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The Icelandic Canadian

XLIII, No. 2

Winnipeg, Canada

Winter, 1984

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THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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EDITORIAL

ICELANDERS AND THE CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS

by Dr. John S. Matthiasson

Twelve years have passed since my stepfather, Dr. Wilhelm Kristjanson, then Editor-in-Chief of this magazine, asked me to write the Christmas editorial. Actually, it is the winter editorial and it probably could deal with any one of a myriad of winter topics ranging from the joys of cross-country skiing to the luxury of being a 'snow bird' and escaping the cold by fleeing to Arizona or British Columbia. But, the topic usually centers around the Christmas season, and this year, when our present Editor-in-Chief, Axel Vopnfjord, asked me to do another editorial for a winter issue of the Icelandic Canadian, his only stipulation was that I use a Christmas theme.

Back in 1972 I composed a free verse poem, in which I reminisced about the family Christmases I recalled from my childhood growing up in the Icelandic west end of Winnipeg. A narrow, personal theme, but one which I thought at the time would touch similar memories of others who had experienced childhood and adolescence in that very Icelandic part of the Icelandic capital of North America. Also, the traditions my own family had observed, it seemed to me, would have been part of the Christmas celebrations in western Icelandic homes throughout this continent.

When Axel asked me to do the job again in 1984, at first I felt at a loss. This year I wanted a larger theme — one which would link our western Icelander traditions with their roots in the mother country. Finally, I decided to raise some questions about the relationship of our own Christmas observances with the Christian meaning of the mid-winter celebration, and to explore the

historical relationship between Icelanders and Christianity in general.

In some respects, the Icelandic celebration of the Christian rite has often seemed rather anomalous to me. For a thousand years after the birth of the figure for whom Christmas is named, Jesus of Nazareth, our ancestors were followers of a religious tradition which Christians call paganism. They practised paganism in Norway, and for the first several decades of their transplanted life in the new nation of Iceland. They worshipped, not the monotheistic deity of Christianity, but rather the pantheon of Viking gods and goddesses, and they might have continued to do so were it not for certain political events back in Norway.

We all know the commonly accepted story of why our ancestors first settled that small island in the North Atlantic. Rebellious chieftains had resisted the efforts of Harald the Fair to unify Norway under one monarch, himself. Unable to withstand Harald's increasing power, they fled Norway for Iceland, taking with them their followers and slaves. In short time the Althing was established, and the chieftains developed their own set of codified laws, which were recited annually by the Law-speaker at Thingvellir. However, their troubles with the Norwegian kingship were to continue. When Norway was christianized, the king looked abroad at other lands to which he could bring this new religion he had imposed on his people. The Icelanders feared that he would use the excuse of prosyletization to impose his political as well as religious will on their new nation.

There were surely many meetings be-

tween chieftains to discuss the concern, and before the gathering of the Althing in 999 A.D., the Lawspeaker resolved that the only protection would be for the Icelanders to accept Christianity on their own, before it was imposed upon them. Accordingly, he pronounced at the Althing that henceforth Iceland was to be a Christian country, and Icelanders were to be Christians. It was, thus, an act of law which brought about the transition from paganism to Christianity among our ancestors, rather than a spiritual conversion. In the manner in which the transition was handled, elements of Icelandic practicality can be seen. For example, it was decreed that certain pagan rituals could still be practised, if they were carried out in secret. Also, to become Christians, even if nominal ones, Icelanders would have to be baptized. A good time to carry out mass baptism seemed to be at the meeting of the Althing that year. There was open water at Thingvellir, but the new converts were not prepared to dip into its frigid atmosphere, and so they rode several kilometers away to

accept baptism in warm spring waters. Certainly they were not caught up in a mood of religious fervor. In a very real sense, the Christianization of medieval Iceland was a secular instead of a sacred event.

In time, of course, a more traditional, and perhaps more spiritual form of Christianity pervaded the ethos of the country, but I doubt personally whether it ever took on a deep emotional meaning for many followers. This is no place for a discussion of Icelandic church history, so I will jump ahead into this century. Today, Lutheranism is the state church in Iceland. There are numerous churches in Reykjavik, with the tower of one unfinished monument rising above the city's landscape, and many of the small towns have brand-new religious edifices, built at state expense. I expect that they are filled with parishioners on special occasions such as Christmas and Easter, and in fact on one recent Easter Sunday I attended the cathedral in Reykjavik myself, and only found a seat because I came to the service early. On more mundane Sundays no one would find difficulty finding a seat

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in any church in the land. Studies by Icelandic sociologists indicate a low degree of religiosity among most contemporary Icelanders. Young people I spoke with on my two visits to Iceland seemed to confirm the dry statistics. They had little interest in formal religion. Today there is even a pagan society in Iceland, whose members are trying to revive ancient pagan beliefs and customs, supporting their activities by selling pagan relics in the form of jewelry. I am not suggesting that there are not many devout Christians in Iceland today, but my impression is that they form a distinct minority. Consequently, the message of Christ at Christmas may not be a central part of most Christmas celebrations in modern Iceland, although I am told that celebrations do take place across the country. It may simply be that Icelanders love any excuse for a party, and the mid-winter event provides them with one.

In North America, Icelandic communities have often been divided into two religious groupings, Lutheran and Unitarian. Followers of the New Theology, and later Unitarianism, have respected the historical figure of Jesus, but denied his Christhood, and they have celebrated Christmas, even though the essential meaning of it is the celebration of the birth of a savior who is also accepted by his followers as the Son of God. Part of my own years of youth were spent in a household in which my stepfather was a Unitarian and my mother a Lutheran. In my own personal religious odyssey, in which I have embraced, rejected and embraced again the Christian message, I have often pondered over the Unitarian observance of Christmas. But, observe it they do, as we did in the home of my parents.

I do not wish to antagonize Unitarians, or relatives and friends in Iceland. I do want to suggest that perhaps the basic meaning of the Christian Christmas may not ever have been central to Icelandic

observance of the festival. We tend to be an intellectual, analytic people, and skepticism runs through our histories both in Iceland and the New World. I do not wish to impose my own religious preferences on readers of our magazine, but I do think that some re-examination of the history of Icelandic Christianity is interesting to pursue. I also think that in this last part of the last quarter of the twentieth century, and as we see the conclusion of the 1984 which many had anticipated with foreboding, remembering George Orwell's novel, we might look to the Christian message of joy and hope which is so central to Christmas. However analytic and skeptical we may be, and recent world history certainly fosters cynicism, the message of universal brotherhood given us by Jesus, whom I personally prefer to call the Christ, may be terribly relevant. If we ignore that message, and instead concentrate at Christmas on simply observing the old Icelandic traditions such as eating the many-layered cake for which we have come to be known, and getting together with friends and relatives, we may be doing so at our own peril. Whether or not we, as individuals, accept the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, his message of universal love should be recalled at this time of year. However we celebrate Christmas in our own homes, let us light a candle for it. It is a message the world needs desperately today, and perhaps we, as western Icelanders, can help to promote it.

PEACE TO EVERY NATION

by David Jon Asgeirsson

Age 9, December 1983

Let there be peace the whole world
through,

Until mankind's final end is due.

Peace on the whole face of the earth,
As it should have been from our birth.

Peace everywhere,

That is all I care.

PEOPLE

A MAN OF MANY INTERESTS



H. Freeman Skaptason

Born in Winnipeg in 1911, the son of Halli and Anna Skaptason and the great grandson of the well known Doctor Joseph Skaptason of Skeggjastadir and Hunavatnsysla in Iceland.

Freeman was born in Winnipeg but raised on a farm at Grund, Manitoba near Glenboro in Argyle Municipality. He later attended Wesley College (now University of Winnipeg). He subsequently served in the Canadian Army in Italy and North West Europe with the rank of Captain.

After discharge from the army he was employed with the Veterans Land Act Administration becoming the Regional Director for Manitoba and N.W. Ontario.

Now retired, he has 3 children and 10 grandchildren. He is still very active with the Betel Home Foundation, The Western Canada Aviation Museum and in Amateur radio.

AN ENTERPRISING
YOUNG LADY

Freya Kristjanson

Freya Kristjanson has been selected as one of four recipients of The Law Foundation Entrance Scholarships which are tenable at the University of Victoria Faculty of Law. This prestigious scholarship has a value of \$4,500 and is renewable for each year of the Bachelor of Laws program with a first class standing. The scholarship recipients were selected on the basis of their academic achievements and the Selection Committee's assessment of their potential to make a contribution to the community. The successful candidates were selected from applicants from across Canada.

Freya Kristjanson, daughter of Dr. Marino and Phyllis Kristjanson of Ottawa, was born in Regina, lived with her parents in Edmonton and Ottawa. She graduated from Queen's University with a first class honours Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring

in Politics. During her undergraduate years, Freya served as an academic Senator, sat on the University Student Council for two years and was elected President of Arts and Science in her final year. Since her graduation she has been a federal parliamentary intern and during this period went with delegations to the United Nations in New York and Washington, D.C. and visited Parliaments in Europe. Freya has been the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships including the Federal Parliamentary Internship '83-'84 (Canadian Political Science Association); the 1983 Queen's University award for significant contribution to university life; the Dean's Honour List Queen's University 1981 and 1980; the Ottawa Ladies College Scholarship; the William Rutherford Dunlop Scholarship and the Ottawa Student of the Year Award.

Freya travelled through Europe during the summer of 1984 and enjoyed ten days in Iceland.

