

## AMBASSADOR'S RECEPTION WELL ATTENDED

Heather Alda Ireland, Consul General in Vancouver, escorted Thórður Ægir Óskarsson, Iceland's Ambassador in Ottawa, to Vancouver Island during his recent western provinces tour. A reception, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, held at the Tally Ho Hotel, to introduce the ambassador to the people of the Victoria area, was well attended. He spent the afternoon mingling with the locals, making new acquaintances, sampling pastries and drinking coffee. The gathered listened attentively as he spoke of Iceland's interest in Western Icelanders and his government's role in Canada today. To commemorate his visit Margo Matwychuk, club treasurer, presented him with a couple of books on behalf of the local Icelandic club. The books had been thoughtfully chosen, reflecting local culture and topics to pique the interest of the ambassador. Thórður Óskarsson noted that fresh made cream puffs were served in honour of "Bolladagur" a holiday that would be celebrated the next day in Iceland. Thank you to the Beck Trust for sponsoring this wonderful event.

### Independence Day Picnic

Come and celebrate your Icelandic heritage and the birthday of Jón Sigurðsson, the father of Iceland's struggle for Independence.

The Icelanders of Victoria have invited the Mid Island Icelandic Club from Nanaimo to share in celebrating Iceland's Independence Day this year. Our potluck picnic will be on Saturday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. at the home of Runa, Vince and Roxanne Pleshak, 4431 Leefield Rd., in Metchosin.

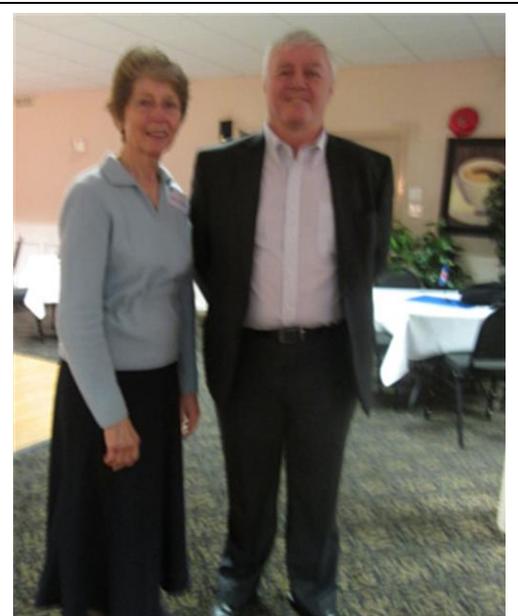
The picnic begins at 12 noon, and lunch will be served at 1 p.m. bring something to share potluck style. Come make new friends and enjoy the company of your old ones.

### **HARÐFISKUR and RÚLLAPÝLSA**

For those that didn't get enough hardfish at the Thorrablót Margo has shared her sources;

**Jon Karlsson** for Hardfish  
on Facebook: Jon's Auto Service  
phone number: 1.204.641.2526  
email: jonsautos1@gmail.com

**Don Bilinski** for Rullapýlsa  
Phone number: 1-204-378-2393  
Email: [shopeasy@lakenet.ca](mailto:shopeasy@lakenet.ca)



BEV NORMAN and THÓRÐUR ÓSKARSSON



# THORRABLÓT 2014



PHOTO: TRISH BAER

From left: Valla Eiriksson, Victoria *Fjallkona*, Fred Bjarnason and the Anderson sisters

## VICTORIA HAD IT ALL – *þorrablót* a success

Bill Valgardson  
Victoria, BC

We rocked. We being the Icelanders of Victoria. We expected 40, then 60, then 86, and Fred Bjarnason had to order more food because food is the centre of *þorrablót*. We rented Norway House, great venue, hired a chef from the University to work with Fred, and got ready to party. We had door prizes, we had dancing, we had our *fjallkona*, Valla Eiriksson, crowned by Trish Baer who had been our previous *Fjallkona*, we had the Anderson sisters from Alberta join us for the first time, we had serious food. *Hangikjöt*, *rúllupylsa*, hot and cold roast lamb, roast beef, horse radish so hot it cleared out my sinuses and lifted me off the chair, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, white sauce,

Icelandic ravioli, local salmon, salads and more salads, and pickles and pickled beets. And there were desserts and as master of ceremonies I told the story of how coffee came to Iceland in 1703, how the big shots at Skáholt were the only ones who got to drink it at first. Drinking coffee spread and soon every farm had its own pot for roasting coffee and its own grinder for grinding coffee and people became known for their coffee. And there was *skyr*, *pönnukökur*, strawberries, chocolate cake, *ástarbollur*, and flourless chocolate cake for people like me who have celiac disease. And after we dined, we danced and drank coffee and celebrated because we've got lots to celebrate. Congratulations to our board and especially to Fred Bjarnason, the miracle man in the kitchen.

