

SUMMER, 1981

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN



THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND
HER EXCELLENCY
VIGDIS FINNBOGADOTTIR

A very special place

The Round Table

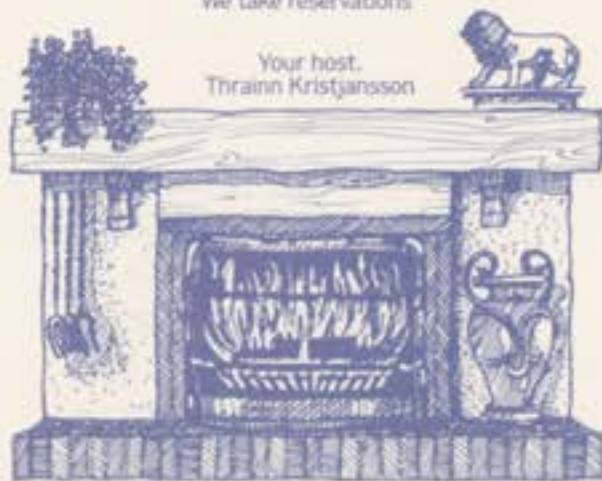
Five small dining rooms with fireplaces
provide unique atmosphere.
Good food and superb service.
Congenial lounge.
Ample on-site parking.
Most major credit cards accepted
Group accommodation for
banquets, etc.

Lunch: 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Monday through Saturday
Dinner: From 5 p.m. nightly
Sunday Brunch: 11:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Pembina at Stafford
453-3631

We take reservations

Your host,
Thrainn Kristjánsson





*Symbol of Service
since 1894*

BARDAL
funeral home

843 Sherbrook Street, Phone 774-7474

Gimli Concrete Supply Ltd.

REDI-MIX CONCRETE - SIDEWALKS - DRIVEWAYS - BASEMENTS
PATIOS - FREE ESTIMATES.

DEALERS IN ALL KINDS OF AGGREGATE LOTS FOR SALE

"QUALITY REMAINS LONG AFTER PRICE IS FORGOTTEN"

PHONE 642-7275

GIMLI, MANITOBA

Grágás 1

LAWS OF EARLY ICELAND



Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote, and Richard Perkins

Grágás 1 brings together two important medieval manuscripts that reveal the mature social outlook of Iceland's ancient self-governing community of farmers. By dipping into these pages, you will discover a treasury of information about the day-to-day life of Icelanders during the period that produced the classical literature of Iceland. \$27.50

OTHER VOLUMES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
MANITOBA ICELANDIC STUDIES:

The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók
Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards
\$20.00

*A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth:
Íslendinga Saga*
Jón Jóhannesson, translated by Haraldur Bessason
\$25.00

Edda: A Collection of Essays
R.J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason
Forthcoming

The University of Manitoba Press
Distributed by University of Toronto Press
5201 Dufferin Street
Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T8

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN, SECOND CLASS MAIL—REGISTRATION
No. 1909 — PRINTED AT 358 ROSS AVE., WINNIPEG, MAN. R3A 0L4

T. & J. Family Billiards & Snack Bar

20 - 2459 - 54th Ave. S.W.

OPEN 11 A.M. TO 12 P.M.

CALGARY, ALBERTA — PHONE 243-3757

SMALL CAR WORLD LTD.

P
S
S
T

- REPAIR & TUNE-UP PARTS
- HIGH PERFORMANCE PARTS
- ACCESSORIES & SUPPLIES

FOR FOREIGN & DOMESTIC CARS

899 Portage Ave. 772-9936
WINNIPEG

DEALER INQUIRIES INVITED



Icelandic National League

Organized 1918 Incorporated 1930



SPECIAL AWARD FROM THE
PRESIDENT OF ICELAND

President: JOHANN S. SIGURDSON, Lundar, Manitoba
Secretary: SIGURLIN ROED, 38 Monck Ave. R2H 1W6

Yearly membership to the league, Singles: \$3.00; Couples: \$5.00

Remit dues to the financial secretary,
LILJA ARNASON, 1057 Dominion St., Winnipeg R3E 2P3

ARNASON FURNITURE (1977) LTD.

ELECTROHOME T.V. SALES
AND SERVICE

PHONE 642-7954

BOX 130 GIMLI, MANITOBA

YOUR A.R.P. VALUE CENTRE

VIKING PHARMACY

Pharmacists:

Ernest Stefanson

Garry Fedorchuk

PHONE: 642-5504

Centre and Fourth

GIMLI

TAYLOR BRAZZELL McCAFFREY

4th Floor, Manulife House

386 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3R6

TELEPHONE (204) 949-1312

TELEX 07-57276

Laurie P. Allen
Gary T. Brazzell, Q.C.
(also of Alberta Bar)

Robert Carr
(LL.M. Harvard)
Ronald L. Coke
(also of Alberta and B.C. Bar)

James A. Cook
(also of Saskatchewan Bar)
Garth M. Erickson

Douglas E. Finkbeiner
Paul B. Forsyth
Nicole J. Garson
Shawn Greenberg
David C. King
Jack A. King
(also of England and Wales Bar)

Jacqueline A. Lowe
Douglas J. Mackenzie
David I. Marr

D'Arcy McCaffrey, Q.C.
Lorne G. C. Milne
Grant Mitchell
H. Sanford Riley
Charles A. Sherbo
S. Glenn Sigurdson
(also of Saskatchewan Bar)
Gary R. Smith
J. F. Reeh Taylor, Q.C.
Shelley M. Weiss

Counsel
C. G. Dilts, Q.C.

Associate
Robert M. Akman

MR. S. GLENN SIGURDSON ATTENDS IN GIMLI AND RIVERTON ON THE
1st and 3rd FRIDAYS OF EACH MONTH

Offices are in Gimli 3rd Avenue and Centre street, between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and
5:30 p.m. with Mr. Sigurdson and his legal assistant in attendance.

(TELEPHONE 642-7955)

In Riverton, Mr. Sigurdson attends in the Riverton Village Office, between the hours of
1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

THE WESTERN PAINT CO. LTD.

"THE PAINTER'S SUPPLY HOUSE SINCE 1908"

521 HARGRAVE ST., WINNIPEG, R3E 0Y1 PHONE 942-7271

J. A. SCHIMNOWSKI, PRESIDENT

VISIT OUR NEW ULTRA MODERN WALLCOVERING BUILDING

SE HARGRAVE & WILLIAM — FREE PARKING — PHONE 942-7317

FREE PARKING FOR 130 CARS

Editorial: The Rocky Mountain Poet	<i>Paul A. Sigurdson</i>	5
The Cover Picture		7
At the Editor's Desk		8
The President of Iceland: A Biographical Sketch		9
Icelandic-Canadian Pioneers (Poem)	<i>Kristiana Magnusson</i>	10
Richard Beck — <i>Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands</i>		11
A School That Was	<i>Elma Gislason</i>	15
A Tribute to G. Bertha Johnson	<i>LaDomna Breidfjord Backmeyer</i>	17
An Elegy	<i>G. Bertha Johnson</i>	22
West-Man Thorrablot Reflects Nature of Ethnic Resurgence	— <i>Leigh and Shirley Syms</i>	23
Dr. Peter Olafson, World Known Scientist	— <i>Arnetta Hanson Moncrief</i>	24
Culture	<i>La Verendrye Entente Cordiale — Martin Kavanagh</i>	28
Settlement of Icelanders in Eastern Canada	<i>Joe Martin</i>	30
Syntax, Semantics and Such	<i>Bjorn Björnson</i>	32
Hardworkin' Tom	<i>Jonas Thorstenson</i>	34
"Oh, You Can Call Me Johnny"	— <i>Eric Jonasson</i>	36
Another Centennial Year	— <i>Dilla Narfason</i>	38
W. D. Valgardson on Writing		39
Joe Martin Elected President of the Institute of Management Consultants of Ontario		42
Book Review — <i>Dr. John S. Matthiason</i>		43
Scholarships		45
In the News	29, 33, 35, 38, 41, 44,	36
Index to Advertisers		47

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

A North American quarterly published in Winnipeg, Canada, dedicated to the preservation of the Icelandic heritage.

MAGAZINE BOARD:—

Axel Vopnfjord, Editor-in-Chief and Chairman of the Board, 1 - 670 Gertrude Ave., Winnipeg R3M 2M9 (284-3079); Gustaf Kristjanson, 8 Selwin Pl., Fort Richmond R3T 3N1; Kristine Perlmutter, 212 Sherburn St., Winnipeg; John S. Matthiason, 23F Wildwood Park, Winnipeg, and Gudrun Jörundsdottir, 11 Winslow, St. Vital. ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Haraldur Bessason, 5 Westlake Crescent, Winnipeg; Heida Jonsson, 669 Warsaw Ave., Winnipeg; Nelson Gerrard, Box 925, Arborg, Man. R0C 0A0; Sigrid Johnson, 330 Brock St., Winnipeg; Eric Jonasson, P.O. Box 205, St. James Postal Station, Winnipeg; Joan Parr, 102 Queenston St., Winnipeg R3N 0W5; Paul Sigurdson, Box 185, Morden, Man.; Elva Simundson, Box 285, Gimli, Man.; Stefan J. Stefanson, 37 Macklin, Winnipeg.

ASSOCIATES: Bob Asgeirsson, Vancouver, B.C.; Valdimar Björnson, Minneapolis; Thorsteinn Gislason, Salem, N.H.; George Hanson, Chicago; Svava Simundson, Reykjavik; Bill Valgardson, Victoria, B.C.; H. V. Vidal, Brandon, Man.

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD: Lorna Tergesen, 60 Wildwood Park, Winnipeg.

BUSINESS MANAGER: Harold Johnson, 1033 Clifton Street, Winnipeg R3G 2Y2 (772-4397).

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Eric Jonasson, P.O. Box 205, St. James Postal Station, Winnipeg R3J 3R4 (885-5792).

BUSINESS SECRETARY: Mildred Storsater, 890 Valour Road R3G 3B4 (772-1707).

REPRESENTATIVES IN ICELAND: Björn Sigurdsson, P.O. Box 122, Skolastig II, Akureyri; Svava Simundson, Klettsvegur 18, Reykjavik, 101.

Information regarding correspondence and subscription rates, see NOTICE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS on page 8 in this issue.

Second Class Mail — Registration No. 1909

Printed at 358 Ross Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3A 0L4

EDITORIAL

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN POET

This year the Cultural Affairs Department of the Province of Alberta will publish a book which should be of great interest to anyone of Icelandic descent who still has a warm feeling for his (or her) cultural heritage. It is to be a project of the 75th Anniversary of the province. The book will be dedicated to Stephan G. Stéphansson, the so-called Rocky Mountain Poet, and will include numerous translations of his poems, letters and articles, as well as facts and details about his life.

Stephan G. Stéphansson was born in Iceland on October 3, 1853 of poor, yet enlightened parents. He emigrated to America in 1873, and homesteaded three times in his adopted country, first in Wisconsin, next in North Dakota in 1880, and finally in Alberta, near Markerville, where he lived from 1889 to his death in 1927. As an immigrant farmer he laboured all his life, striving to make a living and maintain a modest farm, practically never having any time for a vacation, and little time for leisure. Yet during those pioneer years of toil and hardship, this man, who had no formal schooling, became one of the most powerful and dynamic intellectuals in the country and indeed, certainly the most notable and often the most controversial, of all the Icelanders in America, and, perhaps, Iceland as well. He was able to accomplish this by reading and studying with an unswerving dedication, deep into the night and often until the wee hours of the morning, his brilliant mind absorbing, like a mighty sponge, not only the best of Icelandic literature, but also the Bible, the philosophies and the political cross-currents of his time. Through the years this vast storehouse of knowledge fed his soaring imagination, inspiring him to compile, in his long yet difficult life, five volumes of poetry, some of it the most original and

profound in the Icelandic language. This was not done without sacrifice. In one of his poems he allows a glimpse into his lifestyle, explaining he was only able to write:

While the weary playboy slept,
While the sportster policked.

But it is not enough to acknowledge Stephan as a great poet, respected and admired not only by Icelanders, but also by Canadian and American scholars. What shines through his poetry is the mobility of the man himself. He was a rare creation, a man who had exquisite artistic sensitivity combined with a logical mind with practical common sense. He was an individualist who realized that although as a farmer he would have to endure hardship and forgo wealth, he would be able, as a farmer, to live out freely that precious individuality. Never was there a man more independent and more true to himself. Like all who have the will and take the time to think beyond the practical affairs of the day, Stephan was profoundly aware of the mysteries of life, and because he was a philosopher as well as a poet, he was confounded by that mystery, and spent his entire life wrestling with that mystery and searching for the ultimate answer. He went his own way, skeptical of anything he could not reconcile with his own reasoning, unswayed by political parties, ideologies, religious creeds and philosophies. Early in his life — he was twenty-two — he turned his back on the Christian faith as it had been presented to him. He calls the poem "Progress" or "Evolution":

In youth I cuddled as a child
The faith all were receiving;
Maturing, doubts assailed my mind;
Now I am believing.

And yet as we study his life and his work

it is revealing to find that the "spirit" of Christ is certainly the most constant and powerful element in his thinking and his behaviour. Time and again he shows his compassion for man, and his respect for his dignity. He dreams of a new world in his poem "Evening":

Where the winning of one is the
hurting of none,
And fairness the highest of laws.

And again in his poem referring to Christ:

He taught that humen love alone
Was the one way to heaven's throne.
He was that all men work in vain
If love is missed for selfish gain.

In another poem he expresses his concern for all men regardless of their beliefs:

To hate with a passion the stand
of a man,
Yet cherish the man for himself.

Stephan felt he had to be true to himself and to his own reasoning and therefore could not accept the "myths", the apparent contradictions of the Bible and least of all the "blindness" he recognized in many religious people. All his life he searched for truth and understanding, putting his faith in the world and in what he believed was reality. In his poem "Tithes" or "Tens" he flatly states:

The soul's a transient flame,
Lit up with power,
A light which originates
In the quickening of matter.

And in his poem to the Rev. Fridrik Bergmann, he concludes by saying:

And thus a light will shine upon
your passage here,
Revealing that you faltered on the
path of truth.

And in "Unbelief" he writes:

It came like a ray in a grave's chilling
shade,
And from it a light over everything
blazed.