Freya acted on an urge to visit Iceland this past summer, and to make contact with some of her relatives there.

* * *

OSKAR HOWARDSON

"I would just like to say that I love the Icelandic language and the people. I think that one of the most important things we can do is to preserve the language as long as possible. It's one of the founding languages of the Civilized Western World. Did you know that only 30 years ago you were considered a foreigner if you spoke a language other than English — now the young people are proud to learn and speak



another language? So why not join the new approach to learning Icelandic over the telephone and give me a call at 434-9513."

Oskar is our director responsible for Language studies. He worked all last year at developing the two types of language instruction that our club is currently offering. This man really takes his job seriously and puts in many hours on the phone and at the classes helping the teacher in whatever way he can.

Oskar was born in Siglunes, Manitoba. His parents were Jon Howardson born in Kirkuboli, North Firdi and Maria Bjarnadottir (Torfason) from the Vopnafjordur district. In our community he worked for many years in Strandin (forerunner to our present club) and for the Icelandic Home as a board member for 22 years where he was chairman of the building committee.

Oskar and his wife Helga, are proud of their two children Robert and Maria. Oskar is also very proud to be an Afi to his three grandchildren. We are proud of Oscar as well.

—Courtesy of the Icelandic Canadian Club of B.C.

READERS' FORUM

From Glen Jakobson, Winnipeg. The magazine doesn't have to be all that different in content from "Lögberg" in the sense that anything of interest to Icelanders is fair game, but it should concentrate more on serious articles, literature, fiction, poetry and eliminate most strictly news items (a different emphasis). Its job isn't to report on all recent events.

I think that one feature that wouldn't be out of place in such a magazine would be the inclusion of episodes out of Icelandic and Icelandic-Canadian history. Perhaps this could constitute a regular section of the magazine as a reminder of where we've come from.

The magazine should not only include short stories and poetry by or about Icelanders. It should be an institution which promotes this type of writing and encourages the public to continue a long-standing tradition of interest in writing by contributing.

Possibly there could be an annual award for the best piece of short fiction, best poem, etc. Perhaps a different author could be showcased in each issue.

A competition could be held for the best essay on a certain topic eg. "Tales From The Pioneer Days", "Hardships and Joys of Life in New Iceland", or "How and Why My Forebears Came to Canada" and entries could be solicited.

An article by an Icelander on differences between our countries (comparison/contrast) would be interesting, as would an article(s) on life in modern Iceland.

Good English translations of famous Icelandic short stories would be good, or translation of various works could be commissioned.

* * *

From Kris Johnson, President, Stephan G. Stephansson Icelandic Society, P.O.

Box 813, Markerville, Alberta. The Stephan G. Stephansson Icelandic Society of Markerville, Alberta is presently undertaking the restoration of the historic Markerville Creamery. This is our centennial project commemorating the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in Alberta in 1888. We have decided to take on this project because of the great importance of the Creamery to our community's growth and economic development.

The Markerville Creamery operated from 1902 until 1972 providing local farmers with much-needed income, especially in critical economic times. The famous Icelandic poet Stephan G. Stephansson was one of the founding members of the Creamery, for he realized the importance of the Creamery to the long term stability of the settlement. Unused for the last several years, the Creamery has been a constant reminder of the early years of our community and the struggles of our Icelandic-Canadian pioneers to establish a life in this country. The Creamery is also the oldest remaining dairy building in Alberta, and therefore would be an ideal place to depict the significance of dairying in Alberta. It was recognized by the Government of Alberta as a Provincial Historic Resource in 1976.

With the technical assistance of Alberta Culture, our society will be preserving the building for use as a demonstration creamery/dairy museum where the public can learn about dairying and creamery processes and the way of life of our Icelandic-Canadian pioneers. (The Creamery has served our community for decades; now it will serve the public in a new way.) It is our hope that dairy products (ice cream, milk, yogurt, etc.) will be sold to visitors on site as well. Downstairs, meeting rooms will be constructed for use by the

Society and any other interested clubs or organizations. (See enclosed plan.) The Creamery will be an important visitor attraction in the community, along with the Stephansson House Provincial Historic Site.

Funding support for our project is being provided in part by the Canada Works Program of Employment and Immigration Canada, the Historical Resources Division of Alberta Culture, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, the Farmer's Union of Iceland, the S. G. Stephansson Committee as well as by our Society. The Alberta Dairymen's Association and the major Alberta dairies have also indicated their interest in the project. However, we are certainly eager to hear from other groups or individuals who can lend their interest and financial support as well. Federal and provincial money has been given, but the Society must raise its share of money to be "matched" against these contributions.

We would certainly appreciate it if you could include an article on the Markerville Creamery Restoration Project in a future edition of your journal. The project will undoubtedly be of interest to those readers who are supporters of Icelandic-Canadian culture. We would especially appreciate

your mentioning our need for financial support and would gratefully receive a contribution from your journal or readers if possible.

We have more information and photographs of the Creamery in the early years if you need them. I thank you for your assistance in advance.

* * *

A LETTER TO AMERICANS DESCENDED FROM ICELANDIC EMIGRANTS TO MIDWEST AMERICA:

Dear Friends,

Sometime back I began to do research for a historical novel which I intended to write based upon the lives of my grandparents, Einar Jonsson Breidfjord and Gudny Jonasdottir. However, since that time I have been hired to co-author one book on area history and another on the history of Swedish emigration to Midwest America, in addition to various historical sketches. When I entered the stacks at Augustana College Library to do research on the above mentioned subjects, I found not one book but many books, all written upon each individual subject. I now realize that the story of Icelandic immigration in general has been sadly neglected by

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American writers and historiographers and is in great need of research and interpretation. We have *Modern Sagas* by Thorstina Walters, a very valuable book, and various local histories, but no comprehensive history to this area of the United States has been written in the language of the adopted land of our ancestors. I now intend to rectify this problem and let the novel wait until a later date.

My letter is a plea for help. If you have any pertinent information about Icelandic emigration to Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, or Illinois, please let me know where you found the information or send me a copy of the same. I need information on individuals, photographs, copies of plat maps containing Icelandic names, and accounts of general history. Anything you send will be returned in a short time, if so desired.

Thank you for your time and interest.

LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer
2530 - 30th Street
Rock Island, Illinois 61201
U.S.A.

From Dr. C. F. Scott, 7, Queen's Gardens, St. Andrews, Fife, Scotland. KY16 9TA. You will be surprised to hear from me so soon again! But, when I was taking a casual look at 'the article', I noted that a line in the text submitted had been omitted in the printed version. This must have rather bewildered readers concerning the meaning not just of the sentence but of the whole paragraph. So, the last sentence to start on page 29 of the Spring (April) 1984 issue should read in its entirety:

"The Anglican tradition behind Pilcher of course conforms more closely to the Lutheran tradition and his translations give a greater sense of mercy and forgiveness."

Could you, therefore, as an *errata* or a 'letter to the editor', bring this to the attention of readers in the next number possible? I would appreciate this final favour with the article: these slips can easily occur, I realize.

With reiterated thanks for your production of the article and every kind wish.



TAYLOR PHARMACY

Centre and Sixth — Gimli, Man.

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THE BRAZILIAN ADVENTURE

by Gustaf Kristjanson

Icelanders seem to have more than the usual share of wanderlust in their bones. In this respect the Viking spirit has lived on even into modern times. I was reminded of this fact on a recent tourist trip to South America. Our aircraft had left Foz do Iguacu in the western edge of Parana province, Brazil, en route for Sao Paulo and thence to Rio de Janeiro. The subtropical forests of western Parana had given way to somewhat more open agricultural land. As the plane descended and tall buildings came into view we were told that we were approaching Curitiba, a stop along the way. Curitiba! I realized then that this was the area where many of the "Brazilian Icelanders" had ended up.

It is sometimes forgotten that a sizeable tide of migrants from Iceland very nearly made their home in South America rather than North America. This occurred in 1873 when hundreds indicated their desire to make the move. Because of difficulties encountered in arranging for suitable transportation most of these did not follow through on the plan. Thorstein Thorsteinsson, in his *Saga Islendinga i Vesturheimi* states that only about thirty-five of this number actually reached Brazil.

The impulse toward migration began about the middle of the nineteenth century. Iceland had suffered severely from the climate during the 1850's, notably the northern portion of the country. The winter of 1858-59 was particularly severe. The sheep industry was in dire straits. As the thoughts of the people began to turn wistfully toward a more benign climate and surroundings, a man named Einar Asmundsson of Thingeyar County began to promote the idea of a mass emigration to Brazil, a land which he evidently considered would make an ideal location for an Icelandic colony. In

1860 he set up an organization among farmers in the county whose purpose would be to further such a move. Needless to say, it aroused controversy as well as interest.

It would appear that the first person to follow through on the scheme was a young man by the name of Kristjan Gudmundsson from South Thingeyar. Kristjan left for Copenhagen to learn the trade of carpentry, but became a sailor instead, according to the account by Jon Borgfirding of Akureyri in Thorgeirsson's *Almanak*, 1902.

He also began to call himself Kristjan Isfeld. In February, 1863, he was on a ship bound for Brazil. He arrived in Rio de Janeiro about six weeks later. There he opened an inn and became successfully established.

