

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN MAGAZINE

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An organization funded by Canadians of Icelandic Descent, dedicated to the preservation of their Cultural Heritage

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# *The* ICELANDIC CANADIAN



ISSN 0046-4457

Vol. 59 #3 (2005)

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# The ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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## THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

North America's quarterly magazine in celebration of the Icelandic Heritage published by Canadian Icelandic Heritage, Inc., Winnipeg, Canada.

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### SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Canadian - \$32<sup>CDN</sup> per year, \$64 for two years.  
U.S. & International - \$40<sup>CDN</sup> per year.  
Single copies - \$8.00<sup>CDN</sup> plus postage.  
(We accept U.S. & Canadian funds)

Typed submissions of articles, book reviews, short stories and poetry are welcome. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. E-mail submissions welcome: [icelandiccanadian@yahoo.com](mailto:icelandiccanadian@yahoo.com).  
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The views expressed in all contributions which appear in **The Icelandic Canadian** are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the publisher or editorial committee.

PAP registration # 09999 and Postal Agreement # 1397893

Printed in Winnipeg, Canada.

## On the Cover



*Vigdís Finnbogadóttir*

# Editorial

by Heather Alda Ireland

It is an honour for me to write this editorial for the Icelandic Canadian. Since childhood the magazine has been in my home, sparking conversation, debate and praise for the stories and poetry to be read in every issue. Its continuance over the decades is the result of the dedication and determination of so many people, all children of Icelandic immigrants.

Visiting Iceland recently, I was struck, once more, by the incredible achievements of its small population in recent years. Since our forbearers left Iceland's rocky shores, Icelanders have guided their country to an important position in the world. Just consider the phenomenon of modern Iceland; economically sound, politically mature and stable, providing an enviable standard of living for its people. One realizes that Icelandic people are driven by a sense of life's possibilities and their need to "make a difference". Accomplishments such as we have seen in Iceland begin with a "vision" and the ability to identify a goal. But visions are only that, unless pursued with wisdom and determination. We can see these attributes in the person of Vigdís Finnbogadóttir who celebrated her 75th birthday on April 15, 2005.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected President of Iceland in 1980, a single mother whose career had been in the humanities, specifically theatre and languages. During her sixteen years in office, she was a gracious and dignified representative of Iceland, raising its profile on the world stage. She was and is an example for all her countrymen and women that you can Dream the Impossible Dream and make it a reality.

I went to Iceland to attend the Dialogue of Cultures conference and Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's special birthday celebrations. We met one morning in her home near the University. She commented, "This birthday has crept up on me. I was

getting older without noticing it. But I find it elegant to be 75, to be healthy and to speak my mind from experience. I can't think of anything better." I asked her what she had been doing since she left the Presidency nine years ago. "I knew that the international community was waiting for me." Activity and commitment throughout a long life is not uncommon to Icelanders.

After leaving the Presidency in 1996, Vigdís was appointed Chair of the United Nations World Commission on Ethics in Science and Technology based at UNESCO in Paris. This position she held for 4 years. She worked in Amman, Jordan for the Leadership Academy, part of the United Nations University. In Copenhagen, she spearheaded the restoration of an 18th century warehouse to establish a Culture House for the North Atlantic. She is proud of this achievement. "It celebrates the cultures of Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Denmark. Many said that it could not be done, for it took a great deal of money and energy and the co-operation of the governments of all four countries. Now the plan is to expand the Culture House to include the other Nordic countries."

The Council of Women World Leaders was established in 1996 at Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the first woman to be democratically elected President of her country, became the Founding Chair. She told me that eight women were members at that time and now there are 23, indicating the progress that is being made by women world wide to reach this high position. She said, "We greet with great warmth all women who are added to this Council of Women World Leaders." Vigdís has "paved the way" for women to become leaders of their countries.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir currently holds the very important position of UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador for Languages. Her aim and duty is to defend all languages and to raise awareness of the many languages that are in danger of becoming extinct.

She was honoured and deeply touched when the University of Iceland established the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages, the only institute of its kind at any university. All foreign languages taught at the University are under the guidance of the Institute. Located there is the recently unveiled bust sculpted by Erlingur Jonsson. It depicts Vigdís looking out into the world with a beautiful expression of wisdom and joy. In her remarks following the unveiling, Vigdís said, "I hoped that it will speak to future generations and answer their questions."

The Dialogue of Cultures conference, organized by the Institute, the Foreign Ministry and other organizations and government offices attracted over 70 foreign guests from 18 countries together with over 120 representatives from Iceland. Vigdís had requested this Dialogue to bring the sciences and the humanities together through intellectual discussion by many learned people and distinguished scholars. She said, "It is essential for people to meet, to try to understand each other. We must respect the equality of all cultures."

At the Conference, Mary Robinson, President of Ireland, 1990 to 1997 praised Vigdís for her many achievements at home and abroad and thanked her for being such a wonderful example for women the world over. As a special tribute and to exemplify the admiration of so many, a choir of 100 women, from little girls to seniors, sang for the guest of honour. Professor David Crystal, the expert on endangered languages from the University of Wales, gave the keynote address and concluded with his own tribute to Vigdís. He listed all the existing awards for the Arts, the Oscar for films, the Booker for writers etc. and said, "There should be an award for language and it should be called the Vigdís".

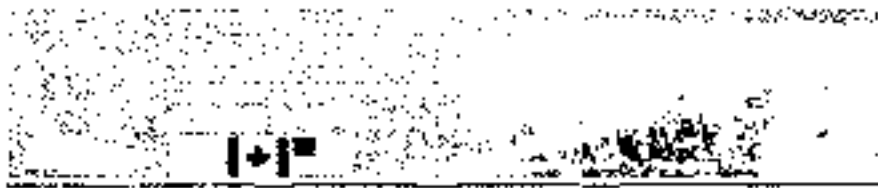
Speakers, President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, Prime Minister Halldor Ásgrímsson, Minister of Education,

Science and Culture, Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir and Magnús Magnússon praised Vigdís, elaborating on all her numerous accomplishments and reciting many of her characteristics. In her response, Vigdís said "Thank you for introducing me to myself"! She was most gracious, speaking humorously and humbly and, once again, endearing herself to all listeners.

Vigdís is currently working on a project for the United Nation's 60th Anniversary that occurs in October of this year. Voices of the World is a film about all the living languages of the world. "It will be a very long film," she said. "There are 6500 languages in the world! It is being made to create awareness and bring attention to the fact that we must take care of our languages. It is only twenty-five years since we started to pay attention to cultural diversity. It is vital to recognize that with every language that disappears, a culture disappears."

During our visit, Vigdís talked about her visions. "I walk around with visions. I want to see things become a reality. It is such a wonder when they do. There is an old Spanish saying that only those who can see the invisible, are capable of doing the impossible. So, you must first see the vision and then start to create something out of it. All visual artists know this. I never give up. I am rather stubborn in that way. I go on until I have seen that it is possible. I have been lucky in life that way. I have changed some visions into reality." That focus and determination has made her an inspiration to so many people over her lifetime.

*To listen to Heather Alda Ireland's interview with Vigdís Finnbogadóttir log on to [HYPERLINK "http://www.pennan.ca/SIR/"](http://www.pennan.ca/SIR/) [http://www.pennan.ca/SIR/Ströndin Internet Radio series: Program #7 - "HARPA"](http://www.pennan.ca/SIR/Ströndin%20Internet%20Radio%20series:Program%20#7-%20HARPA)*



**IN THIS ISSUE**



**Lost in the Prairies**



**Skagfirski Singskólaskólinn**

Raverton, Mountain and Wiscard - L-H's chair conductor is Vakinnarson.



Manitoba's fjallkona Thelma Wilson with her two maids of honour in the parade in Gimli. On the left is Anjoleine Rose Kathryn Hunt of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and to the right is Thelma Björk Wilson of Reykjavik, Iceland.

**Cold Front records CD in Winnipeg**

Steinþór Guðbjartsson, Winnipeg, MB

The jazz trio Cold Front recorded its first album



爵士鼓手 Steve Kirby, the Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Manitoba

**Fore!**



**A busy viking**  
Kent - Business is always a hot on bats - not only is he the restaurateur of Nautic Trails - he also a boat builder. / page 16

*The Lögberg-Heimsrkingla today*

# Lögberg-Heimskringla: chameleon on a changing surface

by David Jón Fuller

The thing with newspapers is there's always a deadline.

I first came to work at Lögberg-Heimskringla with experience from my high school paper, a love for writing, and not much else. At least, not in terms of newspaper production. It was 1998, I had returned to Winnipeg from a two-year stint in Iceland the previous year, and Lögberg-Heimskringla, or L-H, was a way to somehow integrate my experience with the Icelandic community in North America.

That first week, taking over from the previous layout person, I had to learn the latest version of QuarkXpress so I could lay out the paper, and then, with much help from then business manager Harpa Isfeld, transfer all the ads from Macintosh format to Windows. Talk about a steep learning curve -- it was a case of doing just about everything from scratch, under a very tight deadline.

Why, you might ask, would anyone take that on?

My actual knowledge of L-H goes back a few years earlier. Having become interested in my Icelandic heritage in 1994, I started taking language classes at the Scandinavian Centre on Erin Street. The teacher, Carol Mowat, mentioned a scholarship for studying Icelandic in Reykjavik -- but the announcement was only to be found in the pages of L-H. I became a keen reader -- though not a subscriber -- after that.

