



Brúin Chapter, Selkirk Icelandic National League



Newsletter

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120th Sumardagurinn Fyrsti

Spring 2013

Design/Layout: Kathy Dahlin

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Wow, another year has passed. It's amazing how time flies. Our Brúin Chapter has had another very busy year and we have an exciting year ahead. This year is our 120th annual Sumardagurinn Fyrsti or First Day of Summer Concert. The Brúin Chapter is one of the oldest clubs of The Icelandic National League in Canada. We are very proud to carry on this tradition that was started so long ago.

In April, Club representatives were invited to The Betel Home Foundation's Volunteer Appreciation Tea. Our Sumardagurinn Fyrsti was very successful. Atli Ásmundsson and Þrúður Helgadóttir were in attendance. We had a very enjoyable evening of entertainment and awarded a scholarship to Ashley Hygaard. The Icelandic National League Convention was held in Brandon, MB. Lorraine and Brad Hirst, Maxine Ingalls, Heather and Johann Schreiner, Gord and Marie Kanne, Patsy Zdrill, Kathy Dahlin and Laura and Maria Bear all attended. Our Club made and donated all the kleinur for the Convention (for all three days). Our Kaffi Tima Choir entertained the evening of the registration. Lorraine Hirst received a lifetime membership.

In May we had our wrap-up business meeting.

On June 9th a group of Canadian Icelanders from Arborg, Gimli and Selkirk areas headed down to Mountain, North Dakota to meet up with Icelanders from that area and tour the Mountain, Gardar, The Stefan G. Stefanson Monument, Thingvellir Cemetery and Cavalier areas. Loretta Bernhoft was our tour guide and what a wonderful job she did. Then we headed out to The Icelandic State Park. The day started out quite stormy but turned out to be beautiful after all. It was a lot of fun. Thank you Lorna Tergesen for coming up with the idea and organizing this outing.

June 16th was the Kvannahlaup (Women's Run for Cancer) held in both Gimli and Winnipeg, as well as in Iceland that same day. I participated in the Gimli run. June 17th is Iceland's Independence Day. A celebration of this was held in Winnipeg on the Legislative Grounds in front of The Jon Sigurdson Statue. The ceremony was well attended. We then moved over to The Winnipeg Art Gallery for a performance there. The Winnipeg Frón Club had a tribute to Atli and Þrúður and then jazz guitarist Björn Thoroddsen entertained us. What a gifted musician. A choir from Akureyri also performed. It was an amazing concert. From our Club Patsy Zdrill, Heather Schreiner, Brad Hirst and I attended.

On June 18th we had our spring windup at Wanda Bruenig's home. It was rainy but being true Vikings we still had a great time.

July 29th Icelandic Camp started, with more campers than last year. Brad Hirst was the Camp Director. We had a volunteer from Iceland return and an Amma from Edmonton (Pat Bond) accompanied her granddaughter to help out at camp. Lorraine Hirst, Laura Bear and I were the cooks, with Kathy Dahlin and Heather Schreiner helping out. Icelandic Camp is such an integral way for our young Icelanders to learn the culture and language. They are our future. Great job Brad and camp staff!!!

In August we celebrate Islendingadagurinn in Gimli. Many of our members helped with events as well as attending the festival.

In October we had our start up meeting for the year and were glad to see each other again. We hosted the October Birthday Party for the residents of Betel Home Foundation with birthdays that month. Our Kaffi Tima Choir sang and then Maeola Whitelam helped us with a polka party for the residents. Thank you Maeola. We helped serve cake and coffee. Twelve residents celebrated their birthdays and amazing longevity.

In November we had a meeting where we elected a new secretary, Helene Davis, and a new treasurer, Kathy Dahlin. Congratulations!!

In December we had our Jólátré (Christmas Party) hosted by Josephine Anderson. We made little Icelandic sheep ornaments for our trees under the direction of Marie and Gord Kanne. We had a gift exchange and of course we had coffee and wonderful Icelandic Christmas treats. It was such a fun evening.

At the end of December the Kaffi Tima Choir sang 'Amazing Grace' in both Icelandic and English at my daughter Laura Bear's funeral. They did a beautiful job. Takk Fyrir...

In January we had our regular meeting. Lögborg-Heimskringla (The Icelandic Newspaper) hosted a gala evening (ljósanott) honoring Atli Ásmundsson and Þrúður Helgadóttir at Fort Garry Place on January 26th. It was a beautiful evening with wonderful tributes. From our club Heather and Johann Schreiner, Maxine and John Ingalls and I attended.