The same year that Kristjan Isfeld arrived in Brazil four other Icelanders took similar action and made the move together. They were Jon Einarsson, a widower, and his son, Jon; Jonas Hallgrimsson, and Jonas Fridfinsson. These latter were carpenters by trade. After taking the sailing ship "Johanna" to Copenhagen, then a steamship to Kiel, they were able to arrange passage on the vessel "Caroline" bound for Rio de Janeiro, where they arrived on October 14, 1863. Some of the early experiences of these adventurers are described in a letter written by one of them, Jonas Hallgrimsson, to the Einar Asmundsson mentioned earlier. The letter was reproduced in the paper *Nordanfara* printed at Akureyri in Iceland. It appeared in the issue of October, 1864. A second letter from the same person appeared in another issue of the same paper the following spring. In it the feeling was expressed that the men would somewhat like to settle in this new country, although they had found the climate somewhat hot in midsummer. The

experiences of this group of adventurers is closely paralleled in a novel written many years later by Johann Magnus Bjarnason entitled *Braziliufararnir*.

The most thorough record of their experiences, however, as well as that of the entire emigration to Brazil is preserved in Thorstein Th. Thorsteinsson's book *Aefintyrid fra Islandi til Brasiliu* published in 1937-38 (by Sigurgeir Fridriksson, Reykjavik). In this work the author is able to reconstruct, by means of newspaper accounts, letters written to friends and relatives, etc. the background of the movement, the experiences of the initial small group of emigrants, and the larger migration which followed. In this work he describes the early experiences of the two Einarssons, Hallgrimsson, and Fridfinsson referred to above. While Kristjan Isfeld was becoming established in Rio de Janeiro, they were attempting to make a living for themselves in the settlement somewhat further south

along the coast in and around the towns of San Francisco and Joinville. They did manage to procure a bit of land and raise some crops. However, they encountered problems with their health in the new surroundings. Jon Einarsson, the elder, became ill and died in the spring of 1866. Not long after this, his son married a Brazilian woman and soon adopted the ways of the new land.

The other two men, Jonas Hallgrimsson and Jonas Fridfinsson Barddal (as he now called himself), moved inland into the higher country around the growing city of Curitiba. The temperature here was more moderate and generally considered more healthful for northern Europeans. Unfortunately, Jonas Hallgrimsson seldom enjoyed good health in this new location. Eventually he went back to the seaside where he succumbed to Yellow Fever in the spring of 1870. Some three or four years later Kristjan Isfeld (referred to earlier) was to fall

victim to the same disease in Rio de Janeiro. Meanwhile, Jonas F. Barddal had married a Brazilian woman (of German ancestry), begun to raise a family, and opened a carpentry shop in Curitiba. It now fell to his lot to keep in touch with the group in Iceland who were considering emigration.

And this interest continued throughout the 1860's. A meeting was held in January of 1865 to try to move arrangements forward. Nothing materialized at this time, however, although 150 people had signed up expressing an interest in emigrating. We know of none, however, who actually made the long journey from Iceland to join the first pioneers until 1873, at which time some thirty or forty managed to complete the trip.

Elva Simundsson, in her book *Icelandic Settlers in America*, describes this migrant group:

Reaching Brazil in January of 1874, this group of Icelanders joined those who had settled in Curitiba. Each family was allowed to rent a plot of land, six acres in size, from the government for six dollars a year. They all built houses and planted gardens.

Because they were unfamiliar with the land and the vegetation, their first gardens were not very productive, but they soon improved. To supplement the income from the small gardens, they found work in the fast-growing city of Curitiba. As they became more fluent in Portuguese, they established themselves as Brazilian citizens, but they still kept their ties with their family and friends in the homeland and in New Iceland.

During the years just prior to this Kristjan Isfeld had been writing enthusiastic letters to his parents and relatives urging them to join him in Brazil. The appeal proved successful. His father, Gudmundur,

his brother Magnus, and three sisters joined the group which migrated in 1873. Unfortunately, by the time that they arrived in South America, Kristjan had died, as mentioned earlier. Thorstein Thorsteinsson mentions in his book that Magnus Isfeld was perhaps the most successful of any in the group in establishing himself.

Mrs. Eliza (Isfeld) Johnson, at present living in Saskatoon, Sask., but formerly of the "Vatnabyggd" or Lakes District of Saskatchewan, has contributed a biography of the Magnus Isfeld family to the book *Reflections by the Quills* (Editor Lillian Thorlacius and Assistant Editor Olive Simpson). By permission of the editors of that publication I am quoting from the first few paragraphs of that account because it seems to catch the essence of the experience of the Icelandic emigrants to South America.

"In 1873 in late spring, about thirty-four people (mostly from South Thingeyar) started off for their intended trip to Brazil. They travelled first to Copenhagen, Denmark, where they saw the Brazilian Consul. Previously one of the Icelanders who spoke and wrote French had been in contact with the consul, who understood the French language. Meanwhile five more people had joined them. Then the group went by ship to Hamburg harbour where they boarded a Brazilian ship called "Elwood Cooper". They were there (in harbour) for a long time because several of the people became ill with what was thought to be cholera caused by contaminated water. Some of the passengers were taken to hospital and many stayed on board. Several died, but of those only three or four were Icelanders. After everyone was well, they set sail for Brazil. They arrived at the harbour city of Paranaguay on January 8, 1874, more than six months after leaving their homeland. Then they

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went by land to Curitiba where most of them settled."

"In that group were my maternal grandparents, Joel and Sesilia Jonsson, and their family of four — Andres, Jonas, Elin (my mother) and Sigridur (later called Sigrina); and also my paternal grandfather Gudmundur Gudmundsson Isfeld and his son Magnus (my father) and three daughters — Maria, Ingibjorg and Jensina . . ."

"My mother Elin was very good at reading and writing and it didn't take her long to become a teacher. My father had established a brick factory and employed three men. Later his older sons worked there after school and during holidays. My parents had a parcel of land on the outskirts of the city of Curitiba and had a few cows, chickens, ducks, and several horses which were used for hauling bricks. Rye was grown and was threshed by flails and periodically ground for flour to make

bread. The flour didn't keep well so only enough for each batch of baking was ground. The bake ovens were similar to the ones the Doukhobors use at the Saskatoon Exhibition. The aroma of the baking bread was wafted on the air in the neighborhood and many a child came to visit to get some freshly baked bread. My mother often had to do the threshing, and in later years when she was very tired she used to remark 'I feel as if I had been threshing all day.' I remember my father telling us about one time when he was late in planting potatoes — even though the weather was like summer there all the time, some vegetables had to be planted at certain times. A neighbour passing by remarked the price of beans would be low at harvest time, meaning that the potatoes would not be any bigger than beans."

At this point in the account Mrs. Johnson goes on to describe the family's departure

from Brazil in 1904 to take up a homestead in Saskatchewan.

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, the eminent surgeon and community leader (and former Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg), had the occasion a number of years ago to pay a visit to Brazil. He made arrangements with the Norwegian Consul in Rio de Janeiro, who also represented Iceland there, to bring together representatives of two families of Icelandic descent to spend an evening with him. Dr. Thorlakson recalls the evening as an interesting, informative, and heartwarming occasion. Of course, these descendants (only partially Icelandic, naturally) had Portuguese names and had become thoroughly "Brazilianized". Apparently many of the Icelandic immigrants to Brazil became involved in enterprises such as construction and boat-building not long after they arrived in Brazil. This would seem to be borne out by

the account by Eliza Johnson quoted above. The Icelanders established a reputation for reliability and initiative and became leaders in their respective areas of work. In later years they also became active and influential in the field of education.

Icelanders, as well as Scandinavians generally, have had the reputation of being able to assimilate readily into the cultural and economic life of any nation of which they find themselves a part. This appears to have happened in Brazil. Although any ties they had with the original mother country have probably entirely dissolved by now, one can be certain that their contribution to their new land has been a valuable one. It is to be hoped that the spirit of enterprise shown by the original adventurers who took the long journey from Iceland in the nineteenth century has been richly rewarded.

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A Friend

SOUTH AMERICA 1984 — IMPRESSIONS

by Gustaf Kristjanson

When the Spanish and Portuguese adventurers of the early sixteenth century opened up the Western Hemisphere to European exploration and settlement it was the southern portion of that hemisphere that got their primary attention. We tend to think of that part of the world as an economic and even a cultural backwater, yet in those early days it was the main focus of exploitation. In recent years it has been emerging once more as an important area on the world stage.

A number of months ago I had occasion to visit this part of the world, not to find any El Dorado as sought by the adventurers of old, but merely as a tourist. Although the quaint provincial charm of Ecuador, the modern bustle and cosmopolitanism of Chile and Argentina, and the historical associations of Colombia all made their impression, I shall confine my observations to two nations only which my wife and I visited on our tour. One seems to face very much toward the past, the other toward the future. They are Peru and Brazil respectively.

Peru is a land of startling contrasts. Here are to be found the highest and most rugged of mountains, the most lush of jungles, and the driest of deserts. None of these aspects, however, were too much in evidence when we landed in Lima, the capital, following our flight from Quito. We were accommodated in the Gran Hotel Bolivar, a hostelry designed in the grand manner of a somewhat earlier age — Edwardian, perhaps. Despite its pretensions, it turned out to be quite the noisiest place in which we've ever tried to get a brief night's rest. This circumstance resulted from its location, which is just off the Plaza San Martin. This plaza is the busiest square I have ever seen or encountered. Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly

Circus, Times Square, and other well known meeting places simply don't compare with it. One could have sworn that all of Lima's six million people were crammed together on that spot. The shouting, name-calling, and raucous bleating of automobile horns seemed to continue throughout the night.

