



NORÐURLJÓÐS

Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton

President's Report

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

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Greetings! It's an exciting year for our Icelandic community. This is the 150th anniversary of the first arrival of Icelanders in Manitoba in 1875.

Planning is underway to celebrate New Iceland 150, also more commonly known as Gimli – from August 1-4, 2025 at

Islendingadagurinn (Icelandic Festival). This will be a weekend of culture, history, music and Viking spirit. If you can travel out to Gimli, the event promises to be a weekend that you won't forget - to celebrate our Icelandic heritage!

To kick off the celebration of New Iceland, the INLNA convention was held in Gimli from May 1-4, 2025. I had the pleasure to attend the conferences along with five other Edmonton delegates; Sydney Veldhuis, Georgia Hladysh, Marla Hladysh, Barbara Biernes and Helgi Thorvaldson. It was a jam packed few days of reuniting with old friends, meeting new ones and learning more about our Icelandic history and connections. Further information on this event is in the newsletter.

Closer to home, we will celebrate Icelandic National Day on Saturday June 21st in Markerville. It's Edmonton's turn to host the program for this annual celebration. Both outdoor and indoor activities are being planned including a Viking Village, Rune fortune teller and the introduction of our 2025 Fjallkona (Lady of the Mountain)!

Bev Arason-Gaudet is our 2025 Fjallkona! Bev has a long history of service to the Icelandic community and to our Edmonton club. Bev is the recipient of the Order of the Falcon, a high honour bestowed by the government of Iceland. We are grateful and honoured that she will represent ICCE as Fjallkona this year. Please stay tuned for more information in the upcoming month on our website and social media pages for more information. Please consider joining us in Markerville!



(President's report continued) There was a session about the Njál Saga Tapestry Exhibit at the INLNA Convention. This exciting event is an exhibition that brings the saga era to the modern era. This community driven project gives locals and visitors an opportunity to engage with Iceland's most important cultural texts by stitching a section of the timeline of major events from the saga, from beginnings of the characters lives to destruction of Njall and his family. This project will be touring Canada, with stops in Calgary and Markerville. When those dates are confirmed we'll send a note out to

everyone. You can also read more <https://www.icelandicroots.com/post/bringing-the-saga-era-to-the-modern-era-understanding-the-njál-saga-tapestry>

As we move into the summer months, please join us in Markerville on June 21st and at Edmonton's Heritage Festival August 2-4th, 2025. Iceland once again will be part of the Scandinavian Pavilion featuring food and culture. More information in this newsletter!



Gunnar of Hlíðarendi

Takk and Warm Regards,

Allison Boychuk

President, Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton

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

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 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. We are delighted that it will be coming to Alberta, to Calgary and also to Markerville in July (dates awaiting final confirmation). Further details will be provided as we learn them.



Viking ships

PHOTO: INLUS WEBINAR

Þorrablót Revisited

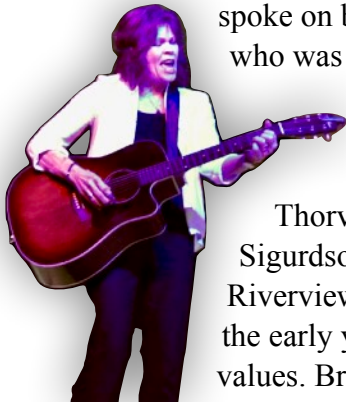
Ninety-six happy Icelanders and friends enjoyed Þorrablót in Edmonton on Saturday, March 15, 2025. Central Lions Senior Recreation Centre proved an excellent venue, with room to spread out our silent auction and Icelandic dessert table.



ICCE President Allison Boychuk kept the program moving. Honorary Consul of Iceland in Northern Alberta, Gordon Reykdal, brought greetings from

Iceland. Armann Ingolfsson spoke briefly on the Þorrablót tradition and led us in the Toast to Thorri. Representatives from Markerville spoke on behalf of Alberta's Fjallkona, who was unable to attend due to

lambling season. We were entertained with musical numbers by Helgi



Carol Dorsey

Thorvaldson and Carol Dorsey. Lori Sigurdson, NDP MLA for Edmonton-Riverview, spoke about her family and the early years that shaped her present values. Bridjet Radstaak, 2024 Snorri participant, presented "A River of

Tradition", a slide presentation featuring her experiences with water in Iceland. Bridjet showed photos of herself slurping up wonderful fresh water in streams she encountered.

In renting venues, city health regulations do not allow adding Icelandic hot food to the menu. However, the caterers provided an excellent meal and we were able to enjoy members' baking: vínarterta, ástarpungar, pönnukökur, and rúlluterta. Yum !!