In February we had a regular meeting.

In March we held a meeting, mostly planning for Sumardagurinn Fyrsti but of course visiting and 'coffee-ing'. Arborg's Esjan Chapter hosted their annual Þorrablót on March 16th which was wonderful as usual. They held a tribute to Atli and Þrúður as well. Heather and Johann Schreiner, Maxine and John Ingalls and I attended.

In April The Icelandic National League of North America Convention was held in Seattle, Washington. Johann and Heather Schreiner, Gary Oddleifson and I made our way to the Convention this year.

As you can see, our Club is busy but we always have a lot of fun. We can't wait to socialize with each other. We have two new members, welcome Leanne Olafson-Kupchik and Wanda Erickson-Brandson. Anyone wanting to join our club, please see any of our members and we'll help you out. It's so important that we continue to learn more and share more with others about our Icelandic culture and language. It's especially important to try and get our youth involved.

Maria Bear
President

TRIBUTE TO ATLI AND PRÚÐUR

It seems like only yesterday that we became acquainted with you, Atli, as Consul-General for Iceland to Manitoba and your lovely wife, Þrúður. But it has been nine years and now it feels like you have always been amongst us as our Icelandic representative and as part of our Icelandic family. You have managed to capture our hearts and endeared yourselves not only to us, as Canadian Icelanders, but to everyone who meets you.

As we celebrate the 120th Sumardagurinn Fyrsti concert, we wish to acknowledge the efforts you have made to support the Selkirk Brúin Chapter of the Icelandic National League. It is a privilege to have you here each year giving greetings on behalf of Iceland. Even though we are a small club, we make every attempt to continue the traditions passed down from our ancestors and to keep our Icelandic heritage alive and well as we endeavour to learn to speak the language, sing the songs and make the traditional foods known and recognized as being truly Icelandic!

Þrúður –“Takk kærlega fyrir”– thank you for coming to Selkirk to teach us the history and the skill in making Laufabrauð (Icelandic leafbread). It was so much fun and informative. As the Brúin club, we love to have fun and we trust you have recognized that in this INL chapter.

As you leave Winnipeg to begin a new adventure, we know you will inform the friends and relatives in Iceland that the ties have not been cut but that the Viking blood flows freely connecting Canada and Iceland. When our ancestors came here, I believe they thought that all that was Icelandic would be lost. To the contrary, as generations continue and travel allows, the bond has become stronger and the relationship deeper as more Canadian-Icelandic people travel to meet their relatives and discover their roots. You contributed greatly in encouraging this and in continuing to participate in and encourage Icelandic culture here in Nyja Islands.

Just as our ancestors emigrated from Iceland, you ventured to Canada and became a vital part of Nyja Islands. You now embark on a new journey back to your native land where you can tell the stories and inform fjölskylda okkur (our family) that the spirit of Iceland resounds loud and clear here in Selkirk and the Interlake because of people like us here in Brúin. Thank you for being a part of that.

We love you and wish for you to be blessed abundantly with good health and happiness as you relocate in Iceland. Enjoy your time with your lovely daughters and precious grandchildren.

You will be missed, our dear friends. Until we meet again.

Bless, bless,

Maxine on behalf of the members of Brúin

CONVENTION NEWS

Congratulations go out to our club's newest Honourary members, Lorraine Hirst (awarded at 2012 INL of North America Convention held in Brandon, MB) and Gary Oddleifson (awarded at 2013 Convention held in Seattle, WA).

Also congratulations to Brúin member Heather Schreiner who won a trip to Iceland at the Convention in Seattle!

The Laurence Johnson Lifetime Achievement Award was presented in Seattle to this year's recipient, Alene Thorunn Moris. This award is given each year in memory of Bruin long-time member and Past President Larry Johnson. Larry's daughters Patsy and Kathy are members of Bruin.

WHEN TWO PASSIONS COLLIDE

It all started with a simple Facebook message back in March 2012 asking about rugby in Iceland. After a response from President Kristinn Thor Sigurdsson saying that they have rugby in Iceland and I was welcome to join them in September for a game, I was now in both my favourite worlds.