We had to be up early to catch a flight to the city of Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Incas, which is situated high in the Andes. What a marked contrast! In place of the urban clangor of Lima we found ourselves in a quaint provincial city of red-tiled roofs and cobbled streets. Perhaps Lima was like this a century or two ago. Many of the buildings here, including their ornate gilded churches are built on the base of Inca walls which have been standing for hundreds of years. In fact the Church of Santo Domingo was constructed on the walls and from the stones of the Inca Temple of the Sun. History seems to pervade the area.

In the hills overlooking the city we were able to examine the remains of the old Inca settlement of Saqsayhuaman, with its walls of massive stones so precisely fitted together without any use of mortar that one would think they had been carved to this shape. It was a rainy afternoon, but this did not seem to bother the small groups of natives in their colourful costumes who waited by the roadside hoping that each bus would stop and thus permit tourists to take photographs — complete with a llama — and earn them a few coins.

The following day provided us with one of the most impressive excursions of the whole tour. Our train had to make a series of switchbacks in order to ascend the hills surrounding Cuzco and then a similar series of switchbacks to descend to the valley

beyond. Our trip down the valley and later the canyon of the Urubamba River was a spectacular experience in itself. As the altitude decreased the vegetation became more and more tropical. This river empties into a tributary of the Amazon. At the end of our three-hour train journey we disembarked and transferred to a small shuttle bus which conveyed us some three thousand feet into the mountains above so that we might view the wonders of Machu Picchu, the "lost city of the Incas". The walls of the temples, houses, and terraces for the growing of crops are still more or less intact. This was a hideaway which the Spanish Conquistadors were never able to find. Incidentally, excavations made at the site showed that ninety percent of the inhabitants buried there were female. What happened to the men? And how were they able to keep the location of the community a secret from the rest of the world? Not until the American historian, Hiram Bingham, discovered the ruins in 1911 did its presence become known. It is an impressive sight. Immense mountain peaks rise on all sides, gazing down on terraces and temples and homes that were once the abode of an Inca civilization. After a couple of hours another shuttle bus took us back into the valley below where our train was waiting to take us back to Cuzco.

The morning saw us up early once more to catch the flight back to Lima. It was a journey that took us from the picturesque provincial tranquillity of an Andean community to the urban congestion of a huge metropolis which lies on a desert plain beside the Pacific Ocean.

Yet somehow one senses that it is in the "quaint" and "backward" villages and towns that the real roots of Peru lie. On our final night in Lima we were treated to a Peruvian dinner in a restaurant atop one of their most elegant hotels which gave a panoramic view of the city at night. We

were entertained with a performance of native dances and music — dances characteristic of the small communities from which the performers came. Even in the heart of cosmopolitan Lima the "real Peru" was still very much alive.

Brazil has a history going back hundreds of years, to the days when a Portuguese fleet under Pedro Alvares Cabral bound for India sailed so far to the west of their normal course that they sighted the coast of South America instead and claimed that area for Portugal. Since that time this nation has enjoyed many periods of boom and decline. Sugar, cotton, and coffee (and, briefly, gold and rubber) have all brought wealth, however temporarily, into the country. It is an area of huge cities and vast frontiers, of lonely wildernesses as well as teeming populations of great wealth and abject poverty. While some of the most primitive tribes in the world live in the interior rain forests, the largest hydro electric power development in the world is

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being constructed on the Parana River at Itaipur. Such are the contrasts. Brazil proclaimed its independence from Portugal early in the nineteenth century with its own emperor as sovereign. Not long after a bloodless revolution turned it into a republic.

The small group of tourists (two dozen or so) of which we were a part entered Brazil under somewhat unusual circumstances. A change in our schedule had delayed our arrival at the border of Argentina and Brazil until the hour in the evening when it was about to shut down. A suitable "under the counter" payment by our tour guide convinced the border officials that they could make an exception in our case. Our baggage was then loaded onto a transport boat and we were ferried to the other side of the river — the Brazil side. It was pitch dark as we reached the shore. The landing lights on the pier had already been extinguished for the night. As we made our way up the hillside to the waiting bus we felt very much like smuggled human cargo which up to this point we were. The border entry point at this spot was closed for the night, but we were driven several miles downstream to a location where the bridge crosses the border from Paraguay. Here there was a border entry point still open and we were able to get our passports stamped. We were now legally in Brazil. Our bus then conveyed us to Iguassu National Park and the Das Cataratas Hotel, where the noise of the great cataract outside helped to lull us to sleep.

In the morning we were able to have a

proper look at the Iguassu Falls, one of the great natural wonders of the world. Iguassu is really a system of cataracts, side by side, formed as the Iguassu River plunges in two successive levels over a great cliff just a few miles above its confluence with the mighty Parana. The highest of the cataracts is about twice the height of Niagara and they stretch out for about two miles, several times the width of Niagara. They are an impressive sight, awesome in their variety and beauty. We were able to take a walking tour below the Falls and to feel the spray as the water cascaded down.

That same afternoon we left for our flight to Rio de Janeiro. En route we made a brief stop at the airport at Curitiba and changed planes at Sao Paulo. The aerial view of Sao Paulo, the largest city in South America, was revealing in itself. Here some twelve million people are gathered in a vast agglomeration of high rises, traffic jams, and pollution.

And what can one say about Rio that hasn't been said so many times before? City of beaches, of festivals, noise and gaiety; city of poverty and crime on the streets, city of incomparable beauty under a blazing sun. The view from the top of Sugar Loaf Mountain is only surpassed by the panoramic sight from the top of Corcovado ("the Hunchback"), where the statue of Christ the Redeemer gazes over the city that has the most spectacular natural setting of any in the world.

On our second evening there we were treated to a dinner at a "churrascaria", a kind of indoor barbecue. Waiters circulate

with swords on which a variety of cuts of meat have been impaled, in the manner of a giant shish kabob. From these they will pare off delectable morsels according to the diner's wishes. After a short stroll among the crowds at Copacabana Beach we were treated to a nightclub show called "Plata Forma Un" (Stage One), where a noisy and colourful stage performance features the samba music and many of the costumes used at the famous annual Carnaval.

When we flew from Rio de Janeiro to the old city of Salvador in the province of Bahia we were making a journey in time as well as in space. This is the birthplace of Brazil. It was here that the Portuguese first landed and the first African slaves were brought. The cultural and racial ties with Africa are very evident. Our guide took us on a tour of the old city centre: up the steep cobblestoned hillsides to the small public square where criminals were publicly flogged in the days when this was the old colonial capital of Brazil. A small museum just off the square displays figures of the "voodoo" deities in whom many of the natives (more than half are of African descent) still believe.

The next stop on our tour was the nation's capital, Brasilia. As a planned city which has only been in existence for a few years,

it lacks the atmosphere of the older "colonial type" places we had visited. It also lacks the squalor. The air is clear, the climate more comfortable. It is a most interesting city, built in the shape of an aircraft (or bow and arrow), with the residential section forming the wings, the business area the body of the plane, and the government buildings the cockpit. In this latter area the Houses of Parliament and the Supreme Court overlook the man-made Lake Paranoa. In this area as well is the ultra-modern Cathedral, much of it underground and with its visible portion shaped like a crown of thorns.

From the architectural delights of Brasilia we were transported to the heart of the jungle. Our arrival in Manaus reopened a page of history for us, the era of the great rubber boom. The city is situated on the Rio Negro just a few miles from where it meets and blends with the mighty Amazon. It is a port for sea-going ships situated a thousand miles from the Atlantic Ocean. On our guided tour of this city we saw the Teatro Amazonas, the old opera house where artists such as Enrico Caruso and Sara Bernhardt performed in the early years of the century when Manaus was in its heyday.

The morning after we arrived there saw



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us taking a boat excursion down the Rio Negro, which is many miles wide at this point, past the freighters tied up alongside the docks at Manaus, and on down to where the river meets the main body of the Amazon. This spot is called the "meeting of the waters". The water of the Rio Negro, as its name suggests, is very dark in colour. The Amazon is grey with silt. For several miles the two currents (which are of different temperatures) flow side by side before they eventually mingle. It was a rainy day on the Amazon and here, where the drainage of half a continent has become

in effect a huge moving lake, we were surrounded by water. We went ashore once, up a slippery path to a shack where a native family kept a small souvenir shop in the heart of the jungle on the banks of the River Sea. There we acquired a small model of an Amazon canoe, returned to our boat and were soon on our way again.

Civilization is slowly invading even the Amazon country. As with the rest of Brazil, there is resource potential here. But it is a vast area, and nature's inexorable forces are going to take a lot of taming.

IN THE BARN

by K. N. Julius

(Translated by Paul A. Sigurdson)

One day when all was quiet,
I heard the moo-cows bawl;
I think that they were holding
A "Ladies Aid" for all.

For everyone was yapping;
— But none were understood —
They talked of all and nothing,
But most concerning food.

"Yes, we are full and chubby,
And we have lots of feed;
Like corn and grinded barley,
And stacks of hay with seed."

"It's not my business really,
And I don't care, 'tis true —
But by the way, dear Spottie,
What is the date you're due?"

"Come has the time for supper,
What will we get for treat?
Be damned! here comes that poet.
And brings us straw to eat!"

THE SKALD

by Freda Bjorn

I am the part of every living thing.
I tune into the rhythm of the sea.
My aspirations curve upon the wing
Of song birds, with their soaring melody.
I lift my vision, let my spirit fly,
Beyond awareness of the night and day.
Yet if I hear a haunting human cry
I sink into the passiveness of clay.
As nature is embedded in my thought
I listen to the music of the earth.
In winter months deep solitude is taught,
And spring awakens me to seek rebirth.
My poetry is buried in my bones
And springs to life from ancient overtones.

