



Connect

Convention Edition! Spring 2023

Forward With Hope

By INLUS Board Member David Johnson

Although the INLUS is only 4 years old, its existence is built upon 100+ years of history laid down by many people through the Icelandic National League of North America (INLNA). We must never forget that history and the synergy we can create by nurturing a strong partnership between our respective entities.

One of the great historical achievements of the INLNA is its partnership with local chapters in hosting annual conventions. And after a few years off due to COVID, another great convention is being hosted by the Leif Eriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary in beautiful Banff, Canada.

I encourage any of you reading this message to mark your calendars to be in Banff, Alberta on May 11 - 13, 2023. Register for the convention soon and make your reservations to get there. These conventions are always inspiring and full of wonderful connections with good people. Here is a link for more information: <https://inlofna.org/convention>.

Looking back gives us perspective; looking forward gives us hope. The INLUS has grown in the last four years in so many ways, in large part to our volunteers, individual and business members and generous donors. A strong, working leadership team is also key to keeping our vision alive and things running smoothly. This past year we welcomed two wonderful new individuals to our Board -- Lauren Fields and Rob Olason. They each bring both enthusiasm and commitment to keep us moving forward. I'm so thankful to work with both of them. We welcome others to join our team and continue to look for individuals who want to join our Board in a leadership role. We'd love to hear from you if you're interested in helping us grow in the coming years.



In my view, growth isn't just about more members, more dollars in our bank account, or more likes on our social media posts. Growth to me means providing even more support and funding for local-level Icelandic-related events, projects, artists, festivals and scholarships.

Paying it forward is what it's all about so that in another 100 years we'll be remembered for keeping the love of all-things Icelandic alive and strong in the United States.



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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.

Setting the Stage at Banff

Convention Presenters:



Birna Bjarnadóttir



Ása Helga Hjörleifsdóttir



Sarah Fuller

Bob Baker, club President and his convention planning team at the Lief Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary are busy putting the finishing touches on the **2023 Icelandic National League of North America Convention**. This year's theme is *A Celebration of our Icelandic Heritage in the Arts*.

The Convention takes place May 11 through May 13, 2023.

Bob said, "we are pleased to welcome speakers from Iceland, Canada and the United States who are all experts in their related field of arts."

Presenters include:

Birna Bjarnadóttir, PhD at the University of Iceland (2003) was the Chair of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba (2003–2015), and as a Project Manager at the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute (2015–2020). She will speak on "The Creative Power of Literature in the North American Icelandic Heritage."

Filmmaker Ása Helga Hjörleifsdóttir will present a screening of the Film "A Letter from Helga," followed by a Q&A session.

Sarah Fuller will deliver a keynote address on Icelandic Photographic & Digital Arts

Musicologist and Director at Iceland Music History Museum, Bjarki Sveinbjornsson, will explore the history of Icelandic Music in Canada

Kristín Ómarsdóttir has published eight collections of poetry, nine novels, six collections of short stories, and six staged plays. She will speak about the work *Another Lady of the Mountain*.

U.S. based authors Sverrir Sigurdsson & Veronica Li will offer an Introduction to Memoir Writing Workshop

Laurel Johannesson will deliver a keynote address on the Intersection of Art & Technology.

In addition there will be presentations from the Snorri Program and Icelandic Roots.

The convention concludes with a Sunday bus tour to the Markerville Heritage Tour & Lunch Hike, which is an optional add-on.



Icelandic Roots and the Snorri Programs will present during "break-out" sessions.





Canadian singer-songwriter, Lindy Vopnfjord

The traditional Saturday evening Banquet and Gala features the popular Canadian singer-songwriter, Lindy Vopnfjord, who has performed both as a solo artist and as a member of several bands. Many may remember seeing Lindy when he performed at the Toronto Convention a few years back. Lindy has recently released his newest album, "State of the Heart." For more information go to lindymusic.com. You will find a number of videos of Lindy's performances on Youtube.