He came to believe man was the ultimate master of his own fate. By his own will and striving, he could make this world a better place and improve mankind's lot. In "The Brothers' Share" he tells of two brothers who inherit a lean and run-down farm. One brother forsakes the land and digs for gold, the other brother nurses the land with a loving hand and turns it into a model farm. Beneath the poem's surface there is a larger meaning: that man becomes more moral and gains greater dignity, by giving of himself to the earth and to the world. Someday man will lift himself out of his pettiness and shoddy mediocrity, and then a new "Golden Age" will evolve. Only because man has failed and to live up to his potential is he still in a sometimes dark and evil world. In "Evening" he explains:

And I was surrounded by spectres
of souls
Who failed to live up to their best.

But the future is bright and there is always hope. We read in "Petersburg":

But that age will come —
When goodwill and good sense man's
worship will be —
And only the Saviour, our help
and our pride.

But it was during the Great War that Stephan revealed not only his manly independence, but also his abhorrence for war, its cruelty, its arrogance and its every kind of baseness. With the war fever spreading around him, and the war zealots screaming their patriotism, and the young men flocking in blind submission to the recruiting stations Stephan remains cool and aloof. He will have none of it, and he lashes out against it. In doing so he arouses the wrath of his fellow Icelandic Canadians. Articles in the Icelandic periodicals make scathing remarks condemning him for what they believe is a subversion bordering on treason. He answers tit for tat, standing practically alone, yielding nothing; and he continues

his stand throughout the war years. He writes in that time a long poem called "Battle-Pause". It is a stunningly frank inditement of war. Stephan spares no one and no institution which he believes must share part of the guilt for the war: politicians, churchmen, businesses, manufacturers, flag-wavers, all suffer the sting of his devastating pen. Had the poem appeared in English it is not comforting to contemplate the passionate reaction it undoubtedly would have caused. In one of his short poems he admits his stand was a difficult one:

When every idiot was fired to fight,
by foolishness inspired —
It took a man with will of stone
to dare to stand alone.

After the war, when the soldiers were coming home, shell-shocked, disabled, scarred mentally as well as physically, Stephan writes one of his finest poems. It is called "The Fjallkona (Maid of the Mountains) Greets her Returning Soldiers", the poet speaks through the Fjallkona, the eternal guardian of Iceland and its people; with her words he expresses his own sorrow and regret for the "Mark of Cain" which he believes the war has branded on the young men. He ends the poem on a note so tragic, so poignant, so heart-rending and yet so true, that one can hardly read it without feeling a lump in the throat and a terrible sense of the futility and the waste of war. The Fjallkona, deeply moved, speaks to the

returning soldiers with the tears flowing down her cheeks:

But knowing lesser men, come
homeward from the field
Is heaviest to bear.

Yes, Stephan G. Stephansson was a great poet, but he was even a greater man, a man who stood behind every word he ever wrote. In this short piece, the writer has tried to reveal to you the essence of the man. He was a non-Christian, a non-believer, but it is his "Christness" which shines through his life and his work. Humble in greatness, compassionate, loving, noble and forgiving, this simple-living farmer-poet epitomized most of the finest qualities that make up the mind, soul and spirit of a human being.

Paul A. Sigurdson

THE COVER PICTURE

It is, indeed, a privilege to feature on the front cover the picture of Her Excellency, Vigdis Finnbogadottir, **The President of Iceland**. In referring to her as "Fosturlandsins Freyja, fagra Vanadis" we are honoring her not only personally, but as a representative of countless, unrecorded Icelandic women whose strength and fortitude have been a major factor in sustaining the morale of the nation throughout centuries of trials and tribulations.

"Lang may her lum reek."

Dockside Fish Products

SPECIALIZING IN

FRESH AND SMOKED FISH

FRESH FROZEN MINNOWS

PHONE 642-7484

CENTRE ST. EAST, GIMLI, MAN.

AT THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION

(Est. 1957 — Reorganized 1973)

A non-profit organization established in 1957 devoted to the preservation of the Icelandic culture and heritage in Canada and the United States.

The Foundation needs your support.

Tax exempt receipts will be issued.

We invite your inquiries. Donations may be made to:

The Canada Iceland Foundation
Mr. Kris Kristjanson, President
289 Queenston St., Winnipeg, Man.
R3N 0W9

Mr. Gordon Gislason, Treasurer
563 Campbell St., Winnipeg, Man.
R3N 1C2

In accordance with its Charter Agreement the Foundation aims and objects are to assist associations, publications, and other organizations whose objectives are similar to those of the Foundation and to provide scholarships for students who are interested in improving their knowledge of the Icelandic language and literature.

Its present support of Lögberg-Heimskringla and The Icelandic Canadian are important factors in the continuance of these publications, thus keeping the lines of communication open between Icelandic-Canadian and Icelandic-American communities scattered throughout the length and breadth of the North American continent.

The Icelandic Canada Foundation looks

to the public for financial support to enable it to play its part in the preservation and perpetuation of the culture and heritage that the Icelandic pioneers bequeathed to us.

* * *

From a Letter to the Editor by Arnetta Moncrief, De Witt, Arkansas, U.S.A.

I have a suggestion that every subscriber give a year's subscription to a friend or a relative. That is how I got acquainted with the Icelandic Canadian. A very dear friend sent a year's subscription as a present. I feel reasonably certain that a number of people of the Icelandic identity are not aware of this fine magazine's existence.

LUNDAR BAKERY

ERIC & LIL JOHNSON

Lundar, Manitoba R0C 1Y0

PHONE 762-5341

VIDIR  LUMBER & SUPPLY LTD.

QUALITY HOMES MOVED ANYWHERE
IN MANITOBA AND SASKATCHEWAN

Phone (204) 364-2261,2,3

BOX 700, ARBORG, MANITOBA R0C 0A0



THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND

(A Biographical Sketch)

Vigdis Finnbogadóttir, born in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, on April 15th, 1930. Her father was Finnbogi Rutur Thorvaldsson, civil engineer and professor at the University of Iceland and her mother Sigridur Eiríksdóttir (customarily Icelandic women keep their maiden name after marriage), for thirty-six years chairman of the Icelandic Nurses Association.

Vigdis matriculated from junior college, Menntaskolinn í Reykjavík, in 1949. She studied French and French literature at the University of Grenoble and Sorbonne in Paris, specializing in drama. Later on she studied in Denmark and Sweden and concluded her studies, adding English, English literature and Education, from the University of Iceland. Vigdis taught French at

junior college for a number of years, first at her old college, Menntaskolinn í Reykjavík, but later on joining the staff of a new, experimental junior college, Menntaskolinn við Hamrahlid, there taking on the responsibilities of planning and building up the French teaching department.

Teaching in winter Vigdis joined the Icelandic Tourist Bureau during the summer, working as a tourist guide. There she was responsible for receiving many foreign journalists and writers, guiding them around Iceland and helping them gather what material and information they wanted or needed. During those years she also built up the guide-training within the bureau and headed that for a number of years. In her sabbath year from teaching Vigdis stayed in

NOTICE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

PLEASE SEND:

Correspondence regarding subscriptions to:

MILDRED STORSATER

890 Valour Road

Phone 772-1707, Winnipeg, Canada R3G 3B4

Business Correspondence to:

HAROLD JOHNSON

1033 Clifton St.

Phone 772-4397, Winnipeg, Canada R3G 2Y2

Advertising Correspondence to:

ERIC JONASSON

P.O. Box 205, St. James Postal Station, Winnipeg, Canada R3J 0H0

Phone 885-5792

Editorial Correspondence to:

AXEL VOPNFJORD

1 - 670 Gertrude Ave.

Phone 284-3079, Winnipeg, Canada R3M 2M9

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$10 per year, single copies \$2.50 plus postage. Overseas, the same rate. GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS: Three or more \$8 each. Subscriptions if paid three years in advance, \$25.

France, studying the cultural relations between Iceland and France in the 19th century.

From 1972 to 1980 Vigdis was a director of the Reykjavik Theatre Company. Under her guidance the company has flourished and during those years she has been especially active in opening channels for Icelandic playwrights.

Vigdis has taught French drama at the University of Iceland, worked for the Icelandic State Television giving lessons in French and introducing the theatre in a

popular cultural series. She was a member of Grima, the first experimental theatre group in Iceland, has been chairman of Alliance Francaise, has given lectures on Icelandic culture abroad and has since 1976 been a member of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Affairs of the Nordic Council and chairman since 1978.

Elected President of Iceland on June 30th, 1980, for the period August 1st, 1980, to July 31st, 1984.

Vigdis is divorced, has not remarried and lives with her adopted daughter, Astridur.

ICELANDIC - CANADIAN PIONEERS

by Kristiana Magnusson

As I pensively think of bygone days,
My thoughts turn back in rhyme,
To the pages of life forever enshrined
In the pioneer's Book of Time.

These pioneers came with hope in their hearts,
And a prayer for a life secure,
Though little of worldly goods they possessed
Of faith in themselves they were sure.

This country seemed both vast and strange,
But their true Viking spirit endured,
And from the stubborn soil and the stormy sea,
A bountiful crop they secured.

Though often they yearned for the sloping hills
And companions and ties of yore,
This country they learned to love and respect,
And proudly its emblem they wore.

Through sagas retold and poetic verse,
They preserved their traditions of old,
And blended these into our Canadian mosaic,
With bonds of love and courage so bold.

RICHARD BECK June 9th, 1897 - July 20th, 1980

by Dr. Valdimar J. Eylands

*"A man should be moderately wise,
not over-wise . . ."*

Havamal



Dr. Richard Beck

Havamal (The High One's Lay) of the Eddas, among which we find the admonition that a man should be moderately wise, and not over-wise. Although one of the most learned men in his field be abhorred intellectual arrogance, and assertions of finality in the type of research which is by nature relative and flexible.

He distinguished himself early as a student by his general ability and intense application. The Reykjavik Gymnasium which in his day prepared people for university matriculation was a six-year school with a heavy curriculum of foreign languages and sciences. The average student found it difficult enough to complete these studies while in residence at the regularly allotted time. Dr. Beck spent only two years in residence at this school, one in the Junior Department which then was located at Akureyri and another at the senior section in Reykjavik. The remainder of the subjects he mastered by himself, or with the aid of private tutors. At the same time he made a living for himself and also his widowed mother, as a foreman on an open fishing boat on one of the fjords on the east coast of Iceland where he was born (Reydarfjord). This unusual fisherman-scholar obtained his matriculation degree from the Reykjavik school in 1920, at the age of twenty-three.

Sixty more years were granted him, and he spent them all as resident of North America, mostly in the United States. Four years after obtaining his degree in Iceland, he had acquired both the Masters and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees at Cornell University. Almost immediately

It is safe to say without fear of contradiction that as a Scandinavian scholar, as a teacher, and as promoter of Icelandic culture, Richard Beck was one of the outstanding men of his generation.

He was generously endowed by nature. He had a keen intellect, a discerning mind, a strong memory, indomitable will power, exuberant energy, and a burning desire to excell. He was a poet of note and an eloquent speaker in three languages. He was a prolific writer of essays and books, a literary critic, compiler and editor. Above all he was a man of good will, generous and considerate of others. While a scholar by nature, he was a perpetual student never pretending to have the last word. He was a great admirer of many of the sayings of

upon graduation he was engaged as a teacher of English at Thiel College, Greenville, Pennsylvania. In 1926 he was invited to the Department of English and Norse at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota. In 1929 he was appointed professor of Scandinavian languages and literature at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, and in 1954 he was appointed the Head of the Department of Foreign Languages at that university.

He enjoyed ever increasing popularity and esteem among his colleagues and students and was often chosen as the formal representative of the university on public occasions. When the university introduced the Faculty Lecture Series, Dr. Beck was chosen as its first speaker. At the time of his retirement, after almost forty years of service to the institution the University conferred on him an honorary Doctors degree as well as the title "University Professor" in recognition for a long and distinguished service rendered the university both in teaching and in public relations.

A complete list of all of Dr. Beck's writings is probably not available anywhere at present. In the Library of the University of Manitoba there are at least forty-six index cards with his name, indicating that he is the author of at least that number of articles and monographs which are available at the Library. This is however, only a partial list, since none of his writings in Norwegian are there included.

In 1964 Dr. Grettir Leo Johannsson, Consul General for Iceland in western Canada took upon himself the onerous task of analyzing two hundred and thirty-two issues of the Icelandic weekly Logberg-Heimskringla, with reference to the names of the people who had sent paper reading material during the period in question, and the frequency of their contributions. Dr. Beck is credited with no less than seventy-five contributions to those issues of the paper, and it is no doubt safe to assume that

this kind of productivity was typical of his literary support of this paper at other times.

For many years it seemed that no matter where you picked up a paper in Icelandic between Seydisfjordur in eastern Iceland, and Seattle on the Pacific Coast, you would find an article or a poem contributed by Dr. Beck, or some of his material which had been reprinted. He loved to give speeches and to write, and people enjoyed reading his compositions whether in prose or poetry. His outlook was always wholesome and refreshing, his style fluent, abounding in classical and modern poetic quotations, and his genuine kindness and love of life were superimposed upon his expressions whether oral or written. Amateur writers often found a good friend in Dr. Beck. He had the ability, and above all the desire to see what ever was good and meritorious in the efforts of his fellowmen and for this reason his literary criticisms were not always taken seriously by the hard liners in the field.

Not only did Dr. Beck write a great deal for the Icelandic weeklies in Winnipeg but also for the Timarit, the annual publication of the Icelandic National League, of which he was president for twelve years. There were fifty annual issues printed of this magazine, and Dr. Beck contributed to all of them except the first two. Some of his annual reports in the Timarit are of such literary calibre that they deserve a better fate than to be hidden in small print in the minutes of the League conventions. He edited the O. S. Thorgeirsson's Almanac for a number of years, and he wrote the story of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod from the beginning up to the year 1935, this being the Fiftieth Anniversary Publication of the Synod. He assisted in editing and collecting the poetry of such men as the Rev. J. A. Sigurdsson, Guttormur J. Guttormsson, and K. N. Julius. He also published a book of his own poems at least on two occasions. He was very modest in his appraisal of himself as a poet, claiming to engage in versification

for his own enjoyment rather than for praise or fame.

The most scholarly and substantial works of this noted author are however written in the English language. Many of his studies in Scandinavian lore and literature are found in: "Scandinavian Studies and Notes on English and German Philology." In a two volume Encycloedia of Literature published in New York in 1944 there is a very substantial article from his pen concerning Icelandic literature from the beginning to the present. But the most lasting monument to his scholarship are his doctoral thesis "Jon thorklsson Icelandic Translator of Pope and Milton," printed in 1957, and his History of the Icelandic Poets, covering the period 1800 to 1940.