MIND AND HEART

by Paul A. Sigurdson

Keep fore'er your mind and heart from
aging,
Be the friend to twilight's glowing,
Son to morning's brilliant showing.

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Sara's Carol

(INTO A WORLD OF PAIN AND SORROW)

for full chorus

WORDS AND MUSIC

by

PAUL A. SIGURDSON

ARRANGEMENTS

by

DOROTHY LAWSON

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Sara's Crawl

(Into a World of Pain and Sorrow)

Adagio

Al - lo In - to a world of pain and sor - row, The ba - by Jes - us came to
 In a world of sor - row, Ba - by Jes - us came to

be, in - fant in a ter - ri - ble or - row,
 be, in - fant in a ter - ri - ble or - row,
 be, in - fant in a ter - ri - ble or - row,

God's mes - sen - ger to set man free. Now we turn to Him in sor - row,
 God's mes - sen - ger to set man free. Now we turn to Him in sor - row,
 God's mes - sen - ger to set man free. Now we turn to Him in sor - row,
 And we turn to Him in pain; Be - cause He of - fers us His
 And we turn to Him in pain; Be - cause He of - fers us His
 And we turn to Him in pain; Be - cause He of - fers us His

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF ICELANDIC DRAMA IN NORTH AMERICA

by Lee Brandson and Hulda Danielsdottir

com-fort, And He re - fresh-es us a - gain.

com - fort, And He re - fresh-es us a - gain.

com - fort, And He re - fresh-es us a - gain.

Warm-ing hearts thru all the world; Bring-ing hope to all the world.

Warm - ing hearts thru the world; Bring-ing hope to all the world.

Warm-ing hearts thru the world; Bring-ing hope to all the world.

In January of 1880 the Winnipeg Framfarafélag (Progressive Society) staged a public performance of Sigridur Eyjarfjardarsol. By the end of this decade virtually every Icelandic community in North America had one or more amateur theatrical groups rehearsing for regular performances, and these groups continued to play an active and vital role in the cultural life of these communities throughout the first half of the present century. The plays produced were mostly from Iceland, but there were also a considerable number of plays written by Western Icelanders — at least 34 plays that we know of. Some of these productions were taken on tour through Saskatchewan, Manitoba and North Dakota, and at least one theatrical group from Iceland also toured through these communities. There was also at least one Western Icelandic play — Reverend Jakob Jonsson's *Óldur* — which was performed in Iceland.

The Canada-Iceland Foundation has recently awarded Lee Brandson and Hulda Danielsdottir a grant for preliminary research into these dramatic activities, towards the goal of preparing an anthology and history of Icelandic drama in North America.

Unfortunately, little has been written on the subject, and few of the plays written by the Western Icelanders were published. For this reason, the success or failure of this project will ultimately depend upon public support; the authors need to contact as many people as possible who have knowledge of the early drama groups in their communities, and who have or know of manuscripts of unpublished plays. The most extraordinary case of 'lost' plays are at least 12 full-length plays known to have been written by the great novelist Johann

Magnus Bjarnason, of which only the titles survive. Others include *Stapinn* by Reverend Jakob Jonsson, *Emigrantinn* by Valdi Johannesson of Vidir, and *Randi Boli* and *Studentarnir* by Johannes P. Pálsson and Baldur Jonsson.

If you have any knowledge of these or other Western Icelandic plays, or of amateur drama in your area, please contact: Lee Brandson at 247 - 99 Dalhousie Drive, Winnipeg R3T 3M2, phone 261-6692 or Hulda Danielsdottir at 139 Greenwood Ave., Winnipeg R2N 2T4, phone 257-3515.

About the Authors:



Camp leaders: Seated: Omar Simundsson; Standing, left to right: Lee Brandson, Linda Benediktson, Neil McInnis, Hulda Danielsdottir and Jackie Goodman. Missing: Shelly Stevens, Kristjana Gunnars, Elva Simundsson.

Lee Brandson is a third generation Western Icelander whose family left Lundar, Manitoba for Winnipeg the year he was born. He has a B.A. in Icelandic Studies from the University of Manitoba, and is currently doing graduate work in Linguistics. His interest in languages has enabled him to spend a year in Iceland, and more recently to spend a year in Papua, New Guinea doing field-work on a tribal lan-

guage. He is active in several cultural organizations, including Icelandic-Canadian Fron, the Icelandic Festival Committee and Icelandic Camp.

Hunda Danielsdottir was born and raised in Njardvik, Iceland. She has lived in Canada since 1977. She has a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Manitoba, and has also studied theatre both

in Iceland and at the U. of M. She participates in several cultural organizations, teaching Icelandic both at the Scandinavian Centre and at Icelandic Camp. She is also the director and president of the newly-founded Scandinavian Drama Society operating out of the Scandinavian Centre. Ms. Danielsdottir is married and has two children.

LETTERS TO PAUL H. T. THORLAKSON REGARDING VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

by Perry S. Bower

August 31, 1964

Dear Doctor Thorlakson:

Re: Vilhjalmur Stefansson

Since you recently reminded me, I have been trying to piece together the story of the Stefansson rifle which came into my family's hands sometime around the early 1920's.

The first mention of this rifle appears to have occurred in "The Voyage of the Karluk" by Stefansson. The Winnipeg libraries do not seem to have a copy although I am continuing to try elsewhere.

Roughly, the story is this. Before Stefansson started out on one of his Arctic trips, — I believe it was around 1915 or 1916, — he presented with a "Mannlicker" rifle by the Harvard Travellers Association. A suitably engraved plate was put on the butt. Stefansson took this rifle with him on the Karluk.

The Karluk started on a voyage of discovery by entering the Arctic Ocean via the Bering Sea. She apparently had just crossed through the Bering Straits when she encountered unusually heavy ice and all progress was stopped while she drifted in the pack for some time. Stefansson ap-

parently harboured no concern about the ship and decided to undertake some exploration across the ice towards the North American continent. This was done by means of dog teams and there were either two or three sleds provisioned and a party led by Stefansson started out on what was eventually to turn out to be one of the great epics of the north. The land party was gone for some time but eventually returned but could not find the ship. Stefansson came to the conclusion that the ship had either been sunk after being crushed by the ice or had escaped southwards. Since he had no means of communication, he decided to return to the mainland, to live off the country, to carry out such exploration as he could with the resources at his command, and to prove that it was possible for white men to live in the Arctic by living exactly as the Eskimos. This he did, returning to civilization a couple of years later. I wish I could remember the dates but, unfortunately, I have not read this book for twenty or twenty-five years.

Meantime, what happened to the Karluk? Shortly after Stefansson left her in the Arctic, the pressure of the ice crushed the vessel and she began to sink. The crew left

behind took to the ice and made it to Siberia, — one of them taking with him the rifle to which I have referred. The following year they made their way back to Vancouver or Victoria where the Captain of the Karluk put the rifle in the C.P.R. checkroom and mailed the check to Stefansson, — I believe care of the Harvard Travellers Association.

Stefansson did not get his mail for a year or so, at which time charges had built up against the checked rifle to a considerable amount of money. Stefansson refused to pay the railroad's charge and the rifle was, therefore, either put up to auction or was about to be put up. Mr. Apps, one of the railroad's vice-presidents, heard about it and bought the rifle in, although I am rather inclined to think he had it taken out of the checkroom so that it could not be sold. Not long after this, Mr. Apps visited our home and saw some of the guns my father had collected over the years and offered to give him the Stefansson rifle. The fact that he offered to give him the rifle suggests to me that he had not bought it at the auction himself.

The rifle became one of the most interesting pieces in my father's collection where it remained, I believe, until the early 1930's. At that time, Mr. Stefansson was in Winnipeg, I believe with the Chautauqua, when someone informed him that his rifle was part of a local collection. He, therefore, came to see my father, who incidentally had always been a great admirer of Stefansson. Father was in a difficult position because, while he wanted to return the rifle to Stefansson, he was not exactly sure as to whether or not he had clear title to it. If Mr. Apps had not purchased it at auction, then there was always the possibility that the title still remained with the C.P.R. I don't know how this problem was resolved but, in any event, my father

removed the rifle from his collection and re-presented it to Mr. Stefansson.

I am sorry I cannot be more exact about the various dates involved. I have discussed this with my father who, as you know, is almost 98, and he himself is somewhat hazy as to the various elapses of time. I would like to regain a copy of "The Voyage of the Karluk". The only copy that I know of belongs to Mr. Jack Cornelius who bought our old summer home at Minaki.

I know that if you are interested in more detail, my father would welcome a personal visit in order to expand on what I have put in this letter.

Kindest personal regards.

Sincerely,

Perry

P.S.: The University Library has the book and is lending it to me. I should be able to "firm up" some of the actual dates.

* * *

September 1, 1964

Dear Doctor: —

I have found a copy of "The Last Voyage of the Karluk", the authors being Bartlett and Hale. Bartlett was the Captain of the Karluk in which Stefansson sailed in 1913 to the Arctic. The book can be obtained from the University of Manitoba Library, its index number being 919.8 B284 LA.

References to the rifle in question appear on pages 110, 129, and 137.

Sincerely,

Perry

P.S.: Capt. Bartlett was with Peary's expedition to the North Pole. I don't know if

he went all the way — but he was master of the — Peary's ship.

