



The Icelandic Canadian Club of British Columbia

NEWSLETTER

May 2016

XLVIII:v

Strandarsaga - A Coast Story

ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF NORTH AMERICA 2016 CONVENTION April 29-30, Hosted by the Icelandic Canadian Club of BC

The Convention was a great success. The sun was out, the River Rock Casino Resort was a great location on the water, the place was full of friendly people, everyone laughed a lot, talked a lot, ate a lot, met new relatives, and enjoyed it all. This is what we did:

On Thursday, we had a tour on the Skytrain from the hotel, over Burrard Inlet on the SeaBus to North Vancouver. We had a stop at 41st & Cambie, at the Lutheran Church which the Icelanders built in the 1950s. Inga Henrikson gave us a tour and spoke about history. In the Fall, the church will be replaced by a tower but the church congregation itself will occupy the 2nd floor.

The Silent Auction opened and it was exceptional with many items much wanted by the crowd, such as, Icelandic shawls and sweaters, food and wine baskets, glassware, original paintings, and even a Canucks jersey signed by *Daniel Sedin*. This was a significant fundraiser for the club.

On Friday, the convention was officially opened by the Convention Chair Norman Eyford. First Nations group, The Tsatsu Stalqay- Coastal Wolf Pack, MP Peter Julian, and M/C Oðinn Helgason.

The following were presenters and their presentations. Regarding most of the lectures, you can check the INL website for either the audio or video or both: <http://www.inlofna.org/2016-Convention-in-Vancouver>.

Fred Bjarnason	<i>Victoria/Point Roberts/Golden</i>
Signý Wilson	<i>Ósland/ Hunter Island/ Sunnybrook</i>
Gerri McDonald, Marilyne Anderson & Lisa Sigurgeirson-Maxx	<i>Vancouver</i>
Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir	<i>Snorri, Snorri Plus</i>
Gail Einarson-McCleery	<i>Snorri West</i>
Margaret Willson	<i>Survival on the Edge, Seawomen of Iceland</i>
Hafþór Yngvason	<i>The Artist, Jóhannes Kjarval</i>
Lisa Sigurgeirsson Maxx—Michael Darragh	<i>Still Creek Crows, musical entertainment</i>
Edward Rickson	<i>BirdLife Iceland</i>
Heather Alda Ireland	<i>Four Plays by Guttormur J. Guttormsson</i>
Bill Valgardson	<i>Lunch Presentation: "Coming West"</i>
	<i>The speech is in this newsletter, pages 6-9.</i>
Gunnar Ólafur Hansson	<i>The Icelandic Language Through Time and Space</i>
Rosa Bjarnason Kontogianni	<i>Rune Readings by Rosa</i>

The Official INL Opening and Award Ceremony began with the procession of dignitaries being introduced by

(Continued on page 2)

Gerri McDonald, past president of the INL, after which Bethany Butler-Wong sang the three national anthems. INLNA president Claire Eckley welcomed the attendees to the 97th annual convention. Sturla Sigurjónsson, Iceland's Ambassador to Canada, spoke, followed by retiring Ambassador Hjálmar W. Hannesson, Consul General of Iceland. This was his final farewell speech and he made a point of giving full credit to his wife, Anna Birgis, who he said was always a part of their team. This evening included honoring six members of Icelandic clubs across North America who have devoted time and effort to the Icelandic community. Because of space issues, that information will be in June newsletter.

Saturday morning the audience enjoyed a presentation by Edward Rickman of Birdlife Iceland which was accompanied by stunning photographs of the birds of Iceland. This was followed by four short plays written by Guttormur J. Guttormsson and presented by eight actors who entertained the more than 200 conventioners.

During Saturday, the Annual General Meeting of the Icelandic National League was held. Discussion ensued on a number of items though none were controversial. The new Board includes: Sunna Furstenau, President; Brad Hirst 1st VP, Past President, Claire Eckley.

At the banquet on Saturday evening, Donald Garth Gíslason was the *Keynote speaker*. He was very entertaining and kept everyone laughing throughout his speech. The official ending to the convention was on a high note.