"We have a jam packed schedule and this program is unique to any previous INLNA Convention. The other underlying theme will be "reunion." This will be our first in-person convention since our 100th Anniversary celebration in Winnipeg in 2019 so what great timing and perfect location for you to get together with old friends and make new ones. Many members are planning mini-reunions of their own by inviting members of their family to "get together in Banff," Bob said.



Emphasizing the reunion concept, Bob said, "For those of you who are Snorris or participated in Snorri Plus or Snorri Deaf we are encouraging you to reach out to fellow Snorris from your year to meet in Banff for a great time. Special events are being planned for the Snorri Alumni that attend."

The direct link to register and book accommodation is <https://inlofna.org/convention> or you can visit the LEIC website at leicyyc.ca for more information on the program and the Banff Centre where the convention will be held.

Book today to secure the early-bird registration rate and reserve your room.

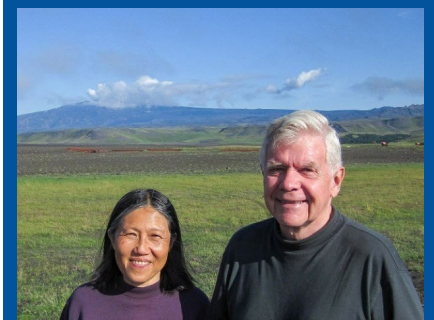
Convention Presenters:



Bjarki Sveinbjornsson



Kristín Ómarsdóttir



**Veronica Li and
Sverrir Sigurdson**

Upcoming INLUS Webinar – Banff Convention Q & A

If you still have questions about the upcoming INLNA Convention in Banff, take advantage of the next INLUS webinar, where Bob Baker will be taking your questions and providing answers and insights about the convention.



Lake near Banff, Alberta

Bob Baker is the president of the Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club and can give the behind-the-scenes perspective on organizing this three day event that draws presenters from three different countries.

The webinar goes live on Tuesday, March 7th, 2023, at 8pm EST / 7pm CST / 6pm MST / 5pm PST / 0100 GMT (March 8) using our online Zoom webinar platform. The webinar link can be found on the [INLUS events calendar page](#).

We will also record the webinar for later viewing on the INLUS website.



Ísafjörður

My Icelandic Language Journey

By Alicia Bjornson

In the winter of 2022, I began taking the Icelandic classes through INLUS. The six-week Basic-1 class taught by David Johnson and the Basic-2 class taught by Birna Sigurbjörnsdóttir provide a good foundation. Both offer their teaching gifts with both patience and enthusiasm. And fellow classmates complete this recipe for success. It's the learning and exploring that matter, not the mastery of the language that matters.

I also participate in the INLUS Icelandic language reading group where we read through Icelandic books together for an hour each week. We've worked our way reading two books, sharing and helping each other along the way. This has helped me with pronunciation, translation and context... besides creating friends along the way. We help each other to succeed.

With these INLUS-sponsored activities under my belt, I had the opportunity (and courage) to apply for a 3-week Icelandic language immersion pro-

gram at Háskólasetur Vestfjarða University Centre. I must thank Marcia Doerr, a fellow INLUS Basic-2 classmate, for the referral. The program was wonderful!

15-20 international students gathered together in Ísafjörður to learn Icelandic. We studied for 90+ plus hours to complete the Icelandic A1-A2 course, using English as our common language. Icelandic was used more and more each day with a focus on sentence structure, vocabulary, grammar, verbs conjugation, and conversational skills. We used film, music and food to shape the foundation of the course, again with friendships being forged through language. The instructors, staff and town folks of Ísafjörður really want to see us succeed. That positive support makes all of the difference as the whole town of Ísafjörður became our classroom.

I highly recommend all of these language programs. The three-week course in Iceland was affordable but will depend on the exchange rate. Funny story – there were three people from my hometown in that class and we knew of each other or had studied together in INLUS

classes, but it wasn't until we meet in an Icelandic class in the Westfjords that we met in-person.