A huge thank you to the Þorrablót Committee for organizing a great event.

—Gloria Krenbrenk



From left: Emma Kaliei, Marilyn Bell, Lorraine Ilnicki and in front, June Parker.

Snorri Alumni Georgia Hladysh, Emma Kaliei, and Sydney Veldhuis



The Toast to Þórri

Iceland's traditional late-winter feast is meant to blast away the winter blues. And so we toast Þórri:

Winters are so dead and sad
Because the darkness covers the nation
And the cold storms chill
The warm blood of the Icelanders.
Then we see, peeking low on the horizon
In the south, the faint sun.
Is there any better occasion to make a toast,
Than at this time?

Skál!

Mark Your Calendars!

Icelandic National Day

June 21st

Markerville, AB

See program in this newsletter, p.9

Njálurefill - Njáls Saga Tapestry Exhibit

Markerville, AB

Calgary, AB

July dates TBA

Íslendingadagurinn

New Iceland 150

Gimli, Manitoba

August 1-4

Edmonton Heritage Festival

August 2-4

Leifur Eiríksson Gathering

TBD

Þorablót 2026

March 21st, 2026

Central Lions Recreation Centre

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.

** Call Gloria to attend by phone. **

Scandinavian Heritage Society: 2025 Heritage Festival, August 2-4

—Lorraine Ilnicki

The Edmonton Scandinavian clubs were present at the very first Heritage Festival in 1976 and have participated annually ever since. This year we can look forward to another wonderful celebration of our Scandinavian Cultures and foods. All is on track for the 2025 Heritage Festival!

This year our culture displays we will be highlighting the Icelandic Settlements in Alberta: Stephansson House, Markerville Creamery Museum, Fensala Hall, Tindastoll Cemetery, and Glenbow Museum.

We have changed up some of our foods we are serving, and brought back some we served a few years ago as well. As usual the food represents all five Scandinavian Countries. We are happy that the Three Vikings are again preparing most of the foods for our pavilion. The menu includes: Herring Smørrebrød, Havarti Lingonberry Chutney Smørrebrød, Swedish Meatballs and gravy, Finnish Pickles, Rødkal (cooked red cabbage), meatball combo (meatballs with gravy, rødkal and Finnish pickles), Riskrem, Kransekake, Cardamon Knots, St Lucia Buns, Swedish Candies, Skyr Popsicles, Bilberry Lemonade, and of course coffee.

Lorraine Ilnicki and Allison Boychuk lead Heritage Festival participation by the Icelandic club.



We are hoping for another successful year. We will soon be looking for volunteers to help at the Festival. If this interests you please get in touch: info@iccedm.org. See you there!

INLNA 2025 Convention in Gimli, MB

The Icelandic National League of North America held its biannual convention in Gimli this year. Following are accounts by Allison Boychuk, Club President, and Sydney Veldhuis. Sydney is a former Snorri and will return to Iceland this year as Canadian Snorri Alumnus intern working at the Emigration Centre.

It was a jam packed few days of reuniting with old friends, meeting new ones and learning more about our Icelandic history and connections with members from Canadian and US clubs. Being this is the 150th year of New Iceland, meeting in Gimli made it extra special.

Friday and Saturday featured a full slate of speakers: INLNA, Snorri Programs, Snorri West, Icelandic Camp and Icelandic language in North America. We heard about the 100 year history of the Icelandic Hekla Club of Minnesota, the oldest active Icelandic Club in the US, and an inspirational story about John Ramsey from director Andy Blicq.

The editor and board members from Lögberg-Heimskringla, shared LH's history and important role as the only English Icelandic newspaper. The Icelandic Roots presentation was meaningful as delegates were able to log in to trace their family genealogy over the convention. Other topics featured New Iceland First Settlers, Icelandic River Heritage Sites, Njal's tapestry exhibit, Canada Iceland Foundation, New Iceland Museum in Gimli and the Icelandic Festival which promises to be the place to be in Gimli beginning of August with the 150th anniversary celebration.



Eliza Reid

The presentation about the strength, resilience and importance of Icelandic women with the creator of "The Day Iceland Stood Still", director, Pamela Hogan and Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdottir, filmmaker/producer of "The Kitchen Sink Revolution" and "Women in Red Stockings" was very powerful.

Edmonton members were also highlighted as Helgi Thorvaldson provided musical entertainment at the Saturday lunch.

Sydney Veldhuis was featured in a video during Pala Hallgrimsdottir's talk about her time as project manager for the Snorri Program.