The next day, Sunday, two buses travelled with approximately 100 people who had the option of travelling to either the Höfn Icelandic Harbour, or to Queen Elizabeth Park; after which they went for lunch to the Scandinavian Community Centre in Burnaby which includes our Iceland Room. Lunch was by Marilyne Anderson and her crew, and presenters at the lunch were: Sunna Furstenau, *Icelandic Roots*, and Christina Reid, *Viking Trade*. The buses returned the travellers to the hotel as many were scheduled to fly home that evening or next day.

In 2017, INL NA convention will be at Alerus Centre, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

INL 2016 Convention Committee Members



Gerri, Margaret, Nina, Heather, Norman, Linda, Joan, Marilyne, Gladys

Chair	Norman Eyford
Co-Chair	Marilyne Anderson
Silent Auction	Marilyne Anderson
Advisor	Gerri McDonald
Registration	Joan Christensen
Website	Edda Langworth
Program	Margaret Amirault
Audio Visual, Brochure Cover Photo:	Linda Johnson
Editor	Heather Johnson
Vendors	Nina Jobin
Facebook Posts	Lois Turner
Fundraising:	Norman Eyford, Marilyne Anderson, Peggy Friðriksdóttir
Committee Members:	Gladys Johnson, Kristjana Helgason, Wayne Brandson, Loren Gudbjartsson, Kristjana Einarsdóttir

Presidential Election June 25, 2016 Advance Poll

Icelanders in British Columbia will be able to vote at an advance poll on **June 8, 2016 from 3pm to 5pm** at the Law Offices of Owen Bird, 29th floor, Tower Three, Bentall Centre, 595 Burrard Street. Vancouver. The Consul General, Heather Alda Ireland, will accept requests for an alternate date or time to vote.

Please email iceconsul@shaw.ca

Donations of \$1000 or More

Adam Isfeld, Keywest Ford
ICELANDAIR
Icelandic Roots
Shirley Eyford Lyon
Oðinn & Kristjana Helgason

Heritage Luncheon

Donations Received 'IN HONOUR OF'

Stefania Eymundson - **Asdis Sophia (Olafsson) Eymundson**
Kimberley Neath - grandparents **Hilda and Halli Eyford**
Joan Young - **Jon Filippusson & Johanna Jónsdóttir** who pioneered at Osland
Judith Richardson - **John and Olina Johnson**
Erik Eriksson - **Séra Eiríkur Brynjólfsson og Guðrun Guðmundsdóttir**
Wayne (Thorsteinson) Bissky - **grandparents Thorsteinn Olafur Thorsteinsson, and Sigurbjörg Ragnheiður Magnúsdóttir**
Julianna Bjornson - **Bjorn and Virginia Bjornson and Thordur and Juliana Bjornson**
Holly Ralph - **Kristín Sigurðardóttir**
Gerri McDonald - **Halldóra (Jónsdóttir Collins) & Franklin Thorsteinson**, Winnipegosis
Margaret Amirault - **Harold (Halli) & Águstina (Gusta Finnson) Bjarnason**, Gimli
Paul and Anna Bjarnason - **Emil Bjarnason**
Shirley Eyford Lyon - parents **Laura & Chris Eyford**, and **Salome & Thorstein Johnson; Sigurdur & Bergljót Eyford**
Heather Alda Ireland - great-grandparents **Jón Guttormsson & Pálína Ketilsdóttir**, and **Sigurður Erlendsson**, grandparents **Guttormur J. Guttormsson & Jensina Danielsdóttir**, grandparents **Sigfús Sigurðsson & Sigurlaug Jónsdóttir**.
Betty Hammerstrom - grandparents **Gisli & Jonina Jonsson; Kristjan & Sigga Einarsson**
Morris Family - **Amma Ágústa Johnson & Afi Friðrik Julius Olsen**
Gail Einarson-McCleery - grandparents **Maria Jóhannsdóttir & Sigurður Einarsson**, and **Marsibil Jónatansdóttir & Thorfinnur Helgason**
Lilly J. Goodman Megard and L. Lynne Goodman Shelton - **our parents S. Leonard Goodman & Laura M. Halldorson Goodman**
Tom Penway—our parents **Anna & Tom Penway**
Wayne & Valerie Brandson—**Elis and Anne Brandson**
Maria Mckay—parents **Oscar & Helga Howardson**
Tom Sveinsson—grandfather **Ófeigur Sigurdson**, died 1956, & Uncle **Fusi Sigurdson**
David Gislason—late mother **Guðrun Gislason**
Agnes Cooke—**Thorbjorg Einarson Stephanson & Eirikur Stephanson**
General donations: **Lee Lipton & Oli Leifsson**

