearly 2000 men left for the goldfields from Edmonton with perhaps 160 eventually reaching Dawson City. Most of the men who did not arrive simply gave up and either returned home or settled in other communities, especially the Peace country, along the way. About 35 died along the way, by scurvy or by drowning.

Sölvi Sölvason from Winnipeg travelled by the Alaska route to Dawson City. He gives a glimpse of daily life in one of his letters: *“It is almost impossible for a person who has not experienced this, to comprehend how hard it is to endure such conditions. In the evening, a man arrives tired, cold, and wet, with his little tent, first setting it up and then gathering some firewood so it is possible to heat a little food. He ... awakens to a howling blizzard, the wind having created snow drifts inside the tent, right over his bed.”*

His letters describe the other people he met, gave glimpses of life in Dawson City, and included updates on his countrymen and their activities.

One Yúkonfarar who chose the all-Canadian route was Sigurður Jón Jóhannesson of Winnipeg. He travelled in a group of 12 Icelanders who set off via the Athabasca River. His poem, *Klondike*, compares their journey to the quests of the Vikings:

*“Now westward in their vanguard fare
Vikings as in bygone days,
To visit vengeance on Cliff Dwellers,
And vanquish Giants of the Frost,
Those who from the world’s beginning
Have guarded gold and untold wealth
Treasure of the ages hidden
By powerful magic of the gods.*

(Translated by Nelson Gerrard)

Gold is a dangerous game.

So wrote Sigurður in the last line of another of his poems (*Gullið er sem viðsjalt tafi*).



There is no information on whether he and his companions got to the goldfields or what they did next in their lives.

Nelson quotes several poems by different Yúkonfarar, noting the Viking references in them and salutes their courage in saying: “In joining the great Klondike adventure, they saw themselves as modern heirs to a proud Viking heritage with heroic mythological overtones, and in this context they were inspired by heroic values — courage, daring, and adventure.”

Fréttir: Iceland in the News

2024 Presidential Election

Presidential elections are due to be held in Iceland on 1 June 2024. Incumbent president Guðni Th. Jóhannesson has announced he will not be seeking a third term. The previous elections on 27 June 2020 saw him re-elected for a second four-year term with 92% of the vote.

The President of Iceland is directly elected by first-past-the-post voting with a simple plurality of votes needed to win. Candidates must be Icelandic citizens and at least 35 years of age on election day. Candidates needed to collect more than 1,500 voter signatures to secure ballot access.

RÚV English has a quiz you can take to see where your opinions on issues match those of the 12 candidates. Search online for The 2024 Election Quiz - RÚV.is.



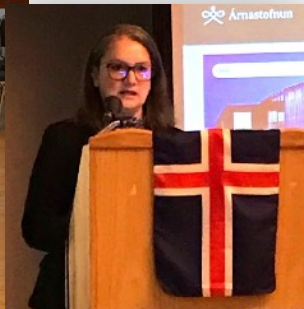
Þorrablót 2024

The club held its annual Þorrablót event at the Norwood Legion on March 9, 2024. Highlights of the evening were songs from Helgi Thorvaldson, presentations from Snorri participants on their experiences, and a presentation from Dr. Natalie Van Deusen on the origins of Þorrablót and her recent one-year sabbatical in Iceland. Here are a few photos from the event!



*Two of the club's lifetime members:
Left: Svala Arnason Dunn
Right: June Parker*

*Dr. Natalie Van Deusen, Professor,
Faculty of Arts,
Modern Languages
and Cultural
Studies*



*Allison Boychuk,
President, ICCE*

Helgi Gunnar Thorvaldson sang in Icelandic for us all, including the iconic and beautiful folk song, Vör í Vaglaskógi. This is an old song that was made famous by the modern rock group Kaleo.