Having been successful in the quest for the scholarship, I also had the good fortune to be given a gift subscription to L-H while I was in Iceland. It usually arrived a few weeks late, which was pretty remarkable considering how much longer a lot of my other mail took. I read every issue, learning, among other things, that Guy Maddin

was of Icelandic descent and that Björk was prone to hitting photographers. Well, once, maybe, and she sent flowers afterwards.

Neil Bardal convinced me to begin sending a few articles in. My main focus then was on trying to fit into Icelandic society, which is reflected in those early submissions.

The funny thing is, it was clear from the start that saying "I'm Icelandic" had a totally different meaning on either side of the Atlantic. It seemed to me that in Iceland it was a patriotic way of asserting an independent, national identity. That is, not just European, not just Scandinavian (definitely not Danish), but Icelandic -- culture of saga, poem and song, not to mention long-simmering feuds and arguments.

In North America, it is not the same thing at all. I have met very few people of Icelandic descent who would assert they are "Icelandic" in the literal sense that Icelanders do. There is no question that they hold their citizenship in either Canada or the United States very dear. And yet, there is still some creeping sense of an Icelandic identity here.

An identity, presumably, large enough to merit its own newspaper.

I worked at L-H from 1998 to 2001, part time, as the copy editor and layout person. I take credit for the design of all the early issues that still make me cringe, every misspelled word I missed, and the rough transition to digital production that finally resulted in clearer photos. I worked with Gunnur Isfeld and Lillian Vilborg MacPherson, and had some great times hammering out the monstrous special issues (quadrupling the page count and completing it in the same amount of time is no mean feat) as well as seeing the paper

through some very “interesting times” (as the Chinese curse has it). I was there through three separate offices, including the beginning of L-H opening an office in Gimli.

In all, because the operation was so small, it was very easy to get wrapped up in what we were doing -- just a few more changes and this will be just perfect, we can still make the deadline. Any editor who has worked for the paper knows what I am talking about. There were many days Lillian said “I’m only going to stay until one o’clock today,” but she would still be working at five. Speaking for myself, I knew that any time we ran a “special” (read: large) issue, I’d be spending most of my weekend at work. It was engrossing.

Part of what made it interesting was the close watch the subscribers kept on the paper. When we started running an extra colour -- blue -- we heard about it. When the details of a story didn’t give proper credit where it was due, we heard about it. And God forbid anyone should bring up the terms “Western Icelander,” “goolie” or “Republic of New Iceland” -- because we sure heard about that.

Which, of course, makes for a great letter column, one of the main indicators that a newspaper is striking a chord.

Part-time work isn’t always the easiest to accommodate, and when I took on another part-time position at a different paper, I realized I couldn’t make both production schedules work in a seven-day week, and left L-H. I continued to write

for the paper from time to time, and still subscribed -- partly because after nearly three years of involvement I couldn’t let it go.

I returned to the fold in 2004, coming back to the layout position and also the duties of assistant editor, part of a transition from Lillian’s tenure to that of Steinhórfur Guðbjartsson.

Each editor I have worked with has provided the paper with a different focus, and it has become clear to me that though L-H is not widely known, those who do know about it have strong feelings about what it is, and should be. Ailing subscription numbers aside, that interest at least is encouraging.

Of course, you can’t please everyone.

Under Gunnur, the paper featured more news from Iceland, and the last of the articles completely in Icelandic (with an English translation). Since she left, a common request from readers has been “more news from Iceland,” or “more Icelandic.”

Lillian’s focus as editor was to open the paper up to submissions, on a regular basis, from across the North American Icelandic community. When it started, we began including the city and province or state in the bylines to reflect this diversity.

Steinhórfur has shown himself to be a very “on the spot” editor, travelling to many towns and cities for the high-profile “Destination” issues. I think this has really opened people’s eyes to what they have in common through their Icelandic heritage. The myriad locations named Hekla/Hecla/Hekkla/Heckla/etc. alone

are enough to give one pause.

Of course, change isn’t always welcomed. Some readers miss the long, continuing biographies and historical pieces (while some were glad to see them go). Others felt the same way about the Icelandic lessons (which have returned in a different form). We’ve even had the comment that L-H featured “too much North Dakota” as if anyone could ever get enough.

In a very real way, however, I feel L-H has reflected quite sharply the Icelandic community as a whole, whoever may be in charge of the paper.

For decades, it was an eight-page weekly, except for regular special issues which would balloon with ads and articles. It was almost always in black and white. It was never on secure financial footing, and even when times were good there was always the sense that the wolves were at the door. Dwindling subscriber numbers and ad revenues were a constant source of doubt: did the L-H have a future? Did it even have an audience any more?

Those whose families subscribed and who still consider themselves Icelandic might respond “Of course,” without hesitation. But sometimes hesitation is good.

The paper has changed because it has had to. Subscriptions are still a large part of the revenue, and without subscribers the ad revenue disappears as well. So in order for the paper to exist, it has to give people what they want.

The paper is no longer in Icelandic. Nor is it an 8-page weekly, because a 16-page issue every two weeks is less expensive to print and it allows for more planning for each issue, resulting in a much smoother workflow. It’s also no longer just black-and-white. Colour makes a huge difference in terms of visual impact.

But the older generation who subscribed because they always had is diminishing all the time. The forty- and fifty-somethings, to a surprising extent, still think of it as “amma’s paper” -- all in Icelandic, something they themselves would never read. And the younger generation, in which I include myself, is largely unaware of L-H, period!

The way in which the paper reflects the Icelandic-North American community is in its struggle to define itself. For a person of Icelandic descent, the extent to which you are “Icelandic” is a matter of personal taste and, perhaps, familial obligation. For L-H, an ostensibly Icelandic publication, it means becoming as Icelandic as your readers think they are. When people stop thinking of themselves as “Icelandic,” there will certainly be no more Lögberg-Heimskringla. In fact, the paper will likely cease to exist before that final flicker of Icelandic identity, because as long as the paper exists, it will be a type of forum for those of Icelandic descent -- and as long as a community has that, it will have some cohesion.

But it’s not my intent to pronounce some doom for either the L-H or the Icelandic identity as a whole. I think there has been enough “save the newspaper” talk over the years. If L-H is good enough, people will read it. If enough people read it, the revenue will be there.

But how do you make sure it’s good enough so that that can happen? Ah, there’s the rub.

A chronic problem for the paper has been staff turnover. It is largely invisible to the readers, but it has real effects. The chief one is the loss of experience and skills. New staff members often have to reinvent the wheel, given the short time they have with their predecessors. (On my first stint with the paper, I had NO time with my predecessor -- in fact I barely met her.) While new blood means new ideas, when you’re in a constant state of flux it also means lengthy adjustment periods. As an example, when Lillian came on board in early 2001, I had been working at the paper for about two and a half years -- and was the senior staff member by a long shot.

The current fundraising campaign to support the paper, spearheaded by Dr. Ken Thorlakson, is meant in part to end the cycle of this chronic difficulty, as well as secure the future financial stability of the paper. This will be a remarkable step in the history of L-H and its founding papers, Lögberg and Heimskringla.

The question remains, though: does an

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# Lögberg

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FRÓD. HARALDUR BESSASON, HON. J. T. THORSON

27. Húsnæðisráðgjafi

audience still exist for an Icelandic newspaper?

If it does, I think it will respond to professional writing, editing, photography and design, and the subscription numbers will show that.

However, it may be that people no longer take their Icelandic heritage as much to heart; at least, not enough to pay for a subscription.

The divide that Gordon Reykdal wrote of in the last issue of The Icelandic Canadian, between the people who are supportive of the Icelandic community and those who say "why bother," is the main source of Lögberg-Heimskringla's instability. If your audience says "why bother" to their Icelandic heritage, selling them a subscription to L-H is going to be an uphill battle to say the least. In fact, it seems to be an uphill battle among people who are interested in their heritage.

Right now, we face a problem in circulation. Well, more accurately, a problem in subscriptions. By all indications, there are tens -- if not hundreds -- of thousands of people who are proud of their Icelandic heritage. This is not borne out by our subscription numbers, yet we hear all the time that the main reason someone won't subscribe is, "Oh, I just read my amma's/mother's/cousin's copy." The question that faces the staff and board is, how can we make the paper so good that people won't wait to borrow someone else's?

I don't think L-H is unique in this. Of all the Icelandic organizations in North America, the ones that thrive are the ones who adapt to what their participants or

audiences want, and give them something they can't get anywhere else. What one generation considers a vital part of its heritage may be seen by another as irrelevant. For example, one generation was eager to rid itself of the Icelandic language; present ones are rediscovering it with a passion. But clinging to a tradition for the sake of tradition is a sure way to kill it off, and in the case of L-H, subscribing to a newspaper out of guilt or because your parents used to doesn't do anyone any favours. Hence the need to change and constantly find new subscribers.

Sometimes that even means tapping the shoulder of old subscribers. As mentioned above, some people have very strong ideas of what a publication like L-H should be. But, perhaps, having seen it change in a direction they didn't like, they stopped subscribing. Many, I think, would be surprised to see how much it has changed recently, and how efforts to really improve the paper have borne fruit.

The other important factor in a publication is the readers' sense of ownership. In a very real way, every subscriber of the newspaper is a member of Lögberg-Heimskringla—it says so in our by-laws. Any subscriber could attend the Annual General Meeting, have his or her say, and vote. It's telling that so few of them do. The L-H is no longer the lightning rod of controversy it once was in the Icelandic community, and in a way I'm sorry for that. But on the other hand, long-standing arguments between Lögberg and Heimskringla didn't keep them afloat well enough to avoid amalgamation, either.

