

# Vatnabyggð

Icelandic Club Newsletter



May 2016

## Report from the President

I would like to honour the memory of those who are no longer with us. Gunnlaugur Goodman and Joan Eyolfson Cadham both passed away last fall and will be missed very much. They contributed so much to this club. With the passing of Joan, the newsletter has sadly been forgotten, so I will make an attempt to do this well.

There were a few changes to our executive. At our annual meeting in January 2016, I was elected as President, Karen Olafson as treasurer and Lynda Waite agreed to continue as our secretary.

Our Board of Directors include: Karen Olafson, Cindy Goodman, Margaret Solvason, Stella Stephanson, Christie Dalman, and Lynda Waite.

The purposes of our Corporation are:

1. to foster and promote good citizenship among people of Icelandic origin
2. to foster and promote knowledge of the Icelandic language, literature and other Icelandic cultural heritage
3. to foster and promote harmony and co-operation and to maintain an active and viable association of individuals and organizations with similar purposes and objectives

Cindy Goodman, President Vatnabyggð Icelandic Club

## Porrablót

We celebrated our 35th annual Porrablót on Saturday, April 23, 2016. The local bakery catered the Canadian buffet which included roast beef, lemon chicken and cabbage rolls. Icelandic delicacies included Sæt súpa, rúllupylsa served on Icelandic brown bread, Mysostur served on white bread, Vinaterta, Pönnukökur and Skyr. Only in small-town Saskatchewan will you find cabbage rolls and rúllupylsa served on the same buffet!

Pastor Íris Kristjánsdóttir led us in grace. Supper was followed by a program which included local talent. For our silent auction we received some lovely donations from members, local artists and home-based businesses.

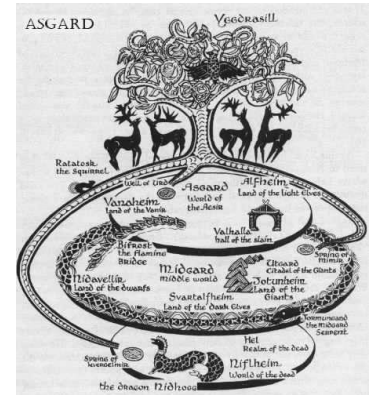
We had a raffle with the winners/prizes: Stuart Stephanson from Elfros won the Aurora Day Spa certificate, Milton & Colette Melnychuk from Foam Lake won the Icelandic doll, Debbie Ford from Elfros won the set of Icelandic Sagas and Lynda Waite from Wishart won the \$500 travel voucher with IcelandAir.

We were honoured to have visiting dignitaries, Horary Icelandic Consul for Saskatchewan, Jón Örn Jonsson, and Ambassador Sturla Sigurjónsson from Ottawa with us for the evening. Jón Örn Jonsson had taken Ambassador Sturla Sigurjónsson to Elfros that afternoon to see the heritage statue there.



To promote our culture and heritage, we learned a little about the ancient Viking Gods and Goddesses. Each table had a picture of a God or Goddess and after the God/ess' story was read, then that table could proceed to the buffet table. These were sourced through "Google".

1. At the center of the Norse universe is the great tree called Yggdrasil, which grows from the fathomless depths of the Well of Urd. In a complicated bit of magic, three powerful and shrewd maidens, called Norns, carve runes into the tree's trunk, which dictate the destiny of all the Norse worlds (there are nine worlds — most of them invisible to the human eye — in which different creatures reside; Midgard is the realm of the humans while Asgard is the gods' dwelling place).



2. Odin was the highest ranking god. He is also known as All-Father. Odin is the wisest of the Viking gods and seeks his knowledge far, even to his arch enemies the giants. A lot of his knowledge comes from the giant Mimir. According to the story he went there to get a drink from the fountain of Mimir in order to gain supreme knowledge. Mimir didn't allow him that unless he sacrificed one of his eyes. From then on Odin has been with but one eye since the other one is still on the bottom of Mimir's fountain. He pulls his hood over the missing eye and that is one way of recognizing him when he is traveling among humans. From the giants Odin also got the mead of poetry.