The Committee, and the Convention, is very thankful for the following Volunteers:

Doug Einarson	Linda Bjarnason	Anna Bjarnason	Maggý Reynarsdóttir
Maria (Mya) McKay	Carol Bjarnason	Lois Turner	Arden Jackson
Valerie Brandson	Kris Jobin	Wade Anderson	Norman Einarson
Lillian Derkson	Jean Ambeault	Debbie Thorsteinson	Elsie Einarson
		Denis Gendron	Gunnar Hansson

Actors in the Guttormur J. Guttormsson play were:

Heather Alda Ireland, Producer; Gisli McPherson Patterson, Director; Mikael Máni Ágústsson, Palma Bjarnason, Paul Bjarnason, Paul E. Bjarnason, Rosa Bjarnason Kontogianni, Gunnar Hansson, Oðinn Helgason.

Silent Auction Donors were:

BC Lions; Western Bank, Charlie's Chocolate Factory; Malahat MoonWater Lodge; Metrotown Shopping Center River Rock Casino & Hotel; Vancouver Art Gallery;	Margaret Amirault; Marilyne Anderson (Thorsteinson); Waynee Bissky; Anna Bjarnason; Fred Bjarnason; Tammy Evans; Tammy Eyford; Carol Garðarsson,	Asthildur Gunnarsson, Norma Guttormsson, Jana & Oðinn Helgason, Heather Alda Ireland; Arden Jackson; Nina Jobin; Gladys Johnson; Linda Stieler Johnson; Edda	Langworth; Mekkin Lundsted; Gerri McDonald; Rob Olafson, Pat Peacock Ellen Scobie, Brian Thorsteinson, Sherry Thorsteinson; Sharon Yeadon.
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**COMING WEST - Presentation by W.D. Valgardson
at the Icelandic National League Convention**

Go West young man, go West. In 1871 that was the advice of Horace Greeley, the editor of the New York Times.

Horace Greeley said that anyone who had to earn a living should go where workers were needed and wanted, where they will be hired because they are needed, not because someone is giving them a job as a favour. He added some conditions to his advice. Before going west, he said, a young man should learn to chop, to plough and to mow.

Because of geography and shipping routes, the Icelanders arrived in Quebec City. Some made their way even further east to Nova Scotia. But that did not last. The Icelanders were late comers. The good land was already taken. Others went to Kinmount, Ontario. After a disastrous year, they, too, continued the journey West. That journey West, with many stops and starts, would continue over the years until Icelandic immigrants reached the furthest West possible, first Vancouver, then Victoria, British Columbia. This weekend, we have all gathered to celebrate that long, arduous and often dangerous journey.

Following their dream of travelling to Amerika and the life it offered had a high price. Not in the fares people paid but in the lives lost. In the first stage of this saga, people died and were buried at sea. Later, they died in Nova Scotia, then in Kinmount; they died on the journey to the promised land of New Iceland.

These sacrifices were not made for frivolous reasons. They were made because in Iceland there was a shortage of land, a lack of opportunity, a rigid social system, and natural disasters created by cold weather and volcanic eruption.

Horace Greeley had said, learn to chop. The movement West was made harder by the fact that the Icelanders didn't know how to chop. How do you learn woodsmen's skills when your forests are dwarf birch?

