



NORÐURLJÓS

Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton

Directors

President: Allison Boychuk
 Vice President: vacant
 Secretary: Pat Dunn
 Treasurer: Kaitlyn Anderson
 Past President: Erla Anderson

Committee Chairs

SHSE: Lorraine Ilnicki
 Snorri & Bursaries: Tanya Hofforth
 Directors at Large: Marty Anderson, Marla Hladys
 Newsletter co-editors: Pat Dunn and Bridjet Radstaak
 Keeping in Touch: Joedy Englesby
 780-905-3000
 Social media co-chairs: Sydney Veldhuis, Georgia Hladys
 Social events committee lead: vacant

Membership: Gloria Krenbrenk
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Auditors

Dennis Magnuson
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Contacts

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Website: <https://iccedm.org>

Facebook: Look for the club by name

President's Report

Greetings! Hope everyone is staying warm and safe. We are almost through another winter! Here are some Icelandic winter facts. According to the old Icelandic calendar, the winter month of Thorri has passed and we are entering the next to last winter month, of Goa. The first day of summer – Sumerdagurinn Fyrsti - will be on April 24th this year, and is a day of a celebration and a holiday for Icelanders!

Seasonal get togethers are great highlights for our club. We had a very successful Litlu Jól Christmas party with a great turnout and fun event comparing different vinartertas, sampling a variety of potluck desserts, and participating in a book swap.

The next winter celebration is coming up soon. We are preparing for our annual Thorrablót (Þorablot). Please mark your calendar and plan on attending on Saturday March 15th at the Central Lions Senior Recreation Centre. Ticket information is in this newsletter.

This year promises many interesting and exciting events celebrating our Icelandic heritage and traditions. If you are inclined to travel to Manitoba, the INLNA convention will take place from May 1-4, 2025 in Gimli. Planning is underway to celebrate New Iceland 150, also in Gimli – the 150 th anniversary of New Iceland, from August 1-4, 2025 at Islendingadagurinn (Icelandic Festival), a weekend of culture, history, music and Viking spirit.

Closer to home, we will celebrate Icelandic National Day on June 21st in Markerville. It's our Edmonton



THE ICELANDIC-CANADIAN CLUB OF EDMONTON PRESENTS

ÞORRABLÓT

AN ICELANDIC MIDWINTER CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 2025
CENTRAL LIONS SENIOR RECREATION CENTRE

Join us for an evening celebration of the Icelandic midwinter festival! There will be music, guest presentations and sharing of Icelandic traditions

5:30 COCKTAILS
6:30 DINNER
9:00 WRAP-UP

Adults \$65
Youth (11-17) \$15
Students \$30
Child (0-10) \$10

Club's turn to host the event in Markerville and to choose a Fjalkona. Please stay tuned for more information in the upcoming months and please consider joining us in Markerville!

Another upcoming exciting event is an exhibition tapestry illustrating Njál's Saga. This project will be touring Canada, with stops in Calgary and Markerville.

New board members and Social Media Chairs, Sydney Veldhuis and Georgia Hladysh are working on revamping our website, Facebook, and setting up an Instagram account for the ICCE to enhance our virtual presence.

Hope to see you all out this year at our events this year!!

—Allison

Þorrablót Details

◆ Saturday, March 15, 2025
◆ Central Lions Senior Recreation Centre
◆ 11113 - 113 Street
◆ Edmonton, AB T5G 0E9

TO PURCHASE TICKETS, click [here](#).

Or email: INFO@ICCEDM.ORG

Mark Your Calendars!

Porrablót

Saturday, March 15, 2025
5:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Central Lions Recreation Centre
11113 113 Street
Edmonton

Icelandic National Day

June 21st
Markerville, AB
Times, Program TBA

INLNA Convention

May 1-4
Gimli, Manitoba
<https://inlofna.org/gimli-2025>

Njálurefill - Njáls Saga Tapestry Exhibit

Markerville, AB
July 14-27
Calgary, AB
July 12-13

Íslendingadagurinn

New Iceland 150
Gimli, Manitoba
August 1-4

Edmonton Heritage Festival

August 2-4

Board Meetings

Times and dates vary. No meetings: July, August, December

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

Icelandic National League of North America 2025 Convention

The INLNA's 2025 convention will be held in Gimli from May 1-4th, hosted by the Icelandic Canadian Club of Gimli. 2025 marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Icelandic immigrants to Nýja Ísland.

Highlights will include talks from Ryan Eyford from the University of Manitoba and Kristín Jóhannsdóttir from the University of Akureyri, and Eliza Reid as the gala dinner speaker. Music and other cultural events are also part of each year's convention.

More information and a registration link is available on their website [here](https://inlofna.org/gimli-2025). ICCE is a member of INLNA and all members in good standing of our club are eligible for the member-discounted rate for convention registration.



