



# Connect

INLUS is Five Years Old! Summer 2024



## Inside this issue:

New Local Club	2
Snorri West Arriving	3
Snorri Alumni Interns	5
INLUS Awards Scholarships	6
Snorri West Alumni Intern	7
Summer Events	8
Hekla Samkoma	8
Seattle Language Classes	9
President's Message	10
Upcoming Volcano Webinar	10

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[info@inlus.org](mailto:info@inlus.org)

Connect newsletter is published quarterly.

## A New Club, New Snorris, and New Celebrations Greet the Summer

There are a lot of new developments happening in our Western Icelander's world this summer. The Snorri Programs are preparing to launch in high gear, a venerable Icelandic celebration is preparing for its 125th anniversary, and a brand new Icelandic club has formed and joined the INLUS. Join in the fun and take advantage of the opportunities in your area.



## Meet The Icelandic Association of Colorado

By H. Dísá Guðjónsdóttir

There is no better place to be than in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado. Add a little snow on a Spring day, in a cozy home, and it actually begins to feel a bit like Iceland.

On the evening of April 19, 2024, seven women gathered together at the home of Ingibjörg Mæja Stefánsdóttir, fondly known as Inga Maja, the Honorary Consul to Iceland for Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Utah. We gathered as members of a newly established knitting club, a custom that all of us were familiar with. In Iceland, knitting clubs (*saumaklúbb*, in Icelandic) are a way to pass the dark winter days and nights. Women gather together at each other's homes to knit and engage in good conversation, company, and food.

On this particular Colorado evening, our saumaklúbb was no different, except this time none of us pulled out our knitting needles. (continues p. 2)

## Connect

### Contributors:

Susan Sigurdson

Sölvi Sigmarsson

Curtis Olafson

Dísa Guðjónsdóttir

Jody Arman-Jones

Diane Greenwood

Doug Hanson

Mark Petursson

David Johnson

Editor: Rob Olason

### INLUS Board:

Doug Hanson, President

Rob Olason, Vice-  
president

Dianne O'Konski, Past-  
president

David Johnson, Treasurer

Dísa Guðjónsdóttir,  
Secretary

Lauren Fields, Board  
member

(Continues from p. 1) This gave me an opportunity to present an offer on behalf of the Icelandic National League of the United States. The offer called for us to establish a minimum of three group members, a President, Vice-President and Secretary, to be in turn recognized as an official club by the INLUS, supporting our club's growth.



So here we are, the new Icelandic Association of Colorado photographed from left to right is Erla Erlingsdóttir (President); Hjördís (Dísa) Guðjóns (Director for Colorado and Secretary for the INLUS); Sigríður Guðmundsdóttir (Secretary and a member of the Icelandic Hekla Club in Minnesota), Íris Heidberg (member); Ingibjörg Mæja Stefánsdóttir, (member and the Honorary Consul to Iceland for Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Utah); Inga Scott (Vice-President) and Astrid Ogilvie (member).

Although currently few in number, we are confident that we will find more people in Colorado who are connected to Iceland in some shape, way, or form, to join our Icelandic club. Planning is already taking place for future events that will bring us together to celebrate our Icelandic heritage and experiences. And, of course, we will involve and pass the traditions and culture onto the Icelandic children growing up in the Colorado area. The Icelandic Association of Colorado looks forward to being a part of the Icelandic National League of the United States and expanding our knowledge on the many Icelandic connections within the United States.

If you are interested in joining our club, please email us at [icelandcolorado@gmail.com](mailto:icelandcolorado@gmail.com). Soon you will find us on the Icelandic National League of the United States' (INLUS) website with our very own page. While you are at it, check out the webinars that the INLUS has produced over the years, especially the one with our own Honorary Consul, Inga Maja, where she interviews the Ambassador of Iceland. You can watch it by clicking [HERE!](#)

If you are interested in starting an Icelandic club in your area please send an email to [disa@inlus.org](mailto:disa@inlus.org) to discuss how the Icelandic National League of the United States can support your endeavor.

# Snorri Adventures Begin

The Snorri summer “migrations” kick-off in June with Icelandic visitors heading to North America and North Americans heading to Iceland to engage in their cross-cultural explorations. Previous participants have marveled at their discoveries and epiphanies on these journeys and no doubt this year’s cohort will find themselves engaged in likewise life-changing experiences. What follows is a look at some of this year’s participants.

## Meet the Snorri West 2024 Participants!

The Snorri West Program recently announced the three Icelanders who will be participating in the 2024 trip to the “Mountain Time Zone Corridor” of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Utah. The trip to visit Western Icelanders and historic settlements in North America takes place from June 13 through July 11. Before arriving in North America, they will interact with the North American Snorri participants in Iceland.

