



Connect

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Connect newsletter welcomes your submissions!

Send your news, ideas, photos, and articles to:

info@inlus.org

Connect newsletter is published quarterly.

Ambassador Bergdís Ellertsdóttir Updates INLUS Webinar Viewers

Iceland's Ambassador to the United States Bergdís Ellertsdóttir provided an update on a range of topics during a November 9 INLUS webinar. Rob Cartwright, Iceland's Honorary Counsel in Northern California, facilitated the interview.

The webinar began with discussion about Iceland's September 2021 elections, which were described as historical and interesting by the Ambassador. In the years immediately following Iceland's economic crash, the government changed several times. The government was in place for 4 years leading up to this September's elections—the first time this has happened since the economic crash. At the time of the webinar, work was still being done to form a coalition government. Later in the webinar, Ambassador Ellertsdóttir gave a brief explanation to help audience participants understand how the elections impact the basic government structure.



Ambassador Bergdís Ellertsdóttir

The Chairmanship of the Arctic Council changed from Iceland to Russia in 2021. Ambassador Ellertsdóttir shared about how the Arctic Council functions and the work it does. She explained the brilliance is that the work of the council continues no matter what the political situations are between represented countries.

Climate issues, COVID, tourism, and collaboration were all additional topics that were covered during this webinar. The Ambassador mentioned many times that Iceland has a good working relationship with the United States and remarked that it has been 80 years since the start of diplomatic relations and 70 years since the establishment of a defense agreement between the countries. When asked about how things are going with her work now that she has been in the United States another year, Ambassador Ellertsdóttir remarked that she was enjoying the post and that she has been warmly received. The full webinar recording is available on the [INLUS website](https://inlus.org).

INLUS

Membership: Renew or Gift!

Do you know someone who thinks all things Icelandic are cool?

Encourage them to join INLUS!

Encourage your friends and family to join! Give membership as a gift!

To join, simply go to:

<https://www.inlus.org/about-us/membership/>

There are four types of membership:

- Individual \$25 annual
- Family \$50 annual
- Icelandic Organization \$100 annual
- Business (Iceland/Nordic related) \$100 annual

To learn more about our community, business, and Icelandic organization members, check out the community area of the INLUS website at:

<https://www.inlus.org/community/>

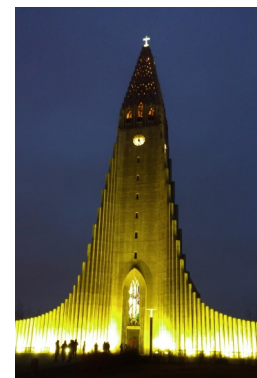
President's Message: A Late Autumn Trip

Our sister organization, the Icelandic National League of Iceland normally holds its annual convention (þing) in August. It was cancelled last year and postponed this year to November 21, but with the virus still surging, it was decided to cancel and meet in August 2022. My flights and hotel were already booked and, having never experienced late fall in Iceland, I decided to make the trip. I was able to meet with Birna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, our instructor for the advanced Icelandic class, and others who help support the INLUS. It was so nice to have a cup of coffee or meal with them face-to-face. One goal was to see the northern lights, but that will need to be another time; the lights were dancing my first night there – I was sleeping! The days are shorter, but the temperature was very comfortable for late November. Christmas decorations are up, and the store windows are beautifully decorated. On the day I left, it was raining sideways and the wind was fierce, a good reminder of what could have been. I recommend visiting at this time of the year. Here are a couple of photos for the holidays, Hallsgrímkirkja and a typical city street.



INLUS President
Dianne O'Konski

I wish everyone a warm, safe, and happy Holiday Season.



Icelandic Language Classes Wrap-up and Next Session

We're proud of the 24 people who recently completed our two Icelandic class offerings in November. 18 people completed the basic/intro Icelandic class and 8 people completed a more advanced conversational Icelandic class.

