

Honoring the Past, Celebrating the Present, and Embracing the Future

KATRÍN NÍELSDÓTTIR—EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As we turn the page into a new year, I do so with excitement and anticipation for what's to come—and with a deep reverence for what has brought us here. This year marks New Iceland 150, a milestone that invites us not only to celebrate, but to remember. One hundred and fifty years have passed since settlers arrived in 1875 and established what we now know as New Iceland. Throughout 2025, we'll be recognizing this extraordinary legacy through stories, celebrations, and shared memories.

This year's pages will be filled with coverage of New Iceland 150 celebrations, including a very special series: interviews with incredible women in our community—trailblazers, knowledge-keepers, and volunteers—many of whom remember the 100-year celebration and have continued to nurture the Western Icelandic spirit in ways big and small. Their voices, full of wisdom and courage, are the beating heart behind this milestone year.

The community has always been the strength of New Iceland. From organizing events to preserving language and culture, our volunteers are the lifeblood of our story. Their dedication, often behind the scenes, is what makes celebrations like this one possible.

This year, the Icelandic National League of North America convention returns to Gimli, and we anticipate it will be one of the most exciting gatherings yet. And of course, all eyes are on Íslendingadagurinn, which promises to be our best ever! We'll celebrate in grand fashion, but also with gratitude, reflecting on how far we've come.

Mark your calendars: on October 11th, we commemorate the historic landing on the beach of Lake Winnipeg—a defining moment in our collective story. Several tours of New Iceland are also planned throughout spring, summer, and fall, offering opportunities for reflection and reconnection with the land that shaped so many of our families.

Amidst this year of celebration, we also pause to remember those we've lost. With great sorrow, we acknowledge the passing of Dustin J. Geeraert (March 21, 1983 – October 15, 2024), a brilliant scholar, gifted artist, and gentle soul. Dustin's impact reached far beyond academia. Whether teaching Norse Mythology and Viking Legends in World Literature at

Katrín Níelsdóttir is editor-in-chief of Icelandic Connection, in addition to being the Icelandic Special Collection and Rare Book Librarian at the University of Manitoba Libraries.

the University of Manitoba or cycling across the country with admirable determination, Dustin embodied a rare mix of strength, intellect, and sensitivity. He was a beloved friend and cherished member of our community, and his absence is deeply felt.

In 2024, The Icelandic Connection underwent a significant transition. After only 2 years of being hosted by the University of Manitoba Libraries, it has returned to its grassroots—driven by the commitment of volunteers who continue to uphold the integrity and heart you have come to trust. This return to our community roots is both symbolic and practical, reminding us that preservation is always a shared responsibility.

We have also breathed new life into our online presence. The Icelandic Department's Instagram account has been reimagined as the *Icelandic Connection* Instagram, where you can now enjoy daily Icelandic words, throwback photos, and tributes to historical figures. It is a wonderful way to stay connected and inspired year-round.

And for those who love the feel of paper between their fingers—the 2024 edition of *Icelandic Connection* will be available in print at Íslendingadagurinn.

We are thrilled to share that all past issues of *Icelandic Connection* and its predecessor *The Icelandic Canadian* have now been digitized and are available online at [Timarit.is](https://timarit.is), opening a treasure trove of history to readers and researchers around the world. This milestone would not have been possible without the invaluable support of the National Library of Iceland, whose dedication to preserving and sharing our collective story ensures that generations to come can explore and learn from the rich legacy of the Western Icelandic community. Our deepest thanks for making this vital history accessible to all.

A heartfelt thank you to Ryan Johnson for his unwavering dedication and behind-the-scenes contributions to *Icelandic Connection*. His meticulous attention to detail in copyediting ensures that every article meets the highest standard, while his technical expertise has been essential in keeping our website running smoothly. Perhaps most impressively, Ryan brings patience and deep knowledge to the important task of verifying sources, helping us maintain the integrity and accuracy our readers rely on. We are incredibly grateful for his steady hand, sharp eye, and generous spirit.

As always, we welcome your submissions—stories, memories, poetry, reflections, and more. Whether you're new to the community or your ancestors were among the first settlers, your voice is part of this legacy. Let this be the year we come together in even greater numbers to tell our stories and celebrate the enduring spirit of New Iceland.

Here's to 150 years of resilience, culture, and connection—and to everything that lies ahead!

Sincerely,

Katrín Níelsdóttir
Editor, The Icelandic Connection