During his tenure as president of the Icelandic National League, Dr. Beck made many trips to Iceland as the representative of his kinsmen in North America. He was very popular on those trips, and sought after as a

speaker at church gatherings, and other occasions. He owed his popularity not only to his ability as a public speaker but no less to his congenial and friendly attitude. He seemed to be at home with the fishermen and the farmers in the remotest areas of Iceland even as in the company of the mortarhooded and many-striped intellectuals at university convocations in the western world.

Apart from the honours which Dr. Beck received from the universities of North Dakota and of Iceland, he received many recognitions from his fellowmen. He served his native land for many years as honorary consul in North Dakota, and was awarded the Order of the Grand Knight of the Icelandic Falcon in 1944. In the same year the government of Norway made his a Knight of the St. Olav Order. He was made honorary member of the Icelandic Literary Society (Bokmenntafelag) and of the Icelandic National League. He held honorary member-

VIKING TRAVEL LTD.

77 4th AVENUE
GIMLI, MANITOBA
R0C 1B0 CANADA

PHONE: (204) 642-5114
After Hours:
PHONE: (204) 642-8276

GENERAL TRAVEL or HOLIDAYS

Airline tickets (all kinds), package tours, hotels, car rental,
reservations to wherever you have to go by AIR, RAIL,
SEA or BUS

AGENTS ALSO FOR:
*Voyageur Travel Insurance, Lloyds of London,
Mutual of Omaha, Blue Cross Travel Health Plan*

ship in the International Order of Good Templars, the Icelandic Seamen's Union and in the Grand Forks Chapter of the American Scandinavian Foundation.

But the honor, above all others, came to Dr. Beck when his countrymen chose him to be their representative at the great celebration at Thingvellir, on June 17th, 1944, when the Republic of Iceland was founded. There our fisherman-professor took his seat among great dignitaries of church and state of many nations, and in their presence, and before the whole nation delivered an address which by the warmth of its emotions, its ardent patriotism, and its poetic eloquence made a profound impression.

Upon retirement in 1965, Dr. and Mrs. Beck moved to Victoria, B.C. He was still in good health, and lived and moved among his private library of some 2,500 books which he later donated to the University of Victoria. He enjoyed his retirement in congenial surroundings, reading, writing and travelling. Eventually, of course, old age caught up with him and deprived him for the most part of sight and sound. But even then he did not lose his courage, but made his friends understand in several ingenious ways that all was well with his mind and spirit, and that he was grateful to God and his fellow-men for a life of singular happiness and usefulness for the fulfillment of dreams far beyond that which was considered possible in the days of his youth.

He passed away peacefully on July 20th, 1980. The funeral service was conducted from the local Lutheran Church of which he had been a Board member. Also there he was spoken of as the good and faithful servant.

One of Dr. Beck's last printed verses is called Breidavik (Broad Bay) which was the name of the place of his birth. He envisions himself in his little fishing boat far out at sea, but looking landward being enchanted by the beauty of fjord and fell. He decided it is getting late, the time has come to go back

to Broad Bay. It is difficult to say whether this indicates a premonition, or whether it was intended to be symbolic. One thing however, remains certain: When Dr. Beck returned from the voyage of this life his sailing was smooth, and his cargo precious: the admiration of multitudes, the gratitude of a nation, and the blessing of God.

TAYLOR PHARMACY

Centre and Sixth — Gimli, Man.

GREETINGS FROM
LOUISE and BILL MORGAN

- SOUVENIRS
- GIFTWARE
- UTILITY PAYMENTS
- FREE PRESCRIPTION DELIVERY

PH. 642-8170

PH. 642-8170

Greetings

from

A Friend

A SCHOOL THAT WAS

by Elma Gislason



Fair Valley School, 1916. Teacher Barney Bjarnason at top by doorway; William Gibbs in Ford; at extreme right front my sister Inga, next to her Ella Abernathy, then my sister Leona; Addie fourth from right front.

Once the Assiniboine river was a mile wide. Gradually, it diminished until the river lay far below its original banks. As it receded, a vast, scenic valley formed.

At the turn of the century, in one of the most scenic curves of the river, about fourteen miles north east of Glenboro, lived three families. Two were Icelandic settlers and their families — my father and mother, Ingolfur and Maria Arnason, and my father's half-brother Hjalmar, and his wife, Gudrun. The William Gibbs family resided at the north part of the curve, uncle Hjalmar at the east, and we had the south west corner abutting the prairie at the south with the river due west a quarter mile.

Our shortest egress from the valley was at the south west corner of the farm by a path up the enormous escarpment we called the Black Hill. Nearing the top, our path joined the remains of an ancient buffalo trail which ran from the prairie unto and along the crest of the west escarpment sloping down to the river. On reaching the prairie, a right turn led us west to the school nearby.

The school was built in 1915 to replace

Waverly School which had been destroyed by fire. The new location chosen was much farther west, overlooking the beautiful valley. Thus, a name emerged — Fair Valley School.

Fair Valley served a large territory. Children from the valley, from across the valley, and from the prairie on which it stood, came by wagons and buggies in summer, and by sleighs and cutters in winter, or simply walked. I remember the school was painted cream with brown trim. The windows, erroneously placed on the south wall, had to be moved to the north side. Like most country schools, it became a centre for community activities, church services, public meetings, parties and dances.

During the time that I attended school at Fair Valley, only two Icelandic teachers taught there, Ella Gillis and Barney Bjarnason. Barney was the first teacher at Fair Valley. He was the son of Kristjan and Kristjana Bjarnason of Glenboro, Manitoba. His influence on the young people whom he taught was deep and lasting. He imbued in them courage, and a zest for learning. World War I claimed him in 1918. Thus ended a life, but not the wealth of goodness he impressed upon our young minds. I remember him well, although I was not of school age when he taught at Fair Valley. I remember screaming each school morning to be allowed to go with the older children. In desperation, mother gave in to me once in a while. Once in a while, also, mother received a note from Barney begging her to keep me home. Unfortunately, kindergarten was unheard of in those days.

Shortly after my schooldays began, I remember that my brother Addie became a hero. The flag had become stuck at the top of the flagpole. Ella Gillis asked for volunteers to retrieve it. Like a monkey, Addie

climbed the pole, released the flag and brought it down, to the cheers of the whole school. The district authorities awarded him a medal for his bravery.

Those were unforgettable days at Fair Valley. I do not remember how much help I was, but one year both boys and girls planted trees on Arbor Day. Picnics and sportsdays in June — the country air redolent with scent of wild roses, sage, juniper and tall grass — and I had my first taste of homemade ice cream. Contentedly we sang and picked flowers all the way home.

Wonderful to remember are the Christmas concerts — the preparation and the anticipation. Ella Gillis coached me in a recitation for a real-life Jack-in-the-box scene. My best friend, Jessie Abernathy, and I made our debuts together, singing to our dollies we rocked in our home-made cradles. That was the first, and only, doll I ever had. With that memory is a cream dress in nun's veiling. Mother had hand-stitched identical dresses for my sisters Inga, Rona and I, and we had gleaming red ribbons in our hair. Best of all was the sleigh ride over snow, ice-hard under skies filled with myriad stars so low that the black night became day. The sound of sleighbells, squeaky crunch of horses' hooves as they belched great billows of steam-clouds. It is still vivid as on that night long ago. I was not too young to appreciate the compliments Mother received on our appearance and the excitement of it all. I remember how shivers ran up and down my back as I listened to Mr. Smart give his yearly, highly dramatic rendition from Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, and the dignity of the Rev. Mr. Lawson from Glenboro United Church as he conducted the program for the families that crowded into that little one-room school house.

Have you ever whiffed woodfire, steaming tea, damp leaf mould, valley flora and the river all mingled in one glorious bouquet, in crisp autumn air? If you have, you

will understand why I have never forgotten lunchtime in the valley. We had built a makeshift fireplace against the vertical backdrop of the escarpment below the school. Here we brewed tea in a ten pound honey pail, and opened the lunch pails that we had so happily swung to and fro on our way to school in the morning. Appetities, usually keen, were sharpened by the pungent aroma and nippy air.

On July 4, 1980, as part of the Centennial Celebrations of the Municipality of south Cyrpress, a cairn was dedicated at the site of Fair Valley School. Many present expressed nostalgic memories and renewed old friendships.

My dearest memory of Fair Valley is the pump organ. It drew me like a magnet, and I could not leave it alone. Now that the school is no more, I wonder what became of it. All the buildings were sold in 1958 when Fair Valley consolidated with the school district of Glenboro. Only skeleton frames of the swings remain — mute reminders that once children laughed and played there, flew high in the air, and ran on feet that bore them lightly and swiftly as winds over prairie grass.

Sigurdson Fisheries Ltd.

Agents for
FRESHWATER FISH MARKETING
CORP.

Telephone Nos. 378-2456 — 378-2365

Dealers in Johnson Outboard Motors,
Fishermen's Supplies and Bombardier
Ski-Doos.

RIVERTON

MANITOBA

A TRIBUTE TO G. BERTHA JOHNSON (1902 - 1980)

by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer

The Icelandic Canadian suffered a great loss with the death of G. Bertha Johnson, one of its most prolific and faithful contributors. Almost from the inception of our quarterly she frequently sent us articles, short stories and poems, so well written that all of them were published, none rejected. An elegy written by her appears elsewhere in this issue. We are grateful to her great-niece for writing this fitting tribute to a very special lady.

For each succeeding age will be
A monument of victory
For pioneers who led the way.

— Sigrid Johannesson Woltzen,
"Three Women on Lake Winnipeg"



Bertha and her nephew, Vilhelm Steinn Breidfjord.

Gudbjorg, who came to be called Bertha as a small child in school, was born in a one room cabin near Swan River, Manitoba. She was the last child born to a very large Icelandic pioneer family, the only child in this family to be born in Canada. Jonas Danielson, Bertha's father, was sixty-three years old at the time of her birth; her mother, Johanna (Johnnsdottir), was forty-three. The family was very poor monetarily, but they were very rich in spirit.

Bertha was out earning a living by the time she was fifteen years old. She graduated from normal school in 1925 and was granted a third class teaching certificate, which was valid for one year. She had the

certificate extended for one more year so that she could save the money she needed to continue her education, then went on for further teacher's training at Winnipeg. There, attending classes intermittently for financial reasons, she acquired a second class certificate, then a first class, then first class, grade A. Later, after attending the university at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (partially through correspondence), she took her test for the Saskatchewan standard teaching certificate. Because she had to support herself as well as pay for her schooling, Bertha taught full-time throughout her years of gaining an education. She also sent money home to her family whenever she possibly could.

These were not easy times for Bertha or for her family. Her father, although he retained his mental facilities until the end, was old, confined to his bed and blind for the last twelve years of his life. And the Great Depression was another factor. Teacher's wages were cut drastically during this period, but Bertha was both stubborn and proud. Teaching was an occupation in which one could take pride, and pride played a very important role in the life of this remarkably interesting and hard-

working woman. Jonas Danielson, a man who read avidly and who composed verse when he felt that way inclined, did live long enough to see his youngest daughter become a qualified teacher. He died on June 6, 1930.

Bertha was a dedicated teacher, instilling a sense of honesty and decency in her students as she attempted to pass on to these children that same love for knowledge and learning that she held so dear. Even the poorest student was a concern and a challenge. Bertha would work with the child and pull him or her up to a passing grade. The brightest student was a joy. Bertha liked little boys the best, the impish little boy with a sparkle in his eye and a flair for creative mischief. Spirit and intelligence — that's what one needed if one was to accomplish greatness in this life. But as much as Bertha enjoyed the impish little boy, she never forgot that the future was in her charge. She also taught her students that responsibility came with maturity, that the two could not be separated. And the students came to love and respect this teacher who helped them to grow in knowledge and in character.

In a sense Bertha was my teacher too, even though we were separated by hundreds of miles, meeting in person only once in the many years that we corresponded with one another. Bertha was my great aunt, a half-sister to my grandmother. I can remember trudging to school — willing for a change — with my first copy of **The Icelandic Canadian** held tightly to my chest. No longer did I want to be a cowboy (at nine years old I still didn't realize that I could never be a boy), nor did I want to be a movie-star or to skate with the Ice-Capades. Fitting in with my childhood desire to be famous, I now wanted to be a writer. "Aunt Bertha," who had written one of the stories within the magazine that I carried, came to be my very own, my personal heroine.

High-spirited and industrious, Bertha wrote much throughout her life, especially for one who filled two other full-time roles. Bertha could write only after her duties as homemaker and teacher had been completed. The small home that perched at the top of a rocky hill in Flin Flon, Manitoba was always neat. There were flowers and trees in the yard, all requiring Bertha's care. The land had been barren and rocky when she and Bodvar (Bertha's husband) bought their home in 1944. Bertha worked hard. Little by little she carried in the soil that would enable her to enjoy the luxury of growth that eventually, after many years of devoted and loving labor, filled the year that she was so proud of. Bertha had much of the pioneer spirit within her. She could create a great deal, even at those times when she had little of the material wealth one usually needed in order to create. This ability was given to her by her heritage and by her mother, Johanna.

Johanna taught much to her youngest daughter, just as she had to all of her children. She taught her daughters how to cook and to bake, to make cheese from whey, butter from cream, to spin, knit, crochet and sew. She taught all of her children to honor God's word, and to have a deep respect for work well done. Johanna taught her children to become loving and responsible adults. As Bertha once said, her mother was a self-taught psychologist at a time when psychology was an unknown science. When one of her children would ask for advice, Johanna would discuss the matter in question, then she would say, "Think it over, then you decide what is right." And the child would feel just a tiny bit taller, would feel the decision had been all his or her own. But Bertha believed that her mother had much influence over most decisions that were finally made. However, when it came to thrift, a very important factor to this family throughout their years, Bertha would sometimes turn a deaf ear to

all discussions, much to the dismay of Jonas and Johanna.

It was a custom in this family to give each child a young heifer calf. And when this calf had grown to be a cow, the calf that that cow bred would also belong to the child, and so on. So Bertha was given a calf, and that calf eventually became a cow and a calf. Then entered brother Joe and the possibility of a trip to North Dakota. All Bertha needed was the money. She sold her cow and her calf for the grand sum of \$120.00 and had a very fine vacation. Bertha was later given another calf, but that animal too was eventually sold. There were no more calves, not for Bertha. However, both Jonas and Johanna were cheered by the managerial abilities of Bertha's older sister, Gudrun. By the time Gudrun was married, she owned several head of cattle, a horse and a pig.

