

ICELANDIC AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (IAAMN)

Minutes from IAAMN Board Meeting held on

February 16, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. in the Danish American Center, Minneapolis

Present: Steve Guttormsson, Claire Eckley, Örn Böðvarsson, Doug Rutford, Katrin Sigurðardóttir, Mallory Swanson, Chris Byron, Harvey Thorleifson, Diane Greenwood, Lyle Hillmann (via Skype)

Claire called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

1. **Approval of previous Board meeting minutes:** Claire asked that the Board provide final review and approval of the minutes from the last Board meeting, held on January 19, 2012. No changes were requested, hence Claire asked immediately for a vote to approve.

MSP Thorleifson/Guttormsson to approve minutes of January 19 Board meeting as written.

2. **Modifications to tonight's agenda:** It was decided to delete the Treasurer's report and add communications with the Hekla Club.
3. **Proposal to convert IAAMN to non-profit 5013c status:** Claire reiterated to the Board a proposal, presented earlier, to convert the organization to a 5013c (non-profit status) organization. She explained that our balance is always low and "we're running on money we don't have". 5013c status would invite donations and raise liquidity. The newsletter is costly and we're not paying for that at the moment. It is estimated that it will cost us about \$500 minimum to make the conversion. Steve pointed out some other advantages to being a 5013c. It allows you to spend some money you have on certain things; It allows you to raise money from people who use it to offset their taxable income. Steve went on to point out that every time we have an event, "we do it on the cheap"; We essentially figure out what our costs are and add a "teensy bit" as a mark-up to figure out our price. We don't include an adequate profit margin in our price — "We are always pricing it as if all of our members are on Medicare and can't afford to come". Furthermore, Steve pointed out that our membership fees are really low. If we do convert to 5013c status, we have to become a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), which then allow us to become tax-exempt. We then have to file an income tax return each year and be approved by the IRS.

The conversation about 5013c status continued with Chris mentioning that he is involved right now with the 5013c conversion process at his church. The church estimates that the costs of conversion will be upwards of \$2,500. If IAAMN can get this accomplished *pro bono*, that would be enormously helpful. The advantage to 5013 status is: We can put ourselves out in the community as a "legitimate heritage group." There are some real significant accounting demands placed on 5013c's though, e.g. dealing with restricted funds (people often attach restrictions to the money they give you). It's a smart way to go, but it is not to be viewed as a source of easy cash.

Following this discussion, it was decided that Orn B., Harvey, and Claire will comprise a committee to look into this.

4. **Sunshine:** Claire informed the Board that Frank Josephson died last weekend and his funeral will be in Minnesota on Saturday. Pat Allred is improving (she has been in the hospital) and will probably be going to a rehab facility. Claire will get her address and provide it to Board members. She IS getting much better.
5. **Correspondence:** We received a request from a musician in Iceland to see if we can get her group to play at the Dakota Bar & Grill. Claire's reaction is that we will see what we can do. Claire e-mailed Páll Skaftason and asked Björgvin about this musician and her group. Neither knew who this person was; Björgvin asked for a sample of her music. Following these communications, it was felt that it probably is not prudent for us to contact Dakota Bar & Grill. Björgvin is going to see what he can find out for us. Katrin pointed out that there is an Icelandic band playing at The Fine Line and they just signed a 10-year contract with Universal.
6. **Communications with Hekla Club:** Claire told the Board that she feels strongly that we want to improve communication between Hekla Club and IAAMN. Claire had thought that communication was improving until she had a conversation with INL President Gail Einarson McCleery, who told her we were not communicating very well. Steve informed the Board that someone from MN has been in conversation with Gail about the possibility for INL to have its annual convention in MN. Gail said INL felt presently disinclined to have a convention in MN due to reports of communication problems between our two organizations. Steve pointed out that over the past few years, snippets of information have come to us that are indicative of communication problems. For example, he was recently invited to Hekla Club to give a talk about his foundation. After the presentation, about 5 people from the Club came up and expressed concern about ongoing issues between the two organizations. Steve has talked with Elin about this and he has suggested that the two Executive Committees meet. Claire pointed out that the reason we have a Hekla Club rep on the IAAMN Board is so that we can have a harmonious relationship. Chris pointed out that we have always made efforts to include the Hekla Club in our events.

Discussion about this item concluded with strong Board consensus that we will go forward focusing on improved communications with Hekla Club via individual conversations and efforts.

7. **Thorrlot report:** Stony deposited \$3,755.00 in gross receipts from last weekend's Thorrlot. He has not received all bills, so is unsure of total expenditures. He needs to match up the checks with the reservations and there are 11 guests from whom we've not collected. The consensus was that the Thorrlot was a smashing success. In fact, the choir was such a success that they will rehearse monthly in preparation for next year's Thorrlot. It was also felt that, given the great turnout we had, a bigger venue is needed next year. Steve reports that we took in \$605.00 in donations from the "Snorri for Thorri" event, which will go towards the Snorri West fund. The write-in auction yielded \$502.50 and those funds will go into the IAAMN general fund.
8. **Update on planning for "Meets and Greets:** There will be quite a number of those this year. There are flights going into Winnipeg this year because Iceland Express is not flying out of there, hence IcelandAir will pick up the slack and all the tours will go from here. Chris updated the Board that Jónas Thór now works for a touring company (Farmhouse Holidays) and he has to follow their regulations now. He has a choir coming to Winnipeg on March 17 and may be in Minneapolis subsequent to that. Jónas, through Farmhouse Holidays, will bring in the tours to Minnesota that he'd ordinarily have brought in with his company. This time, the company will

send us a check, which we will use to buy food and drinks and guests. We have generally made money on these Meets & Greets. We provide a sandwich, people donate salads; We cannot have any liquor because the hotel doesn't allow it.

9. **Update on Icelandic family gathering:** Will be held March 4 from 2 to 5 p.m. The age groups are 6 months to 20 years to adults. We need to work on incorporating the adults better

10. **Proposal to offer lifetime membership:** tabled.

11. **Fundraising update:** We brought Doug's shirt to the Thorrablot. We now need to move forward on it and Doug is working on a catalog on the website. We need to think about other things to do besides t-shirts.

12. **Organ concert update** – the consensus of Board members who attended was that it was excellent.

13. **Proposal for providing travelers assistance services:** Claire briefed the Board that Stony was very upset when several years ago, someone's parents were coming through MSP and they were going to be here overnight. Their kids were very worried about the parents not knowing English and where to go, what to do. Stony tried to find someone who could help with the communication and he was not successful. It would be nice to have some people available to help.

14. **Samkoma Dinner:** April 28 at U of M Campus Club. It will coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Val Bjornson scholarship.

15. **INL update:** Chris explained to the Board that every time there is a telephone meeting of the INL (which is usually 2.5 hours), he has to do a report. He offered to supply copies to the Board. The Board readily accepted his offer.

16. **Update on showings of "Turf Cottage":** This will be showing on February 26 at 2:00 p.m. at the Sons of Norway in Duluth. Steve noted to the Board that the facility has undergone a substantial restoration in advance of the King of Norway's visit last Winter. They are finishing up their restoration and the facility, despite a fire, is looking great. Film will be shown on February 26 at 2:00 p.m. The showing of the film will be free of charge and Claire will follow up do some type of mailing.

17. **Snorri West update:** Claire reported that the budget has been approved and we are already taking volunteer names. Mallory will be paid \$2,000 for being the MN Coordinator and there will be a coordinator in Manitoba. Publicity for donations to the program will soon go out.

The meeting ended at 9:06 p.m.

MINUTES TAKEN AND RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY ÖRN BÖÐVARSSON