* * *

September 4, 1964

Dear Dr. Thorlakson:

I might refer you to "The Friendly Arctic" by Stefansson, printed by Mac-Millan, reference 919-8 (University Library) S81 FR 1943. On page 56, Stefansson says:

"When our hunting party left the ship (Karluk) we expected to be absent from it only a week or two . . . Wilkins (later Sir Hubert), whose work and pleasure alike was photography, left all his equipment on the ship except the lightest camera. I had a specially good rifle, presented to me by the Harvard Travellers Club of Boston, which I had promised to use on all important trips. I left this rifle aboard and took an ordinary one."

This is the only reference I can find in "The Friendly Arctic" to the rifle in question but it is undoubtedly it. The rest of the history of the rifle I think you will have to take substantially as written by me in my previous letters and which I verified as closely as possible with my father.

It is interesting to note that while Stefansson went ashore for a maximum of two weeks in September, 1913, he essentially lived off the country, with the few men he had with him and two sledges, for what I believe was as long as four years. I think he returned to civilization just about the time the first World War ended. He makes the observation on page 686 that he helped to celebrate the real ending of the War upon his arrival in Toronto, — "a war from which we had been more nearly

shielded than any citizens of the civilized world."

Sincerely,

Perry

Mr. Bower is a retired vice-president and treasurer of the Great-West Life Insurance Company, Winnipeg, Canada. He now resides in Carmel-by-the-sea, California.

NEW ORLEANS

by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer

by day

Trees splash green against a silver sky
And rivers of flowers flow through the square,
While underfed artists paint faces they never knew,
And never will know.
A gaunt young man stretches his form
Across the paved walk;
His bones protrude through stretched skin.
Cathedral bells ring,
And the windows of houses, shades drawn,
Reflect the flowing images of paper people.
A stench of garbage rises heavily in the air.

by night

The sounds of Jazz lifts its lonely voice into darkness
And hangs sadly upon air amidst
Tinsel of laughter, both silver and gold.
A girl of the night stretches
And searches for the next purpose in her life,
Which has little purpose.
And all the voices become one voice
As the carnival spins onward,
Toward morning,
And the gaunt young man
With his palm spread upward.

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by LaDonna Breidfjord Backmeyer

WOODLAND ELVES HELPED MAN BEAT DRUG PROBLEMS

by Edward Reynolds

You too can be Saved!! Through the Nordic Connection.

A one-time drug abuser says woodland elves actually helped him defeat the destructive habit that was ruining his life.

Not only that, but the warmhearted little people even stuck around to help him hack out a modest living in the woods.

Confesses Ezekiel Appleby: "I've done my fair share of drugs, but these little buggers are for real.

"When I looked at myself in the mirror I saw a circle of cruelty, hardness and despair. But the little people changed all that. They've taught me self-control, to love myself."

Avoiding

Appleby, 23, who has been living in the Maine woods since his release from a drug rehabilitation center in Portland two years ago, says the wee folk befriended him after carefully avoiding mankind for centuries.

The elves are not eerie supernatural beings or darling fairy tale spirits, Appleby says, but descendants of a hardy — although small — Nordic people brought to these shores more than 1,000 years ago by Vikings.

"My favorite elfin buddy, Anders, told me that their folklore has it that a large percentage of the Viking population was affected by a strange sickness similar to the flu," he explains.

"It affected the genetic makeup of their children. They were born as midgets."

Incredibly, Appleby's fantastic disclosures appear to be rooted in solid historical fact.

Dr. Kenneth Cook, professor of anthropology at the University of Maine, said the Viking presence 1,000 to 1,200 years ago has been documented by several archeological expeditions throughout the state.

Says the professor: "I cannot deny the Vikings might have left some of their own behind, but it would be hard to believe their descendants, whether elves or not, could have survived without being detected."

Appleby says the little people have remained so well hidden because they are nocturnal creatures.

Although they do not speak English and he cannot converse in their language, he says they communicate with each other by using hand signals.

The elves have blue eyes and blonde hair, and the men have facial hair, he says, but otherwise they are similar to Indians in many ways.

Appleby confides that he was fighting addiction to PCP, a particularly nasty mind-bending drug known among abusers as angel dust, when the elves helped to convince him to change his way of life.

"They chop my wood into perfect four-foot lengths. Sometimes I bring some frozen venison out of the freezer and we build a big fire and cook it up good and have a real fine meal.

"I've had to buy about 40 pairs of those new-wave sunglasses so the light from the fire won't hurt their eyes."

JUDGEMENT DAY

by Paul A. Sigurdson

I fear my life on earth in equal share
With Judgement Day, of how I am approved;
Because I know the one soul I possess,
Can never from my keeping be removed.

BE SERIOUS — IT'S GOLF

by Paul A. Sigurdson

There is only one way to approach the game of golf. You must take it seriously. Don't appear at the first tee like a misplaced Haight-Ashbury hippie, togged in blue-jeans, running shoes and a black ten-gallon hat, brim up and askew on your head. Don't resurrect your old Uncle Jockerby's ash-shafted clubs, and don't be seen with any of those freshly enamelled balls you buy from the little link-rats at the entrance gate.

In golf you'll find the approach is important. Take up the game in the right spirit. I suggest you buy yourself a pair of plus-fours, a tweed cap, a V-necked sweater and a pair of stockings with a diamond design. That will show you know something about the history of the game, and I guarantee you'll make an impression. You'll need clubs, a bag and a caddy cart. And don't forget, you'll need about twelve dozen golf balls. Stick to the brand names; even if they don't make any that float! Don't hesitate to spend your entire month's paycheck on your accoutrements. This will arouse your interest in the sport, and I have a feeling it may arouse your wife as well.

I advise you to join a Country Club right off. Something prestigious, historical. A \$5,000.00 membership fee has a certain way of intensifying your attraction to the game. It will encourage you to get started early in the season. Golfing in the snow with a red radioactive ball can be an adventure. Some people may have a hard time getting in. I have a friend, Hymie, who got in like a song, because his wife's father's brother's nephew's daughter's brother-in-law owns the club.

However, once you're in, you're in. All rights and privileges are yours. You are what they call 'bonnified'. I'm not sure just how they 'bonnify' you, but I think it is

some kind of Scottish initiation that originated in the St. Andrew's pub. Some day I'll look it up. I do know if you're 'bonnified' you have the exclusive right to get 'beezied' to the gills in the 19th hole.

The Country Clubs have increased tremendously in the last few years. You see, golf is really a relaxing game. Several of the more cultured and psychologically advanced clubs now have what is fondly known as 'the womping tree'; a sturdy oak post cemented six feet into the patio at the 18th hole. Finishing players can relax by 'womping' it to their heart's desire. Wisely, there are no restrictions on 'womps' but the management has a conditional clause absolving themselves of all blame for cardiac failure. This unique form of relaxation is usually done with a faulty putter, and I am amazed at the number of faulty putters put out by the manufacturers. It is enough for you to lose faith in American technology. So the 'womping' tree does get a lot of affectionate attention. I did witness one two-hundred-and-ten pound giant miss an eight inch putt and go into an unusual form of relaxation. Foaming at the mouth, he attacked the 'womping tree' coiling his steel shafted putter around the post like a bull whip. Still wanting to extend his relaxation, he went 'up the scale' so to speak, bestowing the same treatment on the '2' iron, then going for the '3', the '4' and so on. I don't know where he stopped, I lost track counting. I think he'd had enough of this relaxation when he reached the wedge. There is no doubt he was well relaxed by the time he was finished. I saw him stagger, flushed (with triumph) to the 19th hole. I hope for his sake he was 'bonnified'. He did quit the relaxing game after that. I wonder what happened to his set of woods? One of his neighbours did

tell me he smelled a strange odor of burning shellac from his barbecue fire one evening.

Now that you're one of the 'in' ones, go down to the first tee Sunday morning. Get there early. Oh, damn! There's a queue already. All celebrities, all bonnified. I see Picklepain — he's in furs, and Goodbury — he's in jewellery. There's Mr. and Mrs. Rubiat — he's in timber and she's 'god an eche in da pendix'. Ganderpooch is there too. He's about to tee off. Cristopher Ganderpooch, man he's a big one! He's up to his teeth in oil. And with him is his brother Rafe, who is up to his teeth in a lot of things — especially debt.

Watch Ganderpooch. He's approaching the ball, threatening it. He's a real golfer. You can see that by the hypnotic gleam in his eye, and the white that's blossoming on his knuckles. He takes the game seriously. Be quiet everyone. This is serious. A mere whisper could have an earthquake effect. Watch Ganderpooch as he begins his backswing. Look at those Bluto arms swing up and over his head. Wait. He's lowered his club. We can take another breath. He's taking a firmer grip. Now the veins are popping out on his arms. Relax, everyone. He's going to address the ball again. A realignment. Direction is important in this game. O.K., fasten your belts, he's about to uncoil.

Whoosh! Man, what a swing! There's power. Don't anyone dare deny it. No sir! Ganderpooch certainly has power. He's driven the clubhead four inches into the sod! Did anyone say he didn't have power? Whoever said that, doesn't know the refinements of golf. And look. The frightened ball has fallen off the tee, from the concussion. That tells the story.

Now for the ball. Ganderpooch takes his stance again. It is not quite the true stance of the pro. There is something vaguely different about it; and yet, no denying it, it

is a stance. And it is a stance to remember. It has the singular dynamic quality of a constipated wrestler poised to cripple his opponent. But, as I have said, the stance is a stance.