Saturday's keynote speaker was former Iceland First lady, Canadian Eliza Reid. Her down to earth talk about her journey "*The Bend in the Road*:"



Stefan Jónasson, Editor, Lögberg-Heimskringla and Unitarian Minister



Allison and Eliza

How to Make the Most of Unexpected Opportunity”, was amazing and inspiring. A bestselling writer, of “*Secrets of the Sprakkar: Iceland’s Extraordinary Women and How They are Changing the World*”, and now also a mystery writer, she launched her first novel with a book reading, “*Death on an Island*”. It is now on the best seller list and tagged for a TV series.

I met many of the other club presidents and delegates. There were some friendly rivalries amongst delegates cheering on our hockey teams, Edmonton Oilers and Winnipeg Jets, in the playoffs over a drink in the evening. It was also a nice opportunity to catch up with family at the convention and afterwards.

All in all, a fantastic long weekend with all things Icelandic!

Allison Boychuk, President, ICCE



*Allison Boychuk,
President, ICCE and Barb
Beirnes, ICCE member*

**Icelandic Roots volunteers Greg McNeill
and Doug Hansen discuss the IR
genealogical database.**

*From right: Helgi
Thorvaldson, Allison,
Helgi's aunt.*

*Author Bill
Valgardson*

A few faces from INLNA

Icelandic National League of North America: 2025 Convention

— Sydney Veldhuis

Visiting Gimli, Manitoba for the first time was a beautiful and moving experience. With Lake Winnipeg stretching out beside it, the town offered a breathtaking setting to reflect on the journey of western Icelanders who settled there generations ago. It's incredible to think that, 175 years later, descendants of those early settlers would gather in the very same region – not just to celebrate their heritage, but to talk meaningfully about how to grow and strengthen the Icelandic community in North America.

The 2025 INLNA Convention was a vibrant hub of connection and collaboration. These conventions are an excellent way to meet fellow western Icelanders from across the continent – and even from Iceland itself. It was especially meaningful for Snorris to reunite, share stories, and encourage others to take part in the program. I had the chance to connect with other clubs and explore new ideas for partnerships, which will no doubt help us better support and expand our community moving forward.

The programming was just as inspiring. I was especially moved by the emphasis on the relationships between Icelandic settlers and Indigenous people. Learning about John Ramsay and the vital role he played in supporting Icelandic immigrants added a deeper layer of understanding to our shared history. Ryan Eyfjord's book, *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the Canadian West*, describes the trials and tribulations of settlers. Further, Canadian singer-songwriter William Prince wrote and performed a song



called *A Song for John Ramsay*. A part of the documentary about the background of the song was shown at the convention, and the director, Andy Blicq, answered questions from the audience.

One talk that stood out was *The Day Iceland Stood Still* – we heard from Pamela Hogan and Hrabba Gunnarsdóttir, directors of a documentary that takes a powerful look at the women's movement in Iceland. I left with a renewed sense of pride in the women of Iceland and am looking forward to watching the full documentary on IcelandAir this summer. I hope we can host a viewing in Edmonton soon!

A particular highlight was hearing from Eliza Reid, the former First Lady of Iceland. She offered a heartfelt keynote, sharing her life journey from childhood to public life and beyond. Her reflections reminded us that while rules can guide us, sometimes there's no set path – and that's when we must trust ourselves to forge our own.

Thank you to the ICCE for your support in attending this convention. I encourage anyone who's ever thought about attending an INLNA convention to go – you'll leave feeling more connected, inspired, and proud of your roots. INLNA Convention 2027 will be in Ottawa!



The 2025 Alberta Fjallkona: Bev Arason-Gaudet



Beverly Arason-Gaudet, 2025 Alberta Fjallkona

The three Alberta Icelandic clubs (Edmonton ICCE, Calgary Leifur Erickson, and Markerville) take turns choosing a Fjallkona each year. This year is our turn and we are honoured and delighted to welcome **Beverly Arason-Gaudet** as our 2025 Alberta Fjallkona! Bev has a long and distinguished history with Norðurljós, the Icelandic-Canadian Club of Edmonton, which started when her parents, Walter and Beulah Arason, were involved in the Icelandic Society of Edmonton, the original name of the Edmonton club.

She has also led and been involved with many other Icelandic initiatives including the boards of Þjóðræknisfélag Íslendinga, the Icelandic National League of Iceland, and the Lögberg Heimskringla newspaper. She served for many years on the board of the ICCE, initially as treasurer and then, following in her father's footsteps, as president. During that time she helped in the successful presentation of two INLNA conventions in Edmonton in 2011 and 2018.