We hope to continue to offer at least two classes again starting in Spring 2022. If you are interested in classes next year, please send an email to David Johnson at david@inlus.org. This way you'll be on our list of people interested and will be among the first to be offered a slot in one of our classes when we have dates determined.

Snorri Programs: Life-Changing Experiences

Snorri Program Manager Pála Hallgrímsdóttir and Snorri West Co-Director Jody Arman-Jones joined INLUS for a November 29 webinar about all of The Snorri Programs. Named after Snorri Þorfinnsson, the first Iclander born in North America, the aim of The Snorri Programs is to strengthen the bonds between the people of Iceland and people of Icelandic descent in North America. Individuals based in North America can travel to Iceland to participate in the Snorri program or the Snorri Plus program. Individuals based in Iceland can travel to a zone in North America to participate in the Snorri West program. Also mentioned was the Snorri Deaf program for hearing impaired individuals offered on-demand. Full details of all programs can be found at [The Snorri Programs website](#).

While much of the programs are administered by The Snorri Programs, the Snorri West program relies heavily upon volunteer support in the North American zone hosting participants. All programs are designed to create meaningful experiences for participants and help forge deeper connections. To hear all of the details, view the webinar recording on the [INLUS website](#).



Snorri and Snorri Plus Program Applications Due January 17

Are you interested in a life-changing travel experience that connects you to Icelandic heritage and culture? Consider The Snorri Programs!

The Snorri program is a five-week summer cultural program in Iceland for North Americans of Icelandic descent who are between the ages of 20 and 30. Program runs June-July 2022. The application deadline is January 17, 2022.

The Snorri Plus program is a two-week summer cultural program in Iceland for North Americans over the age of 30: individuals, couples and family groups. Participants can either be of Icelandic descent or have a passion for Iceland. Program runs August 2022. The application deadline is January 17, 2022.

If you're interested in learning more or applying, check out [The Snorri Programs website](#).



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Profile: Barbara Gislason

"I'm hardly the herd lawyer," said Barbara Gislason, a trailblazing Western-Icelander in frontiers of the legal profession. In addition to writing a book about animal law, Gislason's law career has encompassed diverse areas of law. Now Gislason is the Editor-in-Chief for the *Juriste International*, the quarterly flagship publication of the international law organization Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA). She was just awarded the UIA's Presidential Medal on October 30, 2021.

How did Gislason get interested in becoming a lawyer? She recalls that when she was younger she was debating between two or three professions: writing, psychology, and law. Successful family members provided early exposure, and an expectation to do things and be curious. Her father and grandfather were both lawyers, while her grandmother was a medical doctor who passed her board certification to provide psychiatric care. As it turned out, when Gislason started her law practice in family law, she found that family law brought in elements of psychology.

Gislason described, "I'm a creative, innovative soul." She felt a calling toward studying science. She felt a calling to travel to China. While travelling on a boat in China, she observed a silent spring with no birds, bugs, or animals and felt a strong sense of calling to help animals. Gislason said that when she was in 10th grade, "I knew I was going to be a change agent." And change agent she has been. She described her law school experience as studying old law, with a retread, retread pattern. She wanted to explore what could be done to make things better. When she became a pioneer in launching animal law as a legal practice area, there was no legal remedy for issues involving an average pet. She was the igniting force in animal law in Minnesota and in the national bar and then the Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section of the American Bar Association. Since that time, animal law has become its own recognized section of the law.

