



# BRÚIN CHAPTER, SELKIRK

ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE  
OF NORTH AMERICA



Newsletter  
Editor: Heather Schreiner

125<sup>th</sup> Sumardagurinn Fyrsti

Spring 2018  
Design/Layout: Kathy Dahlin

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow! Here it is April again. It's hard to believe how time flies. Last year's Sumardagurinn Fyrsti was very successful. We are always so very proud to celebrate this time-honoured tradition brought over by the pioneers from Iceland. It has been celebrated here since their arrival, and has been celebrated in Selkirk for 125 years. The Lutheran Church Ladies Aid hosted it first, then The Brúin Chapter of The Icelandic National League took over the event. Previous members worked tirelessly to carry on this tradition. Our club is proud and honoured to celebrate Sumardagurinn Fyrsti with you, enjoying our Icelandic culture. Our Kaffi Tima Choir will be singing in Icelandic and English for you. By doing this, we are practicing our Icelandic and keeping some of the songs of the Icelandic settlers alive. Some of our club members wear our traditional Icelandic clothing. We also try to have other entertainers and whenever possible to have children perform. Last year Pordur Bjarni Gudjonson and his wife Jorunn Kristinsdottir celebrated at the event with us. Pordur brought us greetings from Iceland. This was their first year attending our concert since their arrival to Canada. We also sell raffle and silent auction tickets. Our club members make and donate almost all of the Icelandic foods that we have with the coffee. This is another way to showcase our culture and heritage with great pride.

The 2017 Icelandic National League of North America was held in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Five of our club members attended.

In June, we celebrated our summer wind-up. It was graciously hosted by Ruth Arnold.

In July, we partially sponsored five campers to Icelandic Camp, including one camper from Germany. He loved it! Some of our club members help out in the kitchen. Volunteers are always appreciated there and are rewarded by seeing campers' happy faces.

Our choir practices started in September and went through until December. Each October, we host The Selkirk Betel Foundation's birthday party for residents with birthdays that month. Our Kaffi Tima choir performs for the residents of Betel Home. We purchase and give gifts to the residents celebrating birthdays. We also have a few minutes of interactive dancing with the residents organized by Maeola Whitlam, followed by helping to hand out the birthday cake to the residents.

In November, we entered a Christmas tree into the Festival of Trees held annually at the Selkirk Rec Centre, decorated with items that represented Iceland. Our members made all the decorations. We won Second prize!

Selkirk hosted an event called 'Homes for The Holidays'. A tour took people to historical places of significance in Selkirk and the surrounding area. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Selkirk was one of the locations. We set up a display table at The Lutheran Hall with articles from Iceland and areas of Canada known as New Iceland. We set up our Icelandic Christmas Tree there, proudly displaying the Second prize ribbon on the front of the tree. We had our table on display for three days. Our Kaffi Tima choir sang Christmas carols at the church, in Icelandic and English. This historic church is of Icelandic origin. The church was decorated for Christmas, so singing for the visitors really enhanced the effect the event organizers were trying to achieve.

Our club Christmas party was held in early December.

January, February and March have been busy with choir practices and preparations for this year's Sumardagurinn Fyrsti

Brúin Chapter gives a bursary each year to deserving students of Icelandic descent. These students have attended Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive High School in Selkirk. Brúin Chapter feels it is important to encourage and reward students whenever possible. This bursary not only rewards the student monetarily but also encourages them to research their heritage. It's important to our members to encourage more young people to be involved in their Icelandic heritage and culture. To qualify, students must submit a short essay detailing their Icelandic heritage. Last year's bursary was given to Ben Dahlin. Congratulations Ben!

We are very fortunate to receive an invitation each year to The Betel Home Foundation's Volunteer Appreciation Tea, held in April, in recognition of our club hosting the October birthday party. Unfortunately, last year's tea was the night before our Sumardagurinn Fyrsti and our club members were so busy preparing for our concert that no one was able to attend. We always appreciate being invited to these Teas.

Our members feel it is important to support and attend other clubs' events. It is our way to show other INLofNA Chapters that we are interested in their activities. It also shows the overall public that we all work together trying to achieve the same pride in our language, heritage and culture. Often these activities are celebrations that were brought over by the Icelandic pioneers.

I hope everyone enjoys tonight's event. We have fun doing this for you and hope you enjoy it too.

Maria Bear

## **INLOfNA CONVENTION 2017 RECAP**

The 98<sup>th</sup> INLOfNA Convention was held from May 4<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Grand Forks, ND. The event kicked off with a Thursday evening Meet-and-Greet.

