

December 2011



PÓSTURINN

The Icelandic-American Community of Minnesota Newsletter

Join Minnesota's Icelandic Community and Celebrate the Season!

Take part in a fabulous celebration

JÓLABARNABALL Christmas Party

Sunday, December 4th 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Knights of Columbus, 1114 American Boulevard, Bloomington, MN

494, Exit at Lyndale South <http://kofc3827.com/>* 952-888-1492



Gather for a heart-warming experience

Icelandic Christmas Service

Sunday, December 18, 2010-4:00 pm

Chapel of the Incarnation, Olson Hall

Luther Seminary

1490 Fulham Street off Como

St. Paul, MN

www.luthersem.edu/campus/driving_directions.asp?m=171

UPDATE on ICELAND'S ECONOMY

November, 2011

by

Örn Bodvarsson

Since my last report on the Icelandic economy back in early September, Europe's debt crisis has deepened. An important question now for Icelandic policy makers, Icelandic business owners, and the Icelandic public is: To what extent will the growing crisis on the continent hamper Iceland's recovery from its own crisis that dates back to Fall, 2008? While a comprehensive appraisal can't be done until at least 6-12 months from now, a few indicators are informative. The Krona has appreciated slightly since

September, trading as of November 19 at around 117.2 to the U.S. dollar from approximately 115 in early September. This appreciation reflects growing confidence by international investors and a pick-up in demand for Icelandic exports. The inflation rate (measured as the annual growth rate in consumer prices) has ticked up from an average of 5% during the month of August to an average of 5.3% during the month of October. Icelandic interest rates are creeping up, though; On November 2, Iceland's central bank raised the seven-day collateral lending rate (which is likely to induce a rise in the general level of interest rates) from 4.5% in early September to 4.75%. This upward pressure on interest rates is reflective of interest rate conditions in the rest of Europe. Like most other stock markets around the World, the Icelandic market has declined a bit since my last report; The ICEXI index has fallen from around 600 to approximately 569, a drop that is much smaller compared to other stock markets in Europe.

The unemployment rate was 7.4% in May and has now *fallen* to 6.8% (as of October). Thus, the performance of the Icelandic economy over the last few months has been mixed. Iceland's economy appears to be doing relatively well in spite of Europe's debt crisis, although the crisis appears to have arrested the Icelandic recovery modestly in some sectors.

VOPNAFJÖRÐUR BOOK COLLECTION

Stefan Guttormsson with the assistance of Cathy Josephson and Minnesota Icelanders, are collecting new children's books that can be sent to Vopnafjordur's School, Grades 1 through 8, to be used for practicing reading in English. The goal is to improve the library collection of books in English. These may be used by children or adults learning our language. The collection will take place at the Jolabarnaball! Please bring ONE book.

ICELANDIC CHRISTMAS CHARITY FOR MÆDRASTYRKSNEFND

Time is passing, Christmas is around the corner, want to remind you of an opportunity to help those in need in Iceland, deadline Dec.10! CHRISTMAS CHARITY FOR MÆDRASTYRKSNEFND This the fourth year, Icelandic National League of North America is encouraging members and member clubs to help out the needy in Iceland at Christmas. Last year, \$11,125 was raised; the goal is to surpass this amount. MN participated last year! The money raised will be shared between 5 branches of this charity (Mother's Fund) in Reykjavík, Hafnarfjörður, Kópavogur, Akureyri and Akranes, who were estimated to be supporting about 1,300 families over the holidays. The groups were all deeply moved by the generosity of INL of NA and its member clubs and individuals behind this outstanding gift. Presentations last year were made by our sister organization, INL of Iceland, in the persons of Almar Grimsson and Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir. The charity supports poor families throughout the year with food and clothing and give special help over the Christmas holidays, to help needy families enjoy the Christmas spirit. The need this year is even greater, as the effects of 4 years of high unemployment and wage cuts spread throughout the economy. INL of NA and Iceland Minnesota is appealing for donations to the Mæðrastyrksnefnd Charity to help those in need in Iceland. Minnesota donations will be forwarded to the Icelandic National League of North America through the **Guttormsson Family Fund** where individual donors will receive a tax deductible receipt. **Send Donations to: GFF, 3715 Greysolon Road, Duluth, MN 55804.**