All set now. Here comes the hefty Mickey Mantle roundhouse again. Whack! Look at that loft! Look at that graceful curve, like the flight of a boomerang! Don't worry, the creek in that area is not too deep. I told you direction was important.

He's on his way now, finished with his first bit of relaxation. I see him striding like an explorer heading for the primeval forest. We won't bother to witness his method of relaxation in the creek bed; and we know all about his power.

Go ahead. It's your turn now. The others are holding back. They recognize a serious golfer when they see one. Those matched clubs have an expensive click about them; your plush leather bag could double as an elongated portmanteau, and of course, those baggy grey plus-fours, which show off your Bobby Jones legs, have told them everything they care to know.



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CHURCHES

Photographs by H. Freeman Skaptason



Gimli Lutheran Church. Organized 1877.



Arnes Lutheran Church. Originally established 1877.



First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg. Founded 1878.



Lutheran Church, Selkirk, Manitoba. founded 1889.



First Federated Unitarian Church of Winnipeg. Organized in 1891. Present building built in 1921.



Unitarian Church, Hnausa, Manitoba. Established no date. Removed from its original location to its present site.



Geysir Lutheran Church. Established 1890. Struck by lightning and burned in 1983.



Christian Fellowship Unitarian Church, Gimli, Manitoba. Established by the Rev. Magnus Skaptason in 1891. Removed in 1904 to its present site.



Ardal Lutheran Church, Arborg, Manitoba. Established 1902.



Unitarian Church, Arborg, Manitoba. Established 1923.



A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Gleðileg jól og farsælt nýtt ár
FROM THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN TO ITS READERS

THE NEW GUNNBJORN'S SKERRIES

(Gunnbjarnarsker hid Nyja)

A ONE-ACT PLAY

by Johannes P. Pálsson

dedicated to Stephan G. Stephanson

(Translated from the Icelandic by Hulda Danielsdóttir
and Lee Brandson)

Translators' note: Gunnbjorn's Skerries (Gunnbjarnarsker) are a group of islands, probably off the east coast of Greenland. They were the site of the earliest recorded landing on North American soil by a European. (cf. The Vinland Sagas, Penguin 1965)

* * * *

Characters:

Truth, the Idealist, the Legislator,
the Soldier, the Scientist, the Capitalist, a Catholic Priest,
Fashion, Decency, and two Sailors

* * *

The stage is a sandy beach. In the background the still ocean is visible. On each side of the stage are steep cliffs. On stage right a point of rock reaches out onto the beach from the main cliff, obstructing the view of the ocean on that quarter of the stage. Above this rock the masts of a ship can be seen. The sun is just setting, and as the play proceeds the lighting is gradually dimmed until at the play's conclusion there is total darkness. Truth stands on the centre of the beach and looks upon the ocean. He is a muscular and graceful youth of light complexion. He is almost naked. The Idealist enters from behind the projecting rock. He is wearing a swimming suit and is still wet from a swim. He is well built, and his features reveal both kindness and intelligence.

The Idealist: (observes Truth) I dove into the ocean to arrive ahead of my fellow travellers.

Truth: You are always ahead of your fellow travellers.

The Idealist: You are Truth and you shall show me the way up the cliff. (points to the cliff on stage left) I have decided to explore your country.

Truth: And your companions?

The Idealist: They will only delay us.

Truth: I will gladly accompany you wherever you wish. Let's go then.

He takes the Idealist's hand. They climb up the cliff on stage left.

The splashing of oars is heard behind the projecting rock on stage right.

The Voice of the Scientist: This is the land of Truth, and I think it must be Truth himself who is ascending the cliff with the Idealist.

The Voice of the Legislator: Row faster, boys. We must not lose sight of him. The Idealist has never been a good citizen, and he may lead Truth astray.

The Voice of the Priest: All is secure. Truth is a servant who must obey every demand of the holy church.

The Voice of the Capitalist: Yes, but he will only obey if he can hear us. A hundred dollars, boys, if you get us quickly ashore.

The Voice of the Scientist: We have fled the land of Falsehood. If you reach the land of Truth in time, you will become famous sailors.

The Voice of Fashion: Then I will decorate you with more medals, and honour you with more titles than you have every dreamt of.

The Voices of the Sailors: We are rowing as if our lives were at stake.

A short silence except for the splashing of oars which becomes louder. The prow of a row-boat can be seen landing beneath the rock's edge on stage right. The occupants of the boat step ashore. The Scientist has white hair, wears dark clothes and looks respectable. The Catholic Priest is solemn and serious, and wears a cossock. The Capitalist is stout, middle aged and wears a grey suit. The Legislator, who is an energetic looking man, wears an overcoat. The Soldier, a big man, wears a grand uniform. Fashion is young, beautiful, and wears flashy clothes. Each of them carries some baggage. The two Sailors wear oilskins. The Sailors remain standing by the boat while the others survey their surroundings with curiosity.

The Legislator: (to the Scientist) You call Truth.

The Scientist: (calls) Truth! We have fled the land of Falsehood and searched for your realm. Now we have arrived, travellers of high stature, expecting you to help us.

A short pause while they all looked, full of excitement and expectation, up the cliff on stage left.

Fashion: He has left with the Idealist. But what does it matter? We have arrived in a new country, and here we will start anew. What do we need Truth for anyhow?

The Scientist: We are complete strangers here. Only Truth can guide us in this country.

The Capitalist: He alone knows where the wealth of this land is to be found.

The Priest: The Lord alone prevails. He will reveal to us the whole truth in this new land.

Truth descends the cliff on stage left.

The Scientist: There he comes.

The Capitalist: He is nothing but an inexperienced youth.

The Priest: May God protect us from trusting him with our future. (crosses himself)

The Legislator: If he is correctly handled he may be made into a law-abiding citizen.

The Soldier: A soldier's uniform would become him.

Fashion: Oh, he's wonderful. I could dress that body so it would become unrecognizable.

The Scientist: (walks to meet Truth, who by now is down on the beach) We have come from the land of Falsehood. There our lives had become unbearable, and now we must rely on your assistance.

Truth: Yes, the Idealist told me of your travels.

The Capitalist: And how far has he gone now?

Truth: He is just beginning to learn how to climb, and therefore has not travelled far.

The Capitalist: He may find the gold before us.

Truth: He's not searching for gold. But what do you want from me?

The Legislator: You must lead us up the cliff and show us the land.

Truth: That I will, if you accept my guidance.

The Priest: (crosses himself) He will get lost! Let us pray.

He looks towards the sky, closes his eyes, places his hands on his chest, and kneels. — The Legislator, Fashion, the Soldier and the Capitalist all do the same. The Capitalist does not close his eyes, but glances sideways at Truth and the Scientist. The Sailors kneel by the boat.

The Scientist: I would prefer that you take the lead, and we become your servants.

Truth: I shall be both at once; servant and master.

The Capitalist: (stands up briskly) This is nobly spoken. But if I have any say in the matter, then I would prefer you to be our servant only. Then you could guide us up the cliff, show us your country, and give us hints as to where there is gold to be found. And then I will remunerate you for it.

Truth: But it is a difficult walk up that narrow path. Many have fallen from it and died.

The Capitalist: The Scientist is going, and he is my best friend. I will follow him wherever he goes, to the ends of the earth.

Truth: (calls loud and clear) Let us go then.

They all rise.

The Legislator: It is I who decides when we leave.

The Capitalist: But why should we waste our time here on the beach?

The Legislator: There are many things that have to be considered. We can't start the journey without Decency.

Fashion: It would be better if Decency came with us.

The Priest: If she's not willing to accompany us, then I will refuse to go. Such a thing would be a sin against justice.

The Scientist: But she refused to accompany us ashore.

Fashion: She wasn't allowed to. Not until someone had gone ahead.

The Legislator: She must come with us. (he goes to the Sailors by the boat) Row out to the ship and summon Decency. Tell her that Truth is going to guide us through this land, but we are not going without her. You have yourselves seen Truth, and you can assure her that he is not as awful as she had imagined him to be.

The Sailors push the boat behind the projecting rock, where it disappears. The splashing of oars is heard.

The Capitalist: (calls) You'll be well rewarded boys, if you are quick.

The Legislator: (calls) You don't have to mention Truth's appearance.

Fashion: The nakedness of Truth must be hidden before Decency sees him.

The Legislator: Quite right! And his clothes shall bear witness to our civilization. (He opens a briefcase and takes out a pair of white trousers. He says to Truth): You must wear these trousers.

Truth: But I never wear any clothes. These trousers will only hinder my movement, and delay our journey.

The Legislator: But Decency demands it.

Truth: That doesn't make any difference. They will still hinder my movement.

The Legislator: (to the soldier) Do your duty!

The Soldier lays Truth down and puts the trousers on him.

The Capitalist: But is this wise? If he can't make it up the cliff or falls, we may lose all the wealth of this land.

The Scientist: Truth never loses his footing.

The Legislator: Quite right. (looks around) Well, now. What do the rest of you have that can hide the nakedness of Truth?

The Priest: (Opens his bag and takes out an old and worn cassock. He throws it to the Soldier.) Here, this is an old and venerable piece of clothing. This will cover the poor fellow.

Truth: No one can climb the cliff in this costume. (The Soldier puts the cassock over Truth's head.)

The Capitalist: (Opens his suitcase and pulls out of it a great and beautiful belt of gold. — He says to the Soldier) Help Truth to his feet. (The Soldier raises Truth to his feet and the Capitalist puts the belt around his waist.) Keep this my friend, and if anyone does better by you than let me know.