### Hildur (Hilla) Sigurbergsdóttir

Hilla was born and grew up in Reykjavík. She attended *Kvennaskólinn* (Women’s Junior College) of Reykjavík, graduating in 2021 in Social Studies, and is currently studying at *Háskóli Íslands* (University of Iceland), working toward her B.A. in History, planning to graduate in the spring of 2025. “After that I think I’ll go after a Master’s degree, likely in a foreign country, which one I’m not sure. I don’t have a clear outline for my future, I mostly just plan on trying to enjoy life as much as I can and staying happy and healthy while doing so.”



Currently, Hilla works for the City of Reykjavík at *Hitt Húsið*, a recreation center assisting teenagers with disabilities to engage in activities like painting, baking, playing games, etc.

Hilla enjoys weight lifting, running and music; both listening as well as playing guitar and piano.

While on the Snorri West trip she looks forward to learning new things, meeting new people, making some friends and having a good time. She speaks both native Icelandic and advanced English. Her exposure to North America has been short trips to New York City as a teenager.

### Mars Baldurs

Born and raised at *Saurbær* near *Hvammstangi* on the *Vatnsnes* peninsula in northwest, Iceland, Mars graduated from *Verkmenntaskólinn á Akureyri* (Akureyri Comprehensive Junior College) in 2023 and plans to attend the University of Akureyri (*Háskólinn á Akureyri*). **(Story continues on page 4)**



(Continues from p. 3) There they will pursue coursework in Modern Studies with the dream of becoming a full-time writer. The first draft of their first novel has already been completed.



**Mars Baldurs**

Mars is working as a Learning Support Assistant for ages 13 - 15, mostly in the areas of math, Icelandic, and creative writing. "My main hobbies and interests are creative writing and literature, history, music, and drumming." While speaking native Icelandic, intermediate English, some German, and Danish they have never been to North America.

Mars enjoys travel, meeting people, and beautiful nature wherever it is found. They hope the Snorri West Program will be a great opportunity to strengthen English proficiency and to learn about the people who emigrated from Iceland to North America. Mars is also excited to be able to learn about American and Canadian culture and get to know people of different cultural backgrounds, meet relatives, see interesting places - especially the communities that the Icelandic emigrants built. All of these will provide Mars with great opportunities to gain inspiration for their writing - broadening their view of the world.

#### **Unnar Ingi Sæmundarson**

Unnar has lived in Reykjavík most of his life. He graduated in 2018 from the city's *Menntaskólinn í Hamrahlíð* (Hamrahlíð Junior College) in Natural Sciences. He then went on to study Icelandic at *Háskóli Íslands* (University of Iceland), which included a study abroad semester in Madison, Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin before graduating with his B.A in 2022. He is currently pursuing his M.A. in Creative Writing at *Háskóli Íslands* and expects to graduate in 2025. Future goals he is considering are additional advanced degrees, possibly in Speech Therapy, and becoming a better writer.



**Unnar Ingi Sæmundarson**

Unnar is working as a script writer at *Náttúrufræðistofnun Íslands* (Icelandic Institute of Natural History) and keeps very busy with student associations and activities. Not surprising, he states his interests are writing (both poetry and fiction), photography, reading, listening to music (he's a huge Bob Dylan fan), as well as a film fanatic.

"I have been interested in Western-Icelandic language, literature, and culture since I did my exchange semester in Madison, Wisconsin and am excited to follow up on my interest in Western-Icelandic culture and literature and to find inspiration for my creative projects. I am looking forward to meeting lovely people to help me on that path (and I dream of hearing more of the Icelandic that has trickled down from those settlers)."

Languages seem to be an interest of Unnar's as he reports he speaks native Icelandic, advanced English, intermediate Danish, and beginner level German and Dutch. He has been to various parts of the United States at least seven times, but has not had the pleasure of visiting Canada yet.

In 2024, the four-week Snorri West trip will be staying in five different cities around the “Mountain Time Zone Corridor.” This would not be possible without the local coordinators and supporting clubs in each location. Your offer of assistance to each of them is welcome! Local Coordinators are:

- Calgary, Alberta - Natalie Wirth (Snorri 2008), Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Canadian Club of Calgary
- Markerville, Alberta - Brooke Henrikson (mom to Kayli, Snorri 2012), and Pat Oxtoby, Historic Markerville and Stephan G. Stephansson Icelandic Society
- Edmonton, Alberta - Jodine Chase (mom to Jenny, Snorri 2016 and Angus, Snorri 2019), Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton - Norðurljós
- Saskatchewan - Cindy Goodman, Vatnabyggd Icelandic Club of Saskatchewan
- Spanish Fork, Utah - Jeanne Bowen, Icelandic Association of Utah

If you can help in any of the regions, send an email to [SnorriWestNA@gmail.com](mailto:SnorriWestNA@gmail.com) to get connected in your area.