Bertha may not have been able to effectively raise a herd of cattle, but she could recite thirty poems by the time she was three years old. Johanna taught her the poems. The mother would set the young Bertha on top of the pickle barrel while she was cooking, and to keep the baby busy as she stirred the pot, she would teach her to rhyme. My Aunt Freda cannot remember seeing Johanna at a time in which the woman was not stirring a pot of something or other, so Bertha must have spent much time on top of that pickle barrel. However, Jonas was the literary member of the family, not Johanna. Johanna was much too busy clothing and feeding her family to read any literature other than the family **Bible**. Although Bertha's mother did relate stories to her children, mostly religious, the tattered old books and newspapers that sat upon the bookshelf were not her domain. These books were read over and over again by Jonas and by his children.

Jonas' interests were wide and varied. He enjoyed politics, religion, adventure and poetry. And after he lost his sight

(when Bertha was about eight years old), one or the other of his children would read to him. The man and his child, some of whom were grown or nearly grown by that time, would laugh together, cry together, know pleasure, pain and anger together. Bertha once told me that she and her father became so engrossed while reading **Ben Hur** that their reading ran well past the lunch hour, and that this tardiness irritated Johanna, who simply had to have things on time. Did the father and daughter discuss the different techniques concerned with the writing of literature? I don't know, but I do know that, had Jonas lived, he would have been very proud of his daughter.

And Bertha was very proud of Jonas, the red-bearded, red-haired giant of a man who became the pattern for one of the main characters in at least two of her pioneer stories, "Sigurhlif" (**The Icelandic Canadian**, autumn and winter issues, 1979) and "Frescoed With Angels" (**The Icelandic Canadian**, winter issue, 1969). "The Christmas Paper," a story written in memory of her father, was published in the Icelandic weekly, **Heimskringla**, sometime in the early 1930's.

Bertha's work has been published in many magazines and newspapers throughout Canada: **Heimskringla**, **The Icelandic Canadian**, **Country Guide**, **Free Press Magazine**, **Outdoor Canada**, **The Western Producer**, and **Canadian Short Story Magazine**, among others. In April of 1951 Bertha was honored with an award from the Canadian Women's Club and the Canadian Authors Association. She also won first prize in a literary contest sponsored by **The Icelandic Canadian** in 1955 for her short story, "The Game of Chance," and she received first prize in the 1976 contest sponsored by **Canadian Short Story Magazine** for her story, "The Promised Land." In 1978 Bertha wrote to tell me that she had just completed an adventure book for children ages nine to twelve, but to my

knowledge this book has never been published. As with most authors, much of Bertha's work remains to be seen. However, in keeping with a desire to finish all work, she did leave instructions stating that it was her wish that the papers, poems and stories she had written were to be compiled into book form at some future date.

Bertha was very proud of her ability to create with words, but she had an even greater pride in her family, her husband (a fisherman and an outdoorsman), her Icelandic heritage, and in the great Canadian northland. These were the people, the places, the ideals that Bertha desired to preserve. "I have only one regret," Bertha wrote in a recent letter to me, "that I have left so much unwritten." "It was all so wonderful," she wrote in another letter, "I do not hesitate to say that many of the more privileged generations will not have such wonderful memories when they reach my age."

But there were great moments of sadness too. By the time Bertha was thirty-four years old she had lost five members of her beloved family. Her sister, Sigurhlif*, died of tuberculosis in 1915 at twenty-seven years of age. Johann, the Joe mentioned earlier, disappeared in the year 1930, the same year that Jonas died. Murdered? I don't think that anyone knows, but I do know that some people suspect this to be true. Ingibjorg, who was called Emma, died on the day after Christmas, 1935 at forty-five years of age. She had been sick for a very long time. And Johanna, Bertha's gentle and loving mother with warm brown eyes (see "Sigurhlif," the short story), died less than three weeks after her daughter, Emma. These must have been heartbreaking years for the young woman struggling to make a place for herself in this world, but perhaps it was just that heartbreak that caused Bertha to find the place that she will be most known for in the years to come. Perhaps it was the heartbreak that inspired

her to push onward with her gift for words. And that gift is her gift to the next generation.

Bertha was a good woman, a woman in love with life and in love with those people whose lives touched hers. She held within her all of the qualities that are so prevalent among the Icelandic people: pride, honesty, scholarship, humility, reverence, and the love of a good argument. Mary Crerar, a friend of Aunt Bertha's stated in a recent letter, "It took me twenty-five years to realize she did not want me to agree with her, but did want me to put up a good argument. Then (after the argument) she

**- ASGEIRSON'S -
LIMITED**

698 SARGENT AVE. 783-4322
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

★

Headquarters for

PAINT ● WALLPAPER
AND HARDWARE

GIMLI AUTO LTD.

Your Ford, Mercury,
Lincoln Dealer
Covering the Interlake

Phone 642-5137

would thank me for a good evening." Mary also wrote of Bertha's determination and of her pride. Three years ago Bertha was scheduled to have a very serious surgery, and not wanting to leave anything unfinished, she called Mary early on one Sunday morning, the Sunday before she was to leave for the hospital. Bertha wanted her friend to hang one tiny piece of wallpaper in a corner that she could not reach. "Yes," Mary wrote, "she had papered her room." Illness and pain could not keep Bertha from completing the work that she thought had to be done. "Sigurhlif." Bertha's last and possibly her greatest written work, was finished on hospital stationery in a feeble and unsteady hand.

After Bertha's death, a Missouri woman named Maxine Blaine wrote a tribute titled "Bertha." This tribute was written to a friend of Maxine's, one for whom Bertha had special feelings and for whom she served as mentor. The following quotes are from that written work: "She gave direction to the whole of your life . . . She gave you love and adoration . . . She gave you strength and courage through her own

tenacious struggle . . . She gave you integrity through her calling things as she saw them, often penetrating to the heart and reality of the matter . . . She gave you a bit of her sense of humor . . . She gave you a bit of her teaching spirit, her inner need to write, an awareness of people, a love of music, and a touch of frivolity . . . She gave you the vitality and the toughness and the clannishness of the Icelandic family . . . and the beauty of its language . . .

She gave you herself.
And none of that is gone.
It will never be gone.
It is forever."

*This is the Sigurhlif who was born at the end of Bertha's story by the same name: see "Sigurhlif," *The Icelandic Canadian*, autumn and winter issues, 1979.

Copyright, March, 1981, by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer. First North American Serial Rights.

DR. G. KRISTJANSSON
PHYSICIAN and SURGEON
PHONE 633-7281
WESTBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE
Logan and Keewatin
Winnipeg, Manitoba

DUFFY'S TAXI
775-0101
Your Neighborhood Taxi

wheatfield press

*for genealogy, history and reference
publications and aids*

publishers of:

"Tracing Your Icelandic Family Tree"

*"The 1891-92 Census of Icelanders in
Canada"*

"The Canadian Genealogical Handbook"

box 205, st. james postal station,
winnipeg, manitoba R3J 3R4
(204) 885 4731

AN ELEGY

*In loving memory of my sister, Emma Danielson,
who died December 26, 1935.*

by **G. Bertha Danielson (Johnson)**

It leads beyond a purple misty hill,
The winding road to memory's lovely vale;
There bygone days live sweet and joyous still,
And love and lilting laughter cheer the dale.

And there, beyond the purple, misty hill,
Death cannot come, for all things live for aye:
Past joys and hopes return the heart to fill;
There with your loved you stroll along life's way.

Ah, you are gone — but memory brings you near,
Your little acts of love, they live again
For those you loved, and bring them needed cheer.
No moment sweet was ever lived in vain.

It leads beyond a mystic, dark divide,
The narrow road to angel-realms above,
Where 'mid the glories of the otherside,
We hope to meet again the ones we love.

You are not dead — for death is transformed life,
To higher destinies of service there
In realms of peace, afar from earthly strife,
Where you are happy in God's loving care.

And I? Ah, there is work for me to do:
A life to live; I must not weep nor pine.
It was God's will: a crown He gave to you;
I still must serve, ere He will give me mine.

WEST-MAN THORRABLOT REFLECTS NATURE OF ETHNIC RESURGENCE

by Leigh and Shirley Syms

On February 7, the Icelandic Canadian Club of Western Manitoba held a Thorrablot in Brandon. A holding of a Thorrablot is not unusual but this social reflects developments that are both promising and important in the re-emergence of Icelandic ethnic awareness and heritage.

Firstly, there were approximately 140 Icelanders and friends, which represented an increase of about 50% over the previous years. Despite the fact that it fell on an evening of the season's worst blizzard, people came from Winnipeg, Neepawa, and Moosomin, Saskatchewan. More important than the number of people was the composition of the group. A family orientation was encouraged and children's dinner rates were established. As a result, there was a group of children aged 5 to 8 years, most of whom were dressed in traditional costume, a teenage group of 11 to 14 years and numerous young couples.

The presence of the young people created an atmosphere approaching that of the old-fashioned family dances. Children and parents were joined by ammas and afis. Children danced with parents and with each other or played among the parents well into the night.

A sprinkling of traditional women's and girls' costumes was noted throughout the crowd. There was a marked increase in the number of costumes and it is anticipated that this trend will increase.

Food is, of course, one of the symbols of Icelandic heritage with which many people are familiar. The dinner consisted of an almost totally Icelandic menu; hangikjot, breaded pickerel, mashed turnip, scalloped potatoes, various salads and rolls. At 11:00 p.m. there was a vast array of Icelandic dainties: rullupylsa on Icelandic brown bread, ponnukokur, astarbollur, vinarterta, kleinur and coffee. The side table groaned



Two generations mixing: (left to right) Deirdre Syms, Signy Syms, Gudrun McInnis, Gordon McInnis, Kim Hood.



Our Icelandic entertainment. Part of the Hekla Singers: (left to right) Erika Stewart-Hay, Kris Vopnfjord, Tristin Tergesen, Lindy, Karen and Len Vopnfjord. Camera missed Kristin Stewart-Hay.

with the mound of goodies, which were provided voluntarily, and extra plates were sold.

Finally, a Thorrablot is not complete without entertainment. Between the meal and the dance a program was provided by the well-known Western Icelandic group — Len and Karen Vopnfjord and the Hekla Singers who have sung at numerous Manitoba socials and at the national ethnic folk festival in Quebec. They provided, not only national and Icelandic flavour during the program, but their presence added a stronger Icelandic atmosphere, and local teenagers had fellow Icelandic teens to whom they could relate.

The Thorrablot is a distinctively Icelandic tradition that takes place in February which, in Canada, is normally a month of extremely unpleasant weather and few holidays. North Americans would do well to encourage its recognition as a national holiday.

Regardless of whether it becomes a national holiday, the Thorrablot is, or shall be, an important focus of Icelanders in which all generations come together to share in fellowship, a pleasant social atmosphere, and delicious food. The West-Man Icelanders are well on their way in developing in this direction.

DR. PETER OLAFSON WORLD KNOWN SCIENTIST

Arneha Hanson Moncrief

Dr. Peter Olafson, a reserved and modest gentleman with a brilliant mind, whose chosen career has become very successful, was born in the vicinity of Gardar, North Dakota. His parents, Olafur and Sigurbjorg Thomasson Olafson, were blessed with superior intelligence, so it is not surprising that their two sons and three daughters had their degrees, when finishing college was not common.

While some states take pride in their fine apples or citrus fruits, North Dakota can honestly say that a small ethnic group of its state has produced an unusual number of worthy people.

Peter Olafson, a world recognized scientist, is one among those, who has reached his star. His career has been spent in the scientific study of the origin, development as well as eradication of the various diseases in animals. He has also been an unusually successful teacher in the department of Veterinary Science, which the many testi-

monials of his former students and colleagues verify.

Dr. Olafson is a product of the soil, so to speak, for he grew up in the rural area of Pembina County, where his interest in the domestic animals began. After finishing grade school of his vicinity, he received his secondary diploma at the University High School at Grand Forks. He also taught in the country school, which he attended.

Many people have various experiences at an early age, which alter their decisions in life. In Dr. Olafson's case was an essay on feeding cattle systematically that was submitted by him to the Jersey Journal, for which he won an award. He received a Jersey heifer calf, that probably played a role in his decision to study the Veterinary Science. He completed his first two years in the animal medical field in 1924 at the North Dakota Agricultural College, what is now the State University.

During the summer he assisted in the laboratory under Dr. Schalk.

His scholarship application to the Veterinary College at Cornell University, which had been supported by outstanding professional people such as Dr. Schalk of the Veterinary Science Department of the State University of Fargo, North Dakota, was accepted. A profound tribute to his outstanding mental ability and unusual scholarship record was noted by Dr. Fish, who was acting for the dean at this time. This meritorious performance continued all during the next years at Cornell University, not only as a student but all through his research and teaching career.

Dr. Olafson graduated with a degree in D.V.M. in 1926. He was appointed an instructor in Pathology after graduation and an assistant professor in 1927. At the end of the next two decades his position advanced, first a professor in 1936 and then he became head of the department in 1946. He acquired his masters degree in 1927.

Dr. Olafson has studied at various institutions outside of his alma mater, Cornell University. His intellectual ability for research was stimulated by studying at Leipsic, Munich and Copenhagen in 1935. He also attended the University of Chicago.

This outstanding scientist has made important contributions toward understanding a number of diseases in dairy cattle. He was the first pathologist to describe bovine listeriosis; he was also first to describe virus diarrhea. His studies included muscular dystrophy of lambs and calves, equine "wobblers" disease, toxoplasmosis, cardiac anomalies, brain tumors, and more. The most rewarding achievement of his successful career was his work on hyperkeratosis in cattle.

Quote: "In May, 1941, in the course of his duties, Olafson was called upon to investigate a disease which had ruined a herd in the western part of New York State. The cause of the disease was not determined, but

Olafson recognized that it was something different from anything that had previously been described. In the next several years other outbreaks, widely scattered were recognized. Because of a characteristic thickening and wrinkling of the skin, Olafson gave the name hyperkeratosis to this disease. Others called it X disease."

Through Dr. Olafson's successful attempts in recognizing the characteristics of the ailment, he expressed the opinion in 1947 that it was not due to an infectious agent.

The United States Department of Agriculture called a conference of research workers from sixteen states to solve the problem. The following year, a cooperative study was begun in seventeen states participating. Dr. Olafson stood alone in believing that this was not a viral disease, but instead chemical poisoning. He was assigned the task of investigating chemical agents, which resulted in death of these cattle herds. He based his studies on the tissue changes in these animals.

Olafson found through his study that a highly chlorinated naphthalene would produce the disease. He became the pioneer in this field and the first to isolate and describe the disease as a distinct type not connected with virus.

Previous to his great contribution as an outstanding scientist, herd losses amounted to between two hundred and four hundred million per year between 1948-1952.

Due to his contribution, he has been called many times to the beef cattle areas of the South Western states to give advice and assistance to this problem.