She also spent 12 years on the board of the Icelandic National League of North America, INLNA, under the diverse roles of convention director, calendar fundraising, Iceland tour organizer in 2022, vice president and as president from 2018 – 2020. Currently Bev is vice president on the board of the Lögberg Heimskringla newspaper.

Bev's contributions to the Icelandic community both in Canada and in Iceland were recognized in 2019 when she was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon by the President of Iceland. Fewer than 75 Canadians have been awarded the Order of the Falcon since it was created in 1921, two years after the country achieved its independence from Denmark. It is the highest honour that the Icelandic state can bestow on individuals.

By profession a pharmacist, in addition to her Icelandic interests she is an avid and active quilter and is a long term board member of the Patchwork Quilters Guild in Sherwood Park, as well as a board member of the Strathcona Christmas Bureau in Sherwood Park.

ICCE Norðurljós thanks Bev for her service and for honouring us as the 2025 Alberta Fjallkona!



Icelandic Independence Day Celebration

in Historic Markerville
Sat., June 21, 2025

12:00 - 3:00 pm — Visit the Viking Village set up at the Creamery Courtyard
The **Ulfraendi** will be back again to re-enact life as it was 1000 years ago, about the time that Iceland was being settled.

- Axe Throwing • Games • Stories • Crafts
- Photo Booth • Rune Fortune Telling Game

12:00 pm — Family Program: Creamery Courtyard

- Creamery Museum • Hamlet Walking Tours • Viking Village
- Coffee, Ice Cream and Food is available for purchase

2:30 pm — Free Ice Cream for the Kids

3:30 pm — Program and Crowning of the Fjallkona at Fensala Hall, with Potluck Supper to Follow

Logos: Calgary Icelandic Club, Historic Markerville, Red Deer County, Icelandic-Canadian Club of Edmonton

Independence Day and the Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton

The three Alberta Icelandic Clubs take turns each year appointing a Fjallkona and putting together a program and ceremony to crown her. This year it is the turn of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton (Norðurljós). We are providing dinner items for dinner after the program. Many of us are also bringing potluck desserts. If you are planning to come and you have time, more desserts are ALWAYS welcome!

The dinner is put on by the Icelandic clubs. Potluck desserts are encouraged and welcomed!

Fensala Hall Program - starting at 3:30 p.m.

Welcome!

Greetings from the Alberta Icelandic Clubs

Crowning of the 2025 Alberta Fjallkona, Beverly Arason-Gaudet

“**River of Tradition**” Presentation by Bridjet Radstaak on her 2024 Snorri experience

Icelandic Dance, *Á Sprengisandi*, by Karen Gummo



Who is the Fjallkona?

The Fjallkona - "The Lady of the Mountain" - is a personification of Iceland. A Fjallkona is chosen in connection with Iceland's National Day to represent the Icelandic spirit and culture in her community and nation. Among Vestur-Íslendingar the first Fjallkona appeared at a gathering at Iceland Days in Winnipeg in 1924. The three Alberta Icelandic clubs take turns appointing a Fjallkona.

The engraving is a famous depiction of the Lady of the Mountain. It was made by Johann Baptist Zwecker, and published in Icelandic Legends (1866). The picture was described thus at the time:

The picture of the woman is to represent Iceland, thus she has a crown of ice on her head, from which fires erupt. On her shoulder is the raven, Iceland's most characteristic bird, Óðinn's ancient friend and the favourite of poets, a great and knowledgeable carrier of news. Over the seas flutters a seagull, but across the surf of time and history are borne rune-staves to the land and up into the embrace of the woman, and she has picked one of them up. This is intended as a symbol of our land of literature and history. It is night, with a starry sky and the moon up. Behind are mountains, moonlight on the ridges.

Woven Together: 150 years, Iceland and Canada

This year Íslendingadagurinn will celebrate 150 years since the Icelanders immigrated to Canada, and the deep connection that remains between the two countries! This would be an amazing year to take part in these annual festivities in Gimli. This year's beautiful logo celebrates the knitting of the lopapeysa and our two nations. For more information: <https://www.icelandicfestival.com/>



— By Bridjet Radstaak

We are very excited to introduce 4 Snorri participants from Edmonton this year! Below are short bios for Jessica Clark, George McLauchlin, EJ Johnson-Dmyterko and Alex Harkness. It is sure to be an amazing experience for them, and a great opportunity to learn more about their family, heritage, and Icelandic culture! We can't wait to hear about your summer!!