Greeley said, learn to plow. They didn't know how to plow. How can you plow lava deserts and glaciers? How could they learn to plow when no crop other than grass would grow?

They did know how to mow, but as more than one writer has pointed out, they mowed what we would think of as

short, domestic grass, not prairie grass that reached to the top of a man's hips. On the immigration forms, they called themselves bondi, farmers, but they were not farmers by any definition in the West. They were herders.

According to Dr. Thompson in his history of Riverton, the settlers were unprepared for one of the coldest winters on record. They were faced with conditions so unbearable that many of the stronger adults, and the older children capable of seeking work, walked to Selkirk and Winnipeg. He says "the men found work at 10 to 20 dollars a month on the farms. Women and children were hired as domestics in Winnipeg homes. Only about one hundred were left in the original settlement when scurvy broke out. Thirty-four of the remaining one hundred died from the disease."

Faced with the difficulties in New Iceland, many of the settlers began moving West to Brandon, and to Argyle. It is hard for us to conceive how slow travel with horses or oxen and wagons was. What made it possible for people to move further West was the building of the railroad. As the railway moved West, settlers took wagons, cattle, and equipment in the boxcars to the end of the rail line, then unloaded and drove away onto the vast prairie.

It wasn't until 1886, that the first train reached Port Moody, B.C. In 1887, the first CPR passenger train arrived in Vancouver. Some Icelanders were on those first trains to BC. We have been coming to BC ever since.

Horace Greeley said go where you will get a job because you are needed, not because someone is doing you a favour.

Icelanders followed this advice in the past and their descendants have followed this advice in the present. In preparing this speech, I began to think about the members of my family who have moved West. One of the first was Valentinus Valgardson. He was married to Thora Sigurgeirson from Hecla Island. They got as far as Moose Jaw. They stayed and he became both a teacher and a farmer. My father's brothers, Earl and Allan, moved to Edmonton and Calgary. My cousins Rudy and Sandy Bristow moved to Victoria and Vancouver. One of my father's aunts moved to Vancouver. My family marks the Icelandic trail West.

COMING EVENTS

May 15 *Golf Tournament, Mylora Sidaway Golf Course*
June 17 *Icelandic National Day celebration, evening*
June 17-19 *Scandinavian Midsummer Celebration*

*Richmond
Scandianvian Centre
Scandinavian Centre*

Halli Bjarnason was a successful businessman and our neighbour in Gimli. When he retired, he and his wife Gusta moved to Victoria. Their three daughters, Linda, Margaret and Carol also came West. Keith Sigmundson came to be the head of psychiatry. Elroy Sveinsson became a salmon fisherman. Janis Olof Magnusson, from Winnipeg's West End went to Regina, Saskatchewan, then to Victoria to work as an agricultural economist. I went from Gimli to Winnipeg, to Victoria to be a professor at the university of Victoria. There's Glenn Sigurdson from Riverton and Heather Ireland from West End Winnipeg. Heather can tell you about the migration from Lundar to Winnipeg and the trek West. The exodus West came from every community. This room, this city, this province, is filled with people of Icelandic descent.

Richard Beck came from North Dakota to Victoria to retire. He brought with him his passion for all things Icelandic and he and his wife, Margaret, created the Richard and Margaret Beck Trust at the U. of Victoria. With the income from that money, the trust has brought over a hundred experts on many aspects of Icelandic history, society and culture to give lectures. The Beck Trust has sponsored summer school courses, including courses in Icelandic film and language. Glenn Sigurdson moved to Vancouver to work as a successful lawyer and then negotiator. Yet, he recently published a book about the Lake Winnipeg fishery called *Vikings on a Prairie Ocean*. In this journey west, our heritage has not been forgotten.