This article originally appeared in the April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 edition of the LÖGBERG-HEIMSKRINGLA newspaper. It has been reprinted by kind permission of Bill Valgardson.

ADDRESS of the FJALLKONA:  
Victoria Thorrablót : 2014  
by Valla Eiriksson

Honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege to represent the Icelanders of Victoria as *Fjallkona* tonight and for the coming year.

My name is Valla Eiriksson, my great-grandparents on my father's side were Þórður Kolbeinsson and Guðríður Jónsdóttir who farmed in the Mýrasysla district, their farm was named Einafell. They emigrated to Canada from Iceland in 1887, and arrived in Manitoba in March of 1888. My grandfather Kolbeinn Stephan Kolbeinsson was born there, in April, 1888.

The family continued westward, as my great-grandfather and other Icelanders were waiting for land grants in what is now Saskatchewan. As the years passed and finances permitted, I can trace their movements from Manitoba to another Icelandic settlement near Tantallon, Saskatchewan, then to Foam Lake, then Saskatoon, and finally in 1910, 22 years after their arrival in Canada, now with six grown children and together with several other Icelandic families, to their land near the Alberta-Saskatchewan border.

I have stood on that land, their homestead, where my father was born... it had two houses, a barn, the trees and bushes they planted to break the harsh Saskatchewan north wind, and I felt as if I could sense their presence, their dream was so strong. We know that our ancestors suffered and endured great hardship in emigrating to an unknown land with unknown possibilities, where nothing was certain except the cycles of day and night. They lived through the Great War followed by the great influenza pandemic of 1918, the Great Depression, the Second World War. These things are unimaginable to us today, our lives are so different, and so easy in comparison.

But reading the personal histories of these pioneers gives us a sense of the Icelandic character, and is inspiration for our own lives. Patience, determination, perseverance, a good sense of humour, and above all, their kindness. What a strong and courageous people! We are here tonight because of them. And we must remember them, and celebrate them, as we are doing tonight.

I would like to close with a quote from a well-known Icelandic-Canadian author, who is here tonight... Bill Valgardson. It exemplifies this sense of remembrance and ancestors and personal history, and I hope that you will hold these words in your heart, as I do:

**"There is no road in the world more important than the road home."**



## Could Star Wars 7 be heading to Iceland?

ENTERTAINMENT, ICELAND

As news of the highly-anticipated Star Wars 7 movie continues to leak, recent reports have indicated that Iceland could be among the filming locations.

An Icelandic website has claimed the crew are set to travel to the North Atlantic nation in April before the main production starts in May. However, the news may not be as exciting as many Icelanders may think, with reports suggesting stars such as Harrison Ford and Mark Hamill will not be visiting the country, rather the production team plans to use it for landscape shots.

The site, [www.visir.is](http://www.visir.is), said producers have earmarked Iceland as a location where “landscape plate shots” can be taken and later used for scenery. The report has, however, sparked talk that the last Star Wars could be partly set on Hoth, the ice planet.

Directed by JJ Abrams, Star Wars Episode 7 will be mostly filmed at Pinewood Studios, and is set for release on 15 December, 2015. It will be set three decades after the Return of the Jedi, which premiered in 1983.

A recent announcement revealed that three new young leads will be cast alongside some of the familiar faces from previous editions. Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher have been among the names rumoured to be returning. Other possible cast members include Girls star Adam Driver and Oscar-winner Lupita Nyong’o.

## MORE THORRABLÓT

After it was necessary to cancel the Thorrablót last year the board of directors were uncertain what the outcome would be this year for their efforts. It was a pleasant surprise to have 83 people come out March 15<sup>th</sup> to celebrate their Icelandic heritage. People came out of the wood work so to speak. Several family groups filled whole tables. Virginia Guenther organized a Lindal family table, Bill Valgardson had his family join him and President Fred Bjarnason had guests from Lethbridge, Alberta and Golden, BC to fill another table. Shawn and Margaret Bryant from Nanaimo and Allan Millar from Ottawa joined us while he was here visiting Vancouver Island

Past president of the club Tom Benjamin and his wife Beverly Dondale were presented with a gift certificate for a package of performances at the Blue Bridge Repertory Theatre. It was “to replace the leisure time that they gave up for the club”, president Fred Bjarnason said during his presentation. Tom was club president since 2007 and Beverly has filled a variety of positions on the board, including vice president, membership chairman and secretary, during the same period.

Also honoured for her efforts for the club was Jodene Johl, she was presented the 2014 Presidents Award. Jodene has been responsible for the decorations at club events most often using her own materials, decorations and themes.

### Matinee Movie Afternoon

UVIC was the well-chosen venue for our clubs recent showing of “The DEEP” produced by the Icelander Baltazar Kormakur. This film based on a true story of a shipwrecked Icelandic fisherman lost at sea. This typically Icelandic drama was both heart breaking and heart-warming. All in all it was a good movie and we are looking forward to the next film presentation by the club.