Dr. Olafson was invited to Israel in 1955-1956 during his sabbatical leave, where the disease of hyperkeratosis had resulted in severe losses. He was presented a scroll of honor, the first one to a non-Israeli, for his valuable contribution.

In September, 1960 he and eleven other United States scientists made a three month

tour of Nigeria. Dr. Olafson was the only one for the purpose of advising on animal disease control. The others were working in various fields. In 1962-63, he was assigned by the United States Public Health Service to Ghana to study animal disease. When he arrived the cavalry was on foot. He discovered a calcium deficiency in their horses and rectified it. These steeds were soon mounted again.

Dr. Olafson was the recipient of numerous honors during his career. He was elected president of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society for 1959. That same year he was awarded the Borden Award by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Quote from Laudation of Dr. Peter Olafson at Miami Beach:

"Dr. Olafson, an emeritus professor of Veterinary Pathology at Cornell University is a charter member of the ACVP. He is one of the group of four outstanding men who had the foresight in around 1946 to work together in starting a veterinary college of which Dr. Olafson served as its president".

He prepared himself for his outstanding achievements with some meritorious people in human and veterinary pathology in America and abroad in Germany and Denmark. One among these was Karl Nieberle in Leipzig, whose life-long interest in tuberculosis made him eminent. However, mostly due to his own gifted mentality and tenacity to finish what he began, Dr. Olafson built up a Department of Research at Cornell that attracted graduate students from all over the world.

No one has exceeded this rare teacher in motivating his students by igniting a spark of enthusiasm for the subject of pathology. This great attribute has been carried on by these same students to the various institutions, wherever they have located. Dr. Olafson encouraged independent thinking in his students as well as work ethic. Clock watching was not his way of life, nor was that something practised by his students. He

set a high standard of performance, for which his students were most grateful after they had entered their careers. This is verified by the many letters of praise sent to their former professor.

The following is a quote from an extract of a letter of the numerous messages written by students from everywhere:

"Besides the acquisition of knowledge, you developed in us attitudes that were just as valuable. You forced us to make and defend independent decisions and you taught us acuteness of observation. Somehow out of all this came independence, self-discipline and pride in our profession. I must admit that there was always a little element of fear — not of retribution, but of disappointing you in some way".

This letter was written by Dr. Donald Cordy, a former student of Dr. Olafson:

"The American College of Veterinary Pathologists named him a distinguished member in recognition of his outstanding service to the college as one of the early organizers, and his leadership as former president".

Given at Miami, Florida on the third day of December 1976.

He was a member of Who's Who in America, Who Knows What, American Men of Science, Circa 1952-1970. He is also a member of three National honor Societies: Phi Kappa Phi (the Bachelor of Science equivalent to Phi Beta Kappa), Sigma XI (Research) and Phi Zeta (Veterinary). The Veterinary Association awarded Dr. Olafson at the twelfth International Veterinary Congress (a prize that is presented annually for contributions to the international understanding of veterinary medicine). The Zimmerman Award from Israel (presented to those who made major contributions to their agriculture) was presented to Dr. Olafson, the first non-Israeli to be awarded this honor.

Dr. Olafson was the recipient of many honors during his career, but probably none

pleased him more than the high esteem he was held by his graduate students.

He retired in 1965, but he soon joined a group of veterinarians including Dr. Myron Fincher, who spent two years in Nigeria establishing a veterinary college at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria. When this assignment was completed, he spent six months in Argentina. On his return the State Society honored him by selecting him as veterinarian of the year in 1968.

Dr. Olafson described his philosophy on research, quote: "You go up many blind alleys to find one that leads somewhere. It can be discouraging — you spend a year or two on a project and find out you are wrong. There is no point in having a nervous breakdown over it. Just wash it out and start all over. Most problems can be resolved if you're resourceful and stubborn enough. No matter how worthless the results are, you usually learn something."

On August 30, 1973 Dr. Olafson, Emeritus Professor, was an honored guest of his former students, friends and members of his family on his 75th birthday. This group became known as the Olafson Club. It was a testimonial dinner given in Ithaca, New York, when this distinguished scientist was presented a bibliography of laudatory letters written by his former students from all corners of the nation and some from other countries, who had become successful in the research laboratories as well as professors in the various universities.

Regarding his research on hyperkeratosis, he said, "It isn't often a man, who discovers a disease lives long enough to see it disappear".

One can add that it isn't often that a distinguished scientist lives to have so many honors bestowed on him.

His accomplishments have been done through hard work, but most of all his God-given brilliant mind played an important role.

Mrs. Olafson should be lauded for her contributions, for no scientist has been able to accomplish success unless he had stability in the home and help from his wife. The responsibility of caring for and influencing four daughters, who are successful in their various fields was mainly on her shoulders.

We of his identity are proud of Dr. Olafson's superior accomplishments. We should also salute his fine family.



**Everything
to look
your Best.**



Harold's got just about everything to help you look your best. Harold's expert stylists can create the style you've been looking for. They can recommend what your hair needs to look its best from a wide range of excellent treatment products.

Harold cares about your skin, too and that's important. Let a qualified Esthetician give your skin the care it deserves, so you can look your best, all the time.

Most important, expect honest, qualified advice on your particular hair and skin problems.

Isn't it time you looked your best?

For a convenient appointment phone 775-8557.

Harold's

**Complete hairstyling services
for men and women.**

1065 Ellice at Wall Street

CULTURE — LA VERENDRYE — ENTENTE CORDIALE

by Martin Kavanagh

Mr. Kavanagh, a linguist and a historian, also a long-time teacher in rural Manitoba and Brandon, is the author of two books: THE ASSINIBOINE BASIN, dealing with the history of Brandon and surroundings: LA VERENDRYE, LIFE AND TIMES. Furthermore he has produced sound slides and video tapes dealing with La Verendrye's explorations in Western Canada. Part I is entitled SEARCH FOR THE WESTERN SEA: Part II WESTERN EXPLORATIONS. These sound slides and tapes have been approved by the Department of Education of Manitoba, and have been purchased by School Boards in various parts of Manitoba and North and South Dakota, and viewed by students in the schools.

Mr. Kavanagh is to be commended for making us more aware of our stirring past predating the nineteenth century. Pride in one's heritage is a unifying factor especially in this era of deplorably divisive trends.

Culture may be defined as a way of life. It is closely related to Kultur which has overtones of warlike strife.

Canada's first way of life, if we overlook the Indian period, was due in great part to Kultur. The War of the Spanish Succession, in which the Allies — Britain, Holland and Germany fought against Louis XIV, was basically a struggle for Kultural and Cultural dominance. It was concluded at the Battle of Malplaquet (1709). The major ideologies of Britain, Holland and Germany predominated.

Winston Churchill describes the savagery of the contest:—

“After one day's battle the slaughter was so great that the surviving combatants were struggling on a three foot carpet of wounded and dying and at the end 40,000 lay dead”.

(A Canadien from New France — Pierre

Gaultier (La Verendrye) of Trois Rivières — received nine wounds and lay among the dying.)

At the Peace of Paris — New France — a mere pawn in international affairs and with a totally French speaking population of 60,000 was handed over to Britain. Thus British North America acquired a segment of French culture. For the rest of the eighteenth century Britain was busy with the American Revolution. The United Empire Loyalists, who moved to Canada, were inclined to have no truck or trade with French Canada even though the Canadiens had refused to support the new United States. Result — a cultural war. Little attempt was made to get the Canadiens to look westwards to the scenes of their first explorations. Result — no inducement to integration.

From 1763 to 1979, a two hundred and seventeen year period, a cultural war has been waged by extremists against the letter and spirit of the Treaty of Paris. This defamation of French culture has reached a stalemate and will, if persisted in, do permanent harm to the body politic of the new Canadian nation. It is time we forgot about the past and worked on the basis of an **Entente Cordiale** with a suggestion that Quebec look westward to the scene of its first explorations. If we do not revise our methods of nation building the result will be situations such as exist in Croatia, the Basque, Belgium, South Africa and Quebec.

In these days of swift communication and television the honest **motivation** of Cultural media presentations like plays, poetry, pictures, history etc. is subject to immediate analysis. Canada has advanced from a zero population to 23,000,000 millions. If we

continue to treat French Canadiens differently from the way we treat Ukrainians, Vietnamese etc. we are only going to amplify reasons for conflict.

Pierre Gaultier — La Verendrye

A nation, as Cicero said, has common heroes. La Verendrye fills the bill on every count. He is a hero to people of French origin and could be a hero to the people of Anglo Saxon tradition and to our multi-cultural population if we examine the record **objectively** and **sympathetically**, and present the “**Exploration of the West**” with **dramatic intensity**.

Gaultier was among the first Canadiens — a patriot — a fur trader — a business man — an international explorer — a clean living family man — an organizer. He induced his family to make the **first maps of the international prairies** in a day and age when it was a superhuman task because the only means of transportation was the canoe and conditions were primitive.

In modern times, when every project demands that it be built up about a **personage**, La Verendrye is a ready made subject for every form of cultural promotion. His **life** has been thoroughly researched. Sound slide Kits and Video Tapes, with narration in French and English and music, specially arranged at Brandon University, has been produced to serve as demonstrators of what can be done along cultural lines in the literary and visual arts fields.

The aforementioned productions cost approximately \$20,000.00 cash for research, translators, script writers and graphics and about \$60,000.00 for unpaid work. All these productions are **totally objective** but further work is halted because of a subsurface struggle about culture and to a much lesser extent by finance and also the age of the producer.

It is suggested that the Provincial Cultural Affairs Departments grasp the nettle and change their attitude from one of **laissez**

faire, denigration, diminution, **supressio veri** and **sub rosa** opposition to active but objective and sympathetic promotion of this great non-political person. It should be required reading for script writers to study Tennyson's “Ulysses” and Walter Scott's “Ivanhoe” to get the proper outlook. Let Cultural Affairs build up an **Entente Cordiale** in French Canadian affairs and produce a series of adventure documentaries based on the La Verendrye Saga.

Empire building has in Britain's past been generally noted for liberal absorption — let us continue the tradition.

ENID ODDLEIFSON RECIPIENT OF GENERAL PROFICIENCY AWARD



Enid Dawn Oddleifson received her Bachelor of Home Economic degree at the University of Manitoba in May 1978. Following a twelve month internship in Dietetics at the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg she graduated in May 1980 and at that time was presented with the general proficiency award for her class.

Enid is the daughter of Einar and Vordis Oddleifson of Arborg, Manitoba.

LUNDAR MEAT & GROCERY

*A Full Line of Groceries
NOTED FOR ITS GOOD MEAT*

K. VIGFUSSON JR. & FAMILY

Lundar, Man. R0C 1Y0

Ph. 762-5261

Ph. 762-5368

SETTLEMENTS OF ICELANDERS IN EASTERN CANADA

by Joe Martin

The first Icelandic settlements in Canada were in the East, in the provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia. The first was in the Muskoka area of Ontario, 130 miles north of Toronto. The settlement was begun in 1873 when 115 people arrived from Iceland. Although it was only a temporary settlement a few families stayed after the others had left. In 1899, there were five families living there. The second settlement was at Kinmount, Ontario where 365 people arrived from Iceland in 1874 and it was a one year settlement. Kinmount is located in Victoria County, north of Peterborough.

The third settlement was at a place the Icelanders refer to as Markland in Nova Scotia. It was begun in 1875 from Kinmount and later supplemented from Iceland. At its height, in 1880, it had a population of 200 people. It was purported to be "near the town of Mooseland heights in the Musquodoboit Valley in Halifax County." By 1882 virtually all of the people had left with a few returning to Iceland but the majority going to either New Iceland or the Dakota Country.

Let us deal with each in chronological order. The Muskoka area is one of the finest and richest resort areas in all of Canada. Indeed within not more than a decade after the Icelander's arrival there, it had already assumed that characteristic complete with a millionaire's row built by wealthy Pennsylvania businessmen who made the journey with their families to spend most of the summer in the Muskoka area from either Pittsburgh or Philadelphia. The Icelandic settlement was located on the Rosseau River, six miles east of the town of Rosseau on the way to Huntsville.

The most authoritative local work on the area was done by George W. Boyer and

entitled, **Early Days in Muskoka, A Story about the settlement of Communities in the Free Grant Lands and of Pioneer Life in Muskoka.** The Boyers are an old Muskoka family and Mr. Boyer's son was a member of the Ontario Provincial Parliament for many years.

There are two references to the Icelanders in this book. The first is, when Lady Dufferin visited in Muskoka in 1874 she spoke of the settlers as being mostly of British origin. However, there were settlements of people from other nations, notably the Icelanders at Hekla and Cardwell and those of German parentage in Morrison Township and at Germania, in Draper".¹ He later quotes directly from Lady Dufferin's diary, "we stopped at Rosseau, where we visited the Church and a poor Icelandic family, and landed at the summer house where we got into carriages."¹

I visited the 'settlement' two years ago. (Getha Hurst's daughter has a cottage nearby). If you are planning to visit please note two things first, that the spelling is H-e-k-k-l-a as distinct from Hecla, and secondly the new Ontario road maps no longer show it. The site is beautiful, from a tourist point of view. There is a lovely graveyard in which half of the gravestones are for a family by the name of Einarsson. But for a people who came from a treeless land, it must have been an intimidating experience.

The next settlement was the following year at Kinmount. Kinmount is in the extreme northeast of Victoria county bordering Peterborough county about 100 miles north and east of Toronto. A very good official history has been prepared on

¹George W. Boyer, *Early Days in Muskoka*, p. 19. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Victoria county by the distinguished scholar Watson Kirkconnell, who is not only a native of the area but who also taught at Wesley College and is an authority on Icelanders in his own right. In his chapter on roads and railways, there is a section on the Victoria Railway and this reference is contained therein, "work was twice interrupted during the general financial depression of 1875. A colony of Icelanders, some 300 men, women and children in all, had been brought in and settled at Kinmount in 1874 in order to help along the construction work. Dysentery demoralized their efforts for a time; various difficulties arose; and they finally migrated to Manitoba in a body in September 1875."²

The story of the Kinmount settlement has been amplified considerably in Jean Elford's well written article, **The Icelanders — Their Ontario Year** which was published in the spring 1974 issue of the *Beaver*. But returning to Kirkconnell's, *History of Victoria County* there is an interesting chapter on the Northern Townships. Kinmount is located in one of them — Summerville and this is what Kirkconnell has to say about it. "The inhospitable aspect of the township repelled all settlement for a time . . . most of Summerville Township is utterly unsuitable for farming and areas eminently suitable for forest culture had been recklessly slashed and wastefully burned over."³

Turning to Nova Scotia most of the Icelandic Canadian sources refer to the settlement at Mooseland Heights, called Markland by the Icelanders. However, I recently received a letter from the Federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, which stated, "in your letter of May 30th, 1980 you inquired about the community Markland in Nova Scotia which could have been a settlement for some 200 Icelanders. We have searched our records and have

found no information on this name nor Mooseland Heights. The community at Mooseland is located at 45° 57' and 62° 48'. A 1875 map at the Archives shows the name Icelander Settlement in the area of Mooseland. This could be the Markland you are looking for."