Ever since I was a young child I have been enthralled with all things Icelandic. From pictures of my Amma and Afi's trips to the strongman Vikings that amazed even this strong farm boy. I always knew that I was an Icelander at heart. When I was older, my brother Trent introduced me to a sport called Rugby. I soon loved it as much as I did Iceland. So much so that I am now the Executive Director for Rugby Manitoba.

My first time playing rugby in Iceland came September 1, 2012 at Voddfonefollidlen in Reykjavik. I was asked to play with the Kopovogur Chameleon's against the Reykjavik Raiders. Many of these athletes had never played a real game of rugby before, making it a rather interesting game. With 14 years of rugby under my belt, I was the 2nd most experienced player on the entire rugby pitch.

However with that experience aside we lost by 5 points (known as 1 try). It was a great day and I made many friends who I still talk to today.

After this experience though, a couple of us decided that we should gather together and invade the West Coast of North America in 2013. With few concerns and several pints, the Icelandic Exiles Rugby Football Club was born. Our tour started in Burnaby Lake, BC then took us to Seattle, WA and Portland, OR, finishing off in Las Vegas, NV at the International Rugby Sevens tournament.

Over the course of 10 days, we got to know people from all over the world. We were treated to great food, drink and stories. Pictures were taken that no one should ever see, however friendships were forged that will last longer than our rugby careers. The motto of our club was "It is a long way from Iceland to heaven". To live up to this motto we played like Vikings on the field and can say with all confidence that we represented Iceland with the pride and respect that it so rightly deserves.

I have been asked to continue to represent Iceland at other international tournaments throughout Europe and I look forward to knowing that I can continue to combine my two passions for many years to come.

Brad Hirst

CLUB EXECUTIVE ARE CURRENTLY:

President - Maria Bear

Vice-President - Brad Hirst

Secretary - Helene Davis

Treasurer - Kathy Dahlin

CLUB OBJECTIVES

Club objectives are to foster and promote good citizenship among people of Icelandic descent; to support Icelandic culture and heritage in various ways; to maintain associations with individuals and organizations which have similar purposes and objectives and to work as a Chapter of the Icelandic National League.

TRAVEL TALK

Johann & Heather's Iceland Adventure

What could I possibly tell you about Iceland that you don't already know or haven't already heard? You've heard all about the hospitality and friendliness of the people. You know that many Icelanders speak English and that there is no problem getting by. You've seen all the sights whether in photos, travel brochures or even personally. Yes you know all about this most wonderful country. So what could I tell you? Nothing, that's what! And that's all I've got. So why bother reading on? Well, because hopefully you're curious about our adventure.

From August 16th - September 5th, 2012 Heather and I went on a three week vacation to Iceland, the country of Heather's heritage. The first two weeks were spent as part of the Snorri Plus program. This is an annual tour for persons over thirty years of age who are interested in Iceland and its history and culture. One of the many benefits of the Snorri Plus program is that the government of Iceland provides a genealogy search to enable those enrolled in the tour to be able to locate and connect with relatives that they may or may not have known about. Besides connecting with many known relatives, Heather discovered branches of her family that she was not aware of. We then were able to meet up with many of these wonderful people where we enjoyed tremendous hospitality! Seriously, both of us fully endorse and highly recommend the Snorri Plus program! So stop hesitating and sign up. Just do it!

Another one of the terrific benefits of the Snorri Plus program is that lectures are provided which cover the language, history, heritage, genealogy, culture, geography and the volcanoes of Iceland. These lectures were very interesting and educational and are not available to the regular tourist.

The tour was arranged to include many highlights both geographical and cultural, especially the Althing which was founded in the year 930 at Pingvellir, the "assembly fields" or "Parliament Plains", situated approximately 45 km east of Iceland's capital, Reykjavík. Just think of it, that was nearly 300 years before the signing of the Magna Carta! Pingvellir is so rife with history that when I was there I could feel it oozing from the rocks!

After our tour of the Golden Triangle, we ended up on the south coast of Iceland for supper at a seaside restaurant. The food in Iceland is remarkably good and we both really enjoyed it. The seaside restaurant was on "the" black sand beach. Wow! How enthused we were to be able to see this unique beach. After an amazing supper of roast lamb and rock lobster, we just had to go out and walk on the black sand. And, being there, I just had to dip my feet into the ocean. With pant legs rolled way up, I slowly and carefully ventured forth. Despite all efforts not to get my pants wet, I was overcome by a rogue wave and was soaked well above the knees right up to... This is where I learned why no one in Iceland swims in the ocean. Even on August 19th during one of the warmest summers on record in Iceland, the North Atlantic Ocean was still really cold! Oh, and as for the "specialness" of the black sand beach? Well, it's Iceland. A volcanic island. All the beaches have black sand!