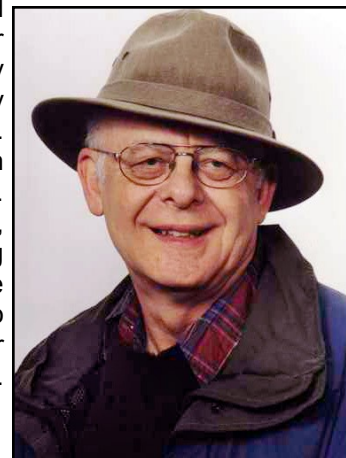
We've come here under many different conditions. Bob Asgeirsson told me he left Winnipeg in a raging blizzard to have a holiday in Vancouver. When he got off the train in Vancouver, there was a light, warm rain. He bought a return ticket to Winnipeg, quit his job and moved to Vancouver. Ian Sigvaldason who is originally from Arborg moved to Salt Spring Island to open the Pegasus art gallery.

There are here, today, the descendants of the group of Icelanders who left Riverton and Hecla and Gimli in the late thirties and early forties. They were fishermen and boat builders. One of their descendants Lisa Sigurgeirsson Maxx is with us. Ken Kristjanson of Gimli tells me that a number of this group tried to get his father and uncle to join them. Many of that group settled in Steveston.

There are enough of us living on the West Coast to have Icelandic clubs in Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Bellingham, Blaine, and Seattle.

There are endless stories of this journey West both historic and current. But one of the most fascinating is that of Christian Sivertz and Elinborg Samueldottir. Although Christian's last name was Sivertz, he was a hundred percent Icelandic.

Christian Sivertz and Elinborg Samueldottir both came separately from Iceland. They knew no English. Christian arrived in Winnipeg in 1883. Christian worked long, hard hours in Winnipeg for little pay. He travelled West to Victoria in 1890 for greater opportunities. He was 25 years old.



After he arrived he met Elinborg Samueldottir who had left Iceland in 1888 with two brothers and two sisters. They had spent two years in Winnipeg. At the time they arrived in Victoria there already were about 20 Icelandic families.

I mention the Sivertz family because I got to know Ben Sivertz, the youngest son, quite well. On many a Sunday in good weather, although he was in his 80s, he would leave his retirement home and walk a mile uphill to my house with a bottle of expensive gin. He'd arrive looking as neat and tidy as the naval officer he once was. He'd have a drink of gin and coffee and a visit and then I'd drive him back to his retirement home where we'd have lunch. He was so modest that I knew Ben for a long time before I discovered that he'd been awarded a medal, the OBE, for his work during WWII. It also took quite a while before I discovered that he was rich. He is the only person I've ever known who owned an original Van Gogh. Horace Greely's advice, travel West young man, had proved prophetic. Ben's parent's trip West had given their children exceptional lives. Opportunity existed and they made the most of it.

I also mention the Sivertz family because their story is so typical in many ways. They came to Canada because there was a lack of opportunity in Iceland in the 1880s. They didn't know English. They first settled in Winnipeg. They came to Victoria and joined a small community of Icelanders who had arrived before them. Ben says about his father, Christian, that he was proud of being Icelandic, but also, of being a British citizen.

The Victoria that the Icelanders came to was very British. It was a place of coal barons who could afford to build places like Craigdarroch Castle. It was a city with aboriginal people who had a highly developed culture evident in the totem poles and art work and in their buildings. It was a city of street cars and four story stone and brick buildings. There were newspapers and aboriginal canoe races on the Gorge. There was high tea, formal dress, outdoor picnics, and cricket.

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When we gather as we are doing this weekend, we remind ourselves of our heritage with the nostalgia of vinarterta, of kleiner, of brennivín, of clothes from the time of immigration.

But there is something here, among us, right now, that is invisible that in the past and present we have carried as we have traveled West. It was an essential part of our luggage. That is the desire for education. The immigrants carried that from Iceland to New Iceland, and from New Iceland West.

While literacy was wide spread in Iceland, the opportunity for an education was not available to many. According to Vidur Hreinsson in *Wakeful Nights*, his marvelous biography of Stephan Stephansson, when Stephan was a boy he made every possible effort to learn and longed to go to school but that was impossible for the son of a poor lodger. The extent of his yearning for formal schooling became evident on a Thursday in the fall of 1865. Stefan was outside during a storm, when he saw three people ride by the farm, heading towards the mountain pass. His friend Indridi was travelling to Reykjavik to go to school. On seeing his friend leaving for school and knowing he could not go, Stefan was overwhelmed with grief. He ran out among the tussocks and threw himself on the ground, sobbing in the rain.