The PÓSTURINN newsletter of the Icelandic American Association of Minnesota Email: IcelandMN@gmail.com
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FACEBOOK Pages of Interest: * The Icelandic American Association of Minnesota, * Icelandic Hekla Club, * Icelandic National League of North America, * Logberg Heimskringla, * Whole Foods Market, * Icelandic American Klub of Fargo Moorhead, * August the Deuce

Web Sites:

The Icelandic Hekla Club

and the

Icelandic American Association of Minnesota

proudly invite you to the annual



Jólabarnaball

Sunday, December 4, 2011

1:00 – 4:00 pm

*Dancing will start promptly at 1:30 pm to
summon the jólasveinar*

Knights of Columbus

1114 American Boulevard West
Bloomington, MN

RSVP to

Maddy Arnar 952-941-3035 or
Carol Anderson caa0204@aol.com

Bring a ready to serve plate of goodies to share, either Icelandic or traditional.

In the 'Nordic Nook' area, the Hekla Club will be selling gifts for the holidays and other occasions!

Jólabarnaball is a family event so bring your spouse, children, and grandchildren.

*Please consider bringing a new children's book, for ages 8-14,
for the Vopnafjordur School Library*

Icelandic Christmas Service

Sunday December 18, 2011 4:00pm

The Chapel of the Incarnation,

Olson Campus Center at Luther Seminary
2481 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN

Gledileg jól

Kristin Brynja Anderson Gallimore



Greetings from the new Ambassador

Mr. Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson is the new Ambassador of Iceland to the United States. He replaced Hjálmar W. Hannesson, who has now returned to Iceland.

"It is a great pleasure to be here at the Embassy of Iceland in Washington DC. I'm looking forward to the challenges and tasks ahead, both with my colleagues in the administration, businesspeople and the Icelandic community in the country and everyone that shows interest in Iceland." Says the new Ambassador Stefánsson. He is also looking forward to a good partnership with our accredited countries Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, and our Honorary Consuls.

The President Laid Flowers at the 9/11 Memorial



Roulers/MBL

October 21, 2011: Kings and queens from across Scandinavia, joined by the presidents of Iceland and Finland honored the victims of 9/11. The same evening they attended the American Scandinavian ball, bringing together the kings and queens of Norway and Sweden, the crown prince and crown princess of Denmark, and the presidents.

Emergency Act Deemed Valid

October 28, 2011: The Supreme Court of Iceland ruled in a case concerning the Emergency Act of October 6, 2008. The ruling entails that the law and associated acts stands undisputed. Since the Supreme Court is a court of last instance, no legal uncertainty remains. The Government of Iceland welcomes this crucial stepping stone towards stable economic recovery.

See more:

<http://eng.forsaetisraduneyti.is/news-and-articles/nr/6934>

Christmas Bazaar

Come and discover "The Land of Fire and Ice" American Legion 3939 Oak Street Fairfax, VA 22030. Imported Crafts, Handmade Icelandic Wools, Icelandic Holiday Decorations and Traditional Icelandic food

Saturday, November 12th 11AM-3PM
www.icelanddc.com



Icelandic Lamb Meat Available in USA

In an environment where consumers are increasingly conscious of their health, food must be safe to eat, pure and nutritious. For this reason Icelandic lamb is being recognized throughout the world for its healthy nutritional value and unique taste. Whole Foods market is offering fresh lamb from Iceland for the next 3 months in most of their stores.

Here is "the tender story of the Icelandic Lamb",

See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAx6007xdRI>

Icelanders Invite Tourists Into Their Home

Encouraging a nation-wide participation the President of Iceland, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, has invited tourists to enjoy pancakes at his home in an effort to make tourists feel welcome in Iceland. Grimsson will be joined by other officials including the Mayor of Reykjavik and the Minister for Tourism, who will also be inviting people into their homes. Icelanders have answered the call and invitations are streaming into www.inspiredbyiceland.com, where Icelanders volunteer to open their doors to welcome visitors with open arms.