The sense of having a stake in a news-

### Þjóðræknisfélag Íslendinga í Vesturheimi



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paper is essential to that paper's survival. In many cities, there are one or two newspapers of record, the ones that everybody discusses. They're the ones with the packed letter columns, whether they've hired provocative editorial columnists or not. If nothing else, L-H can claim to be the newspaper of record for the Icelandic community.

It may not always have been as scholarly or in-depth as other publications, and there have been many. Some, such as the one you're reading right now, are still with us; others, like Leifur and the Almanak, are long gone. But still, I often find in the back issues of L-H a surprising article about someone who's making much bigger headlines today, such as former teacher Peter Bjornson, now Manitoba's Minister of Education; or an interesting perspective on a matter of history, such as the North American Icelandic response to Hitler's pre-war interest in landing rights in Iceland.

Sometimes, I also find out things about my own history I never would have known.

Two examples, concerning the same person, have to do with my afi, Dr. Eyolfur "Olie" Johnson, of Selkirk.

He died when I was less than a year old and I never knew him. Most of what I know comes from relatives' remembrances. A few years ago, my mother came across an old issue of L-H from 1970 which featured Dr. Olie on the front page. That was interesting enough, but hardly a couple of months later I saw his name in the paper's pages again, as part of Katrina Anderson's "Islensk kona" series, which was recently published in book form. Not only was the anecdote told therein by Asdis Anderson a story of my afi I had never heard before, it was also one I don't think many others in my family knew either.

The above story may not be something L-H could ever compress into a sales pitch, but it gave me a personal connection with the paper I hadn't had before. I suspect that with the current efforts to digitize the entire run of Lögberg, Heimskringla and L-H, many more will have similar experiences. Currently there are only two and a

half years' worth of back issues available online. This was begun in 2003, and over the last year, I have begun sorting through our digital archives to produce online copies for our website – as I write this, I'm still partway through 2002, and I hope to do the same for every issue going back to the time I started in 1998. (If there are digital backups from before then, I haven't been able to unearth them.) However, this year's announcement by the Government of Iceland, that it will sponsor the digitization of all the back issues, means that others will soon be able to tap into this resource more easily.

And that, whatever happens to the Icelandic presence in North America or the newspaper itself, will remain for future generations. Lögberg-Heimskringla has been a chameleon on the surface of Icelandic communities in Canada and the United States, showing through its pages the colour of debate and communication. Each of those colours is preserved for future generations.

Of course, I can't go to work every morning with the weight of generations on my shoulders. The board and staff have to constantly think of the paper as something new, something we must improve on with every issue. Sometimes we succeed; sometimes we don't. But though the back issues may accumulate, you're only as good as your next edition. And there's always a deadline.



# The Ferry Repossessed

## Part two of three

*Told by Erling Palsson, Gudjon Valgeirsson and Valentinus Olason at Akranes, Iceland*

*A continuation of the adventures of three Icelandic men, who after arriving in Turkey realized that they were up to something that was not legal---they were about to steal a ferry boat.*

### Time to Sail

Now was the right time to start working. Everything had been carefully planned. We rushed into the engine room, for now we had to move fast to put the oil pumps in and start the ship's main engines. They were 2X500 hp Deutz engines. We all worked together on putting in the oil pumps. Gudjon checked the ventilation and cooling system and pumped up the oil pressure on the main engines. When that was done, we only had to wait for the bridge to be ready before we could start the engines.

Now it was up to Erling and Johan to get to the bridge without being seen. They had to pass the dining room where the Turks were with Philippe. The music of ABBA sounded loud in the speakers so they got by without being heard. Valentinus followed them so there were three of them in the bridge. They found a chart of the harbour and studied it while waiting for Gudjon to start the engines.

When the time was right the engines started and then everything went on full speed. Johan and Philippe ran back and cut the remaining shore ropes. The engines were run on full power.

When the Turks realized the engines had been started they ran down to the engine room and Johan followed them. When they got there they saw Gudjon whistling, as if he had never done anything but run these engines. They were shocked and looked like they had seen a ghost.

Johan was prepared in case the Turks would get desperate. He grabbed a big iron axle and showed them that he was not scared to use it if necessary. The Turks saw that he was serious and ran away.

In the bridge things were going fast and turning the ship in the harbour went successfully. It was easy to steer with its two propellers and three steering gears. All the lights were switched off and the ship was put on full speed in order to get out of the three sea-miles limit of Cyprus. At that time the Turks came running up to the bridge, scared to death. One of them spoke quite good English. He said that the "Lampaert brothers", as they called Johan and Philippe, were going to kill them. Erling told them they didn't have to worry; "They have to ask for my permission before they do that." That calmed the Turks down and they thought of Erling as their saviour. They were now offered to row back to land in one of the ferry's lifeboats, but they wouldn't dare to do that. There was no way to change their minds, so they stayed on board and went with us to Italy.

In order to confuse anyone that might follow us we raised the flag of the United





States since the Turks respect it very much. We thought it would be safer to sail under that flag. We didn't have any problems, and sailed straight out of the harbour.

### Without Navigation Equipment

When we got outside the three-mile limit we headed south of Cyprus and now we finally had the opportunity to inspect the ferry further. It turned out there was no automatic pilot on the ferry, the radar didn't work, and neither did the depth recorder. All we had to go by was the compass and the North Star.

We passed Cape Gata, the most southern point of Cyprus, we headed west by the compass, which we really didn't know if it worked properly. Those who had nothing else to do could finally get some rest and go to sleep.

Around 10.00 hrs on Sunday morning a British military helicopter flew over the ship. Later we were told that the Turkish military command had asked them to keep us under surveillance.

In the afternoon of Sunday, June 5, we had all started to recover from the events of the night, and got to check oil supplies and provisions. We found out that we would have to slow down to 6 knots if the oil was supposed to last us to Italy, but until now we had been going 9.5 knots. That was very disappointing. Neither did it make us any happier or more optimistic to discover that the food would only last us for two or three days. But there wasn't much we could do about that.

We also decided to paint over the

ship's name, which was written in big letters on the front of the bridge--GIRNE.

We waited excitedly to see some ships, because we badly needed accurate location, mainly to find out if the compass worked. Sunday passed without a sign of any ship.

On Monday morning we finally saw a ship ahead and thought about asking for location. When the ship was about 2 miles away from us it stopped. They seemed to know the ferry, even though we had painted over the name on the bridge. They called us up by the name GIRNE. We thought it suspicious and decided not to answer. Then the ship sailed a big circle around us and then went away. We thought that was strange behaviour and wondered what was the reason, but didn't come to any conclusion.

Around that time we found our situation uncomfortable. We had no definite location and could only guess where we were. Around 18.00 hrs we got lucky. We met a German freight ship on its way to Cyprus. They called us up and asked for the difference between Greenwich and Cyprus time. We told them and they then gave us the correct location of our ship. According to that we were 29 degrees 47'N and 34 degrees 34' E and were heading in the right direction. Everything looked better after this information.

That day we connected "Hellas" radio in Greece. We were afraid to tell them the right name of the ship in case they would track us down. That is why we gave them a false name and call sign. We named the ship OLAV and gave them a Norwegian call

sign OLWW (oscar lima double whisky). Erling could call collect home to Akranes and talk to his wife. This was the first word our families got from us since we left home. They were getting anxious and had been worried. Erling told her everything had gone as planned. We were on our way to Italy and the trip would take longer than originally planned. He



said we were all doing fine, sent his regards and told her we would call again when we got to Italy. He didn't think it was safe to give her any further information. She asked if everything was all right and said that other than worrying about us, everything was fine at home. We were glad to receive this news because we had been worried about our families, which didn't know anything about what was really happening.

The rest of the day and night passed with no special occurrences.

### Lack of Food

Tuesday started bright and beautiful as all the other days on the trip so far. The heat was terrible and the sun burning hot above our heads. Now the lack of food was starting to bother us. In the beginning we were supposed to be four or maybe five on board, but since the Turks came along, there were seven of us. The cruise to Italy was supposed to take 3-4 days. Now 3 days had passed already and it was clear that it would take double that time.

On Wednesday morning we knew that we should be close to the isle of Crete and decided to go there for provisions. We looked out for lights and sailed close by a little island just off the coast of Crete. It's called Gaidaro Nisi and lies 7 miles from the town of Ierapetra on the south coast of Crete. We got close to this island early in the morning. Not far from us we saw fishermen at work and stopped the ferry. Johan, Philippe, Valentinus and one of the Turks, who spoke Greek, got in one of the jolly boats and rowed up to the fishermen. Johan and Philippe asked them if they would take them to shore to buy food. They agreed, but thought they should call for permission from the authority in land. When they did, they inquired about the ship. The answer was that the ship was Dutch and on its way from Turkey. The food onboard had gone bad and we needed to get new supplies. They seemed to be suspicious and ordered us to sail straight to harbour on Crete. We discussed this and decided that it would not be a wise thing to do. They could be likely to detain or even sequester the ship. Before we left the fishermen gave us a few small fish in a bucket.

When everybody was onboard the ferry we sailed by the coast of Crete to the west. In our belongings we had a roadmap and managed surprisingly well to figure out locations on Crete by that map.

The lack of food had gotten to us. We especially longed for meat and bread. The fish helped a little. We prepared a fireplace from an oil barrel, put a gridiron on top and grilled the fish. When it was done there was hardly any food left on the bones. It didn't do much else than make us hungrier.

The Turks weren't interested in the fish. They brought a tin of biscuits they had found on the ship. They ate the biscuits with good appetite. It didn't look appealing to us as it smelled from a long distance with mold. The Turks laughed at us and said: "Tomorrow biscuit good!" That was very true, because the next day we were hungry enough to gobble the biscuits.