The tour included so many premiere sights of Iceland that I would need a novel to relate them all. But there was one stand out event that I simply must relate. The event was another amazing benefit of the Snorri Plus program. On August 20th our Snorri group had afternoon coffee with Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, the President of Iceland, at his official residence. Seriously, afternoon coffee with the President of Iceland! He was a most gracious host to our group and spent a lot of time with us, patiently enduring everyone's photo opportunity and then, during coffee time, he engaged

each and every one of us in conversation. He wanted to know each one's background and connection to Iceland. He certainly is the consummate politician. He discussed several current issues of note to Iceland in particular, and also stated his fervent support of the Snorri program. He stressed the importance of the close ties between Iceland and Canada and the United States. It truly was an absolutely surreal experience!

On August 25th our Snorri group attended the annual convention of the Icelandic National League of Iceland which was held in Akureyri in the north of the country. This was a most interesting and enjoyable event. At the convention we met up with several acquaintances from Iceland, Canada and the United States including Pam Furstenau from Mountain, ND as well as Brad Hirst from our own Brúin Chapter. Pam, Brad and some others had come to Iceland to make presentations at the convention.

All good things must come to an end and after two weeks, we bid farewell to our Snorri group as most of them headed back home, whereas we were to stay another week. The third week of our trip we rented a small motor home and toured the country on our own.

Heather absolutely wanted to visit the Westman Islands (Vestmannaeyjar). These are a group of small islands just off the south coast of Iceland accessible by ferry. So away we went, motor home and all. We stayed there overnight, took a boat tour around the main island of Heimaey in the morning and then took a bus tour around the island in the afternoon. The rest of the time, until we caught the ferry back to the mainland that evening, we spent driving around and exploring. It was very interesting to see the lingering devastation, as one third of the town was destroyed by a lava flow from a volcanic eruption in 1973.

We spent the rest of week three driving almost all the way around Iceland including some of the east fjords. We managed to connect with more relatives there and saw many more sights during that week.

Believe it! Kleinur and skyr are available in every grocery and convenience store in Iceland. Yes it truly is paradise! I was totally enchanted with Iceland and with the city of Reykjavík, my new world's favourite city. I also really enjoyed Akureyri, Skagafjörður and Hofsós. And I really got caught up in Icelandic folklore. Many people in Iceland believe in the existence of Huldufólk (hidden people) as well as elves and trolls. Having been there and experienced it myself, I also now believe! For three weeks I was busy keeping look out, in the hopes of seeing some of them. To my great disappointment, I never did see one. And that forms one of the main reasons I am so eager to go back to Iceland. I actually want to keep looking!

The entire adventure can quite easily be summed up in one word – GO! Unless of course you've already been there – in that case two words are necessary – GO AGAIN!

Johann Schreiner

A MUSICAL TALENT

Grandson of our member Josephine Anderson and descendant of Sigtryggur Jónasson, the founder of New Iceland, Jay Uschold recently received one of two Gudrun Skaptason Memorial Scholarships. In 2008 Jay traveled to Iceland with the new Icelandic Youth Choir. Jay is now in his first year in the Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba. While attending Glenlawn Collegiate, he participated in the school's Wind Band, Concert Band and Jazz Ensembles and the school's musical theatre programme. He has been a member of the U of M Concert Band, the Manitoba Provincial Senior Honour Band and the National Youth Orchestra. We extend our congratulations and wish you well in your studies, Jay.

ICELANDIC CAMP - Íslenskar Sumarbuðir 2013

It is hard to believe that with all the snow still on the ground we are talking about the Icelandic Children's Summer Camp. With 4 months to go, the staff at the Icelandic Camp is preparing for yet another exciting and adventurous season.

From July 28th - August 2nd we hope to entertain 35 - 40 children at beautiful Camp Veselka in Gimli, MB. Located along the beaches of Lake Winnipeg, Camp Veselka has been the home of Icelandic Camp for over 10 years.

This year we are excited to introduce some new activities and we are bringing three staff members from Iceland to assist us in making sure the kids get the real deal. As always, we will be offering Icelandic language, culture and games, plus we will be taking the children on a full day trip to see local spots of Icelandic relevance in the Interlake area.