Friday's events consisted of a full-day "Viking ship excursion" (bus tour) of Icelandic sights in northeast North Dakota and the official Opening Night/Awards Ceremony in the evening. During the daytime tour, lunch took place at the Mountain Community Centre and was provided by the Icelandic Communities Association. Susan Sigurdson Powers entertained the crowd with Icelandic folk songs played on the accordion. Our very own Heather and Johann Schreiner were awarded Lifetime Memberships during the Awards Ceremony in the evening. The events concluded with entertainment provided by a live band while the crowd mingled, visited and enjoyed hors d'oeuvres.

Saturday activities included the Annual General Meeting, presentations on various topics such as the Snorri and Snorri West programs, modern cinematography in Iceland and exhibits at Iceland's National Museum. The Gala Banquet was a sold-out event on Saturday evening.

On Sunday morning, the nonprofit group Icelandic Roots presented a genealogy workshop. Attendees were given temporary access to the group's database to search for relatives online. Some attendees were able to trace their roots back several hundred years! Quite amazing!

Candice Murphy will be Brúin Chapter's delegate at the next INLOfNA Convention next week in Edmonton, AB.

Kathy Dahlin, Brúin delegate 2017

## **LAURENCE JOHNSON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Laurence Johnson Lifetime Achievement award is designed to honour the memory of our late Past-President and longtime Icelandic National League of North America member Larry Johnson. This acknowledgement is given to a person who has made a significant contribution to society over a long period of time, as Larry did.

The recipient of the award in 2017 was Gail Einarson-McCleery of Toronto, ON. Larry's daughters and Brúin club members Patsy Zdrill and Kathy Dahlin were in attendance to help make the presentation at the INLOfNA Convention in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The award will again be bestowed upon a deserving recipient at the next INLOfNA Convention, in Edmonton, AB, April 26-28, 2018.

## **ICELAND'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY**

Iceland became a free and sovereign state on December 1, 1918, when the Union Treaty with Denmark came into effect. That day may be seen as one of the most important landmarks in Iceland's campaign for self-determination, which had then been in progress for nearly a century.

During Iceland's 100 year celebration, Icelanders nationwide are encouraged to celebrate the island nation's unique culture and language throughout all of 2018. Icelanders have two major events to look forward to in the coming year to commemorate the anniversary!

In July, Iceland's parliament, the Alþingi, will hold a celebration at Iceland's ancient parliamentary site, Þingvellir, where the Union Treaty was signed 100 years ago in 1918.

On December 1, all of Iceland will join in on the nationwide celebration of the 100 year anniversary! Universities, local governments, and all people of Iceland will come together to commemorate the day. The goal is to encompass all aspects of Icelandic society, from education, culture, sciences, health, politics, economic development, communications, and transportation to daily life in Iceland.

Watch this video to get a brief history of Iceland's independence!

YouTube: Iceland sovereignty 1918 English

## **2019 CALENDAR**

Look for the Brúin page in the 2019 INLOfNA calendar. We have been offered the month of April and are putting together a collage of Brúin activities. Be sure to get your calendar!

## **CHAPTER FUN**

I was recently in Gimli, checking out how the Viking Statue had been redone with a wonderful garden and walkway. I saw the Runic alphabet cut out of stone, very impressive! I thought "I'll bet the Brúin Chapter would love to write their names in this old tongue." So I went to the beach and gathered some nice, white, flat stones. At our January meeting we did just that, wrote our names in Runic on the stones. Everyone was very excited to see how this looked. We took them home in a special bag and looked for different ways to feature them in our homes: set it in a small dish of shiny black stones, made into magnets, added to flower pots, etc. It was a lot of fun.

Marie Kanne

## SUMARDAGURINN FYRSTI ORIGINS

I've been a member of the Brúin Chapter of the INL for going on 20 years now. To say the least - "it's been a slice of life!" Oh sure, it has had its ups and downs but the ups far outnumber the downs. Where I'm going with this is that you should join our group! We need more members. Ok, enough advertising and on to the main subject. In all these years of membership, I've never questioned the timing of Sumardagurinn Fyrsti. But really, First Day of Summer in late April? After all these years I felt reluctant to ask. No slight on the club by any means for I'm sure they would gladly have helped but it is just a failing of mine. So now in this wonderful age in which we live, where do we go to find information? Why Google of course, because Google knows everything! Whenever Google gives a reference to Wikipedia that is my "go to" article. Well, that article was woefully inadequate! I did, however, find a most wonderful article by Rögnvaldur Guðmundsson. So now I will reference his web post here.[\*]

Iceland has a lot of holidays but mostly the international classics, like Christmas, Easter and a National holiday. Still, it has one holiday that's only celebrated in Iceland, The First Day of Summer. It makes sense that Icelanders would want to celebrate the arrival of summer after long winters, but what doesn't make sense is that it's celebrated in late April when you can still expect freezing temperatures in Iceland.