Hæ allir! My name is **Jessica Clark** and I'm thrilled to be a part of this year's Snorri program. I am 20 years old and live in Edmonton, Alberta. I am currently finishing up my final gap year before studying acupuncture in the fall. During my time off school I have developed a passion for travel and have had the opportunity to explore 8 new countries - I'm super excited to add Iceland to the list! My interest in the Snorri program began when my older cousin participated in 2012, and ever since I have been super excited to do it myself. One of the things I'm most looking forward to is reconnecting with my Icelandic culture. Although I haven't had much connection with it in the past few years, my Amma and Afi were very proud of their culture and made me interested to learn more. I can't wait to explore the country's beautiful landscapes and immerse myself in the culture!



Hello! My name is **Alex** and I'm part of the 2025 Snorri cohort. I'm currently studying at McGill with an interest in global health in arctic communities. My exposure to family has always been small and tight-knit- I'm an only child and was raised far from either side of my family. Participating in the Snorri program will allow me to explore my heritage beyond stories and family trees, and rekindle relationships with family that I never got the opportunity to be connected with. I'm so excited to experience daily life in Iceland, learn the language, and of course, get to know my fellow Snorri's!



George McLauchlin has been participating in ICCE's community events for longer than he can remember. Whether enjoying vínarterta at Þorrablót, dancing with friends and family at Leif Eiríksson Day, or enjoying homemade Sýr that his mother prepared, the Icelandic roots ran deeply throughout. After seeing the experiences my mom, Aunties, Amma, brother and sister experienced in Iceland (the latter two through Snorri), George knew that a trip to Iceland was in his future, and is beyond excited that the Snorri program has provided the opportunity for that future to become present this June.

Hello my name is **EJ Johnson-Dmyterko**. I grew up hearing stories of my Icelandic heritage from my Afi. Thanks to him I became curious about the history. I also hold a deep desire to travel and explore the world in general. This trip to me is a way to explore history while also learning about my family. I like to learn about people and places, and hear other people's stories. So while I learn and explore and just embrace history I want to hear stories. Learn not just from a textbook but experience. Right now I'm most excited to learn about not only history and my family, but folklore. Because folklore is important to me as well, it's still part of history and the world. I hope that's a good introduction to myself, if you meet me ever I'd love to hear your stories because they are what make history.

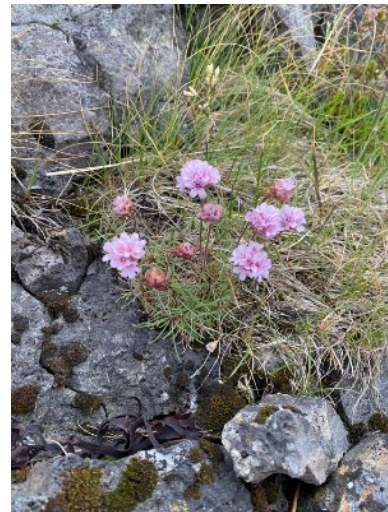
Feature: Wildflowers of Iceland

— Photos and article by Bridjet Radstaak

In addition to its beautiful waterfalls, rolling hills and towering volcanoes, Iceland is also well known for its assortment of gorgeous wildflowers, often seen during the spring and summer months. Rolling hills of violet lupine are a picturesque icon of Iceland's wilderness, but did you know Iceland is also home to nearly 490 different species of plant? Many of these species are protected, and at least 8 are found nowhere else in the world! Many flowering plants, for example lupine, are considered "naturalized", meaning they are not native to Iceland, but still grow wild amongst the rocky outcrops and puffin-heavy cliffs. Below are some images I took last summer throughout the country. Common names in English are first, followed by Icelandic common names and finally the scientific names of the species.



Heath Spotted Orchid • Brönugras •
Dactylorhiza maculata



Sea Thrift • Geldingahnappur •
Armeria maritima



Northern Green Orchid •
Friggjargras •
Platanthera hyperborea



Velvetbells • Smjörgras •
Bartsia alpina



Water Aven • Fjalldalaffill •
Geum rivale



Moss Campion • Lambagras • *Silene acaulis*



Heath Speedwell • Hárdepla
• *Veronica officinalis*



Frog Orchid • Barnarót
• *Coeloglossum viride*



Common Butterwort • Lyfjagras •
Pinguicula vulgaris. This is a
carnivorous plant!



Lupine • Alaskalúpína •
Lupinus nootkatensis

Volunteer Opportunities

We are only able to offer events and keep our not-for-profit society running with volunteers. There are many opportunities to work with our friendly team!

Currently there are two vacancies on the board, VP and Social Events Committee Chair. We also look for volunteers for every event we offer. **Next event up is staffing the Scandinavian Pavilion at the Heritage Festival, August 2-4.**

For more information, please get in touch at info@iccedm.org.



Volunteers Erla, Gloria, Joedy, and Pat after an afternoon organizing the club's storage unit!