It was not just Stefan who longed for the opportunity to get an education.

Think about the situation of those first settlers in New Iceland. They landed on a sand bar as winter was beginning. They had ratty second hand Hudson Bay tents for shelter. Their first task was to build as many log cabins as there were stoves. Yet, nine days after their landing at Willow Point, John Taylor, their leader, sent a letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba saying:

“The Icelanders in the colony are desirous of having a school for their children as soon as they can put up a schoolhouse. They have a teacher with them and wish to be connected to the regular educational system of Canada.”

Nine days after landing; wanting a schoolhouse. That, to me, is amazing. They had traveled all this distance with great difficulty, had undergone severe hardships, and now were in the midst of the wilderness in a completely foreign land and what they wanted was a school house.

The settlers could only build as many cabins as there were stoves. The result was crowded, inadequate shelter. Some of the food the Icelanders were sold in Winnipeg was of poor quality. Once the lake froze over, to keep from starving, they had to learn how to fish under the ice. Yet, before Christmas, Caroline Taylor, the niece of John Taylor, opened a school in English. Thirty people

enrolled. Imagine the situation. Winter, snow drifts, blizzards, no roads, isolation, inadequate food, illness because they didn't have the cows they were promised. In Iceland, milk had been a major part of their diet. Yet, they had a school. And people struggled through the snow and cold to get there.

The next year when the smallpox started, the school was disbanded. Temporarily disbanded. One hundred and two people died from the smallpox. The settlement was devastated. Yet, once the smallpox was over, Jane Taylor restarted the school, this time with sixty-three students.

In the following years, Rev. Pall Thorlakson held classes. In 1885 Gudni Thorsteinsson organized and taught classes. There was Sigurdur G. Thorarensen and Johann P. Solmundsson and Bjorn B. Olson. All of them and many others were determined to see that children would get an education.

The desire for their children to be educated was carried by the westward traveling Icelanders all the way to the coast.

Ben Sivertz says at the beginning of the book he wrote about his father that his father was a laborer and his mother did housekeeping. His father, Christian, finally got a job as a postman delivering mail. Being a mailman paid enough that they had their own house and they could afford to educate their six sons. Their sons did not need to become indentured servants with no future.

Henry, the eldest, took teacher training and taught school before joining the army. He was killed in the war. Gus, the second son, became an optometrist and then a reporter with the *Vancouver Sun*. Chris earned a PhD and became a Professor of Chemistry at U. of Western Ontario. Vic earned a PhD and became a Professor of Chemistry, U. of Washington. Sam was a bank officer in Shanghai until WWII. He then joined the armed forces and after the war became an office manager. Ben, the youngest son, became a Navy officer. Then he joined the Department of External Affairs setting up consulates. He became the last Commissionaire of the North West Territories.

There were many others who came West. Some stopped in Brandon, Manitoba, in Regina, Saskatchewan, in Foam Lake, Saskatchewan, in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta. Some stopped in the interior of British Columbia where they improbably became ranchers and orchardists. Others came to the coast and created Icelandic communities in Vancouver, Port Roberts, Blaine, Bellingham, and Seattle, etc.

There was Gisli Gudmundsson from the Western

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Fjords and his wife Sigurbjorg. They lived in Winnipeg for several years, then went to Victoria. From there to Point Roberts.

Jonas Saemundsson from Grafarkot. He came to Amerika in 1889. He lived in Winnipeg, then went to Victoria and finally to Point Roberts in 1904.

Arni Myrdal. He emigrated with his parents and lived with them through the misery in New Iceland, the notorious smallpox, scarlet fever and many illnesses that followed. His two sisters died there that winter. He went to Pembina and from there to Victoria. He went to Point Roberts.