Taking a selfie between classes

If interested in taking the leap to take the three-week class in Iceland, plan early, get housing locked into place, and find a roommate if you can. I stayed in a campground travel camper with two Icelandic friends for the course duration. Housing there is limited and at a premium, but the school is hoping to have more student housing available in the future.

Pursuing my interest in the Icelandic language has indeed been a journey. And when traveling to Iceland, that journey is more relaxed and enjoyable with a little more confidence in the language.



2022 Annual Report

The INLUS was very busy in 2022 developing and producing a wide variety of programming for our members. In addition, the organization also awarded grants and scholarships that supported local Icelandic organizations and Snorri Program participants.

To learn more about what the INLUS did in 2022, click the link below to read the report:

[INLUS 2022 Annual Report](#)



Students in front of the Háskólasetur Vestfjarða University Centre

Know of an event in your area that would be of interest to the INLUS community?

Send news, photos and stories to:

info@inlus.org

Word Play

By: Rob Olason

Over on the INLUS Facebook page a fascinating dialog between Icelandic and English words is being explored by Justin Gailey for our benefit. Justin has shared his linguistic curiosity with the wider world on the page and we are much the wiser for the opportunity to tag along.

I was able to track Justin down between postings and asked him to share with us a few details of his interesting passion.

Rob: I'm guessing you have a strong linguistic background, but could you tell us a little about that, such as how you first gained this interest? How did you learn the field, and what keeps you fascinated by exploring these linguistic connections among words from different languages?



Justin Gailey and a friend he met in Iceland during his Snorri Program experience

Justin: As much as I'd love to go back to school and get a linguistics degree, I've never formally studied it. It's mostly just something I've studied as a hobby. What got me interested in the field though, was learning Portuguese. I served in the Peace Corps in Mozambique right out of college where I taught two years of high school physics in a rural town. Portuguese is the national language of Mozambique so that's what I learned and taught in. It was the first time I had gained fluency in a language other than English and it really altered my perspective on the structure of language and how they work. With your first language you just do what "sounds right". It's generally not until you learn a second language that you really have to understand why you do the things you do.

Things really started to click into place though when I began learning Icelandic. English is part of the Germanic language family (which also contains Icelandic) but has inherited so much from French and Latin that it has the vocabulary of an honorary romance language. So I soon realized that if I was trying to think of a word in Icelandic, and I knew the word wasn't cognate in Portuguese, then it must have a cognate in English. And more often than not, this is the case. Learning Portuguese has given me a sort of 6th sense of when English and Icelandic will have a connection. And it's usually even more interesting when I'm wrong and a cognate that I think should exist, doesn't.

Rob: If responding to those questions didn't bring you to this next subject, can you tell us a little bit about yourself when you're not a linguist? And your Icelandic background and fascination with Iceland?

Justin: So this might have been a prelude of things to come but I'm currently a high school physics and astronomy teacher in Washington state. Astronomy was my first real passion and what I studied as an undergraduate student so I consider myself very fortunate that I now get to teach it to students!

My maternal grandmother's paternal grandmother was born on the Westman Islands and emigrated to the United States. Our Icelandic family has always been part of the family lore so it's been something I've been interested in since I was young. As an adult, I participated in both the Snorri program and the Snorri internship where I got to meet living relatives in Iceland, study the language, and deepen my connection to the country. But I feel like even if I didn't have a familial connection to Iceland, I'd still be interested. It's not often that you find a country that was made of poor farmers with near universal literacy rates that modernized in the span of a couple generations. And as a lover of the outdoors: it's hard to beat the Icelandic landscape.

Rob: Can you tell us a little about your process in selecting a word connection across languages and how you research that connection?

Justin: I don't really have a set method, it's mostly just things that stand out to me or grab my attention. A lot of my early posts came from when I was listening to a podcast called The History of English Podcast. And every time he'd mention an Old English word or word of Old Norse origin, I'd jot it down and look it up to see if there was any connection. But usually it'll just be a word or phrase that strikes me as being likely Germanic in origin that I think might have an interesting story.