3. The Norse god Thor is the son of Odin and Earth. His wife is Sif. He has one daughter, Thrudur and two sons, Modi and Mangi. Originally Thor was the Norse god of thunder. He is the strongest of all the Norse gods. His weapon is Mjolnir, a hammer that is the finest piece among gods and men. He also has a belt which, when worn increases his strength. His third important piece is a pair of iron gloves that he can't be without when he uses his hammer. When used together the three pieces doubled Thor's strength. The Norse god Thor protects the land of the gods from the giants. If he wasn't around and with his hammer, the giants



would over run Asgard (the land of the gods) as well as Midgard (the land of the humans) and bring total destruction. Thor is constantly battling the giants and kills so many of them that he's able to hold them back. It is this role that made the Vikings view Thor as the Norse god of war.

4. The Norse god Balder is the son of Odin and Frigg. His wife's name is Nanna Nepsdaughter and their son is named Forseti. His home is called Breidablik (Far shining) and is in heaven. Nothing unclean can come up there. He also owns a ship called Hringhorn, the greatest of all ships. The Norse god Balder is described as being the greatest of all. Everyone loves him. He is so beautiful and fair that he glows. A flower exists that can be compared to him. It is the whitest of all flowers and from it you can judge Balder's beauty, both hair and body. He is the wisest of all the Viking gods, well spoken of and the most gentle. But he is plagued by bad dreams that mustn't come true.



5. The Norse god Niord was a very wealthy god that could give land and money to anyone he wanted. He seems to have been the god that controlled people's prosperity and affluence. He was originally the god of fertility, but that job was gradually passed over to his son the Norse god [Freyr](#). According to Icelandic sources Niord is the god of the seas.



He's married to the giant Skad, the daughter of Thiasi the giant. Their marriage was not a happy one and each wanted to live in their land. In the end they went their separate ways. Skad returned to the land of the giants in the mountains and Niord to his land close to the sea.

6. The Viking god Freyr is the son of Niord and eventually takes over his job as a fertility god. He is one of the greatest Viking gods. He controls the sunshine and the rain and therefore also the fruits of the earth. He also controls the prosperity of men. He is very beautiful and powerful. He is so kind that he makes no maiden nor wife of men cry. Freyr has great status amongst the Viking gods and goddesses.

He controls the world of the elves that the gods gave him. The elves made him a huge ship called Skidbladnir. It is so big that all the gods in full armor can easily fit there. It is the fastest of all ships and will always have wind in its sail. It also has one magical feature, when it is not in use it can be folded together like a cloth and kept in a pouch. Freyr also has a boar he rides that is called Gullinbursti. He also has a magical sword that fights by itself. Unfortunately he gives it away in order to marry a giant. When Armageddon arrives he really misses his sword when he has to fight Surt the giant. This will bring about his death.



7. The Viking god Tyr is the son of Odin. He is considered the bravest of the Viking gods and can decide the outcome of battles. It's good to worship him if you are a warrior. He is also very wise and far sighted. His courage is such that he takes risks even though he knows the odds are against him. There are two sayings that involve Tyr. One is to be Tyr-brave and the other, to be Tyr-wise. Tyr only has one arm since he lost one while fighting the wolf Fenrir. Tyr seems to have been mostly worshiped in Denmark. His worship, however doesn't seem to have become widespread in either Sweden or Norway. In the last few centuries of paganism, worship of Tyr declined rapidly. For much of this time he stands in the shadows of Odin, Thor and Freyr.



8. The god Heimdall is yet another son of Odin. He also has nine mothers who are sisters themselves and maidens to boot. He is the guardian of the gods and lives in Himinbjorg (Heaven rock) which is at the end of the bridge Bifrost that leads into the land of the Viking gods. He is sometimes called the white god and Goldtooth. His job is to guard the bridge Bifrost (the Rainbow) and make sure that no giant or any other foul creature can find its way into Godland. He has an incredible vision. He can see equally well, near and far, both day or night. His hearing is also exceptional. He hears the grass grow and the wool grow on sheep. He also needs



less sleep than a bird. No wonder he's picked out as the watchman. He has a huge horn that he will use when danger approaches. The horn is called Gjoll and can be heard in all corners of the world.