Later that same hungry day Philippe, Gudjon and Shanol (one of the Turks who was rather fat), sat in the hinder room. In spite of the hunger we all tried to joke around and Shanol told about many adventures that he had been through. All of a sudden Philippe poked his belly and said: "You are fat, Shanol." The Turk smiled and rubbed his belly. "The fattest one gets eaten first," Philippe joked. Shanol understood what he said, paled up and ran away and hid. He didn't seem to understand that this was a joke. They called him back and told him he had nothing to worry about, this was merely a joke. That made him happy again.

### Caught in a Storm

Around midnight on Wednesday night, we passed Cape Krios on the west coast of Crete and headed towards the Strait of Messina between Italy and Sicily. The night went by without anything going on.

Early Thursday morning that changed. The wind, that up until now had been quiet, got stronger. Soon we were caught in a storm, which was bad for this ship, as the superstructure was very high and the bottom was almost flat as mentioned earlier. We decided to keep on going and see what would happen. The ship pitched and trem-

bled a lot. Therefore we were afraid to sail on, so we stopped and stayed where we were. The ship rolled terribly when the waves hit it.

The Turks, Shanol Osman, 30 years old and Hussein Abbas who claimed to be born in 1338 by the Moslem calendar, were terrified when the storm hit us. They started praying and invoking Allah loudly. They were sure this was their last. It was strange seeing them act this way. They had soon started respecting Gudjon very much and looked upon him as if he was supernatural because of his knowledge of the ship's engines. They though could not imagine how that was possible. They were often heard to mutter "Engineer very clever," and then they shook their heads. The fact was that the main engines in the ferry were the same kind as the electric generators in the ship Vikingur, on which Gudjon had worked as an engineer, except that they were bigger in the ferry. He knew that before we went on this journey, and it was one of the reasons why this adventure was the success it turned out to be.

The storm kept going through Thursday. To tell the truth it didn't look promising. We thought about it a lot and kept calling ships to get the weather forecast. There was a lot of noise when the waves hit us.

The following night the storm still didn't go down and we didn't see any changes ahead. We were getting low on oil supplies and realized that we would run out of oil, which in fact seemed unavoidable under the circumstances. We were determined from the beginning to try to reach Messina

or Malta. We had to go there, since we couldn't go to Greece because of Johan's affairs with the Turkish military.

He had sold them all sorts of machines and vehicles so the Greeks would hardly welcome him. If we would go ashore there, we would probably all end up in prison.

For that reason we decided early Friday morning to take the risk of sailing to Messina in the storm. We now went on full speed and headed what we thought was the right direction.

When we sailed against the wind, the Turks weren't the only ones that got scared. Everything went upside down. All removable things went over board. Johan and Philippe were serious talking about the fact that we would not get out of this storm alive. The Turks kept on bleating, "Captain crazy." That became a phrase between us "Engineer very clever, but Captain crazy."

Once, the ferry almost rolled over on the other side. Philippe had been half asleep in the front room and woke with a start, looked out of the window and saw straight into the roaring sea. He ran into the hinder room and calmed down a little when he saw Erling and Gudjon lying down and reading books. They did that so the others wouldn't be as scared. Philippe thought it safer to go up to the bridge. In this hubbub, partitions down below cracked and small things were all over.

After two hours of sailing the weather calmed and in a short while the wind was nearly still. Even though the storm had been very bad, it still wasn't as bad as it can be off the coast of Iceland.

We still didn't know where we were though we were sailing by the compass, because nobody knew for sure if it was correct. We tried to figure out ships we saw, which way they were going, and we looked and "smelled" around. When Erling said he could smell a forest from land the Turks said: "Captain crazy". They figured the captain had now gone completely mad. The truth was that we could clearly smell plants from land, even though we couldn't see anything through the mist. It stayed that way through Friday and the following night.

### Land in Sight

Saturday greeted us with the same calm wind and mist. There was no land in sight. Now the lack of food was bothering us badly. We had a few biscuits, but nobody had tobacco. So our condition was not too good at that time. We often thought of home. We can't deny that we sometimes wished that we had never gotten ourselves into this adventure. But we kept those thoughts to ourselves and never mentioned them.

On Saturday afternoon we finally saw land. That was the moment we had all been waiting for and the joy was enormous. Hussein was so happy when the land came in sight through the mist, that he ran to Gudjon, hugged, kissed and blessed him on and on. He felt as his prayers had been answered. Allah's power was great. Finally he had hope that they would survive this.

Now we tried to figure out which land we saw ahead, Italy or Sicily. An Italian cargo-ship passed us. We called them, but they kept on going without answering. Shortly afterwards we spotted a yacht and signaled them to contact us. On the yacht were two Frenchmen. They informed us that we were located 8 sea miles south of Cape Spartivento on the south coast of Italy.

We were very glad to hear that. Amazingly, we had kept the right course the whole time and were exactly on the right way to Messina on Sicily. We took out the roadmap and now we could easily figure out where to go.

The lack of food and tobacco was still bothering us a lot. But the excitement of getting to Messina gave us new energy.

Around 2:00 hrs on Sunday morning we sailed into the harbour in Messina. We called to shore and asked for a pilot, but that wasn't possible unless we could identify the lighthouse. We told the pilots that the name of the lighthouse was not printed on our chart, and after a moment they accepted to come early in the morning. At 10:00 hrs on Sunday morning we finally landed. Then we had been without food and tobacco for two days and were almost out of oil. That surely was a close shave.



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It was an incredible feeling to finally be on a safe shore. Still the thought of food and tobacco was stronger than anything else. We had just finished to tie the ship when Shanol came to us and offered us cigarettes. It is still a mystery where he got them from.

Now the immigrations and customs came onboard and asked for papers. We showed them our passports. Old Hussein had some problems when his passport showed him to be 641 years old. He was born in 1338, before the calendar change, which happened in Turkey in 1925. As matter of fact he was 60 years old. Shanol, on the other had, was 30 years old but didn't have a passport. At first they wouldn't let him off board, but he pretended not to understand and followed us when we went up to the pier.

We practically ran up the pier and looked around for a restaurant. All our thoughts were about food. Fortunately we soon found a restaurant and ordered the biggest breakfast that had ever been ordered in this place - to the owner's great pleasure and even more so for us. It was magnificent to have the taste of meat and bread in your mouth again, swallowed down with beer. Fantastic, after two days without food! Never had any food tasted better.

After having this fine breakfast we wandered around the city and viewed its most interesting places. Messina is a beautiful city with many old buildings. Ferries sail from there between Sicily and Italy, and a lot of ferries were in the harbour there. At dinnertime we found a restaurant and ordered roast pork and red wine, which went down easily in large amounts. The Turkish Muslims were no inferiors to us on the pork and red wine. When we asked them what they thought Allah would say about this behaviour, they told us Allah never went abroad so he had no idea of what they were up to in foreign countries. They considered that no problem at all.

Valentinus called his friend in Luxembourg that day and asked him to call Iceland and let our families know how we were doing. We had decided not to take the ferry any further and go home from Messina. We felt that we had gone far enough and had no more duties to Johan. We discussed this with him and Philippe, but they convinced us to sail the ship to France. After long discussions Johan finally persuaded us to go on and we agreed to sail to Toulon.

*Part three in the next issue of  
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# Arngrimson's Trek

by Darrell Gudmundson

Arngrimur Arngrimson was born in 1845, the only son of Arngrimur Jonsson's marriage to Gudrun Eiriksdottir, his second wife. He was christened at four days old at Saudanes, Nordur-Thingeyjarsýsla.

Arngrimur was nearly a generation younger than his several half-brothers and half-sisters. He farmed at Finnsstaðaseli in Eiðaflinghá from 1875 to 1882 - then with his bride Forbjörg Magnúsdóttir he set out for America with sons Stefan, about 5 years old and Siggi, about 2 yrs.

Arriving at New York, they boarded a train for Duluth, where the rail line ended, aiming for the North Dakota settlement, where some cousins already lived.

At Duluth, it was found that none of their trunks had found their way onto the train! They were without belongings except for the clothes on their backs. All household effects were lost, never to be recovered. It was late autumn, and to continue on was impossible.

The family approached the Lutheran Church in Duluth for help, and Arngrimur was given a place to live and put to work as caretaker. In spring, his cousins came from North Dakota, and assisted the family on their way.

The rivers of Minnesota were in spring flood, and three year old Siggi could recall being held at the ferry rail by his mother, watching a baby's body float by on the icy current, on either the Mississippi, St. Louis, or the Red River. Such memories tend not to fade.

To pay for homestead goods, Arngrimur found work to the north, on a railway line that was almost certainly the CPR, since they were near the Canadian border. Arngrimur was not sturdily built, but slight, and heavy work must have been hard on him. He developed lung problems, and died early, likely of consumption, as tuberculosis was called in those days.

Arngrimur's brother Petur had joined them, taking a nearby farm. Petur was a powerful man who was known for having repelled a band of Moroccan sheep-stealers by throwing each one off a bridge into an icy stream till they fled to their ship. Petur was elderly for a homesteader, but his help was welcome. Later, Petur's other claim to fame occurred when he became frostbitten and contracted gangrene; he took off the infected toes of one foot with a sharpened ax.

Steve became the head of the homestead, while Siggi was put out to work for a farmer at about thirteen. The job included living in the barn, with porridge twice a day - not quite enough for a growing lad. Siggi and a co-worker subsisted on raw eggs and milk fresh from the cows. However, there was no substitute for the leather in the soles of his shoes. These wore out in midwinter, and Siggi could not buy replacements as his entire pay went to his mother to look after the younger siblings, Jon, Sofia and Bjorn. Fresh straw went into the bottoms of the shoes each day - replacing the wet straw of the previous day - and when plowing began in spring, Siggi went barefoot, though each morning he cut his feet on the shards of fresh ice that formed in the puddles each night.