Rob: What future linguistic explorations do you have in store? Are there types of English/Icelandic connections you haven't yet tackled, or find too challenging, or too esoteric?

Justin: I really wish there was a way to talk about pronunciation more. But it's really difficult to do in a text-only medium. But I have some strong opinions on language learning and pronunciation and would love to do stuff like that but can't think of a way to do it that would make sense. The other struggle is I write all my posts assuming that it's the first post from me that the reader is seeing; I don't assume any prior knowledge. And that limits the sorts of ideas or themes I can pursue.

Rob: Is it possible to exhaust the number of word connections or is that "universe" infinite?

Justin: Oh man, this is my deep fear right there. I've been doing near weekly posts on English/Icelandic connections for over three years now and am constantly worried about running out of things to write about. But so far, I haven't hit a wall yet! I might just have to get creative moving forward.

Rob: A final "fun" question: what's your favorite Icelandic word (and why)?

Justin: This is maybe a cliché answer, but *Eyjafjallajökull* has a soft spot in my heart. I learned to pronounce it when I was in Mozambique, and it was my first foray into the Icelandic language. I was incredibly sick and couldn't do much more than lie around and I decided to sit down and master the word. I think it contains so much though: it's a volcano, it has fun Icelandic compound word structure, and it has two double l's which are probably my favorite sound in the language.

Have you caught the
latest INLUS videos?

Author's Corner:



Author Margaret Willson talks about the little known role of women in the Icelandic fishing industry. This is the topic she explores in her latest book, *Woman, Captain, Rebel*.

Icelandic Author Visits North Dakota

By Susan Sigurdson

The North Dakota Icelandic Communities Association was visited by Icelandic author Halgrimur Helgason (*101 Reykjavik*, *Hitman's Guide to Housecleaning*, *The Thousand Degree Woman*) in October. He was looking to gather sights and stories for his next novel which focuses on a main character who travels from Iceland to the Icelandic settlements in North America in 1919.

As part of his research, he got a ride in a combine during harvest at the Bernhoft's farm and enjoyed a meal with them. He traveled to Gardar where John H. Johnson gave him a tour of the Gardar Pioneer Church and Cemetery as well as the Stephan G. Stephanson Memorial.

The next day, Robert Olgeirson took him on a tour of the Thingvalla Memorial and Cemetery where he recorded some readings of K. N. Julius' poems. Later he traveled to Walhalla to meet with Jim Benjaminson. Jim shared his book *Sagas of Pembina County* with him. He also traveled east for a tour of the Icelandic State Park and the Pembina County Historical Museum. After touring our area, he headed north to Winnipeg.

Halgrimur commented about his meal and visit with Bernhoft's: "Although we spoke English, I couldn't deny the overall feeling was very Icelandic. I felt like our genes were speaking. I was among family."

INLUS Language Classes Forming

In the past three years, approximately 150 students have taken an INLUS-sponsored Icelandic language class. Some of these language learners have excelled through with more intense, advanced learning, building on the strong foundation our classes provide.

The week of February 13, 2023, we completed three different six-week courses that had a total of 45 students from all across the United States and Canada.

With such high demand for this kind of on-line learning, we will be offering four Icelandic classes starting the week of March 27, 2023. These four classes will also last six-weeks, ending the first week of May. Classes range from a beginner's level introduction to the language to more moderate level classes. We attempt to limit the beginner's level class to 25 students and the moderate level classes to 10 students. You can learn about the content and starting times for these classes by going to our registration page: [Registration Page Link](#)

If interested, we encourage you to register early since we typically fill these classes weeks before they actually begin. The instruction is provided through live, 1-hour weekly lessons via Zoom video conferencing with various other supports and class communication portals between classes.

If you have any questions about these classes and which may be right for you, please email one of our instructors: David Johnson at david@inlus.org.