## Snorri Interns: Hofsós Summer

David Johnson, one of the early genealogist volunteers for Icelandic Roots and one of the founding members of the Icelandic National League of the United States, will be welcoming visitors to the Icelandic Emigration Center in Hofsós, Iceland this summer: <https://www.hofsos.is/>.

David was selected as the U.S. person for the Snorri Alumni Internship Program, and he will be joined by Maddy Garneau as the Canadian intern. They will work together through the summer season at Hofsós. The museum is open June 1st through September 1st, 11AM to 6PM.

The museum in Hofsós features four outstanding exhibitions. The first “New



Madeleine Garneau

Land, New Life” which presents an overarching look at the emigration experience from Iceland including the reasons people left, the hardships the journey presented and what many encountered upon arriving in their new land.

The second is “Silent Flashes” that was created by Nelson Gerrard showing photos of Icelanders, many of whom their identities were not known. Over the years, many of these unknown

faces from the past have been identified by descendants and visitors to the museum.

The third is “Prairies Wide and Free” featuring the Icelandic communities in North Dakota, far from the ocean and mountain landscapes they’d come from.

And finally, the newest exhibit is one focused on the handful of Icelanders who emigrated to Brazil. Yes, these few Icelanders who settled in Brazil have 100s of descendants there who take pride in Iceland, just as many of us do in North America. **(Continues on Page 6)**



David Johnson

**(Continued from p. 5)** If you are planning to be in northern Iceland this summer, please make time to stop by the charming town of Hofsvós in Skagafjörður to visit David and Maddy and take in the museum. And if you're of Icelandic descent, please let them know you're coming and the dates you think you'll be there. They can try to do some research of your Icelandic ancestry before you arrive and perhaps provide some new family insights about their lives in Iceland back then while you're there.



The Icelandic Emigration Center in Hofsvós

## INLUS Awards Scholarships to 2024 Snorri Participants

The INLUS board awarded scholarships to five U.S. Snorri participants for the 2024 season. The scholarships help cover the participant's out of pocket costs for the four week program in Iceland.

This year's recipients are Alysia Johnson (Lehi, UT); Audrey Ledford (Pinehurst, NC); Carly Newberger (Hopkins, MN); Codi Shogren (Woodbury, MN); and Inga Gudmundsson (Athens, GA).

### Passionate About Icelandic Culture?

So are we!

Join us in the quest to celebrate Icelandic culture whether in Iceland or North America.

Become a member of the INLUS or renew your membership and let's celebrate together!

[Click Here to Join!](#)

# Snorri West Alumni Internship 2024

The 2024 Snorri West Alumni Intern is 29-year-old Sigfús Haukur Sigfússon. He was born in Egilsstaðir, Iceland and raised in Reyðarfjörður. Sigfús was a Snorri West participant in 2022, visiting Chicago, Washington Island, Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba. He currently lives in Reykjavík and is completing his Teaching Certificate and master's degree in English from the University of Iceland (Háskóli Íslands) which includes student teaching grades 5 - 10 at Fjölbrautarskóli Garðabæjar. He will graduate in June. In addition, he has worked at Byko (a "big box" home improvement store in Iceland) for eleven years.

A fan of literature, writing and reading, people describe Sigfús as friendly, easy going, and a good guy. He looks forward to revisiting some places he saw in 2022 as well as some new stops and he would like to reconnect with some of the fine North Americans he met back then.

Sigfús would also love to make the acquaintance of more relatives. His Icelandic Roots number is 1625495. Please contact the Snorri Program at SnorriWestNA@gmail.com or info@snorri.is if you are interested in meeting your Icelandic cousin Sigfús H. Sigfússon. He will arrive in mid to late July in Minneapolis/St. Paul and work his way to Mountain to help them prepare for and host the milestone Icelandic community celebration, August the Deuce, before moving on to Manitoba and their Icelandic community events. How long he is able to stay will depend in large part upon whether he lands a teaching job for the next academic year and if so, when his school staff will need to report.