On a rare trip into town, Siggi was stopped on the street by a local homeopath and sternly warned not to return to his farm job. Siggi was coughing nastily, much like his father had once done. The doctor advised Siggi to get an outdoor job, working with cattle, so that fresh air and sunshine could do their work.

Afraid to tell his mother, Siggi found a ranch job, and the kindly rancher took him in as if he were a son. Siggi became a range-hand, but was offered a job as a veterinarian's helper on condition that he let the doctor put him through veterinary school. Sadly, Siggi's income was needed too



Siggi in Buckboard flanked by Norman and Magnus Arngrimson (sons of Jon) with Sigga (Melsted) Arngrimson and her daughter Valgerdur, her daughter-in-law Irene, and Lizzie on far right. In front is Valgerdur's daughter Janet. Taken in later 1950s. (Note the buggy is not fully operational)



Siggi and Lizzie

cousins!) convinced him that he should homestead in Montana. Hence the Saskatchewan property was registered to his mother, while he built a ranch in Montana, the Lazy-S Bar, from which he worked to round up wild horses, break them for farm work, and deliver them to North Dakota and to Saskatchewan, replacing the oxen that so many early homesteaders used. The nearby Blackfoot reservation provided help in rounding up horses from the hills, and Siggi braved spring blizzards and packs of wolves to bring herds of horses through the Big Muddy Valley, through the valley of the Wood River, past Wood Mountain, and up into the Vatnabyggd territory.

Siggi married Elisabet Petursson about the same time he settled in Montana. 'Lizzie' was a strong, independent typesetter for the local paper in Edinburg, N.D. In her day she was not only a farm housekeeper and gardener, but a practical nurse and midwife. She once headed the Saskatchewan Poultry Growers Association, chosen because her fowl repeatedly won prizes at city fairs. Some were shocked to learn that her flock consisted of only a couple of dozen chickens! In those few were examples of many exotic

badly, and he was forced to decline. However, he became a skillful cowboy, and became a rodeo champion, with prizes for calf-roping.

In 1902, one dozen Icelandic men, mostly young, but some nearing middle age, rode north on a trip of exploration into the Canadian mid-west. Their destination turned out to be Vatnabyggd, the area to the south of the Quill Lakes, Foam Lake, Fishing Lake, Noop Lake, the tiny Hoseason's Lake, Birch Creek and Milligan Creek – the Water Settlement. Siggi was in that group, choosing homesteads for himself (in his mother's name), for Steve, Jon and Bjorn. His cousins Sam (Samsi) Samson and Joe Gislason also chose land, as did many others. A huge migration followed from the Dakotas into what soon became Saskatchewan, leaving behind 40 and 80-acre homesteads for the 160 acres that was being offered. By old country standards, this was a grand estate!

Siggi, however, had other ideas. Another cousin (Icelanders have so many



Lizzie, Siggi, Tobba and Sophie in 1926 (Elfros)



Stefan and his wife

breeds, chosen with the co-operation of the University Agriculture College in Saskatoon.

After ten years, Siggi left the Montana homestead behind and settled at Elfros, on Birch Creek, where he brought up my mother Tobba and her sister Sophie. He retired in about 1945 to Blaine, Washington, where he owned a two-acre pasture on the Canadian border, adjoining the Peace Arch Park. He was forced back to the U.S.A. because at that time, Canada had no old age pension.

In the pasture at Blaine, Siggi kept two purebred Jersey cows, drawing a class of dairy agriculture students each year from the University of Washington. Siggi remained there till he passed on in the fall of 1957, the week before Sputnik was sent into orbit.

Steve, Jon and Bjorn continued to farm in the area north of Mozart, near Little Quill Lake. There are Arngrimsons in the area still. The journey is far from over.

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# How DO you write about Icelanders?

by Sara Loftson

Since I can remember my parents have told me that I'm Icelandic. My dad's been bugging me to write for the Icelandic Canadian Magazine for years. I've been meaning to, but I've just never gotten around to doing it. I guess it just always seemed like such a hassle, sitting down to write about a topic I know nothing about.

Iceland: ice, land, Icelandic pancakes...yum, the Icelandic festival in Gimli, volcanoes, Bjork. Yup, that's it. That's all I know about Iceland.

Man, I could use some money right now; I'm a starving university student. I know, maybe if I write for the magazine then at least I'll get paid. Nope, that's right, it's free labour. I think my Dad calls it volunteer writing. Doing something good for your Icelandic community; but who is this community anyway? I mean who reads this magazine? Probably people my Dad's age and what could I possibly write of interest for people my Dad's age? And they're most likely all Icelandic; they probably even speak the language.

So here I am miles and miles away from my home in Winnipeg. I'm going to school in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I'm studying journalism at the University of King's College. My Dad keeps telling me again and again to write for the magazine. I thought maybe if I moved away he'd stop asking me, but no that would be too easy. So this time I told him: "O.K. give me until the end of the week. I'll have a story for you." I've used that line before, but for some reason I think this time will be different. Why? I don't know; maybe because I need the writing experience; maybe because I'm physically closer to Iceland so I feel more of a connection; or maybe because I want to get Dad off my back!

I don't know anything about Iceland. Have I already said that? Where to start? Humm... well, in journalism school we

learn the art of being nosey; an easy starting point is usually a simple Google search on the web.

Ideally, I would like to find some real live Icelanders and interview them.

Searching... searching... ah-ha! here we go: the Consul for Nova Scotia. His name is Mr. John Carter Risley. He's probably a cool guy; I bet he could put me in contact with some Nova Scotian Icelanders. I'll e-mail him and see what happens...

Mr. Risley,  
My name is Sara Loftson. I am a reporter with the Icelandic Canadian Magazine. The magazine is published in Winnipeg, Manitoba but I am writing a freelance piece from Halifax. I would like to ask you a few questions. What does a consul do? How does someone become a consul? What kinds of interesting people have you met? Do you like Icelandic pancakes?

I hope to hear back from you soon as I am writing to deadline.  
Takk Fyrir,  
Sara Loftson

In class we also learn how to change Google pages into different languages. I didn't really know why I would ever need to know how to do this, but I guess this skill comes in handy when writing letters to Icelandic consuls in Nova Scotia.

While I'm waiting for a reply I'll continue my search.

What do I want to know about Iceland? What's the population? What kind of government do they have? What is Iceland's major industry? Wait, the readers will probably know all that, plus it's kind of boring. Umm... I know!

What do Icelandic boys look like? Are they cute?

I'll just punch in: Iceland + boys, click on Google Images, and see what pops up.



Ooops! I didn't literally mean "boys", boys as young as my brother who's 14 that is. Alright, not those kind of 'boys', I'll try 'men'. I assume Icelandic men have blonde hair and blue eyes; it's what I think of when I think of Scandinavian countries. Let's see if I'm right.



Well, that's not exactly what I had in mind. I wonder if all Icelanders are that buff? I wonder who these guys are? I'll do a quick search: "Jón Valgeir Williams"

Well, I doubt that all Icelandic men are power lifters. It says they were competing in the Viking Challenge. I think they're into pushing semi-trailers and flipping large tires over. Ummm...not really my type.

Well, I think I've gotten off to a good start. I'll continue my search tomorrow.

The next day:

No reply from Mr. Risley, so as a good reporter should, I followed up the e-mail with a call the next day. Mr. Risley's assistant Donna Williamson answered. She said Mr. Risley is away on business for two weeks and would be too busy to write back to my e-mail. She asked me to send her a copy of it and she would call him and transcribe his reply.

This is what she wrote:

*Mr. Risley has been traveling a lot lately on business and has not been able to answer his email. He will be tied up for the next month or so and I cannot tell you when or if he will get back to you.*

Well, I suppose I've learned a new lesson: story ideas fall through. I guess I won't be able to profile Mr. Risley right now, but I'm not giving up. I'm interested to find out more about the Icelandic community here in Nova Scotia and next time I'll report more of my findings.

Sara



# Letters from Friðjón Friðriksson

Translated by Sigurbjörg Stefansson



*Friðjón Friðriksson*

Letter 20

Gimli, Jan. 25, 1881

Dear Friends,

I thank you very much for your letters of Nov. 13 and Dec. 2. They were warm and cordial, reflecting yourselves. I was sorry to learn that you do not like it in Iceland, but that is only what the two of you and I expected. Hopefully, you don't have to stay there for long.

By the way, man's existence is not expected to last anyway. Now the year 1881 has begun. May God bless you this year and bring you closer and closer to himself. Long ago the destruction of our planet in this year was prophesied. I do not believe in the accuracy of this prophecy, but it has a great impact on a lot of people. Some believe it, others, who do not

believe it, cannot help but thinking about it and discussing it. This discussion is moving in on us here in New Iceland, but it will probably not reach you north there until it is all over. I can't say that I believe in the prophecy, but it seems to me that the end of the world is no more frightening than the end of each individual's life - an end which according to the laws of nature is never extremely far away from any individual now living on this earth, and this new year will be the last one for so many. We don't have anything to worry about if we believe in Jesus Christ. My religious belief is still feeble even though I preserve some religious spirit within myself. I praise the Lord for that. Admittedly, I would like to go on living for a while, if it is God's will, but I, nevertheless, once in a while look forward to getting away from sin and misery, both those of myself and those of others. The hope that I will be allowed to see my friends and be with them in a place where everything has become holy and good makes me happy. It is my hope that almighty God give that we may all meet there, and I believe that waiting for us in that place is more happiness than any eye has ever seen, or any ear has ever heard, or any imagination has ever pictured. This is how one's mind wanders. My mind keeps wandering to you because through you is the road to heaven; you certainly guided my mind to heaven time and again, and I thank you for it.