HELP WANTED

Conversational Icelandic Class Forming

We're looking for a talented teacher and motivating coach to lead a conversational Icelandic language class that would last six weeks, with one, one-hour live Zoom class each week. We'd limit enrollment in the class to 8 or 10 students who already have moderate language skills. The person for this role will prepare one-page discussion theme handouts before each class to help students prepare for the discussion.

If you are a native speaker or have an advanced knowledge of the language, please contact David Johnson at david@inlus.org to discuss. A stipend will be paid to the successful candidate.

Local Icelandic Club News

The Icelandic Hekla Club was founded in January 1925 and for nearly every year since then, we have held a *Samkoma* or coming together. Beginning in 1982, with the founding of the Val Bjornson Icelandic Exchange Scholarship, we have held a raffle to benefit that fund during Samkoma. The scholarship exchange is between the University of Minnesota and University of Iceland (*Háskóli Íslands*).

In September 2022, the leaders of the two schools met in Minnesota to renew their agreement, now in its 41st year. The grand prize of this year's raffle will be \$1,000 in Icelandair gift certificates. Each raffle ticket is \$5. Winners do not need to be present to win, but must be at least 18 years of age to purchase a ticket or win the raffle, per Minnesota statutes.

The year's Samkoma event will take place on Sunday, April 23, 2023 beginning at 10:30 am at the elegant Woman's Club of Minneapolis. It will include social time, a gourmet brunch, speakers and finally the raffle drawing. We are thrilled to announce that our keynote speaker will be the Ambassador of Iceland to the United States, Bergdís Ellertsdóttir. Also speaking will be Vilhjálmur Wíium, Consul General of Iceland in Winnipeg.

Everyone is invited to attend! For more information contact us at info@HeklaClub.org go to our webpage about Samkoma at <https://tinyurl.com/2023-Samkoma>.

Find more local
club news on the
back page of this
newsletter



INLUS Webinar:

Immersion Icelandic Study



Have you ever wondered what it would be like to learn Icelandic in a language immersion program in Iceland?

Listen in on the discussion of three recent participants of this intriguing form of language learning.

Land of Fire and Ice...

...Cream

By: Cass Heigaard



A Snorri Ice Cream stop after a visit to the Sky Lagoon

It is no secret that food brings people together. Food has also served as an important connection to my Icelandic heritage. I made the voyage to Iceland with my family in 2017, and I was introduced to Icelandic ice cream by the Iceland Højgaard relatives. My parents and I could not believe how delicious it was and made a point to have some everyday for those five days.

Shortly after landing in Iceland with twenty-one fellow Western Icelanders, I had my first Icelandic ice cream of my Snorri experience. Jokingly (or so I thought), I committed to **THIRTY-FIVE days of Icelandic ice cream.**

I am happy to report that it was the best decision I ever made, because the ice cream gifted me with an unforgettable connection to my family, friends, and heritage.

After I committed to my new project, I searched for a way to document the process. A fellow Snorri, Sydney Veldhuis, and I decided on an Instagram titled, "Land of Fire and Ice Cream."

I reviewed ice cream flavors and ice cream shops, and fellow Snorris posted guest reviews. During the last week of our trip, I interviewed the Snorris daily. Sometimes it was an easy question

about their ice cream favorites, but I also gave them challenges such as pronouncing the most challenging Icelandic word (in my opinion) "*bragðarefur*." *Bragðarefur* is the Icelandic version of a Dairy Queen Blizzard but bigger and with much better ice cream.

Many of my Icelandic family members followed along the first two weeks of my stay, and my host family were fully committed to making my Icelandic ice cream experience one to remember.

For the two weeks I stayed with my relatives, my host mom, Unnur, and I went to the grocery store often to pick out new flavors. She shared with me her favorites and ones she remembered from her childhood.