Find us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/icelandic.embassy



Nordic Food Day

Children in Washington D.C. enjoyed food from Nordic countries when five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland) and Nordic Innovation created a Nordic food day for all 130 D.C. public schools. In collaboration with the District of Columbia Mayor's Office, D.C. Public Schools, and the Office of Food and Nutrition Services 45,000 children enjoyed Nordic breakfast and lunch. The Embassy employees participated by serving the Nordic food and entertaining the children. Musicians came to perform and the Icelandic Björn Thoroddsen played the guitar and the children's school band participated. After spending the day with very thankful and happy children, the Royal Norwegian Embassy hosted a reception, where the five Nordic Ambassadors, the Nordic Innovation, Nordic Food Ambassadors, and HRH Prince Daniel of Sweden were honored.



Photo shows: Embassy employees handing out gifts for the children and Ambassador Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson, HRH Prince Daniel of Sweden, Ásdís Hreinsdóttir, Guðbjörg Bjarnadóttir Özgun and Björn Thoroddsen

Icelandic painter Louisa Matthiasdóttir

The Tibor de Nagy Gallery is pleased to present its third exhibition of paintings by the much-admired Icelandic painter Louisa Matthiasdóttir Oct 20-. The artist is known for her brightly-colored and strongly geometric realist paintings. For further information please visit the TIBOR DE NAGY GALLERY'S WEBSITE: http://www.tibordenagy.com/exhibitions/louisa-matthiasdottir_2/



Viking and Medieval Norse Studies

Viking and Medieval Norse Studies is a two-year (120 ECTS credits) Nordic Master's Programme run by the University of Iceland in cooperation with Aarhus University (Denmark), University of Copenhagen (Denmark), University of Oslo (Norway), and the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies. Visit our website: <http://oldnorse.is/> Watch a short video: <http://www.youtube.com/user/OldNorseStudies> The programme will start in the autumn of 2012. Application deadline: February 1st, 2012. Email us for further information: oldnorse@hi.is -----Haraldur Bernharðsson, Ph.D., University of Iceland -- The Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies Árnagarði við Suðurgötu, IS-101 Reykjavík, I C E L A N D, + 354 525-4023 / +354 891-7511, Email: haraldr@hi.is - <https://uni.hi.is/haraldr/en/> -----
----- Viking and Medieval Norse Studies Program: <http://oldnorse.is/>

INL/NA Report to Clubs - Installment #6 – Nov. 2011

I'm back again, and it's been a few months since you've heard from me about the doings of your INL, so this will catch up, I hope.

First, and maybe most important – the Snorri deadline is approaching quickly. We strongly encourage you to consider giving your kids or grandchildren the opportunity to go. There has never been a Snorri alum who said they regretted the trip. The chance to get immersed so fully in your heritage, with help from the host program, isn't really available any other way. It might seem expensive, but most of the cost is still covered by the generosity of the Icelandic government, who retain the belief in it's importance. Don't forget the INL coat of arms motto – *Strong are the ties*.

I encourage everyone who has the resources to make this investment to give it consideration. Check the INL website, or www.snorri.is. The cost, the dates, and the prospective program are all there.

The recent visit to North American clubs by photographer Mats Wibe Lund was very successful and well received. Many of us were thrilled to see aerial photos of farm sites that had only been names written in family lore. To see a thriving farmsite where an ancestor worked and lived may even have inspired some to make another trip to Iceland. Even to see a derelict farm surely created some strong emotions. If you haven't ordered copies of photos, you can still do so. The INL website under 'web links' will tell you how to purchase photos.