The First Day of Summer has its roots in the old Icelandic calendar that was used pretty much from the settlement of Iceland in the 9th century and until as recently as the 19th century, parallel to the Julian and later the Gregorian calendar. According to the Icelandic calendar, there were only two seasons, winter and summer, so summer started in late April and lasted until late October. The old calendar was week-based so the official timing of the first day of summer was the second Thursday after April 11<sup>th</sup>, on the first day of the month of Harpa. Outdoor celebrations in Iceland in April? What on earth could go wrong? Icelanders like to celebrate the First Day of Summer, so much so that it's actually an official national holiday. Celebrating the beginning of summer has been done for centuries. For example, it's been customary to give children small gifts known as summer gifts since the 16th century. They even precede Christmas gifts in Iceland by about three centuries. Every town in Iceland has its own celebratory program, but scout parades and brass bands are common. Unfortunately, the summer weather rarely gets the message and the temperature usually hovers somewhere between 0°C and 10°C on the day itself. It's even considered good luck if it dips below freezing the night before; it means Iceland will have a good summer. If you're not in the mood for watching 'scoutsicles' (scouts that turn into

icles) march to the music of equally cold musicians, you can always go get Icelandic pancakes instead. The crêpe-like flat pancakes (pönnukökur), served either rolled with sugar or filled with whipped cream and jam, are a popular First Day of Summer treat.

So that's what I now know about Sumardagurinn Fyrsti.

Johann Schreiner

[\*] [http://www.whatson.is/sumardagurinn\\_fyrsti\\_](http://www.whatson.is/sumardagurinn_fyrsti_)

## BRÚIN CHAPTER BURSARY

Ben Dahlin received Brúin Chapter's 2017 bursary upon his graduation from Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive High School. Ben is a grandson of Brúin Chapter long-time member and Past President, the late Larry Johnson. Ben recently completed his first year in the Integrated Education Degree Program at the University of Winnipeg. Congratulations, Ben!

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The annual membership fee is \$20. We will happily accept new members at Sumardagurinn Fyrsti, just ask the ticket sales ladies to direct you to Helene Davis.



Displays at Homes for the Holidays.

## CURRENT CLUB EXECUTIVE

President - Maria Bear

Vice-President - Lorraine Hirst

Secretary /Treasurer -Helene Davis

Past President - Brad Hirst

## ÍSLENSKAR SUMARBÚÐIR ICELANDIC CAMP 2018

This summer the Icelandic Camp welcomed 47 campers from all over North America. Located in Gimli, MB, the heart of New Iceland, these little Vikings (some not so little) sparked their interest in all things Icelandic. During the week leading up to Íslendingadagurinn these campers were kept busy with many activities, the most important one being the language classes. As many of you know, Icelandic is not an easy language to pick up quickly. With help from Brett Lamoureux and Margrét Jónína Árnadóttir the campers were learning the language quite well and using it much more this year. Not only were they speaking it a bit more but they were also able to learn several Icelandic songs to perform at the 32<sup>rd</sup> annual Camp Concert Series.

We also had the opportunity to visit Hecla Island and have a personal tour from Maxine Ingalls, resident expert of the Island and my Aunty! (Cheap plug so I can get some of her Kleiner... ) The campers learned about the pioneers and how the Ukrainians, Indigenous people and Icelanders worked together to learn from each other. As well they learned about the local fishing industry. We were surprised to meet the Consul General at the Hecla Village docks. He was able to share a few words with us and meet some of the staff and campers.

On August 2<sup>nd</sup> we held our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Icelandic Camp Concert Series at the Gimli Pavilion. The campers performed a medley of songs both in Icelandic and English. This is no easy feat, as Icelandic can be a hard language to pronounce, let alone sing and memorize. They did such a great job!

Afterwards the Icelandic Camp was the beneficiary of an amazing gift from the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba. Grant Stefanson, incoming IFM President, along with the entire festival board asked the children to create their own Rune stones to be placed throughout the new Viking Park, allowing them to have a personal and private spot within the park. We were also the very first group of people to have access to the park. The kids were almost as excited as the staff and accompanying parents. This opportunity is a once in a lifetime event and we at Icelandic Camp are very grateful to everyone who made this happen.

Throughout the week the campers also got to enjoy the beautiful weather by playing in the lake, participating in activities around the camp and most importantly making friendships that will last a lifetime.

This year the Icelandic Camp will take place Saturday, July 28<sup>th</sup> – Friday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you know of a child aged 5-17 that would like to attend Icelandic Camp or maybe you would like to get involved in some way please feel free to visit us at [www.icelandiccamp.com](http://www.icelandiccamp.com)

Second Place for our  
Icelandic-themed tree  
at the Festival of Trees!