Back to earth, I am sitting at your editorial desk, dear friend, which is located in the northwest corner of my living room with Longfellow, my favourite, in front of me. My wife and our children are with me. Hermann never leaves me alone, he keeps kissing the picture of the girl on my desk lamp, and in between he talks to her. I am childish enough to enjoy this behaviour of his. You knew that I love Aurora,

now I think that I love Hermann just as much. She is very nice and tender, and she is fairly intelligent - a lovely child - but he is somehow different from all other children whom I have ever known. He seems to be highly intelligent, and he has now started to speak. He talks a lot and he talks clearly. Often, he shows us a great deal of tenderness, but upon deciding that he has carried on long enough he says, "dona nu" (that's enough"), and immediately all his affectionate interests disappear, and all of a sudden he is very serious. He is inflexible and hot tempered, and I do anticipate a lot of difficulties in raising him.

I was sorry to learn from your last letter that you have not received any letters from us except the one which my wife wrote while I was on my trip on Lake Winnipeg. Between my return and New Years I sent you a letter each time the mail boat sailed for Iceland, i.e. four letters altogether. One of the letters included pictures of myself and my wife. It is most unlikely that all these letters have been lost, but since you had not received them on the 2nd of December some of them have obviously gotten stuck somewhere for a long time. In these letters I told you about what happened in New Iceland this summer and fall, i.e. rain, floods, etc. I also mentioned the common transfer anticipated at that time. Most do still keep their former intentions in that respect, except many are less emotional and not as hasty about the whole thing as before. All the inhabitants of South Vidines have established settlements in Township 6 R. 14 West, located in N. W. T. just west of the border of Manitoba. Only a handful of people will remain in the northern part of Vidines, i.e. maybe some 10 or 12, and there are going to be a few left in the Arnes settlement. Most of those who leave Arnes go to Dakota. A few are moving from the Fljot settlement, but most of the Fljot people will remain. I think that there are very few going to move from Mikley, but that population has become sparse. How do you like New Iceland?

Dear Friends, at this point in my letter I had to go to Winnipeg. I took it with me in order to complete it. Yesterday, Sigtryggur and I drove from Lundur, the

homestead of Kristjan Jonsson - 50 miles to Winnipeg. We are talking business. I wrote to you before that Victoria had been a success last summer. In general terms, we see bright prospects ahead. There are some plans concerning a German entrepreneur going into business with us. His name is Osenbrugge. I believe that you have heard about him. He is a nice man, he has a good reputation, and he is considerably well off financially - both of which are of great value in this world. We are planning to build a sawmill by the Icelandic River. I am convinced that with a little luck this business can prove profitable, maybe more so than most enterprises that the average man can manage. Sigtryggur and I had in mind to finish the negotiations today, but Osenbrugge is not at home. Therefore, we are waiting here until tomorrow or rather until Monday since today is Saturday and I am becoming strict concerning taking Sunday off. I believe that each Christian has a commitment to keep the Sunday holy and I consider it to be sinful to violate that commitment, and besides one needs to rest from one's everyday work and one should enjoy this rest each Sunday. I want people to work diligently and conscientiously and then to have proper rest. One of the things that you have to do, dear friend, is to preach against the desecration of the Sunday in Iceland.

If the building of the mill up north becomes a reality, I will probably stay in New Iceland for a year at least, because I will probably be in charge at first. Now I can see, in my mind's eye, your faces telling me that you think that I am about to take leave of my senses. Well, I am not going to try that excuse myself. I leave it up to you to do that. You know that I am one of those who wants to become rich. I am aware of the dangers accompanying such desires, but I also see that the average man cannot accomplish much if he has no money. If God makes me a man of considerable means, I intend to use my money to do something good and useful as best I can, mostly to educate my children, provided they turn out to be educable. I take it for granted that the mill business will be more profitable than anything that I could



do outside of New Iceland. My presentation is very illogical, the hind legs were born first - my mind is confused.

Winnipeg Feb. 3, 1881

Dear Friends, now I continue to write to you. The last few days I have been very busy preparing the mill business. The contracts are now ready and they are to be signed at 10 a.m. tomorrow. Sigtryggur, Osenbrugge and I are joint owners of the mill and boat, each of us owning one third, but my brother Arni is a special partner. He contributed \$1,000.00 and he is to collect the proportionate net profits of his share. Our investment in the steamboat (and some other things) \$3,920.98. Osenbrugge will contribute all the money that we need for running the business until it starts to return profits, but instead he gets one third of the property mentioned above. Our business is called, "Jonasson, Fridriksson & Co." and has been legalized for a period of four years except if we decide otherwise.

Sigtryggur is going to be the captain of the boat and he will be paid by the company. I am going to manage the business here up north. I am only signing a contract for one year, my salary is probably going to be \$75.00 a month plus a free house. We plan to run a little store in connection with the mill.

This year Sigtryggur will probably lend me his house. His wife will spend some time in Winnipeg, and occasionally she might work for us (i.e. my wife and me) but nothing is settled yet. More about this later.

Even though I never intended to go any further north than Gimli, I now suppose I will in spite of some negative sides to such a move, but on the other hand there are some plusses too. Once in a while my wife suffers from some nervous condition and fearfulness. Therefore my being away is hard on her and consequently I am often worried when away from home. Living up north would enable me to stay at home all the time. Besides, I would hopefully have some time to read if living up north, an occupation more important to me than the

potential company in Winnipeg or some other town. There are just so few whose company gratifies us, but then one should look for happiness at home as much as possible.

My wife sends you her best, especially you, dear sister. You are always in her thoughts. In a letter I received this morning she asks me to send "Hammond Hymns" (highly loved by her) to you. Rev. Hammond is a "revivalist". He travels to various countries, and this fall he preached in Winnipeg for a few weeks. I listened to him on several occasions and for the most part I liked what he had to say. Before long....

Well, I had to leave my writing abruptly and now I cannot remember what I was going to say, it is such a commotion here in Revere House.

Icelanders in New Iceland, Manitoba and in Dakota (I think) have hardly ever been doing better than now, and to my knowledge there is no shortage of food. There is an abundance of well paid work this summer. Many Icelanders still work for the C.P. R. The Government of Canada is about to sell that railroad to a company which offers to build the railroad all the way to the Pacific in 10 years provided the Government grants them 25 million dollars, 25 million acres of land, and a permit to bring all "material and rolling stock" free of duty into the country, also giving them special permission to build branch roads, etc, and exempting them from paying taxes for the unforeseeable future, etc.

The Opposition Party is fighting fiercely against this proposal in Parliament, but the Government is supported by the vast majority of the members of Parliament, enabling it to have this contract approved in a few days. There are many big shots in this new company, for example Stephen, the President of the Montreal Bank, Montreal Angus and Hill, St. Paul and other U.S. capitalists.

This mail boat will bring you a letter from Baldvin Benediktsson; he showed it to me. Baldvin has become insane, not in the sense however that he wants to take his own life. He has his mind set on spiritual

matters a lot, but he is thoroughly confused. He claims, for instance, to be an ideal instrument in the hands of God to reform Icelanders, and he claims to have an unbroken verbal contact with God. It is possible that this condition of his is only temporary. I certainly hope so.

Icelanders in Winnipeg are showing considerable desire for progress. The Icelandic Association, for example, is sponsoring a grade school. There is general interest among Icelanders in building a hall for Icelanders in Winnipeg. Helgi Jonsson has donated grounds for the house, and a collection among the Icelanders is taking place in order to finance this project. If the collection turns out to be successful, the hall will probably be built this summer.

There is a great number of Icelanders in Winnipeg, and nowhere in America is there more need for an Icelandic minister than there, but their financial status doesn't allow them to support a minister.

This time I am not going to discuss the money I owe you. If you need the money this summer, please write to me about it. If not, I appreciate being able to put this money to use because there is certainly need for it now.

This letter is raw-boned, and I ask you to pardon its inadequacies.

My wife asked me to give you her very best, and I myself ask Almighty God to bless you forever and a day.

Your loving friend,  
Fridjon Fridriksson

Letter 21  
Gimli, Mar 27, 1881

Dear friends,

I cannot remember whether or not I have thanked you for your letter of the 15th of Dec. That one is the latest that I have received from you, and new letters from Iceland are not to be expected until the beginning of summer. Anyway, I thank you very much for it.

Long ago I ceased looking forward to big holidays, but I keep looking forward to

your letters because they are so warm and always have the power to cheer me up, bringing our spirits close together, and being close to you certainly does me a lot of good.

I am sorry to learn how few letters you have received from me, the more so because you think that I never or very rarely write to you. Since I have returned from the trip to Indians<sup>1</sup> I have sent a letter to you on each mail boat that was to sail from Leith to Iceland, except once, and I shall continue to write to you as regularly as possible.

The last few weeks the majority of the inhabitants of the Vidines settlement have moved away. Most of our followers went to Winnipeg or the N. W. T. colony - whereas the followers of Rev. Pall went to Dakota.