We are looking forward to our next convention in Brandon, on May 3,4,5,6 in 2012. Brandon is a small club and we are very encouraged by the progress they are making. As you all know, the hosting of our conventions has become somewhat of a financial gamble, and several clubs which had the desire to host us had to decide in favour of prudence and have opted out. Brandon will demonstrate that the convention can be brought off without a huge budget, and we all need to help them with this. They are not asking for financial help (although they will be happy to receive donations, which they'll acknowledge). But logistical help will be appreciated, most likely from other MB clubs with convention experience. Especially, our hosts would be grateful for donations to a silent auction or rainbow auction. Let your president know if you have something to donate. Or contact the convention chairman in Brandon, Harold Jonasson jonassonh@netlink.ca

I still hold on to the idea that transportation can be done by pooling in Winnipeg. First, there are the MB clubs that can travel together on a charter bus. Then, perhaps those who fly in to Winnipeg could join us on the bus. It might work. I'm looking for a local transport guru to help work it out.

But, even if it doesn't happen, there is a regular shuttle from Richardson Airport to Brandon, reasonable and apparently comfortable.

The 2012 INL calendar is a sales success. And since we raised the price to retailers, and ads were fully sold, it will earn some profit. We must extend our thanks to Dianne O'Konski for doing such a super job. We will soon be selling ads for the 2013 calendar. We encourage you all to try to find local advertisers.

The other Dianne O'Konski project that is happening is the Settlement Tours. In 2011, this did not work out as hoped. We need to take some time to consider our approach to this. Although there were a few logistical difficulties in 2011, the idea lives. If you have any ideas for Dianne get hold of her at deokonski@charter.net

Rob Olason's plan to start INL Reads will have interest for many. This will be an on-line discussion group on Icelandic literature. It was decided that Halldor Laxness' *Independent People* will be the first topic. So, read it, or re-read it as the case may be. The project is not yet under way. If you have any comments for Ro, or want to help him robolason@aol.com

The INL film screening project has run into some difficulty in obtaining films because of format issues. The Icelandic DVD format being different than ours. Stay tuned on this. In the meantime, you'll be hearing from your club.

Our newest scheme is the creation of a 'virtual club', an on-line club for those who may be remotely located, or have other reasons for not being in a club. The virtual club will give them an opportunity to share comments with a peer group. A lot of work has been put in on this by Gwen Mann. The name will be Icelandic Online Club, annual membership to be \$15.00. Launch coming in december.

MINNESOTA NEWS: CONGRATULATIONS to Bragi Magnusson! He poetry received First place at the Islendingadagurinn Poetry Contest.

The Icelandic American Association of Minnesota begins a new year! Thank you to outgoing board members: Patricia Allred, Margret Arnar, Dan Simundson, and Keith Stinson for their tireless time, energy and assistance. Welcome to new and returning elected board members: Chris Byron, Remi Douah, Pall Skaftason, Katrin Sigurdirdottir, Mallory Swanson, new Vice President Steve Guttormson.

Duluth News Tribune article from Oct 10, 2011
Local view: **Leif Erikson reflects America's strengths**

Andrew Saur - 10/09/2011

Today is Leif Erikson Day, an observance in the U.S. honoring the man who led the first Europeans believed to have set foot on North American soil. In 1964, Congress authorized and requested the president to create the observance through an annual proclamation. Lyndon B. Johnson and each president since have done so. Presidents have used the proclamation to pay tribute to the contributions of Americans of Nordic descent generally and the spirit of discovery. In addition to the federal observance, some U.S. states officially commemorate Leif Erikson Day, particularly in the Upper Midwest, where large numbers of immigrants from Nordic countries settled. In 1930, Wisconsin became the first state to officially adopt this holiday, thanks to efforts by Norwegian-American initiator Rasmus B. Anderson. A year later, Minnesota followed suit. In 1963, our U.S. Rep. John Blatnik introduced a bill to observe it nationwide. The following year Congress adopted this unanimously. The journey of Leif Erikson reflects the spirit that has made America strong; the desire to explore and understand is part of our national character. Through my art exploration, I wanted to share my Nordic pride with my community by creating a design (below) to commemorate Leif Erikson Day which reflects my strong Nordic heritage. *Andrew Saur of Duluth is an artist and designer of Scandinavian descent. Thank you Andrew.*