### **AGM: September 26, 2014**

Put this date on you calendar and come out to our Annual General Meeting at Norway House. It is a potluck dinner night, doors open at doors at 5:30pm dinner begins at 6pm with the meeting to follow at 7pm.

## WHAT IS THE I N L you may ask?

The Icelandic National League of North America was established in 1919, it is a non-political, cultural organization that strives to contribute to North American culture through the preservation and promotion of the positive aspects of our Icelandic heritage which was brought to this continent by our Icelandic pioneer forefathers and their descendants, through the strengthening of cultural bonds and kinship ties with the people of Iceland and through the promotion of cooperation among Icelandic cultural groups here in North America.

Wow the answer was quite the mouthful! Now one would expect that all of these cultural groups would be in Manitoba or North Dakota where the largest organized settlements historically were. But the list is quite surprising in that there are some unusual locations and the largest clubs are not necessarily in Manitoba. The ICCBC in Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto all have memberships that are more than the sum of the entire Manitoban membership list. Locations like Ottawa and our local Victoria club are members of the INL

INL has created programs, grants, fund raising tools, calendars, language camps and scholarships. It is also used as a channel for the flow of information from the government of Iceland to people of Icelandic descent in North America.

The following are a few of the INLs organized efforts:

### **The Donald K. Johnson Icelandic Film Series.**

The film series is funded by a generous grant from Donald K. Johnson

### **International Visits Program**

Each year the Program selects and sponsors people from North America or from Iceland with special qualifications or expertise as writers, scholars, scientists, genealogists, researchers or other areas of interest to audiences.

### **SNORRI PROGRAM**

Since 1999 The Snorri Program has offered hundreds of young individuals (18-30) to participate in a 6-week diverse program in Iceland.

### **SNORRI PLUS**

This program for individuals over 30 who are interested in Iceland. It is a 2-week cultural program focused on relatives, history, culture, nature and everything in between!

### **SCHOLARSHIP DEPT. OF ICELANDIC LANGUAGE & LITERATURE**

We invite students of Icelandic or part-Icelandic descent to apply for the following scholarships which are offered, or administered by the Canada Iceland Foundation

### **ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF B.C.**

The Icelandic Canadian Club of British Columbia has established a fund to provide financial assistance to students of Icelandic descent who are residents of B.C. and who are beginning or continuing a program of post secondary education.

### **GOVERNMENT OF ICELAND SCHOLARSHIP**

Scholarships for Icelandic as a second language at the University of Iceland.

### **Snorri Sturluson Icelandic Fellowships**

The Snorri Sturluson Icelandic Fellowships are granted to writers, translators and scholars (not students) in the field of humanities from outside Iceland, to enable them to stay in Iceland for a period of at least three months, in order to improve their knowledge of the Icelandic language, culture and society Find more information on these programs, scholarship and events at [www.inlofna.org](http://www.inlofna.org) the INLs website ,check out the weblinks for more Icelandic connections. This website is being updated and will be relaunched at the INL convention in May. Já

Icelandic National League of North America

**95<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention**

May 15-18, 2014

Winnipeg ↔ Manitoba ↔ Canada

*"Welcoming Icelanders since 1875"*

at the Canad Inns – Polo Park



Source: TravelManitoba.com

### **Footprints: "Celebrating Our Achievements"**

A true celebration of our motherland, our history, and our future! Renowned authors, historians and musicians will share their insights, perspectives and talents. A time to share and honour the contributions and history of the Icelanders in North America.

### **Early Registration Discounts before March 15, 2014**

Rooms available at \$119.00 (double occupancy) with up to 2 free breakfasts.

Contact Canad Inns Polo Park 1-204-775-8791 Event Booking No. 238367

### **For Information and Registration:**

Visit the INL of NA Web site at [www.inlofna.org](http://www.inlofna.org)

Or contact Linda:

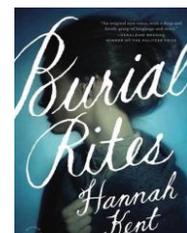
E-Mail: [linda@lh-inc.ca](mailto:linda@lh-inc.ca) or Phone: (204) 284-5686  
or Toll Free 1-866-564-2374

## A Book Worth Reading

Hannah Kent's

### **"BURIAL RITES"**

A review by Vorna Butler



"I recently read "Burial Rites" by Hannah Kent. The author is a twenty something Australian who went on a Rotary exchange to Iceland and was enthralled by the country. I was very impressed by the calibre of writing of this first novel which tells a fictional story of a young woman accused of murder and housed to await execution with a farm family who are more than reluctant to have her.

Set in the early 19th century this compelling tale was apparently inspired by a true story of the last execution in Iceland. If that is the case, it strikes me that Iceland must have given up capital punishment more than a century before the rest of the Western world! Revealing also are the descriptions of the harsh conditions under which our ancestors lived with primitive houses, brutal winters and a precarious food supply. In all an excellent read."