Benedikt Arason stays in Kjalvik. There is no-one living any further south than Kjalvik except old Asmundur Einarsson who lives alone in his shed, but he intends to move north to Meidavellir -



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to Asmundur Gudlaugsson. Skapti, Kristjan, Sigurdur Kristofersson, Sigurjon, Eyjolfur, Wm. Hearn, and Skuli took their families with them while the others left their families with friends; Mrs. Hearn and Mrs. Christopherson and their children are staying with J. Taylor. Wm. Taylor - with his family - started out late, travelling on oxen sleighs, and he became stuck in Clandeboye. He is known for traveling slowly. John Taylor and his family, after a lot of thinking, have decided to move into a fairly decent house close to Capt. Kennedy, St. Andrews. Taylor is hoping to be able to keep his salaries and his position for a while. Jon from Meidavellir is going to move to Akur, but Rebekka is going to take turns in staying with him and her daughters in Winnipeg. By the way, old Bjorg from Nyibaer is Jon's house-keeper. Pall from Nyibaer moved to Winnipeg with his family. Our Bjorn Jonsson with his pregnant wife and their children also settled down in Winnipeg, except his little son, Bjorn, who was left with my father in Gimli. Life is rather dull in the Vidines district; there are not many men around equally honourable and upright as Skapti, and besides he is so very reasonable and clever. He is one of the few in whom one can confide in all the time concerning everything. Many of my friends have been well meaning but none has Skapti's stability.

This time last year I said goodbye to you in St. Boniface. Then I cried again like a child. Now I say goodbye to many of my friends each day without shedding a

single tear. The friendship between the two of you and the two of us (my wife and me) has been totally unique; we do not ever expect to find friends as good as you were.

There is no doubt that many of those who are now moving from New Iceland are going to experience a lot of difficulties. I can hardly see how they are going to survive. Many of these people settled down in Winnipeg because there is a lot of work in that city this summer and in the future, but on the other hand the cost of living is high. Thus there is little hope of prosperity even for those who work hard. We have gotten news from Dakota saying that people there are optimistic, but there is still a lot of hard work and poverty.

A man by the name of Jonas Hallgrimsson is now staying here. He used to be with Taylor. Jonas has broken land by the Park River and last fall he built a shed there - where his wife and their children live now while Jonas has been working for C.P.R. since last November. Jonas is optimistic, but he is tired of spending so much time away from home. All those who take land for themselves and who are poor have to work away from home in order to survive. Icelanders in North America have still a long way to go before acquiring general prosperity for themselves.

Rev. Halldor Briem and his wife left Gimli for good for Minnesota in the middle of March. He has not, however, left Winnipeg yet since his luggage was delayed and he decided to wait for it. The more I get to know Rev. H. , the more I realize

what a weakling he is. He is a good person but that is his only positive side as a minister. I am not going to discuss Rev. H. any further. I am sorry if I have hurt you by my words about him. He left here without worldly wealth, but he had enough money for the journey south.

I don't have time to discuss general news from America. I suppose that you can follow goings-on through newspapers from the U.S.A. , but I guess that you do not get too much news from Canada. The Government of Canada has now sold the C.P.R. to a certain company presided over by Mr. Stephens, President of the Montreal Bank. Other members of the company are St. Paul, New York, England, and France. The Canadian Government provides this company with 25 million acres of land and 25 million dollars for the building of the railroad. The construction of the road is expected to proceed rapidly from now on. Transportation by railroads to the middle regions of the U.S.A. was delayed due to exceptionally heavy snowfall and blizzards early this month, resulting in a lack of firewood and food that left people in serious trouble in various places.

Back to myself: On the 2nd of April I am going to leave Gimli for good with my wife and children. I plan to settle down in Sigtryggur's house and I plan to stay there for at least a year, working for Jonasson & Fridriksson & Co. - managing the sawmill which is to be built by the river by this coming spring. The members of this corporation are Sigtryggur Jonasson, Fridjon Fridriksson, and Osenbrugge, a merchant from Winnipeg. All three of us share equal ownership of one third each. The fourth member is Arni Fridriksson, my brother. He is a "special partner" after having invested \$1,000.00 in the company. This business demands a considerable amount of cash for initial operations. All this cash is provided by Osenbrugge, since the other members do not have any extra cash available. If we manage to avoid major accidents, this business is bound to become profitable in the future. We have already cut down 6,000 logs and brought them to the river, and we have also brought wood for the construction of the mill.

This summer the mill is to be built and the logs that have already been brought here are to be sawed. Now it is important to keep the work going, and with God's help - I am certainly going to see to it that the work goes on. The corporation owns a small store up north, of which I am in charge. Thus I am working exclusively for the corporation. My salaries are supposed to amount to \$75.00 a month. I am rather strapped for money these days because - upon closing my own store - all my creditors demanded what was theirs. At the same time I am having difficulties collecting the money which others owe to me. Besides, a lot of my money is invested in real estate, etc. I have put your money into circulation - it is going to stay that way as long as you do not write for it. If you need it, please let me know.

My in-laws are going to move north. My father is going to stay in my house in Gimli. All members of our family are doing well.

The management of the publishing company has been asked to sell the press if an acceptable offer comes along. This decision was made at a general meeting. If they cannot sell it, they are to lease it to someone who is willing to publish a periodical for Icelanders. Icelanders do need a periodical, but who is willing to publish it?

My warmest wishes to both of you. Good God grant that we may continue to improve ourselves and eventually to live together with the Lord a more perfect life.

Your loving friend,  
Fridjon Fridriksson


*Editors Note: 1. He is almost certainly referring to a trip he made north on Lake Winnipeg to trade with the Indians.*

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# Letters from Balsam Bay

by Agnes Bardal Comack



Starting at the back, from the left: uncle Andy, sister Signy, auntie Helga, sister Helga, unknown man. Two boys, unknown, sister Margaret, Karl Thorlakson, Agnes and cousin Marino Magnusson.

As I get older I am amazed that some of the simple things I do bring back memories of wonderful people I have known. In the summer at our cottage, when the pincherries are ripe, I pick them to make jelly. I always relate that smell and taste to memories of my mother's eldest sister, my Auntie Helga, who was married to Andy Christianson.

Auntie Helga and Uncle Andy lived in Balsam Bay, on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Their's was a two story log house. As I recall, the house had one big room with a stairway up one wall to an open bedroom loft. The lean-to addition on the back of the house was the kitchen.

The most exciting object of all, to this little city girl, was in the back yard. There was the well. It was a low stone wall surrounding a deep hole.

Braced above the hole was a log which was turned with a crank to wind the rope that brought up a pail full of fresh, cold, clear water.

At the back of the lot was a shed which housed Uncle Andy's horse. When I hear the word 'mare,' I always think of Uncle Andy, as he often referred to his 'mare.' Nell was her name.

I am lucky to be in possession of letters written from 1927 to 1929 by Uncle Andy to my father, Arinbjorn S. Bardal. Reading these letters, it is obvious that my Uncle Andy was a rare and wonderful character. Almost every letter is a "thank you" for parcels received, but events reported reveal the life of hardship they endured.

On Feb. 2, 1928, he writes, "Just a line to let you know I ran into hard luck.

Yesterday, I lost my old chum Nellie. She was only sick one day. Although I did everything I could for her, it was acute indigestion. She ate and drank up to the time she died and didn't seem in much pain. Poor old Nell had to kick out just

when I was most in need of her. I hear there's a horse for sale in Libau so I'm going to take a trip up there on my dogs and look him over." Uncle Andy raised Irish Water Spaniels. In another letter, he wrote:

"Biddy delivered twelve pups to me December 8, eight dogs and four females. I killed seven of them as they were too many for her to bring up in the cold weather and also being her first litter. I kept four dogs and one female."

He offered a dog to my father, "whichever sex" he preferred. "I will ship it to you with all its papers from the Ottawa Kennel Club. A better stock can't be got in all of Canada - champions of the world on both sides." Then he offered some advice. "I kept the female special for you because if you have her split by a Vetenary (sic), which cost one dollar, you have a one man's dog that will never leave your house. No one can use her but yourself. A dog will follow anyone with a gun, then run around when females are in season. Let me know. I'm going to make dam good and sure you have a duck dog for next fall's hunt." (I remember we ended up with the female. 'Patsy' was her name.)

In another letter he wrote: "I had the misfortune of losing my calf last night. I tied him along side his mother and she must have got sore at him during the night because I found him with his neck broken in the manger this morning."

In the letters there are references to attempts to get across the muskeg to get at 'your deers.' I presume my father had been deer hunting. There had been several attempts and Uncle Andy was hoping to get the deer carcasses across the lake where my father would meet him. "I can get them as far as Selkirk at least," he wrote. I will phone you the day before I leave so you can meet me at Paul Magnusson's at



*Karl Thorlakson throwing the horse shoe. Auntie Helga sitting on the fender of my father's car. Sister Helga sitting on the log looking this way. The others are unknown.*

Selkirk." (Paul and Stefania Magnusson lived on Dufferin Ave in Selkirk.)

On Feb.29, 1929, he wrote,"I had a narrow sweak last month on the lake with my old plug. He broke through a crack on the lake and dropped in up to his neck. I got him out only to break through again. This time we both had a taste of it but we managed to get out without any help. I had to keep driving him on the lake until some fishermen got planks across the crack so we could get ashore. We were two miles out where the crack opened. It was the coldest-

day so far this winter. We both darned near froze stiff before we got to shore. The old plug is sick over his dip but is getting over it again. He sure got thin but the tough old devil is none the worse - nor is the good leg." (Uncle Andy had only one leg.)

A letter written December 21st, 1928, refers to the big public meeting called by the new Councillor, Mr. P. Trapp, to choose delegates to meet Hon.Clubb and Hon. Hoay to press upon them the need to finish the road to Grand Beach and Victoria Beach in the spring. "The School House was crowded to the door.