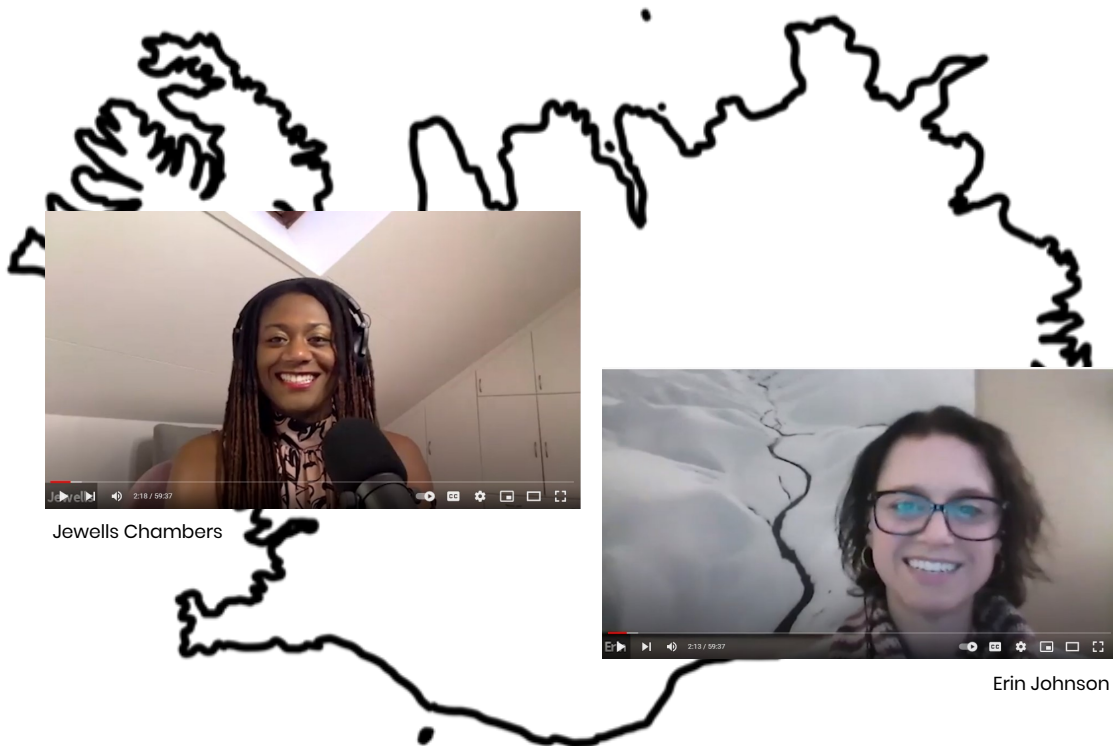
A presentation about human and animal biobanks at a meeting in Miami was a launching point for Gislason's involvement in the UIA. She was recognized for her excellence in writing when she received UIA's top award, the Monique Reynaud-Contamine Award. In her role as Editor-in-Chief Editor of the *Juriste International*, she is once again a change agent. In addition to adjusting the graphics, type-set, and colors, she has implemented a new model for the table of contents and peer editing. She has also included content about Icelanders. The second 2021 issue included a profile piece on protester Isak Douah, who has Icelandic lineage. Gislason recently interviewed Bergdís Ellertsdóttir, Ambassador of Iceland to the United States for an upcoming edition of the *Juriste International*. Ever the change agent, Gislason is hopeful that Icelandic lawyers will join the 110 countries represented in the UIA.



Photo courtesy of
Barbara Gislason

Have You Ever Thought About Moving to Iceland?

Jewells Chambers and Erin Johnson have done just that! They shared all about the joys and challenges of making their big move in an October 20 INLUS webinar. Chambers moved to Iceland in 2016, and Johnson moved there in 2019. For Chambers, the draw to Iceland was her husband. The pull to Iceland for Johnson started when she participated in the 2013 Snorri Program. After several subsequent extended stays she decided to make a permanent move. One challenge Chambers and Johnson have had in common is the challenge of learning the Icelandic language. During the webinar they generously shared learning strategies and tips. Chambers said the best part of moving to Iceland was the nature and the people, and she relayed how nature has nourished her soul. They both talked about finding jobs and their work experience in Iceland. In particular, they have both experienced a more laid back pace and how the weather influences the betta Reddast mentality. In addition to many more helpful tips and suggestions, they each offered good advice to people considering the move. Johnson said, "Bring a raincoat." Chambers said, "Keep an open mind, manage expectations." You can see the recording of their full conversation on the [INLUS website](https://www.inlus.org).



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