The Snorri Program is currently accepting applications for summer2012. Snorri offers the opportunity for young people (ages 18-28) of Icelandic descent to travel to Iceland for six weeks. Once there, they will spend two weeks in Reykjavik where they will take language and culture classes, tour historic sites and museum exhibits, and have fantastic adventures exploring the city and surrounding areas. The second part of the program connects participants with Icelandic relatives. Each participant will stay with family members for three weeks, where they will learn

about daily life in Iceland, often getting to stay in the region from which their ancestors emigrated. In the final week of the trip, the participants reunite and travel together on an adventure tour to some of the most breathtaking parts of Iceland.

. Please apply for the program, or encourage your children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews to apply. This program is a key piece in fostering enthusiasm for Icelandic heritage in the young people who can carry on the traditions that have been built in the years since our ancestors journeyed to North America.

Mallory Swanson shares the outcome of her SNORRI experience:

Snorri allowed me to step beyond my previously established comfort zone and made me realize that I am capable of creating new worlds for myself by saying yes to every opportunity and by not being afraid to try something completely new. Every new person that I met, every food that I tasted or new place that I explored during those wonderful six weeks opened my eyes to diverse perspectives and educated me in the differences and similarities between life in Iceland and the life that I have always known in the States. I cannot speak often enough or enthusiastically enough about the Snorri Program to truly do it justice. It was a life changing travel experience, and I feel incredibly lucky to have been able to participate. If there was any demand for English speaking Speech Language Pathologists in Iceland you can bet I would have all my belongings packed up and shipped over on the next flight. For now though, I will be happy with knowing that I made some extraordinary friends and unforgettable memories, and will without a doubt, be back in Iceland as soon as I possibly can.

ICELANDIC FAMILY GATHERINGS

The Icelandic American Association of Minnesota offers Family Gatherings once a month. The children will sing in Icelandic, play games, and do crafts while learning about Icelandic customs and traditions. The program is for all ages, the entire family, children and adults, as well as those without children. This will be a great opportunity to share with other families learning Icelandic heritage, while we play games and participate in activities. Please bring your own drinks and snacks to share. The next gathering will be meeting **Sunday, January 8, 2012 2:00 pm** at the Danish American Center 3030 West River Parkway, Minneapolis, South of Lake Street and River Parkway. www.DAC.mn This will be a great opportunity to share with other families learning Icelandic heritage, while we play games and participate in activities. Please bring your own drinks and snacks to share.

Greetings from the new Ambassador

Minnesota Welcomes Ambassador of Iceland to the United States.

Hjálmar W. Hannesson was the Ambassador of Iceland to the United States for the last few years. It has been a pleasure to work with him during his tenure. Ambassador Hannesson was integral in beginning the newsletter that we have been reading every month and was always very responsive to Minnesota. Ambassador Hannesson has left this position and has returned to work in Iceland. We wish him the best.

Minnesota Icelanders welcome the new Ambassador of Iceland to the United States Mr. Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson. Minnesota looks forward to getting acquainted with Ambassador Stefánsson and working with him as we move forward.

Guttormsson Family Fund

Dr. Steve Guttormsson and his wife Rosemary, announce the establishment of the Guttormsson Family Foundation. The Foundation celebrates the lives of Dr. Guttormsson's Afi, Rev. Guttormur Guttormsson and his father, Bishop Stefan Thorstein Guttormsson. Both men lead lives of devotion to their families, their church and a love of their Icelandic American Heritage.

In recognition of this, the Foundation is offering two Scholarships for US students participating in the Snorri Program. The Scholarships will be for \$2,000 each, and will be available to any US citizen applying for it. The future of our Icelandic American Clubs rests with our young people and the excitement and enthusiasm that is instilled in them by the Snorri Program is quite impressive.

The Guttormsson Family Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 corporation and contributions to the fund are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Applications for scholarships and contributions to the Snorri Fund can be made to:

The Guttormsson Family Foundation, 3715 Greysolon Road, Duluth, MN 55804, email: xpag@mac.com, phone: 218-728-4037.