9. The Norse Goddess Freyia is daughter of Niord. Her name means queen. Her domain is called Folkvangur and her home is called Sessrunir, a big and beautiful house. She has the finest of all jewels called Brisingarmen. Her husband is Odur. Odur left a long time ago and Freyia has ever since wept for him. Her tears are of gold. She has traveled to many lands to look for him, but not managed to find him. She also cried much when Balder was killed and will cry even more when Odin is killed. When she travels she goes about in a chariot that is pulled by cats. Many stories exist where the giants are trying to force the Viking gods to hand over Freyia to them. However, she always flatly refuses to go each time. She likes the music of humans and it is good to worship her when it comes to matters of love.



10. Loki, the sliest and darkest of all the gods and will eventually betray them and fight them in Armageddon. The Norse God Loki is considered one of the Viking gods. But he is a giant and in many ways unlike the other gods. Loki is good looking, but mischievous and devious. Often he's referred to as the Norse god of Strife. He has the ability to change into any shape, an ability he uses a lot. He was accepted into the ranks of the gods by becoming Odin's blood brother. From the stories of Loki it is clear that he goes through two stages. The earlier stage is where Loki is not at all bad. He follows the other gods and even though he causes trouble it is unintentional and is due to his shortsightedness and carelessness. In the latter stage Loki has become a true demon. Now he's blamed for everything that goes bad. Loki's wife is called Sygin and is the sweetest and most loyal of all women. Their son's are called Vali and Nari. But Loki had more offsprings. With the horse Svadilfari (being in the shape a mare) he had Odin's horse Sleipnir. But his most famous offsprings, which



he had with a troll woman, are the wolf Fenrir, the serpent of Midgard and the goddess of death, Hel.

11. Fenrir, son of Loki. The gods raised him themselves trying to keep him from wreaking havoc throughout the 9 worlds. In order to bind him, the god Tyr sacrificed his hand to trick the wolf. But it is said that he will break free in Ragnarok, with his mouth open he will devour the ground and the sky, even manage to kill the all-father.



12. Ragnarok – the Norse Apocalypse. It's where gods and beasts alike meet their demise, and the world crashes into oblivion.



13. Another picture of Balder with wife, Nanna Nepsdaughter



We had quite a diverse program. Pastor Íris Kristjánsdóttir led a sing-a-long of Icelandic folk songs, including the English favorite, Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer ... which the Icelandic version has her being invited for a boat ride, instead of on a bicycle built for two.



Raea Lamont, accompanied by Marilyn Lazorko, sang the Icelandic song, “Faeries in the Moonlight”. It is great to have our youth involved. Cindy Goodman recited both Icelandic (translated to English) and “cowboy” poetry. Luz Marina Dominguez and Carson Froehlich closed the show with their amazing talents on their guitars; they were requested to perform an encore.

We had a great response to the contest, “Viking, can I whack you?” Rules are: you must keep one hand on the box at all times. You call out your opponent’s name. Your opponent must answer back and you try to whack the opponent with your bag filled with ????. Three whacks wins. You of course take turns whacking and must be blindfolded. When you respond after your name is called, you cannot move the hand on the box. Each contestant was awarded a club shirt.



Lyndon Morrison, Marilyn Fredsberg (referee) and Stefan Lindal were great sports in this activity. Lyndon was wearing 35 pounds of chainmail during the contest. We will be looking for new ideas for next year!



Our Icelandic guests have often given us a hard time for having Thorrablot so late in the year. I understand that in Iceland, Thorrablot is celebrated in Feb or March ... but isn't it supposed to be a celebration for the end of winter??? I was in Iceland at the beginning of March, and yes, winter seemed to be over. The day before our Thorrablot, it was snowing here. Maybe next year we should have our Thorrablot in June – then maybe winter will be over!

### **Other news**

We have received information about the Snorri program for 2017. If anyone is interested, please contact Karen Olafson.

We are thrilled that Eric Olafson has been accepted as an exchange student at Reykjavik this fall for 4 months. Congratulations Eric! He will be taking Arctic Dynamics: Power and Everyday Life; Being Icelandic: Icelandic folktales, beliefs and popular culture past and present; introduction to the history of Iceland from settlement to modern times. Karen may be “forever in motion”, while Eric is “forever in school”.

Icelandic Independence Day is June 17, which is a Friday this year, with Wynyard Carnival Days and Father's Day that weekend. Hopefully we will find a way to celebrate the date. We are open to suggestions.

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