

## **President's Report at the AGM September 30, 2011**

**by Tom Benjamin**

We have put on fewer events ourselves this year, but taken part in more: the Scandinavian Craft Fair last fall the Victoria Day and Canada Day parades. We celebrated Leif Eriksson Day and held a Christmas Party. This September we were at the Nordic Festival. The 2011 Thorraþlót was well enjoyed and it is always good to see old friends and meet new members and their families. A paid person to do the cleanup worked very well and we will extend that to include dishwashing and kitchen cleanup next year, giving our fabulous volunteer cooks a break. Shawn Bryant brought along some traditional Icelandic “delicacies” to supplement the harðfisk, hangikjöt and skyr.

The annual Independence Day potluck on June 17<sup>th</sup> at Runa, Vince and Roxanne Pleshak's home in Metchosin was very successful with many more people attending than in the previous year. There were no visits from Iceland

### **Financial Status:**

The Treasurer – Margo Matwychuk – noted that the club's fundraising activities have been very successful, resulting in a surplus of \$902.43 in 2010-2011. We are required to spend this since our club is a non-profit society. The Board has therefore decided to spend more on our own events, and is considering setting aside any surplus money for providing financial support to a member of our club who is interested in attending the Snorri Program. This program is located in Iceland. Please see the article by Kristjan Butler.

this year outside the Beck lecturers and the only visitor was Gail Einarson-McCleery who came to speak to us about the INL, It was interesting to hear about the other clubs across Canada. Vorna Butler attended the INL convention in Edmonton as our delegate.

We put out fewer newsletters and seem to be moving away from that format and more to communicating by email. Nevertheless informing members of events and activities is a key requirement, so the Board will make every effort to do better in the coming year, with more frequent email communication as well as newsletters.

We will be planning the same events as in previous years: Thorraþlót, June 17<sup>th</sup> potluck, Leif Eriksson Day (October 9<sup>th</sup>) and the Christmas Party.

A number of members have expressed interest in having Icelandic language lessons. There is also interest in learning to make Icelandic foods. We will see what we can do!

## Editorial

Greetings Icelanders of Victoria! I'm Roxanne Pleshak, the new editor of Fréttir. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> issue of the newsletter. That's quite an accomplishment, may we have many more issues! This will be my first experience with the preparation of a newsletter, but I like writing, so I hope I made the "write" decision. The board is now preparing for the annual Christmas party.

This year we are going to have a book reading by Bill Valgardson, and live music by Eleanor Gjelsten. Icelanders have a penchant for strong coffee and spending time with family and friends. We are a long way from Iceland, but we will still get together at the Christmas party to say: "Gleðileg jól!" in Icelandic, or "Merry Christmas!" in English.

### Board of Directors and Committee Chairs 2011-2012

<b>Tom Benjamin</b>	President	250.475.2824
<b>Beverley Dondale</b>	Vice President	250.475.2824
<b>Margo Matwychuk</b>	Treasurer	250.384.1197
<b>Virginia Guenther</b>	Secretary	250.655.4864
<b>Jodi Johl</b>	Social Convener	250.721.4027
<b>Nicole Johnson</b>	Membership	250.478.6237
<b>Roxanne Pleshak</b>	Fréttir Editor	250.478.4778
<b>Trish Baer</b>	Beck Trust Liaison	250.853.7656
<b>Members at Large</b>		
<b>Ellen Coates</b>		250.381.2570
<b>Kay Sessions</b>		250.595.0938
<b>Brian Sessions</b>		250.595.0938
<b>Runa Pleshak</b>		250.478.4778
<b>Vorna Butler</b>		250.721.3299

### Recipe Corner

#### "Gömlu íslensku" Gingerbread

½ cup of soft butter

1 cup brown sugar

¼ cup molasses

1 egg

Mix the following together:

2 ¼ cups of flour

¼ tsp. baking soda

1 ¼ tsp. ground ginger

1 ¼ tsp. cinnamon

¾ tsp. cloves

Cream together butter and brown sugar. Beat in molasses and egg. Stir in flour mixture.

Chill for 1 hr. Roll out approx. 1/8 inch thick.

Cut out cookies. Bake at 350 degrees. 8-10 min.

Flour table and roller. No need to grease non-stick pans. This recipe can be doubled and freezes easily.

## Icelanders Spotlight

by Kristjan Butler

It's a lucky few who make a true connection to their heritage through grandparents. For those who do, this connection may hang on only a few conversations. Or, even a single request.

With Rachelle Lynn Gislason – artist, musician, and Icelandic Canadian – it was her grandmother's request, made while fighting terminal brain cancer that led Rachelle to visit Iceland as soon as possible and get in touch with her roots.

After reflection and some providential encouragement from her cousin Thorradice, Rachelle set about preparing to fulfill the request and left on Snorri almost a year later in 2004, with her grandmother now much alive in memory.

Part of the preparation included gearing up to ensure it was the experiencing of a lifetime. Rachelle applied and was accepted for a 50% Snorri bursary to make the trip possible. Then, sent ahead to make connections and be sure of opportunities to give back and share her talents

and inspiration with the people of Iceland, just as they would welcome her.

One of these chances came as an invite to perform her music in front of a large crowd for Icelandic Independence Day in Reykjavik. Being well received, this led to an invitation for a further two live shows; and, subsequently to a luncheon at the Icelandic President's house, where Rachelle was invited by Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson himself to entertain the guests with some piano tunes and singing.

To this day, Rachelle is passionately involved in music, teaches voice and piano locally, and has just released a new album entitled *Green Lights* (see <http://rachelleyann.com>). Having grown up attending the Icelanders of Victoria Thorrablót dinners and receiving support and encouragement from the community, Rachelle made her thanks and dedication clear. Bravo!

**Editor's Note:** For more information on the Snorri Program, the website is:

<http://www.snorri.is/>

<b>Almanak</b>
<b>Scandinavian Craft Fair</b> November 19 <b>Norway House</b> 10 am to 4 pm
<b>Christmas Party</b> December 4 with reading by Bill Valgardson from "What the Bear Said" <b>Norway House</b> 2 to 4 pm
<b>Thorrablót</b> March 10, 2012 <b>Norway House</b> 5:30 to midnight



Bill Valgardson will be reading from "What the Bear Said" at the Christmas Party. He will have copies of the book for sale. We will have coffee and snacks.

## Photos from Leif Eriksson Night

Leif Eriksson Night was celebrated Sunday, October 9<sup>th</sup> with dinner at Swans, followed by a “raid” on the Irish Times pub. It was a rousing success!



Charissa and Kristjan Butler



Jodi Johl, aka “Viking Jódís,” brandishing two severed heads as evidence of her Berserker spirit!

**Editor’s Note:** The term “Viking” comes from the Old Norse noun “víking,” meaning expedition. Hence “fara í víking” – to go on an expedition. Just what Leif Eriksson did when he sailed from Iceland to North America.



Jodi Johl and Jim Hall. Jim is from the Sons of Norway Club. The Nordic Clubs of Victoria plan to have more inter-club events.

Robert Johnson and daughter Nicole Johnson



Next year consider making your own Viking jewellery based on this example of a glass bead and amber necklace from the grave of “The Pagan Lady” found on St. Patrick’s Isle, part of the Isle of Man off the coast of Great Britain.