There was another Icelandic settlement that most people don't know about at Osland on Smith Island in the mouth of the Skeena River. This is seven hundred kilometres north and the site of a large salmon fishery. It was a small settlement but it included Haldorsons, Johnsons, Philipsons, Freemans, Oddsons, Grimsons, Kristmansons, Snidals and many others. It was settled by a mix of bachelors and families between the early 1900s and 1940s.

These people had made the great trek West. They had created an Icelandic colony on an island. They fished, raised animals, worked in the cannery in Prince Rupert. Elin Einarsson's memories are in the Osland history. This is what she says "At times during the winter months we would be locked in by the ice that came down the river. Before winter set in my father would go to Prince Rupert for supplies—sacks of flour and sugar, butter in 14 pound boxes and a quarter of beef. The men would hunt deer for extra meat during the winter. My dad made a good root cellar with a cement floor below our house. We stored vegetables from my mother's garden there. Potatoes in large bins and carrots and beets in barrels of sand. During the summer my mother was kept busy tending the gardens and the animals while the men were fishing. She would salt fish and preserve salmon and fruit in jars for the winter. Every weekend she baked a layer cake spread with jam filling for the family. Vinarterta was special and only baked at Christmas and Easter."

G. Olafson says, "Lots of wild berries—blueberries, huckleberries, salmon berries and salal and crabapples. Mom grew gooseberries and currant and once in a while we'd have a few plums and apples off the trees." This is a Canadian talking. This is an Icelandic Canadian talking. This is someone talking who has come West, who has adapted to a new land and made it his own.

These people came West, as far West as it was possible to go, and made Canadian lives for themselves. They made a living the West Coast way, boat building, running a shingle mill, logging, pile

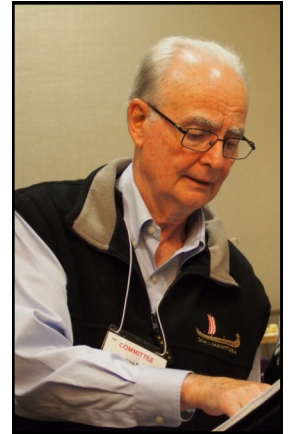
driving, sheep raising, goat raising, working in fish canneries.

Their children and grandchildren got educated and became doctors and lawyers and nurses, university professors, and started their own businesses. They found good jobs and had their own families. The original settlers made a heroic journey from Iceland, to Scotland, to Quebec City, to New Iceland, always West, across the prairies where headstones in lonely graveyards testify to their journey but they reached the West Coast and they found, I believe, what they were seeking: a good life for themselves and their families.

How, after all these miles, all these journeys, all this time, has this pilgrimage West worked out? At the beginning of the Icelandic emigration, there were great fears that our heritage would be lost. We would forget the golden age of the Sagas, that we would lose our pride in our Viking ancestors, that we would no longer be connected to this land of fire and ice that our distant ancestors had settled in the late 800s. Icelanders were not the only ones who had these fears. On maps, you can find places like New Denmark, New Sweden, New Germany, and New England. Places where everyone would stay the same and have no contact with all those other foreigners. However, the land would not allow it. The opportunities would not allow it.

We are very fortunate. We came to a place where we could adapt and adopt, could integrate, but keep our identity, be proud of our history. I recently heard an aboriginal survivor of the residential schools say they took away our identity. We have seen and continue to see the tragedy that has created. Fortunately, we have managed to keep our identity and the benefits that go with that identity. Like Christian Sivertz, we can be proud of our Icelandic heritage and be proud of being Canadians.

How has the trek West worked out? Each of you will have to ask yourself that question but for myself coming West has provided everything those early settlers hoped for. Has our community, over one hundred and forty one years continued to carry both Icelandic values and history with us? Have we been true to the dreams of those early Western Far Travelers? I can best answer that question by pointing to my granddaughter, Rebecca, who graduates from UBC in a few weeks and two days after that leaves for Iceland on the Snorri program. Her connection to the Icelandic past and the Icelandic present is shared by many in the West. This INL conference and all of you who have come to it proves that.