Having received this letter, I examined a map of Nova Scotia and then drove to Mooseland. The settlement is about 30-35 miles east of the Musquodoboit Valley some 75 to 80 miles east of Halifax on the Tangier River.

It derived its original name because of the abundance of moose in the area. According to the Nova Scotia directory of 1871, Mooseland was a gold mining district with gold being first discovered in 1858 and mining operations beginning in 1860. At that time, although access to Mooseland was difficult the settlement did have a weekly mail service and a population of about 200.

The first recorded land grant was in 1865. Most of the land was granted in 50 and 100 acre lots to two different families. The first grant being in 1872, the second in 1884. In *Place Names of Nova Scotia* published by the Nova Scotia Archives in 1967 they noted that, "in 1875, about 80 Icelanders, settled."

As has been noted the Icelanders didn't stay long in Nova Scotia. The 1971 census showed there were only 159. Although Icelanders are included in an appendix to **People of Nova Scotia** which lists 65 different cultural groups, Icelanders are not large enough to rate a write-up, write-ups being restricted to the largest groups. However, Macdonald did note that Nova Scotia was able to attract small contingents of Irish and Icelanders in the 1870's."⁴

A drive to Mooseland raises similar questions to those posed about the Icelandic

²Watson Kirkconnell, *History of Victoria County*, pp 85 and 87.

³Watson Kirkconnell, *History of Victoria County*, p.

⁴Macdonald, *op cit*, pp. 156 and 157.

settlements at Hekklá and Kinmount in Ontario. Why there?

All three settlements were in areas which are basically trees and rocks and not fitted for farming and fishing. Unlike Hekklá and Kinmount, Mooseland today is still too far from centres of population to even rate as a

resort area although there are a number of lakes nearby. Unfortunately, there is no official history of Halifax County which is where Mooseland is located and so our knowledge of this settlement is even more restricted than of the two Ontario settlements.

SYNTAX, SEMANTICS AND SUCH

by Bjorn Bjornson

Had the Reagan administration not called a halt to it, some public schools would have embarked on a program next June of teaching in several languages. School districts with more than 25 students whose first language was other than English would have been required to teach those students in their native languages. This aborted regulation was promulgated on the premise that it would provide equal educational opportunities for Spanish-speaking people and some Orientals.

It is a little difficult to fathom the thinking behind such a regulation, but apparently it was felt that children who spoke little or no English were at a disadvantage and teaching them in their native tongue would give them an equal opportunity with the English-speaking majority. To accept the theory that Spanish-speaking and Oriental children need educational spoon feeding in their own languages is an insult to the intelligence of those children.

This theory overlooks a number of things, including the history of this country. Millions of immigrants came here with no knowledge of English and, of course, they spoke their native languages in their homes. They settled in what were virtually foreign language enclaves like those created by the millions of Germans who came to Pennsylvania, Milwaukee, St. Paul, St. Louis, and hundreds of villages and farms all over

the middle west and the French, Spanish, Italians, Scandinavians and other Europeans as well as Chinese and Japanese who created "settlements" of their own all over the country.

The children of these immigrants all attended American schools where there was no thought of the teaching in any other language than English, the language of the majority and the official language of the country. Learning English was a necessity then and it is no less a necessity now. Not only does learning a language come easier to children than to adults, but to deny children the opportunity for full instruction in English puts them at a disadvantage, keeps them in their linguistic ghetto longer, and impedes their progress toward full command of English. Those who would insist on native language instruction for the foreign-born and the children of the foreign-born would do well to consult some of the larger number of Americans who started like speaking a non-English language and yet received English-language instruction as a matter of course.

There are still thousands and thousands of native Americans who can remember when English was a foreign tongue. I can't say that I can remember with any degree of clarity such a time, but English was not the first language I spoke. My parents were born in Iceland and came to this country as children

and so learned English early. However, my grandmother, who was an important part of our household, never learned English. There was no need for her to do so for in our village there were Icelandic merchants, an Icelandic church, an Icelandic doctor, and a complete Icelandic community, including for a few years an Icelandic-language newspaper which my father published. Because my grandmother never learned English, Icelandic was the "official" language of our home and my siblings and I spoke it exclusively at first. I also recall receiving reading instructions in Icelandic from my grandmother. Sunday school and church services in my childhood were also in Icelandic and I still address the Lord in what I once considered His language.

I can't remember "learning" English; it was gradually acquired as I strayed farther and farther away from our back yard and into the company of "utlendingar" (literally outlanders) as we called the non-Icelanders. I can recall when I was five or six years old my grandmother sometimes complained about our talking English in the home so somewhere early on I must have picked up a working knowledge of the tongue. Thus gradually, almost imperceptibly, began the encroachment of the great big English-speaking world on our tiny Icelandic community. Grudgingly, Icelandic gave way to English in the church until eventually even the word "Icelandic" was removed from the name of the congregation. And after my grandmother's death Icelandic for our family became only the language of privacy.

There were those who tried to preserve our Icelandic heritage and at least delay the death of the language in our community. One of the things tried was an Icelandic-language school. For a month during a couple of summers those of us of Icelandic parentage returned to the public school building and attended classes that were conducted entirely in Icelandic. Since we all spoke the language, the lessons concentrated on im-

proving our reading and writing skills and tried to teach us the complex Icelandic grammar. I wish now that I had paid closer attention in school, but like most of my classmates, I sat and watched the "outlanders" at play and cursed the fate that made us pay such a penalty for being Icelandic.

There isn't any moral to this tale, unless it be that no array of pedants or pedagogues is going to halt the inevitable. In this country it will always be English "uber Alles". Those who would delay the immigrant's acquisition of a facility in English do him a great disservice. The sooner the immigrant develops a command of English the better off he will be. He need not lose his native language nor abandon his heritage simply because he acquires a knowledge of English. Let him learn English early — and let him learn it well.

—*from the Minnesota Press*

GLEN JAKOBSON IN ICELAND

Glen Eric Jakobson, son of Dr. and Mrs. B. B. Jakobson of Neepawa, has been awarded a scholarship by the Icelandic Ministry of Education for studies in Icelandic language, history and literature. Last summer, Glen served as editorial assistant for Logberg-Heimskringla, the Icelandic weekly newspaper which is published in Winnipeg. Earlier this year, he received his B.A. from the University of Winnipeg. Glen is now in Reykjavik, Iceland, attending classes at the University of Iceland.

IN REMEMBRANCE

of four loyal friends of the Icelandic Canadian:

Dr. Richard Beck
Johann Thorvaldur Beck
G. Bertha Johnson
Gissur Eliasson

"HARDWORKIN' TOM"

by Jonas Thorstenson

Dillingham is a small village in Bristol Bay in the Bering Sea in Alaska. I was there for several years, affiliated with the local salmon cannery which is the backbone of the economy or welfare of the village.

During the summer months, approximately 750 people congregated here — Eskimos, Aleuts, Italians, Swedes, Portuguese, Norwegians, some Filipinos and one Icelander — me! When that fact became known, I was quite an oddity.

There was a character there who was also rumored to be Icelandic. His only known name was "Hardworkin' Tom". He was a man of medium size, but built more like an orangoutang. He had sloping shoulders from which two ape-like arms hung almost to his knees. There they terminated into two ham-like hands tipped by fingers resembling bunches of bananas. His head was crowned by a huge mop of snow-white hair and he was never known to wear a hat or cap. Also, he was never seen without his hip boots folded down to knee length.

I happened to be handy one day as he was coming ashore from his fish boat. I said, "Köndu saell lagi — hvernig hefur það gengid í dag?" (which loosely translated would be like, "Hi, pardner, how goes it today?"). Without even looking around, he replied, "Oh, not so bad". I found out later that this was the first spoken Icelandic he had heard since he was 12 years old. He did not even look around to see where it came from.

I cornered him once in a saloon and sat next to him on a bar stool. (He could down a fifth of whisky as fast as you or I could a glass of milk.) This I garnered from his garbled speech:

"Eg var tolf ára gamall, thegar eg redi mig a norskt fiskiskip. Eftir það sa eg ekki

land fyrr en í Noregi. Þar komst ég a skip sem sigldi í kring um Sudur Ameríku til San Francisco. Þar komst ég a skip sem flutti timbur farma frá Puget Sound til Californíu. Árið 1896 komst ég a seglskip sem fór til Alaska, og hér hefi ég verið síðan."

A loose translation of the foregoing is:

"I was 12 years old when I joined the crew of a Norwegian fisherman off the coast of Iceland. I never saw land til we made port in Norway. There, I joined a ship that was outward bound for San Francisco by way of Cape Horn. For some years, I was on steam schooners hauling lumber from Puget Sound to California ports. Then, about 1896, I joined a ship going toward Alaska, and I have been here ever since I jumped ship then."

Now, the town of Dillingham is at the mouth of a huge river where a large proportion of Pacific salmon come to spawn. Consequently, everyone gathered there during the summer months to work in the salmon cannery. They came from as far away as San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, even Point Roberts. But, for the most part, they came from "up-river". These natives would travel "down river" in the spring, "up-river" in the fall (generally 3 sleeps down river, 12 sleeps up-river). "Hardworkin' Tom" had a shack about 2 sleeps beyond the last sleep of the natives.

One spring, when he failed to show up with the rest of the migratories and after the ice had long gone out of the river, we became a little concerned about him and sent a bush pilot up to his cabin to investigate. The pilot found him in his shack, frozen stiff as a plank. He had evidently kept a sort of diary in which he indicated that he had injured his foot. His last entry stated that his foot was

getting worse and that the swelling was creeping further up his leg, preventing him from getting to the wood pile. It was getting colder all the time and he was finally reduced to burning the flooring of his shack to keep warm. Although he had signaled the bush pilots, nobody came. So that is how and where the pilot found old "Hardworkin' Tom".

His shack was a riot of classical material, including a phonograph with stacks of records, mostly operatic excerpts, symphony orchestrations, and the likes, and volume after volume of books by authors such as Shakespeare, Longfellow, Dickens, Hugo, and Thoreau. You name it, he had it. Included among his books were volumes of old Icelandic sagas. Also, there were pages and pages of his own writings in English and in Icelandic. All of these were brought out, along with the corpse, to Dillingham and placed in the custody of the town mayor-clerk-auditor (I am not sure of her title), Mrs. Maxine Emberg, a long-time resident of the town. As I knew Maxine personally and she knew that I was Icelandic, she called

on me to come to her house to delve through this junk of "Hardworkin' Tom's". Frankly, I would have liked to have taken some of that "junk" home with me and, although Maxine was willing, she was not authorized to release any of that stuff until she could trace a possible heir or relative of "Hardworkin' Tom". However, I doubt if she will ever be able to find one.

It later transpired that "Hardworkin' Tom's" real name was Tom Overwick. He apparently had left Iceland in the 1870's or 1880's and at the time of his death must have been in his 90's, although he would only admit to being 79 at the time. Nothing is known of his parents, or from what part of Iceland he was from.

His diaries and other paraphernalia, including many photographs of him, are still in the hands of Maxine Emberg. She has never been able to locate a relative of his. Myself, I'd say that he is just a broken branch off a broken limb of someone's family tree — gone and forgotten (although not entirely forgotten by some).

NORDIC PHILOSOPHERS IN REYKJAVIK

A few weeks ago, Reykjavik was host to the second Inter-Nordic Philosophical Symposium, a sequel to an inaugural convention held in Copenhagen in 1979. Several institutions here, including the University of Iceland and the Nordic House, pooled their resources to sponsor the affair.

The subject for discussion was the nature of understanding. Papers leading the symposium were delivered by six noted academics in the field, among them the University of Iceland's Thorsteinn Gylfason. Each of the five Nordic nations was represented by one of the main speakers; the sixth was a

special guest, a Canadian-born professor from Oxford.

Thorsteinn Gylfason and Mike Marlies, an American who is a faculty member at the University of Iceland, were coordinators for the symposium. As they explained to newsmen, the objective of such gatherings is to develop closer contacts among philosophers in the Nordic countries.

Interestingly, the symposium was conducted in English.

—*Courtesy of News from Iceland*

"OH, YOU CAN CALL ME JOHNNY..."

by Eric Jonasson

I am constantly perplexed by the numerous pronunciations and spellings of my surname which are inflicted on me by the people I meet. Although I realize that the name might appear to be somewhat confusing to a few people at times, I am beside myself to explain why so many seem to regard it as a tongue-twister and a spelling catastrophe.

As a child, isolated from the real world, I grew up with the great misconception that my surname was as simple, easy and common-place as those of the Smiths and Browns of my neighbourhood. Such naive foolishness, however, is only permitted in the very young. Today, as a more mature individual who is wiser in the ways of the world, I realize that I was the victim of parental indoctrination — no doubt prompted by the misspellings and mispronunciations which now confront me. Unfortunately for me, the indoctrination process was so successful that I still regard my surname as easy and common-place. However, because society does not share this view with me, I find that the correct pronunciation and spelling of my name has become quite a phobia to me — almost a personal crusade!

In order to understand my near-obsession, it is necessary to become aware of the problems and frustrations which confront me on a daily basis. In Canadian society I pronounce my name "Jonas-son" (i.e. Jo na son). I do not insist on the original Icelandic pronunciation of the "J" as a "Y" for I know that this would only tend to complicate an already complicated situation. Now, all in all, this should appear quite simple and easy to understand — but for most people, it is not! Invariably, I find that I am referred to as "John-asson" or the more popular "Johannesson" and "Johannsson". In fact, I find that I spend a considerable amount of my time explaining to people that there is no "h" in my name — often to

no avail!

This non-existent — but certainly not unsilent "h" causes me the greatest anguish. In those many offices which exist for the sole purpose of creating and filling out forms are countless documents whereupon my surname begins "J-O-H-", which is then crossed out and followed by the correct spelling (in most cases). I cannot count the times when I have been asked to spell my name — to which I have complied — only to watch in horror as the clerk nonchalantly includes an "h" in the appropriate place. I am often tempted to circulate a petition to have this letter struck from the alphabet, an act which would provide me with enormous relief despite the fact that I would invariably become the favourite prey of everyone who uses this nasty little letter in their names. However, I am almost convinced that a deluge of poison-pen letters from irate Johnsons (or is that Jonsson?) would only be mildly irritating.