***“Þó líði ár og öld –
Though years and centuries pass”***
2025 convention theme



Riverton homestead of the Arnason family

Scandinavian Heritage Society

This committee has been working with the Heritage Festival Scandinavian team to develop a menu for this year's Heritage Festival, to be held at Borden Park on the August long weekend. There won't be Icelandic hot dogs this year, but pickled herring with smorrabroð, red cabbage, and pickles, and possibly a combination plate. Riskrem, Swedish candies, dessert lefsa, cardamom knot, coffee and other items are still under discussion.

The Scandinavian clubs were present at the very first Heritage Festival and have participated annually ever since. Over 70 pavilions representing more than 90 countries and cultures come together to share their entertainment and food and to celebrate the rich diversity of the people from around the world who have made Edmonton their home. A dedicated committee works to make this show a reality every year. Lorraine Ilnicki and Allison Boychuk lead this for the Icelandic club.

150 years of Icelandic settlement this year

In 1875 the first Icelanders arrived at the area that would be called New Iceland. They named their settlement Gimli, the name of the hall in Asgard where the righteous will live after the end of the world, thus a name for paradise. Sadly it was far from paradise for the first pioneers to the area, who experienced severe hardships, including deaths from smallpox and enormous challenges to their survival and subsistence.

This year we celebrate the 150th anniversary of their arrival. Watch for events unfolding for the 2025 Íslendingadagurinn festival from August 1-4 this year. Organizers aim to make this year's celebration truly unforgettable, with a wealth of opportunities to make history come alive. It's a good year to return to New Iceland!



The Scandinavian Pavilion: brought to you by a host of hard working volunteers every summer! UNESCO has formally recognized the Edmonton Heritage Festival as Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is the largest three day event of its kind in the world and admission is kept free.

Icelandic Connections Journal

Sometimes it seems that Icelanders and Western Icelanders must be some of the most diligent archivists, librarians, genealogists, and guardians of culture that could be found anywhere! There are so many excellent and accessible sources of information both on the history of Iceland and on the Icelandic immigration to North America, and there are also many scholars ensuring these stories do not get lost.

Katrín Nielsdóttir is the Icelandic Special Collection and Rare Book Librarian at the University of Manitoba. Some may be aware that the University of Manitoba publishes a journal called Icelandic Connections, which comes out once a year as a digital journal and is edited by Katrín. The journal is committed to preserving North American Icelandic cultural and traditions. For example the 2024 edition contains a variety of interesting and enjoyable articles on exploring New Iceland; on the life and work of the author Guðbergur Bergsson; the 170th birthday of Stephan G. Stephansson; literary articles and articles on folklore; and more.

Katrín also runs the *um Icelandic* Instagram page (a nice pun on the Icelandic word *um* meaning about, and the acronym for the University of Manitoba!). You can subscribe to *Icelandic Connections* by messaging her. The journal comes out in digital format and is free: excellent value!



Snorri News!

CONGRATULATIONS are in order for our former Snorri and current board member, Sydney Veldhuis! Sydney participated in Snorri 2022. She has successfully applied for the Snorri Alumni Internship. This summer, she will live for up to 12 weeks in the beautiful community of Hofsos on the shores of Skagafjörður, working at the Icelandic Emigration Center with a Snorri Alumni intern from the US. The Center is dedicated to commemorating the Icelanders who emigrated to the Americas between 1850 and 1920. It also promotes connections between their descendants and the people of Iceland. Sydney will welcome guests from around the world and work on projects developed with the US and Canadian embassies to promote the strong bonds between our nations.

We are very proud that a member of our club and a Snorri participant we have helped support are going to have this amazing opportunity. We are all looking forward to hearing about Sydney's adventures in Iceland this summer!



Volunteer Opportunities

Offering our events and keeping our not-for-profit society running takes a team of volunteers. We have a hardworking and friendly board and members and we hope you will consider helping out when and where you can. Here are some volunteer positions that are available with the club:

Board Member: Vice-President. The Vice-President supports the President, and is backup for the President role. The VP may take on particular projects within the club as well. This is a good position for getting to know the work of the club, whether or not the President role is something that you would consider down the road. The VP does not necessarily have to succeed the president.

Board Member: Social Events Committee Chair. Events are the club's biggest work item and we offer four main events per year: Thorrahlót in March; Icelandic National Day in June; Leifur Eiríksson Day in September; and Litla Jól in December. The social events committee chair works with a team to ensure all the pieces fall into place for an enjoyable gathering that celebrates our shared heritage, and lets us have fun together.

Liaison to Scandinavian Studies Association: The Icelandic club would like to provide a representative to the Scandinavian Studies Association (see writeup in this newsletter). If you are interested in learning more about what the Scandinavian Studies program at the University of Alberta is all about please consider getting involved with this role.

Event volunteers: It takes lots of hands to make any event happen. Whenever we have an event we will reach out for helpers. For example, for the Heritage Festival in August we will need volunteers for the Scandinavian Pavilion. We are especially hoping to find people with current Food Safe certification, but there is work for all hands that want to help. We hope to see you at the club events!

For all opportunities, please get in touch at info@iccedm.org.

Scandinavian Studies Association

All around us in our communities are small groups quietly doing important work. The Scandinavian Studies Association (SSA) is one of these, a registered charity with a close working relationship with the University of Alberta; specifically, Scandinavian Studies within the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies. This small dedicated board has a huge role in making possible the study of Scandinavian culture and language in Alberta.