We will continue to offer all the favourites like swimming, a trip into Gimli and seeing the Viking Village, however new trips will be introduced and more learning opportunities made available. The 2013 Camp theme will be An Icelandic Christmas. Carols will be sung, Christmas treats will be shared and it will all be done while comfy and cozy in our shorts in +25 to +30°C weather.

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer some of your time to the Icelandic Camp, please email Brad Hirst at icelandiccamp@gmail.com or visit us at www.icelandiccamp.com for more details.

A MEDAL WELL DESERVED

Lieutenant (N) Sandra Elizabeth McKay, CD, was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal on Saturday, February 9th at 17 Wing CFB Winnipeg. She was recognized for her dedication and commitment to the Canadian Cadet Organization as well as youth sail training programs both military and civilian. She is the daughter of our member Carmen (Johnson) and the late Hugh McKay and granddaughter of the late Gustaf Johnson, Friðrik Magnusson and Guðrún Friðbjörg Eliasson Johnson Magnusson, all of Selkirk.

THE HYGAARD GIRLS EXCEL

Our member Debbie Hygaard's daughters continue to excel in the world of horses.

Robin, who is in grade 12, is a member of The Canadian Western Horse Association. In the summer of 2012 Robin went to four of the five shows and won almost every class she entered. At the year-end banquet, the MC called Robin up to the front and presented her with 12 high point trophies and the high point of the year intermediate trophy, plus many prizes too numerous to mention. Robin intends on showing in the CWHA show tour this summer. She is hoping to get her name out there as a horse trainer.

Ashley Hygaard is currently in Fort Worth, Texas, riding, training and competing in team penning and cattle sorting. Ashley received a phone call from a friend and well known horse trainer from Alberta asking her if she would like to help him condition (ride) horses in Fort Worth for the stock show. She left in February saying she'd be gone for three weeks and now has phoned to say she will be staying longer.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Our members Gord and Marie Kanne are happy to share the activities of their son, Mason. Mason became a member of the Brúin Chapter and he loved gathering knowledge of his heritage and the warm and caring time he spent there. He was active in many Club activities, including First Day of Summer. When he moved to Winnipeg, he sought out the Frón Chapter. They were very impressed with his knowledge of the INL for a young person. Seeing his many skills he was soon involved in many things. At Christmas he worked with the JOLAFVEINNAR (Yule Lads-large puppets) presentation at the Scandinavian Club. In the New Year, he took on the office of "Working with the Youth" of the Frón Chapter. He has organized a poetry night, continuing to show his interest in poetry. His poem "Afi" has been published in the 'Icelandic Connection'. It's early in the year and the sky is the limit as to what he will be up to next. Good luck, Mason.

WEDDING BELLS WILL RING SOON

Our member Carmen McKay's son Don became engaged to Tanya Martinussen in November 2102. They are planning to begin their wedded bliss on August 31, 2013.

IN MEMORIUM

The Brúin Chapter has been deeply saddened this past year as we mourn the passing of Laura Bear. Laura left us far too early at the young age of 45. Despite the valiant efforts of her co-workers, as well as the availability and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), sadly Laura succumbed to an asthma attack shortly before Christmas.

Laura was a stalwart member of our club. She was a vibrant, very active member for the past 13 years and served in various roles. She enlivened us with her spirit and her jovial style. Her happy disposition was always uplifting and made our monthly meetings just that much more enjoyable! We will forever miss her sense of humour, her organizational skills and her love of shopping. Her shopping skills came in very handy for our group as she often took on procuring items for special events such as our Christmas party and especially for Sumardagurinn Fyrsti. Laura was quick to interject whenever there was any dissention in our group. She took care of so many of the duties for all of our planned functions that we will forever miss her input. We have now had to spread out the duties she usually looked after and have had to share them among several of us. Laura was so full of energy that we will have trouble filling those talented shoes. Laura lived her life to the fullest. She was fiercely proud of her Icelandic heritage! She visited Iceland, getting in touch with her Icelandic roots. She regularly attended the Icelandic Camp from the age of eight until in her teens and over the past three years volunteered as one of the camp cooks. She was always encouraging kids to attend the camp. Laura was a diligent and dedicated member of our Bruin Chapter. We all extend our heartfelt sympathies to her family and friends and especially to her Mom, our President, Maria Bear.

Laura Maria Bear
November 11, 1967 - December 20, 2012
Dearly missed. Gone but never forgotten.