SCANDINAVIAN CENTRE

Website: www.scandinaviancentre.org (for more details)
E-mail: info@scandinaviancentre.org, Telephone: 604-294-2777

May 11 (Wed), 7 pm—Scandinavian Business Club's Dinner, Email Paul Andreassen at info@sbc-bc.ca. We welcome both non-members and members to all our events! Also visit us at www.sbc-bc.

May 13 & Jun 10 (Fri) 12 noon—Scandinavian Seniors Lunch, please call Tor 604-294-0749 or the office.

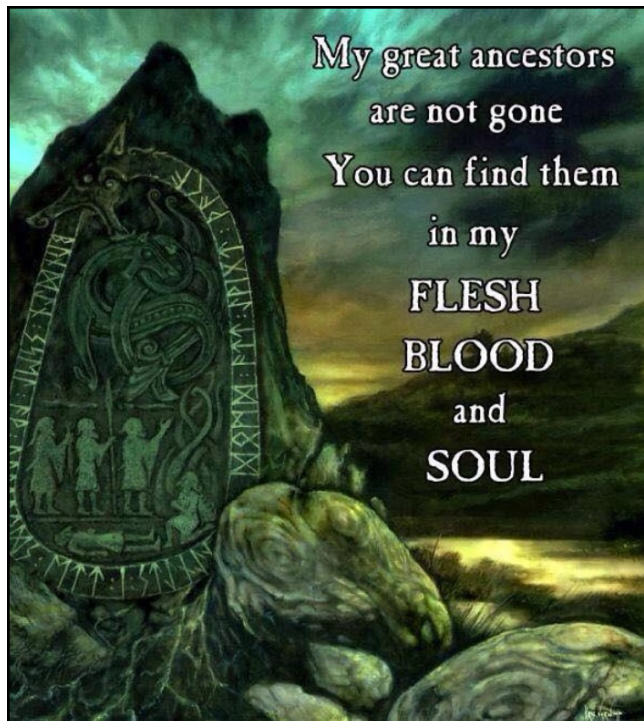
May 15 (Sun) 12 noon—Golf Tournament, Mylora Sidaway Golf Course, Richmond, \$42/person (golf & BBQ) Contact: ScanSports@gmail.com

May 21 (Sat) 1 pm—Genealogy meeting.

May 17 (Tues) 6pm—Norwegian Constitution Day, buffet & dinner dance, Contact: 604-941-0760.

Jun 17 (Fri) 6 or 7 pm TBA, - Iceland National Day, event at Iceland Room.

Jun 18-20 (Sat/Sun) 10am—Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.



Icelandic Online Club; email: ioc@inlofna.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/IcelandicOnlineClub

The 8-page newsletter is published at the beginning of each month, ten months of the year. A newsletter is not printed in July or August. Material is gratefully received by the 20th of each month.

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Distribution: Naomi Dyer, Gerri McDonald, Nina Jobin

Labels: Norman Eyford

Courier: Naomi Dyer

Website: Icelandic Canadian Club of B.C.

www.inlofna.org/ICCBC/Welcome.html

Convention: <http://www.iclandicclubbc.org/convention2016/>

Email: icc_of_bc@hotmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Icelandic-Canadian-Club-of-British-Columbia/190426084338925

Website: Icelandic National League: www.inlofna.org

Icelandic Archives of BC: www.inlofna.org/IABC/Welcome.html

Icelandic Radio (6 stations): www.xnet.is

Morgunblaðið: <http://mbl.is>

Ströndin Internet Radio: www.inlofna.org/SIR

Honorary Consul General of Iceland for BC & Yukon,
Heather Alda Ireland: iceconsul@shaw.ca



Oakridge Lutheran Church
585 West 41st Avenue,
Vancouver

10 a.m., Sunday Morning Service
English Joint Services
Coffee served every Sunday



LIBRARY & GENEALOGY

Books written by Icelanders in English or translation are available in the Scandinavian library upstairs. The sorting of books in the Sólskin Library is progressing. Information regarding the Genealogy Centre can be obtained from Gerri McDonald, email: gerrimcdonald@shaw.ca