The main spokesman being Ace Emmitt. Beausejour was represented by ex Mayor Hayes, Lac Du Bonnet by W.Childs, Grand Beach Community Club by Mr.Lees, Ladywood by Trapp Brothers, Thalberg by Mr. F. Otto, Victoria Beach by Mr. A.Bouchie, Albert Beach by Mr. A. Atark, Balsam Bay by A Christianson "Uncle Andy," Beaconia by Albert Trapp, Greenswold by Mr. Yule. The Bank Manager at Beausejour, Broken Head was also on deck. We sent an auto to East Selkirk to bring out our new Reeve and we read the riot act to him. If he didn't back us

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up to finish the road in the spring, we are all going in a body to make our demands on the Government as we have a garinter (sic) that the highway will be taken into the trunk highway inside of five years."

It was before that time, I would guess 1927, that I was included in a drive to see Auntie Helga and Uncle Andy. In the car driven by my father were three of my seven sisters. Also with us was Mr Karl Thorlakson of Winnipeg.

The trip was unforgettable because I had never before, or since, travelled such a rocky road. It was surely meant for horse and buggy and not a gasoline powered automobile, but my father was an adventurer. The road was actually a winding trail through the bush. Huge rocks and stumps studded the way. I expect my father wasn't surprised when the muffler fell off.

Kids don't forget things like that, nor do they forget the sight of a man taking off his artificial leg to prop it against a boulder and hop one-legged into Lake Winnipeg. That was Uncle Andy when he joined us for a swim. Both Uncle Andy and Mr Thorlakson had lost a leg. I never knew if my uncle had lost his in WWI or when he worked as a brakeman on the W.S.and L.W.Railway, which he referred to in one of his letters.



*Auntie Helga and Old Nell. This was taken at Julius Bloch's farm. Elma Bloch Aikins (his daughter) told me that auntie Helga always dressed in her Sunday best when she came for a visit.*

The one thing that does stand out in my memory is the joyous welcome we received from Auntie Helga on our arrival, and the wonderful aroma that wafted from her kitchen door. I'm sure she must have been making pincherry jelly.

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# Poetry

by Kurtis Eyolfson

Skull now frozen in a log,  
Face that somehow changes the fog  
Take me in and spit me out,  
Faces you can see without a doubt  
Take me out on the fog in the night,  
You can watch the two faces fight.

Hold my soul and you will see,  
The face has got a hold of me.  
In a circle surrounded by light,  
My heart pumps full of fright.  
Skin burns slowly away,  
For this man it was his last day.

Tortured crowdedness awakes,  
Sit in the circle of mistakes.  
Your face touches me at the last,  
Broken-hearted little outcast.  
Faces, eyes deceive,  
It is you that I believe.

# Book Reviews



## Any Day But This

By Kristjana Gunnars

Reviewed by Krista Martin MacGregor  
Red Deer Press, ISBN 9780889953116  
Hard cover, \$29.95

Kristjana Gunnars' latest collection of short stories, *Any Day But This*, will be welcomed by admirers of her writing and by fans of short fiction. Gunnars' spare, straightforward prose leads the reader into the emotional lives of characters poised in equilibrium. Reflecting upon pasts that have bubbled to life's surface, Gunnars' characters must see the connection between

past and present before moving toward new possibilities.

Born and raised in Reykjavik, Kristjana Gunnars has been a professor of creative writing at the University of Alberta since 1990. Her numerous works include: books of poetry, novels, nonfiction, essays and translations. She has been awarded the Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry, the McNally Robinson Award for Fiction, the George Bugnett Award for Fiction and has been nominated for the Governor General's Award for Nonfiction. Gunnars currently lives in Sechelt, on the Sunshine Coast of British Columbia.

Gunnars sets the majority of these thirteen stories on the Sunshine Coast, locating her characters in a geography well suited to their emotional state. While part of the mainland, the Coast is isolated from the larger population by mountains and sea. Its feel is that of an island—a desirable setting for those seeking privacy and retreat. In *Every Shade of Meaning*, Martha Abernathy wants her experience of motherhood to be “owned” by her alone, not shared with the complications and catastrophes of her past. Gunnars' characters wish to be cleansed of the accumulations of their previous lives; they wish for the tranquility to consider and begin anew. This harmony is not to be found in the outside world where there is “good reason for all the conflict and strife surrounding us all: discord and friction are wanted. They are what make people feel alive”.

The Sunshine Coast is home to many who are retiring from one life to begin another and this echoes throughout *Any Day But This*. Gunnars' stories are concerned with people transplanted in hope that a course change will bring emotional peace. In some instances, this change is actively sought. In *Under Other Skies*, Tamara is leaving her career as a professor.

Her life, while outwardly successful, was inwardly dry and muted. She is called toward a world where she may feel vibrant and alive.

The unpleasant character of Adam Ainsworth, in *It's Raining Gently All Over The World*, is also consciously seeking change. Retired from the Saskatoon Police Force, Ainsworth is looking to leave the "accumulation of sad detail" behind. His ego has traveled with him, however; his cold behaviour at this story's end leaves no doubt that he will add to his pile of discontent.

In *The Secret Source of Tears*, John Henry has not gone looking for change; it has come for him. Having lost his wife to Alzheimer's, he has retreated to a world of memory. But the betrayals of memory—of his wife's deprivation and death, of his inability to capture the past through her belongings—force John Henry toward the future.

Carla George, in *Pleasures Liberty Cannot Know*, understands that change cannot release her from herself. A downtrodden, but determined little girl has grown into a downtrodden, but determined woman. The cracks of her youth will continue to trip her in later life. You may plan on liberation, but "wherever you take yourself, it's still you and you're just following a bend in the river."

The idea of the past resurfacing to claim our present is captured by Gunnars in two wonderful images from *The Swans of Chesapeake Bay*. Elise, originally from Normandy, describes the enormous sink-holes that have appeared there. Chalk quarries, long abandoned, have been forgotten and their locations built upon. Heavy rains have eroded the pillars that once supported these caves and their collapse swallows the shocked inhabitants of the present. More striking is Elise's comparison of the past, of memory, to the waters of an estuary: "The freshwater from the land and the saltwater from the sea: they meet, they layer themselves, they circulate in levels and wander into each others' territory." There is no boundary to distinguish between the two.

These unseen currents link the

moments of life; it is from these connections that Gunnars' characters learn to muster hope and determination. In *Dreaming of the Coliseum and Angels Hide Their Faces* (both featuring writers as protagonist), the importance of this connection is understood. There is meaning in the randomness of ordinary experience. By registering these moments, we can see the possibilities that arise as we move through our days. To connect in life, even briefly, with others, with our pasts, is to bring meaning to madness.

Gunnars takes the title of this collection from a poem quoted in her story *Code Pink And Denim*. The poem is by the Metaphysical poet George Herbert and its choice seems significant. From lives controlled by realities beyond immediate perception, Gunnars' characters learn to find strength in the present. There is but one day to live and its beauty and possibility is here and now.

Kristjana Gunnars has the ability to bring her readers close to her characters. They seem familiar even as one is just entering their story. Gunnars evokes a 'small world' feeling through the light passage of characters between her stories (a feeling certainly familiar to those in the Icelandic Canadian community), but this is not where the familiarity lies. The reader does not identify with this diverse group because their experiences are necessarily those we may understand. We identify with Gunnars' characters because their longing to craft hope for the future, despite the debris of the past, is one desire we all may claim.

***Rev. Stefan Jonasson***

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# Contributors

**KRISTJANA MAGNUSSON CLARK** has written four family history books on family members, as well as a series of articles and poetry which have been published in numerous magazines and periodicals. She has recently been involved in writing up some biographies of Icelandic people in British Columbia, for the Icelandic Archives of British Columbia. Kristjana resides in the White Rock area of B.C. with her husband Alder Clark.

**AGNES BARDAL COMACK** was born in Winnipeg in 1921 to Arinbjorn S. and Margret Bardal, graduated in nursing in 1943 and married Hugh Comack in 1946. She raised three daughters and one son and now has 10 grandchildren and one great grandson. She has been doing art work since 1970 and won several awards.

**KURTIS EYOLFSON** loves to write poetry and music. He is the 23 year old son of Valerie Valgardson and Elerd Throstein Eyolfson, grandson of June Martin & Kristjan (Zeke) Valgardson, Bernice Einarson and Stoney Eyolfson.

**DAVID JÓN FULLER** is a Winnipeg-based freelance writer. His work has appeared in Lögberg-Heimskringla, The Icelandic Canadian, and Prairie Books Now, and he is a regular contributor to Uptown magazine.

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**HEATHER ALDA IRELAND** is Honorary Consul General of Iceland in British Columbia and the Yukon. She was invested with the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon in 2000.

**SARA LOFTSON** researches and writes about Iceland because she wants to learn about her cultural origin (and get her dad off her back).

**KRISTA MARTIN MACGREGOR** is a fan of short fiction who has transplanted herself to the family farm in Arnes, Manitoba. She and her young family are enjoying the change.

**ELI PALSSON** is an inspector for the Director of the Ministry of Fisheries in Iceland. He is still close friends with Gudjon Valgeirsson and Valentinus Olason.



PHOTO BY KAREN EMILSON

## The back page

Baldrun Paetkau, (right) of Sechelt, B.C., and Valerie Larson of Winnipeg spent an afternoon along the shores of Lake Manitoba in the Siglunes District. Baldrun's great-grandparents, Anna and Jorundur Eyford, homesteaded here in the early 1900s.

During the Diphtheria epidemic of 1905, the Eyford's lost four of their children. Baldrun's grandmother was the eldest surviving child who impressed upon her children that the gravesite should someday be permanently marked. In the early 1990s, a cairn was erected in memory of the lost Eyford children.



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