Dr. Stefan P. Guttormsson, Retired Ob-Gyn Physician; Icelandic American Association of MN, Board of Directors; Icelandic National League of North America, Board of Directors

University of Minnesota's Global Programs and Strategy Alliance, Val Bjornson Scholarship Fund

Greetings from the University of Minnesota's Global Programs and Strategy Alliance! The GPS Alliance is the central international office and the driving force for the University in globalizing teaching, learning, research, and engagement. Thank you so much to the Icelandic American Association of Minnesota for offering us space in the *Posturinn* each month to share information about the University's relationship with Iceland. Many of you probably know about the Val Björnson Scholarship that supports student exchange with the University of Iceland, but there's so much more that we want to tell you about.

It's been a busy few months of celebrations in both Minnesota and Iceland. The U of M just inaugurated its 16th president, Eric Kaler, on September 22. The University of Iceland sent a welcome video with Rector Kristin Ingólfssdóttir that was shown at the inauguration ceremony. Honorary Consul General of Iceland Örn Arnar attended the inauguration ceremony and a luncheon with international delegates. In October, the University of Iceland celebrated its 30th anniversary. Connie Delaney, professor and dean of the School of Nursing, went to Iceland for the festivities and presented a proclamation from President Kaler.

This fall we welcomed another Icelandic student while one of our students left for Iceland, thanks to the Val Björnson Icelandic Exchange and the scholarship fund that supports it. We'll tell you more about these students in the coming months as they get settled into life in their new environments.

To watch the video of Rector Ingólfssdóttir or to learn more about the Val Björnson Icelandic Exchange Scholarship and how you can support it, go to: <http://global.umn.edu/about/iceland.html>

The Snorri West program, a cultural exchange program that brings Icelandic youth to North America for four weeks in the summer is being expanded this year to include a two-week stay in Minnesota and North Dakota as well as Manitoba. The goal of this visit is to show Snorri participants where Icelanders settled in Minnesota (Minneota, the Twin Cities, and Duluth), their contributions to their communities and the history and development of the state. Events will be scheduled giving you the opportunity to meet and participate in welcoming these young people here. We look forward to planning a wide range of activities. In 2012 watch for information and how you might be involved.

Tala Íslensku got off to a serendipitous start with its first session held on dagur íslenskrar tungu or Icelandic language day! Instructor Sigga Guðmundsdóttir led attendees through several basic phrases, a bit of grammar, a poem and a song. All in attendance were beginners, except for Páll Skaftason who assisted those sitting near him with pronunciation.

Sigga, who is a teacher by profession, is being mentored for the class by a friend in Reykjavík who has been teaching Icelandic as a second language to foreigners for 20 years! The next session of tala íslensku will meet on Monday January 16, 6:30-8:00 pm, in the Community Room of Edina Lunds-50th in the 50th & France neighborhood. The class is open to members of the Icelandic Hekla Club and the Icelandic American Association of Minnesota at no charge.

2011/2012 DATES TO REMEMBER:

December 4: 1:00 pm Jolabarnaball, Knights of Columbus, Bloomington
December Cancelled IAAMN Board Meeting
December 18: 4:00 pm Icelandic Christmas Service, St. Paul, MN
December No Hekla Club Meeting due to Jolabarnaball
January 8: 2:00 pm Icelandic Family Gathering, Danish American Center
January 15: 10:30 am Icelandic Hekla Club Meeting
January 21: 7:30 pm IAAMN Board Meeting
February 11: 5:30 pm Thorrablot
February 16: 7:30 pm IAAMN Board Meeting
February 18: 10:30 am Icelandic Hekla Club Meeting
March 15: 7:30 pm IAAMN Board Meeting
March 17: 10:30 am Icelandic Hekla Club Meeting



**ICELAND IS MORE AWAKE THAN EVER
NOW IS THE TIME TO VISIT.**

Icelandic American Association of Minnesota
7646 E Borman Way
Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076