Sigfús is truly committed to the Snorri West programs. He originally applied to be a participant in 2020, which ended up being canceled due to COVID-19. He applied again in 2021, again canceled due to COVID-19. His third application dodged COVID-19 and he finally traveled to North America in 2022. Back in Iceland he has been a good friend and volunteer for the Snorri Program. He has helped at promotional events and other opportunities to share about the programs.

The Snorri West Alumni Internship (SWAI) was envisioned as a parallel to the Snorri Alumni Internship (SAI). Since 2015, SAI has given Snorri and Snorri Plus alumni the opportunity to spend another summer in Iceland deepening their ties to their heritage. In a similar manner, the SWAI offers Snorri West alumni a chance to return to North America to further develop their connections to the Icelandic communities there. As with all of the Snorri Programs, the overall intention is to "strengthen the bonds between the people of Iceland and people of Icelandic descent in North America."

Following a successful two-week pilot program in Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba in the summer of 2023, SWAI launches an extended program (up to 4 weeks) in 2024 and again in 2025 to coincide with milestone Icelandic celebrations in Mountain (125th anniversary of the Deuce of August in 2024) and Gimli (150th anniversary of the founding of the colony of New Iceland in 2025). To learn more about all the Snorri Programs go to [snorri.is](http://snorri.is)



Sigfús Haukur Sigfússon,  
2024 Snorri West Alumni  
Intern





**SCANDINAVIAN  
FESTIVAL**  
June 21-22, 2024  
Hjemkomst Center  
Viking Ship Park

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](mailto:info@inlus.org)

## Local Club News–Upcoming Events

**June 15:** Lief Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary celebrates **ÍSLENDINGAMÓT**, Icelandic Independence Day in Markerville, Alberta. [More info here.](#)

**June 16:** Celebrate **Icelandic Independence Day** with the Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle's picnic. For more information and to RSVP go to [the club website.](#)

**June 21-22: Scandinavian Festival**, sponsored by the Nordic Culture Clubs will be held at the Hjemkomst Center on June 21 and 22, 2024. There is a lineup of vendors with a wide variety of Nordic themed items for sale and many performers that will be entertaining for all. The host country this year is Sweden and the Swedish Cultural Society has been busy raising funds through the Nordic Gala and the *Swedish Death Cleaning (Döstädning)* sale and planning events for a great festival. The Fargo–Moorhead Icelandic Klub will be serving Icelandic fare (*rúllupylsa* on brown bread, smoked salmon spread on brown bread, *vínarterta*, *pönnukökur* and bliss fruit bars) in the Taste of Scandinavia both days. Go to the [Nordic Culture Clubs website](#) for more details on the events at the schedule.



**August 1, 2, 3: 125th Annual 2nd of August Icelandic Celebration**, in Mountain, ND. Check out the Icelandic Communities Association website for the tentative schedule. [www.theduce.org/](http://www.theduce.org/) It will be an action packed weekend!

## Hekla Celebrates Samkoma

by Diane Greenwood  
Minneapolis, MN

The Icelandic Hekla Club held its annual Samkoma celebration Sunday, April 28 at Norway House in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The choice of this new venue provided a setting fitting to our Nordic roots with crisp white tables and linens set against natural woods and light colors creating an open feeling in the banquet room. State of the art technology allowed Norway House to project ceiling level accent lighting around the perimeter of the room in the exact shade of blue of our Icelandic flag. In addition to a new venue, a new caterer delighted us with a delicious spring buffet and dessert.

This year marks the 99th anniversary of the Club. Ann Hobbs, President, was unable to attend due to a death in the family. In her place, Elin Hansen, Vice President welcomed guests, acknowledging we look forward to ways we can mark the 100th anniversary in the coming year.

Elin recognized past year recipients of the Val Bjornson scholarship, Alexander Sigurdarson and Hákon Jan Nordfjörð, both of whom attend the University of Minnesota.

Special mention went out to: Molly Portz, University of Minnesota Assistant Vice Provost of International Programs, who oversees the Val Bjornson scholarship fund.

Club members recognized included: Codi Shogren, who was accepted into



this summer's Snorri program and Dianne O'Konski, who will participate in this year's Snorri Plus program.

A special guest and long-time member, Sigga Gudmundsdottir, traveled the furthest, coming from Colorado.

Members remember Sigga for leading Icelandic classes and gathering young members of the Icelandic community at her home, having them join in *elda saman* (cooking together) Icelandic foods.

Highlight of the event was Sven Lindauer, award-winning artist, author and publisher, who spoke about his work, a professional career spanning over 40 years. Of Norwegian descent, Lindauer is known for his realistic illustrations and paintings.



Ann McKinley and Kaitlin McKinley display the Hekla 100th anniversary mugs.