Despite the consistency of society's misspellings and mispronunciations, I am occasionally surprised to find someone who defies the majority. Recently at the airport in Thunder Bay, Ontario, I was informed by the desk clerk that my flight would be boarding shortly. This would normally seem quite ordinary, except that she addressed me by name — complete and correct in every detail — after having only glanced at my ticket. I was amazed (this event occurs so rarely)! I questioned her further. Despite my initial suspicion that she was of Scandinavian origin, I found that she was not. I was dumbfounded! I pressed her to tell me how it was that she knew the correct pronunciation — convinced in my mind that she must have come across another Jonasson in the past and been so curtly informed of the correct pronunciation that she remembered it to that day. However, she replied "I just pronounced it the way it was written." At

that moment, my respect for the English teachers of Thunder Bay rose considerably. If only they could be cloned!

As a child, I was the victim of parental indoctrination. Today, as a parent in my own right, my daughter has become the focus of my own form of repetitious propaganda about our surname. My efforts have been relatively successful. She can now rattle off "Jonasson" better than any three-year old I know — and considerably better than some thirty-three year olds of my acquaintance. However, in light of the problems I've had, I realize that merely knowing how to pronounce the name is not enough. I constantly imagine her lost somewhere and the people who find her frantically phoning every "Johannsson" in the telephone book — slowly reaching the panic stage as they approach the end of the list without results. To counter this, I have been teaching her the correct spelling of the name although again this may not prove to be overly beneficial, judging from the number of people who almost insist that I am wrong and who feel that there "must" be an "h" in there somewhere! Hopefully, people will not think that my little progeny would lie to them — at least I hope so for her sake.

Thankfully, my daughter believes that I am telling her the truth about the spelling and pronunciation of our surname. However, we cannot seem to come to agreement about her middle name. Her full name is "Erin Dagbjort Jonasson", the Dagbjort for my great-grandmother. Until recently, my wife and I have concentrated our indoctrination on her first and last names only. Lately, we have been mentioning her middle name to her so that she will be aware of her complete name, only to be curtly informed by her that her name isn't "Dagbeard" but is "Erin Jonasson"! Is it any wonder that my hair is thinning and that I've detected the odd grey hair?

You are probably beginning to view me as somewhat of a complainer — not without

justification I must admit. You are also probably wondering why I don't make a greater effort to inform society of the correct spelling and pronunciation of my name or, barring that, change the name and eliminate the problem entirely! I am way ahead of you, however, having considered these alternatives on several occasions. Advertising the correct spelling and pronunciation is impractical, not to mention too expensive, because I've concluded that the urge to misspell and mispronounce is too great an obstacle to overcome. In fact, I think that the problem could become acute if I attempted to inform the public of the correct procedures. What about changing my name? Granted, this would certainly eliminate the general problem, but would in fact create another for me. My indoctrination as a child was so complete and successful that I'm afraid I would have a hard time reconciling myself to a name-change. By keeping my name I am only subject to fits of hysteria a few times each day — changing it could result in too many sleepless nights agonizing over my disobedience of my parents' wishes! I am doomed regardless of what I do!

Until fairly recently, I must admit that I have occasionally felt somewhat selfish and self-centred about my name and its problems — in spite of my youthful indoctrination. This is probably only natural — my insistence on correct spelling and pronunciation being an obvious rejection of society as a whole. Then, by accident, I came across a reference in the Bible to Simon Peter, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ, and the man generally recognized as the founder of the Roman Catholic Church. A quotation (John 1:42) refers to him as the "son of Jonah". In extending the name, I realized that in Hebrew his surname would be "Bar Jonah" and in Icelandic it would be "Jonasson". Thus I have concluded that if the surname "Jonasson" was good enough for the first Pope, it's good enough for me!

ANOTHER CENTENNIAL YEAR?

Surely it must be a unique happening when a community is able to have a centennial celebration twice. Many people will recall 1975 as the centennial year for Gimli. It was then that we looked back to 1875, the year the first settlers came to this area. Amongst the celebration activities was the **Islendingadagurinn**, when some fourteen hundred visitors came from Iceland and joined in our celebrations. It was truly an enjoyable and memorable occasion when the skillful performances by different individuals and groups, made it possible for us to reflect on past cultures from which we have a common heritage.

In 1975, the town council of Gimli applied for the provincial grant towards centennial celebrations. This request was denied, stating that Gimli was not eligible until 1981. Having been a territory unto itself, outside the boundaries of the then postage-stamp province of Manitoba, it was not until 1881 that the "Republic of New Iceland" legally became part of Manitoba according to the Dominion Act of 1881.

In May 1980, Mayor Ted Arnason called a meeting for the residents of Gimli to make them aware that as far as the provincial statutes were concerned, Gimli would be 100 years old in 1981. From this meeting some interest was generated and discussion followed about possible celebration activities. A committee was formed to act as a co-ordinating group in the centennial planning for the year. Various clubs and groups were approached for their support of the centennial theme for their annual events and perhaps planning for other specific occasions throughout the year. As meetings were held it became apparent that a calendar of events was evolving. To start the year off, the Gimli Legion hosted the New Year's Eve dance with more than three hundred people joining in the celebration. Since then there have been hockey tournaments, the

winter carnival and figure skating event. Curling bonspiels will take place, followed by the Evergreen District Festival of the Arts in May. The Gimli Women's Institute plans to host a tea for citizens sixty-five and over to give recognition to the founders of the town and those who followed in their footsteps. Another event being planned is a Mini Folklorama which will offer goods and entertainment from various ethnic groups. Other highlights will be a performance by the Chai Folk Ensemble, a High School reunion, an Oktoberfest and special Canada Day celebration, to name a few.

As indicated, many citizens have become involved on an individual basis or through a specific organization. Some events are planned and taking place. Others are still being organized and it is anticipated that others will emerge throughout the year. Gimli has always been a place where people "come home to" and it is forecast that this is the year that many citizens from former years will decide to "come home" to renew old acquaintances and reminisce about old times. The town hopes that family and friends will come and join in the celebrations. Gimli says **Welcome** and happy Centennial for a second time.

Dilla Narfason

IN THE NEWS

THORRABLOT OBSERVED IN REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA

by Ted Schweitzer

The Icelandic Society of Northern California observed the traditional **Thorrablot**, rooted deep in Viking history and observed as the winter wanes and spring approaches. This traditional feast was observed on March 7, 1981 at the American Legion Hall, 655 El Camino Real, Redwood City, California.

W. D. VALGARDSON ON WRITING



In the following interview alumnus W. D. (Bill) Valgardson, Class of '61, discusses his writing with contributing editor Diane Haglund.

Professor Valgardson's latest work **Gentle Sinners**, a novel, was released at the University this past April following the premiere of the Manitoba Department of Education film based on his short story **God Is Not A Fish Inspector**.

Professor Valgardson teaches creative writing at the University of Victoria. He is the author of **In The Gutting Shed**, a collection of poetry, and three volumes of short stories: **Bloodflowers**, **God Is Not A Fish Inspector** and **Red Dust**.

Q. Why do you write? Are you 'driven' to it?

A. When I was at United College I remember telling professor Halstead that I wanted to be a writer. He said: "Valgardson, it has nothing to do with want. If you are going to be a writer you really have no choice in the matter." That's probably true. There's not a lot of choice. I have to write. If I don't, I'm

displeased with myself and the others around me.

Q. You teach and have family obligations. Your writing is done in the evenings and at weekends. Does that ever fail?

A. At 40 you take a look back and there are some regrets. You make tremendous sacrifices. My social life of the past 20 years could be packed into someone else's holiday. You miss out on all kinds of things.

For most people who want to write and don't this is what prevents them. Many decide that they're not going to live this way. When you've missed out on the fifth party. When you've missed going out for a drink for the fifth time. When you've ignored your wife and children and friends again and again. Writers are hard on their families. We're not good at meeting our obligations.

Q. Do people understand when you refuse an invitation for the fifth time?

A. Most people try to be friendly. After they know you for a little bit they know that you're so busy with things in your head that you won't be reliable at doing things. At being there. You become isolated. You're in a no-man's-land. But it's not because people aren't friendly.

Q. What are the rewards?

A. Obviously one of the things is to see your name in print. It's a little kid's thing. "Look at me." But the older you get the less desirable that is. As you become older you look for answers. You become more aware of why you're doing it. But when you're younger it's a more self-centered thing.

That night (the reception following the premiere of **God Is Not A Fish Inspector**) I found myself standing there thinking, "why am I here"? Then a lady came up to me and said: "You've made me proud to be from

the Interlake." Then I thought, "All right, it's giving rather than taking. It's a trade."

The rewards? Certainly in Canada it's not money. You're aware of the freedom and time you can buy with money. And in our society money means acceptance. In our society people vote with their money. It means tremendous popular approval. And as much as we may say that we write for ourselves, we want the approval.

Q. There are many frustrations to being a writer in this country. Certainly *Gentle Sinners* won't be well known even though it has received good reviews.

A. No. It's not even that people will have an opportunity to know it's there and reject it. We don't have a system of distribution and marketing in this country. Canada is one of the few countries in the world where we feel our writers have to compete with everyone else.

When you write a good book that you know has a wide audience appeal do you go to a Canadian publisher? Should you be loyal and help Canadian publishing and writers? Or do you go to an American publisher — and be colonized again?

Q. If you could earn your living by writing would you give up teaching?

A. I'd teach on an intermittent basis. I'd use it to go to different places. I like teaching. I really do believe in the thing about transferring. We only live so long and we can transfer those things (in ourselves) that are very positive. There's a tremendous need in this country to teach them (young writers). To accept them.

Q. How does a story begin with you?

A. I dreamed the last scene of *Gentle Sinners*. The ideas come from everywhere. All writers have an active subconscious. The kind of subconscious that simply mops things up. But you're not aware you're picking up all the details you are.

I keep a journal (of dreams, incidents, etc.). I don't try all the time and sometimes I

can't be bothered for a while. And then I regret it. I don't look through it. It's as though writing it down impresses it.

I dreamed that dream (the last scene of *Gentle Sinners*) many times. It was so determined to be there. I worked to find the beginning. To find where the dream came from.

Q. Is there a long gestation period between the dream/the idea and beginning to write?

A. Most things take a long period of time between seeing the thing and beginning to write. But not always. (The short story) **A Place of One's Own** was sparked by a telephone call from a colleague. "W.D.? This is L.R. Have you seen the tattooed man (another colleague)? I knew I had a story. It came as a landslide.

Q. You may write out of mood but it is still hard work.

A. Beginning writers honestly believe that the first draft is good enough because they're a genius. They're so caught up in the commercial image of the writer. But they never read biographies of writers. This will disappoint a lot of students. I'm not a genius.

There's a misconception that writers don't have to work. But there's an incredible amount of writing and rewriting. A story may go through 30 to 40 drafts. A dream does not provide the finished story any more than raw gold is a finely crafted piece of jewelry.

Q. People frequently ask you why you are so gloomy. Your world view is a dark one. So many of your stories end in suicide, death or some form of isolation.

A. I hope it's not unrelieved gloom. When I give readings people are surprised that I'm not in black clothes and covered in ashes. I'm totally different from what they expect.

People often miss the tone of the voice that's telling the story. There's a lot that's

damned funny. A lot of tragedy and a tremendous amount of comedy.

No wonder I'm pessimistic in the long run given the people and things in the background I come from. But that doesn't eliminate humor or even hilarity.

Q. Why do people miss the comedy? The tone of the voice telling the story?

A. Most people aren't terribly good readers and tone is a subtle thing. Even sophisticated people miss it. And people are having the definition of humor redefined by television. There's no real human conflict. No humanity. (For many it's become) one dimensional slapstick. That's really sad. Real humor to me is tragicomedy. You go back and forth across the line.

Q. You enjoy tremendous support from the Icelandic community. A kind of support I don't think any other Canadian author enjoys. Yet people could be offended by your stories.

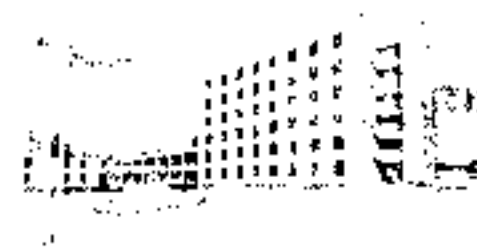
A. There are people who are offended. But rural people are much more aware of others as full individuals. The guy down the road may be a drunk but he's the guy you're going to turn to in an emergency. You accept people very much for who they are. In the city if someone offends you, you can ignore them.

And there is the whole thing about pride. The Interlake is an area that has been poverty stricken. There's a need to know you're worthwhile. And how much more worthwhile (can you be) than to be the subject of art. It's a kind of immortality.

The Icelandic settlers were poor but they brought their books. They really care about writing and art. It's wonderful to come from a community that offers that kind of support.

—Courtesy of the Alumni Bulletin, Summer, 1980
University of Winnipeg

PROPOSED BETEL HOME IN WINNIPEG



Proposed Betel Home in Winnipeg

Shown here is the architects concept of the proposed Betel Home Complex which it is hoped will be built in the City of Winnipeg.

It consists of a two storey Personal Care Home of 70 rooms and a seven storey low rental apartment complex of about 70 apartments. The two buildings will be joined so that the apartment dwellers may take all or some of their meals in the dining

room of the Personal Care Home.

The Executive of the Betel Home Foundation met with the Executive Committee of the Manitoba Health Services Commission on 13 November 1980 at which time they presented a detailed brief and architects plans. The Commission expressed interest in the concept, but pointed out that 1981-82 funding was committed and hence no final commitment could be made at this time. Since that time, Health Minister L. R. Sherman had advised the Betel Executive that the Health Services Commission has been asked to review the plans in detail and that when a new home is built in Winnipeg the Betel plan will be given a thorough and fair evaluation.

—Logberg-Heimskringla
January 30, 1981

JOE MARTIN ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS OF ONTARIO



Joseph E. Martin, C.M.C.

TORONTO — Joseph E. Martin, C.M.C., has been elected president of the Institute of Management Consultants of Ontario at the annual meeting held today.

Mr. Martin is partner-in-charge and a member of the board of directors of Touche Ross & Partners, a management consulting firm with headquarters in Toronto.

The Institute of Management Consultants of Ontario is the provincial body which fosters professional conduct and ethical practice, provides educational opportunities and sets examinations, and generally advances the practice of management consulting in Ontario. The Institute has 408 members and 130 prospective members who are completing examinations and other requirements for full membership.

MARTIN, Joseph E., B.A. (Hons.)

Partner-in-charge, TOUCHE ROSS & PARTNERS P.O. Box 12, First Canadian Place, Toronto, Ontario.