Unnur taught me how to make her Christmas Ice Cream. As the name suggests, she only makes this on Christmas so it was a special treat. It was not hard to convince my other family members to take part in my ice cream challenge, and most experiences included the treat.



Unnur and I making Christmas ice cream

My cousin Grettir and his wife Alda gave me a tour of the Reykjanes Peninsula, which of course included a stop for ice cream. This time with them was one of my favorite experiences of my Snorri trip.

Here is the thing- my Instagram, my trip, and the ice cream was never really about the ice cream. It created a connection with my Icelandic relatives and my fellow Snorris. It connected me to my family, friends, and heritage.

I have continued learning more about my Icelandic heritage since I have returned from my trip. Our family recently came together to learn how to make *Kleinur*, a treat I had previously only enjoyed but had not learned how to make.

I plan to make Icelandic ice cream a Christmas tradition. Every Christmas, I will share my Icelandic ice cream with my family, while wearing my *lopapeysa* (traditional Icelandic wool sweater).

Of course, I cannot end this story without an Icelandic Ice cream recommendation- check out the Rye Bread Ice Cream from *Valdís* or any flavor from the ice cream parlor in the Perlan Museum!



My cousin, Halldor Pál, and I stopped for bragðarefur



One of my many ice cream stops on my THIRTY-FIVE days of Icelandic ice cream journey.

Editor's Note: if you are interested in Unnur's Christmas Ice Cream recipe, the only intel we have to share is a one sentence follow up from Cass: "One of the most important parts is the pieces of a whole Toblerone candy bar!"

If you have any leads on the rest of the recipe, send them to info@inlus.org!

If you would like to explore Cass' Instagram page documenting her Icelandic Ice Cream Journey, here's the link:

[Cass Laufey \(@landoffireandicecream\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

Local Icelandic Club News



(Graphic credit: Icelandic Association of Utah)

February 2023: *þorrablót* – Þorrablót Season was in full swing.

First, the **Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle** kicked off the festivities on February 18, in Seattle's Nordic Museum.

February 25 featured two more Þorrablót Celebrations. The **Icelandic Association of Utah** held theirs at the Spanish Forks Fairgrounds. The **Icelandic Communities Association** of North Dakota held their celebration at the Mountain Community Center.

Navigate to the club's Facebook pages and websites to see event photos.

More Upcoming Local Events:

The **Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club** is celebrating their 50th Anniversary this year. In addition to hosting the **INLNA Convention in nearby Banff on May 11-13**, the chapter has a busy year planned highlighted by a **50th Anniversary Celebration in October**. The club reports that attendance at chapter events has slowly returned to pre-pandemic levels. The Christmas Party was sold out and they are expecting another strong turnout at the **Annual Spring Dinner** being held on April 22 at the Scandinavian Centre in Calgary.

Samkoma: Icelandic Hekla Club holds this annual event April 23 at the Woman's Club of Minneapolis. More details are on page 9.

2023 August The Deuce – The **Icelandic Communities Association** has set the dates for the weekend of August 4th, 5th and 6th.

Before We Go...

If you're planning a trip to Iceland this year here are some great travel tips to consider. This ideas were provided by Grace Lenhart who was a 2022 Snorri Alumna.

She offered these thoughts for the benefit of this year's Snorri visitors to Iceland, but they are great suggestions for anyone traveling to Iceland:

- ◆ I'd prepare to be flexible! Plans can change, and in Iceland you're on island time – don't expect everything to be prompt or by schedule.
- ◆ Bring stuff to be comfy sharing sleeping space with others like ear plugs, and eye masks because the sun shines all night!
- ◆ Save up some spending money – It will be nice to treat yourself to coffee, drinks, and meals out, or some souvenirs – remembering that Iceland is expensive in comparison to USA and Canada.
- ◆ Layers, layers, layers – rain gear and wind breaker's necessary!
- ◆ Study basic Icelandic so you can dive right in when you arrive.

You can read about Grace's 2022 Snorri adventure in the September [2022 issue of Connect \(p2\)](#).

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