## Seattle Offers Icelandic Language Classes This Summer

The Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle is offering three opportunities to learn the Icelandic language this summer.

**Icelandic Language & Culture 101** is designed as an introductory exposure to Icelandic language and culture for those planning a visit to Iceland. The first session runs June 18th to July 2nd and offers 5– 90 minute lessons held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. June 18th, 20th, 25th, 27th, and July 2nd.

The course repeats for another session July 9th to July 23rd with 5 - 90 minute lessons will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. July 9th, 11th, 16th, 18th, and 23rd.

- Immerse yourself in the beauty of the Icelandic language and gain practical conversational skills to enhance your travel experience.
- From basic greetings to ordering local delicacies, we'll cover it all.
- Discover Iceland's rich history, folklore, and traditions, making your journey even more meaningful.

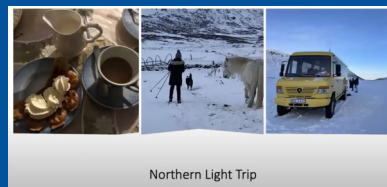
**Icelandic Language Foundations** – This course is for English speakers who want to begin their studies of the ins and outs of the Icelandic language.

Starting on Tuesday June 18th, 10 - 90 minute lessons will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. June 18th, 20th, 25th, 27th, and July 2nd, 9th, 11th, 16th, 23rd.

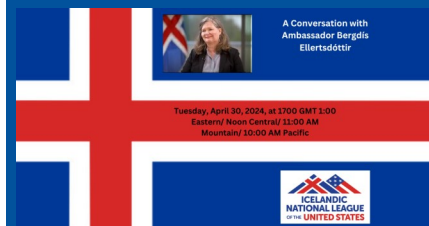
This Icelandic course offers an introduction to the fundamentals of the Icelandic language and grammar, including the alphabet and letter sounds, noun gender and definite article, numbers, pronouns, verb conjugation and noun declension. Getting to know the language is a great way to learn about the cultural identity of Iceland and its roots going back to Old Norse!

### Recent INLUS Webinars:

Explore Travel to Iceland with INLUS business supporter, Hey Iceland:



Hear from Iceland's Ambassador to the U.S as she concludes her tenure:



Explore the nearly 50 videos in our growing library!



## President's Message



Doug  
Hanson

Please join us in celebrating five years since the Icelandic National League of the United States (INLUS) was founded in 2019. A lot has happened in a very short time! We welcomed new members, donors and friends from all across the United States (US), and other countries too. We shifted to online offerings during the worldwide Covid pandemic and expanded our Icelandic language class offerings. Most importantly, we have helped connect the Icelandic communities across the US and maintained our strong bonds with our cousins in Iceland and Canada.

While the INLUS organization is five years old this year, our roots go back to the earliest years of Icelandic settlement in the United States. This year the Icelandic Communities Association in northeast North Dakota celebrates 125 years of the Deuce of August celebration. Next year, the Icelandic Hekla Club of Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota will celebrate their 100th year. I hope to see many of you at local celebrations such as these in the coming year. Until then, I encourage everyone to become involved in your local Icelandic organization. If you don't live near one, check out Icelandic Roots and the Icelandic Online Club or maybe start your own local group. Contact us for assistance or ideas.

Thank you all for your ongoing support. This year the INLUS has already awarded scholarships to five Snorri youth cultural exchange participants as well as a grant to *Slysavarnafélagið Landsbjörg*, the Icelandic Search and Rescue Association. Your gifts make the INLUS philanthropy program possible.

-Takk fyrir.

## Volcano Webinar

The eruptions of the last two years on the Reykjanes Peninsula have captured worldwide attention with their impacts on the area's landscape, the town of *Grindavík*, the Blue Lagoon and the infrastructure of the region.



Geology professor Shawn Willsey will be sharing his observations from his recent research visit to the area in this June 6, 2024, INLUS webinar.

The webinar will offer an overview of Iceland's active geology through the lens of the ongoing eruptions of this highly active region.

Shawn P. Willsey is the author of *Geology Underfoot in Southern Idaho*, and co-author of *Roadside Geology of Idaho (2nd Edition)*. Shawn is the Distinguished Professor of Geology at the College of Southern Idaho.

The webinar is Thursday, June 6, at 8:00 PM Eastern, 7:00 Central, 6:00 Mountain, 5:00 PM Pacific. Find the link on the INLUS.org calendar.

[www.INLUS.org](http://www.INLUS.org)

[info@inlus.org](mailto:info@inlus.org)

2843 27th St S

Fargo ND 58103