Career: Investment Analyst, The Monarch Life Assurance Company 1959-61; with Manitoba Government 1961-66, Executive Assistant to Premier and Provincial Treasurer (the Honourable Duff Roblin) 1961-63, Executive Secretary to Manitoba Royal Commission on Local Government Organization and Finance (the Honourable Roland Michener, Chairman) 1963-64; Executive Director Manitoba Centennial Corporation 1964-66; joined Touche Ross & Partners as Consultant, Winnipeg Office 1966, transferred to Toronto office, 1968, Partner 1972.

Military Record: Served with C.O.T.C., University of Manitoba and Prairie Command Personnel Selection Unit; retired 1962, rank Captain.

Member: Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs (Member of Board); Institute of Management Consultants of Ontario (Member of Executive); Institute of Management Consultants of Canada (Board Member); Canadian Association of Management Consultants (Alternate Board Member).

Past President: Manitoba Young Progressive Conservative Association; Manitoba Historical Society.

Publications: "The Minister and his Deputy", Human Resources, October 1977; "The Government Squeeze" Board of Trade Journal, February 1975; "Ontario's Role and Place in Canadian Confederation" Ontario Economic Council, February 1974; "Real Property Taxation" Canadian Tax Journal, September-October 1972; "Our horse and buggy government needs a systems approach" Canadian Business, February 1971; "Management Consultants in the Public Sector" Journal of

Public Administration, Winter 1970; "Bloodshed at Seven Oaks" Beaver, Summer 1966.

Personal History: Born in Kelvington, Saskatchewan, 13 January 1937, son of the late George Hebert and Jakobina Sigurlaug (Einarsson) Martin. Married Sally Ann, daughter of the late W. Noble Dagg, 16 July 1960; children — Marian Michele, Jon Noble George, Michael Reid and Meredith Ann.

Maternal grandparents: Johannes Einarsson and Sigurlaug Thorsteinsdottir, pioneer in the Logberg district of Saskatchewan. See the book "The Saskatchewan Icelanders" by Judge W. J. Lindal, page 318. The author quotes a tribute in the Yorkton

Enterprise to this versatile and energetic pioneer upon his death in 1950. The following are excerpts from it: "Mr. Einarsson was a public spirited man all his life and a community leader of the first magnitude. He might be termed a philosopher . . . He attended all public meetings . . . It is said he served more often as chairman of meetings throughout this district than any other man."

Religion: Anglican.

Recreation: Squash; hockey.

Clubs: Albany; Toronto Cricket, Skating and Curling; Cambridge.

Residence: 215 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario.

BOOK REVIEW

Kristjana Gunnars, **Settlement Poems 2**. Turnstone Press, Winnipeg, 1980. 49 pp.

Review by:
Dr. John S. Matthiasson

The ancient Icelandic tradition of poetry writing is still being maintained and nurtured by young poets such as Kristjana Gunnars, although her poet forbears might initially feel uncomfortable with the form her poetry has taken, with its sparsity of punctuation and e. e. cummings — like lack of capital letters. However, **Settlement Poems 2** is poetry in the true sense nevertheless, if poetry is indeed a crystallization of truth.

Gunnars has given us in crystallized form, cut down to its bare bone structure, the immigrant experience of the early settlers of New Iceland in the interlake region of Manitoba. At times, to use her own allegory, she breaks the bones to show the marrow within. The life of those settlers was harsh and basic, and they were forced to deal on a day-to-day basis with the brutal realities of existence: cold, hunger, disease

and death. These are the themes of **Settlement Poems 2**, which reads at times, and it seems that this was the intention of the poet, like letters home or entries in a diary.

Their new environment was strange to the Icelandic settlers, but they brought to it a history of adaptive skills which in time enabled them to master it. They learned to hunt large game, and to make the pemmican of their Indian neighbours. When such luxuries were not available, they harvested grasshoppers and coarse grasses, and they survived. They kept alive their traditional folk beliefs and found time to build printing houses and debate the personal qualities of clergy-men. They buried the dead from the smallpox which "creeps with brown toads' legs out of the clothes", and went on living.

It is striking how Gunnars has been able to take such material and weave from it a fabric of flowing poetry which captures the dignity and pride which kept the spirit alive in bitterly trying times. An immigrant from Iceland herself, but of a different generation and a different time, she has told the story in her own words, and yet made this reader feel

that the long-dead settlers were speaking themselves. **Settlement Poems 2** should be read by all those of the present generation

who live in a world of affluence and who wonder at the survival of those who came before us.

NEWS FROM ICELAND

NEW CABINET MOVES ON INFLATION FRONT

In the traditional Premier's address to the Icelandic nation on New Year's Eve, Gunnar Thoroddsen announced a multi-faceted scheme for battling inflation.

The complex package of economic measures was effective from January 1, but subject to ratification by Althing (parliament) after its Christmas recess ended on January 26. The opposition promptly urged that the body should be called back into session without delay — a request that fell on deaf ears. The Premier asserted that, contrary to some speculation, there was adequate parliamentary backing for the plan.

If the details of the temporary laws were a well-guarded secret until the Premier's New Year's Eve address, it seemed certain that the Government would make important economic moves, of some sort, before the end of 1980. For one thing, a currency reform — a changeover to a krona of hundredfold value — would take effect on January 1, or in practical terms when the banks opened again.

Moreover, the old krona had been sliding fast in recent months — and had "floated" downward by nearly a percentage point vs. the U.S. dollar over the Holidays alone. A new cost-of-living adjustment of wages was ahead. In short, the outlook was that a runaway inflation would spiral to new heights, barring resolute measures.

At a meeting on December 31, the Government granted rate hikes, reported as averaging around 10%, to a wide range of public services. That was not mentioned expressly by the Premier on New Year's Eve.

Three basic objectives were stressed in a

preamble to the Government's release on the plan: Strengthening of the economy consistent with full employment, rollback of inflation to around 40% in 1981 and protection of wage-earners' purchasing power. Some highlights of the package:

- Halt to the gradual devaluation of the krona, with a stable exchange rate v.s. the U.S. dollar to be maintained the next few months.
- Price freeze until next May 1 — affecting all goods and services, with exceptions to be granted only in pressing circumstances and subject to approval by the Government.
- Setting the cost-of-living index at 100 as of January 1, 1981; the wage adjustment due next March 1 will presumably be down by 7% from what a 1979 law provided.
- Stringent credit controls, to keep lending in step with the Government's basic economic goals.
- Moving the date for full indexation of interest rates back to the end of this year — while banks must offer indexed 6-month deposit accounts, instead of the 2-year time accounts so sheltered thus far.
- Transfers compensating the Fisheries Price Equalization Fund for the pegging of the exchange rate.
- Steps enabling fishing operators and freezing plants to consolidate their short-term debts into longer-term financing.
- Lowering of interest on indexed rediscount bills for fisheries and agriculture, from 8.5% to 4%.
- Transfers to aid import-competing industries.

JON SIGURDSON CHAPTER, IODE SCHOLARSHIPS 1980



Lorna Jakobson
The Johanna Gudrun
Skaptason IODE Memorial
Scholarship I 1980.



Leah Bjarnarson
Elinborg Hanson IODE
Memorial Scholarship
1980.



Deborah Arnason
Music Scholarship
1980.



Stewart Anderson
The Johanna Gudrun
Skaptason IODE
Memorial Scholarship II
1980.



Donna Budzinski
Valdina Gottfred IODE
Memorial Scholarship
1980.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The Pjetur Palmason Family Memorial Scholarship — \$500 each

Halldor Bjarnason, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
Parents — Kenneth and Mildred Bjarnason.

Kevin Kjermisted, Stonewall, Manitoba.
Parents — Dr. Valdimar and Beverley
Kjermisted.

CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Einar Pall and Ingibjorg Jonsson Award — \$500

Lorraine Johnson, Vogar, Manitoba, at-
tending the Ashern Collegiate. Parents —
Paul and Beverley Johnson.

Canada Iceland Award — \$500

Ragnar Paulson, Keewatin, Ontario, at-
tending the University of Waterloo. Parents
— Mr. and Mrs. Paul Paulson.

PROMISING SCHOLARS



Leonard Harvey

Neil Thor

Leonard HARVEY Thorleifson was honored by the following Academic Awards of the University of Winnipeg Convocation Exercises, May 25th. He received the University Gold Medal in Geography (Honours Course) and the O.T. Anderson Award to the outstanding graduate for distinguished academic and extra-curricular achievement during undergraduate years, as well as the "Wesley Award" — the foremost recognition award, given to the graduating students who have made a major contribution to the University of Winnipeg Student Association. Harvey is the fourth son of the late Allan O. Thorleifson and his wife Thora S. Gunnlaugson, presently of D'Arcy, Sask.

Neil THOR Thorleifson received his Bachelor of Science (Geography) at Spring Convocation Exercises, University of Winnipeg, May 25, when Chancellor R. O. A. Hunter conferred degrees on 547 graduates.

Thor is the youngest son of the late A. O. Thorleifson, Baldur, Man. and his wife Thora S. Gunnlaugson, presently at D'Arcy, Sask. Harvey and Thor are the grandsons of the late Gudni and Lena Thorleifson of Langruth and the late Ingolfur and Sigrun K. Johannesson of Baldur, Manitoba.

ERIC ALLEN MERCER

Eric Allen Mercer graduated recently from the University of Saskatchewan, Regina, with a Bachelor of Education degree. He is the son of the late Harald Mercer

and a great grandson of Johanna Solvason of Golden Acres, Wynyard, Sask.

He and his wife Lynn are now teaching in Thailand with C.U.S.O. (Canadian University Services Overseas) and will be there for two years.

GIMLI MAN WINS AWARD



Stuart H. Jones was honored by the Manitoba Council of the Society of Management accountants for obtaining the highest average. First level in the R.I.A. Program of Studies.

Stuart received his award at the Convocation exercises University of Manitoba on Oct. 14th, 1978. Stuart is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Helgi Jones, Gimli, Manitoba. Stuart's father is all Icelandic in spite of the name Jones. His mother's mother was Icelandic also.

The following are excerpts from a letter to Mr. Jones from the president of the aforementioned Society, Mr. W. J. Cessford:

Dear Mr. Jones:

On behalf of the Manitoba Council and all members of the Society, it is my pleasure to extend congratulations to you on your examination results in the R.I.A. Program of Studies.

I wish to advise you that you obtained the highest average, first level. The reward for this achievement is \$50.00.

Index to Advertisers

Armason Furniture (1977) Ltd.	3	Lundar Meat & Grocery	29
Asgeirson's Limited	20	Neil Bardal Inc.	I.B.C.
Bardal Funeral Home	I.F.C.	Round Table Restaurant	O.B.C.
Dockside Fish Products	7	Sigurdson Fisheries Ltd.	16
Duffy's Taxi	21	Small Car World	2
Gimli Auto Limited	20	T. & J. Family Billiards & Snack Bar	2
Gimli Concrete Supply Ltd.	I.F.C.	Taylor Brazzell McCaffrey	3
Greetings from a Friend	14	Taylor Pharmacy	14
Harold's Hairstyling	27	Vidir Lunber & Supply Ltd.	8
Icelandair	48	University of Manitoba Press	
Icelandic National League	2	Vidir Pharmacy	3
Investors Syndicate	47	Viking Travel Ltd.	13
Dr. Gestur Kristjansson	21	Western Paint Co. Ltd.	3
Lundar Bakery	8	Wheatfield Press	21

PIECES TO THE INVESTORS FINANCIAL PACKAGE

A comprehensive portfolio of services usually associated with banks, stockbrokers, trust companies and insurance companies — all presented by one person in the privacy and convenience of your home.

Let an Investors Financial Planner help put together your package.

Investors
SYNDICATE LIMITED
HEAD OFFICE: Winnipeg, Canada

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SEE EUROPE THIS YEAR, DON'T MISS ICELANDAIR'S ICELAND.

STOPOVER TOURS INCLUDING HOTEL, TRANSFERS, SIGHTSEEING AND SOME MEALS AT INCREDIBLY LOW PRICES: 1 DAY, \$49; 2 DAYS, \$79; 3 DAYS, \$109.

Now you can take advantage of Icelandair's inexpensive Stopover Tours of Iceland while you're taking advantage of our low fares from New York or Chicago to Great Britain, Scandinavia or Luxembourg.

Iceland is a land of volcanoes, giant waterfalls, Viking museums, glaciers, geysers, concerts, art shows, duty-free shopping and hot-springs pools.

You'll get transfers between airport and Reykjavik, room at the first-class Hotel Loftleidir or Hotel Esja, breakfast daily, city sight-seeing tour, and for those staying 2 or 3 days, a countryside tour, all at unbelievably low prices: 1 day, \$49; 2 days, \$79; 3 days, \$109.

So on your next trip to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain or Luxembourg, stop over in Iceland for a few days.

For further information see your travel agent or contact Icelandair, P.O. Box 105, West Hempstead, NY 11552. Phone 212-757-8585 (New York City only) or call 800-555-1212 for the toll free number in your area.

*Prices are per person, double occupancy and are in effect May 1 through September 30, 1981 and subject to change



NOW MORE THAN EVER YOUR BEST VALUE TO EUROPE
ICELANDAIR

Neil Bardal introduces a new concept in family funeral planning

As Manitoba's newest funeral counsellors, we are pleased to provide bereaved families not only with an itemized price list, but also with an actual "choice" of those individual services which are best able to match their own private needs and budget.

In other words, you are no longer compelled to accept any traditional, prepackaged funeral arrangement containing certain unnecessary or unwanted services.

At Neil Bardal Inc., we offer you great understanding and complete freedom of choice in tailoring a Memorial Service that will express reverence and respect for a loved one, in the most dignified and appropriate way. And, in doing so, you are also afforded the opportunity for significant savings as is evidenced by the following examples.

Phone or write for a free brochure or visit our counselling office and showroom between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M. Monday thru Saturday.

THREE SAMPLE ARRANGEMENTS FROM OUR LIST OF SERVICES:

1. _____

Removal	\$ 35.
Cremation	100.
Professional Fee	150.
TOTAL: \$285.	

2. _____

Removal	\$ 35.
Casket, from	125.
Chapel Service	50.
Cremation	100.
Professional Fee	150.
TOTAL: \$460.	

3. _____

Removal	\$ 35.
Preparation	150.
Casket, from	125.
Directing Service at your Church	75.
Hearse	75.
Limousine	50.
Professional Fee	150.
TOTAL: \$660.	



Winnipeg's only Bardal family-owned Funeral Service
984 Portage at Aubrey St./Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 0R6/Telephone 786-4716