SSA fundraises for and administers the **Scandinavian Studies Fund (SSF)** providing scholarships and other support for Scandinavian studies students at the University of Alberta. In cooperation with Torskeklubben of Edmonton, up to eight \$1,000 scholarships are awarded annually to students enrolled in advanced Scandinavian language courses. They also manage a **Scandinavian Professorship Endowment Fund (SPEF)** providing financial support to attract and retain Scandinavian Studies faculty at the University of Alberta.

We are looking for an Icelandic club member to represent us on the Board of the SSA. If this would interest you, please get in touch with Pat Dunn for details. SSA also accepts donations from those who would like to contribute to their work. For more information: <https://www.scandinavianstudies.ca/>

Njál's Saga Tapestry Project, *Njálurefill*: *Ferðarefill* comes to Alberta



Viking ships

PHOTO: INLUS WEBINAR

One of the most well-known of Iceland's sagas is Njáls Saga, which took place near Hvolsvöllur in south Iceland. The farm Hlíðarendi 14 kms from Hvolsvöllur was the home of Gunnar, the hero of the saga. Starting in 2013, some local residents began embroidering a 90-meter-long tapestry depicting *The Saga of the Burning of Njál*. Fiber artists in and around Hvolsvöllur began sewing the 90-meter-long tapestry depicting the story of Njáls Saga on February 2, 2013.

The first stitch on the tapestry was taken by adventurer Vilborg Arna Gissurardóttir, the first Icelandic woman to scale the summit of Mount Everest and travel alone to the South Pole. By the time the tapestry was complete in 2020, visitors from six continents and over 150 countries had sewn on the tapestry, named *Njálurefill*, creating 12,518 discrete entries. A video about the project can be viewed on the INLUS website.

The community plans to bring awareness of this project to North America. In order to do this, they embroidered a smaller *Ferðarefill* (Traveling Tapestry) that is only 5 meters long. While the tapestry itinerary is still being confirmed, it has been invited to exhibit at several western Icelandic communities and festivals. We are delighted that it will be coming to Alberta, to Calgary on July 12-13 and Markerville July 14-27 (dates awaiting final confirmation).



Embroiderers at work, Hvolsvöllur

The tapestry has been embroidered using the same techniques used to create the famous Bayeux tapestry in the 11th century. During the exhibits, the *Ferðarefill* tapestry will be displayed. Plans are afoot to present talks on embroidery and on Njáls Saga. Tapestry kits and books will be available for sale. The Njáls Saga Tapestry is believed to be the longest continuous all-handstitched embroidery in the world—a monumental endeavor for a small town in saga country. More details are still to come but meanwhile we are very excited for this opportunity coming to our area.



A detail from the Njáls saga tapestry



Gunnar of Hlíðarendi

The Tradition of Thorablót (Þorablót)

Þorablót is an Icelandic midwinter festival, named for the month of *Þorri* of the historical Icelandic calendar (for 2025 January 25 to February 24). The modern festival arose in the late 19th century, inspired by the Romantic nationalism of the time, much like Burns night in Scotland. It celebrates the endurance of the Icelandic people and the old traditions that helped them survive.

Þorablót gained wide publicity starting in 1958, when a Reykjavík restaurant, called *Naustið*, began offering a platter of foods they called *Þorramatur* that were once common in the Icelandic countryside, but had become rare. The food was arranged in slices on a wood trough like the ones used long ago.

The word *blót* means a feast held in honor of a god in the old Norse religion. *Þorablót* can be anything from an informal dinner with friends and family, music and poetry reading, to large events with stage performances and dances.

Þorramatur includes meats and fish that were preserved to last through a long winter. They were cured in lactic acid, fermented, or dried; cut into slices or pieces and served with *rúgbrauð* (dense and dark rye bread), butter and *brennivín* (an Icelandic akvavit).

We're not likely to find goodies such as hákarl, hrútspungar and svið on Canadian grocery store shelves! Our Þorablót celebrations focus instead on coming together to celebrate the ingenuity and hardiness of our ancestors both in Iceland and here. Even though Þorramatur is not part of our lives today, we can appreciate that some of its DNA is still part of us.

Skál!

Þorramatur

Hákarl, fermented shark.

Hrútspungar, the testicles of rams pressed in blocks, boiled and cured in lactic acid.

Svið, singed and boiled sheep heads, sometimes cured in lactic acid.

Lifrarpylsa (liver sausage), a pudding made from liver and suet of sheep kneaded with rye flour and oats.

Blóðmör (blood-suet; also known as *slátur* lit.

'slaughter'), a type of blood pudding made from lamb's blood and suet kneaded with rye flour

Harðfiskur, -dried fish (often cod, haddock or sea wolf), served with butter.

Rúgbrauð (rye bread), traditional Icelandic rye bread.

Hangikjöt, (hung meat), smoked and boiled lamb or mutton, sometimes also eaten raw.

Rófustappa, mashed turnips