Truth: This belt is like the fetters of a slave. I can't stand upright while wearing it.

The Legislator: You must. (to the Scientist) What is your contribution to Truth's costume?

The Scientist: But I think this is ridiculous! Is it necessary that I . . . ?

The Legislator: I demand that you do it.

The Capitalist: But Truth says himself that he is opposed to the costume, and that it will impede his movements.

The Legislator: What of it? He says he's a servant, and as such he must obey.

The Priest: If his apparel is a burden, then he should thank the almighty God that we have placed it upon him.

The Scientist: (reaches into his pocket and takes out a large pair of spectacles — he places them on Truth) This is the most recent scientific discovery. The most powerful microscopic lens in existence!

Truth: (looks around) I can see nothing but the smallest of things!

The Scientist: (smiles contendedly) But you probably see them clearly and in detail.

Truth: No one sees clearly and in detail except if he sees all things simultaneously.

All except Truth: See all things simultaneously?

Truth: Yes, in order to understand one thing fully, one needs to know all things. To be fair to one thing, one needs to see all things. But now — I am half blind.

The Priest: This is blasphemy! No one but God sees all things.

Fashion: This I have never heard before, that one man can see all things at the same time. Oh, isn't he amusing.

The Scientist: I think he's insane.

The Capitalist: If he sees everything, then he also knows where all the world's wealth is hidden.

The Legislator: (to the Soldier) What are you going to add to Truth's costume?

The Soldier: I own nothing, not even the uniform I wear, although I wear it constantly, whether it be warm or cold.

The Legislator: You have handcuffs, though.

The Soldier: But I can't give them away. They belong to the state — the land of Falsehood.

The Legislator: I command you to put them on Truth. The Scientist says he is insane.

The Soldier takes a pair of handcuffs from his pack and fastens them around Truth's wrists.

Truth: These irons keep me from pointing out to you the beauty of this land. I can never guide you as long as I wear this outfit.

The Legislator: That remains to be seen.

Truth: By then it will be too late.

The Legislator: You must comply. (to Fashion) You have yet to add your share to Truth's costume.

Fashion: (who has been watching with admiration) This is wonderful! A new wardrobe. Now I will add what is missing. Kneel, mister Truth.

Truth: I don't know how.

The Legislator: (to the Soldier) Teach Truth how to kneel.

The Soldier presses Truth to his knees. Fashion reaches into her purse and pulls out an assortment of make-up. She paints Truth's face until he becomes unrecognizable and looks more like a woman than a man.

Fashion: Now you have a new face and everyone will find you attractive.

She puts a gaudy looking woman's hat on his head. — While this was taking place, the sound of splashing oars has been heard from behind the projecting rock.

The Priest: This young man is no longer the image of God.

The Scientist: He has been completely transformed.

The Legislator: He has obeyed my every command. He can now become a model citizen.

Truth: (in a bitter voice) I am losing my strength.

The Capitalist: (to the Legislator) Make sure that he retains his vigour until he has shown us the riches of this new land.

The Legislator: Leave that to me. (to the Soldier) Prop him up if he gets any weaker. (the Soldier puts his arm around Truth's waist)

Fashion: (who has finished putting her stuff back into her purse — claps her hands) Oh, this is an adorable outfit. A completely new idea. A sheer chance, but a great success.

The boat has landed, but as before only the prow is visible beneath the projecting rock. The two sailors go ashore. One of them assists Decency out of the boat. She is a graceful yet arrogant looking woman who dresses smartly. She walks to the others who are gathered around Truth.

Decency: What is the meaning of this? Why have I been summoned here?

The Legislator: This man (points to Truth) is to assist us up this cliff and lead us into the new land, but as you can understand, we felt it would be imprudent of us to set out on a journey without you.

Decency: What kind of nonsense is this? As far as I can see, this is a woman; even though her costume is somewhat odd.

The Scientist: No, this is Truth. It is only that he now bears some semblance of our civilization. We dared not let you see him in the state he was in when we found him.

The Priest: Now he has also stopped his blasphemy.

Fashion: He is charming the way he is now.

Decency: I don't understand you at all! You talk about some man who is nowhere to be seen. I will, however, readily admit that Fashion has successfully created a new costume for this lady, and that alone should be enough for you to treat her with common courtesy.

The Capitalist: It is no one's intention to abuse mister Truth.

Decency: But you are abusing the lady by calling her a man.

The Legislator: (confused) Well, is this then a woman?

The Priest: Do you doubt the words of Decency?

The Capitalist: Where then is Truth, who was supposed to find all the wealth of this land?

The Scientist: (looks at Truth) If this is Truth, I can no longer recognize him. This is Falsehood.

All: (back off, frightened) It is Falsehood.

Truth: I'm going to faint. (falls on his face)

The Priest: (crosses himself) God preserve us.

The Capitalist: But where is Truth? We have to find him again. He alone can help us find the gold.

The Scientist: Truth is not here. We are still in the land of Falsehood.

The Legislator: Away, away with us all from the land of Falsehood! (they all run to the boat and hurry aboard — the Soldier is last) Go run falsehood through with your sword.

The Soldier walks to where Truth lies. Meanwhile the boat is pushed from the shore. It disappears behind the projecting rock. The sound of splashing oars is heard. The Soldier pulls out his sword, runs Truth through, and leaves the sword in the wound.

Voice of the Legislator: Row now boys, row.

Voice of the Capitalist: A hundred dollars each if you row like men to the ship.

The Idealist: (comes down the cliff on stage left) Why are they leaving? Where is Truth?

The Soldier: Truth isn't here. We are still in the land of Falsehood. But now she is dead.

The Idealist: Falsehood is dead? But why didn't you go in the boat with the others?

The Soldier: The Legislator commanded me to stay behind and kill Falsehood.

The Idealist: My friend, this is some sort of a misunderstanding. (sees Truth's corpse) But who lies there?

The Soldier: That is Falsehood. I ran her through at the Legislator's command.

The Idealist: You have made a dreadful mistake!

He pulls the sword out of the wound and throws it aside. He then removes the handcuffs from Truth, as well as the costume, and wipes the make-up from his face.

The Idealist: You have run your sword through Truth's heart.

The Soldier: What business is that of yours? I was only following the Legislator's orders.

Truth: (rises to his feet — no wound is visible on his body — he is completely cured and in good spirits) You have helped me shed the skin of Falsehood.

The Idealist: Yes, without you I can't make it up the cliff. But this was an unfortunate delay. My companions always manage to delay me, and by coming down the cliff I have lost some of my stamina.

Truth: Don't you want to abandon your plan to ascend the cliff? The rock is steep and high. You may fall.

The Idealist: No, I am going to try yet again. I noticed that my hands and feet mold the rock. Those who follow will see my imprint to whatever height I reach.

Truth: Let us go then.

The Soldier: May I not come along?

The Idealist: You can't climb unless you take off your uniform.

The Soldier: I can't undress unless I'm ordered to.

The Idealist: I never give orders.

Truth: And neither do I.

The Idealist and Truth ascend the cliff as before. Cries of distress and terror are heard from behind the projecting rock on stage right.

Voice of the Scientist: We have run aground.

Voice of the Capitalist: It may be a sunken treasure chest.

Voice of the Legislator: I will drown if you don't rescue me.

Voice of the Capitalist: A hundred dollars to the man who rescues me.

Voice of Fashion: Oh, my gown. My expensive gown.

Voice of Decency: I thought I was travelling amongst civilized people.

Voice of the Priest: This results from striving with Truth. God have mercy on us.

Short silence.

Voices of Scientist, Capitalist, Legislator, Priest, Fashion and Decency: We are drowning!

Meanwhile, the Soldier stands as if petrified, and is startled from this state only when the Idealist falls down onto the beach. The Soldier walks to the Idealist and examines the corpse.

The Soldier: He is dead. I alone outlive my fellow travellers, and now there is no one to command me. My life is of no value.

He picks up his sword, falls on it and dies.

Truth descends the cliff on stage left. He walks to the same spot where he stood at the opening of the play and looks out upon the ocean. The stage is now in total darkness.

CURTAIN.

SHARON PROSKE WINS SILVER MEDAL AWARD

Sharon Proske, of 4991 60A Street in Ladner, B.C., recently received Kwantlen College's Governor General's Silver Medal Award for achieving the highest academic standing at the college in the 1983-84 graduating year. A graduate of the college's two-year accounting program, Proske also won the Certified General Accountant's scholarship award.

The Governor General's medal is considered to be the highest academic honour the College can bestow on a graduate of a two-year university transfer or career program.

The student who will receive the award has completed the requirements for a two-year diploma — taking 20 courses and receiving 20 A's. In addition this student also did extra work setting up a tutorial system

for fellow students, and made significant contributions in class.

This student is married, has two children, graduated from the University of Victoria, has also studied in Europe, is Sports Chairman for the B.C. Summer Games, is Zone Representative of the Lower Mainland for the Recreational Canoeing Association of B.C., President of the Kwantlen Paddlers Club, is currently working on a Music Diploma, has built all the household furniture, except the piano, and is presently building a canoe.

This is undoubtedly an exceptional and talented individual.

Sharon is the daughter of Mattie Clegg and Oskar Gislason, the granddaughter of the late Herman and Emma Von Renesee and Gudmundur and Runa Gislason.

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

CANADA ICELAND FOUNDATION

We invite students of Icelandic or part-Icelandic descent to apply for the following scholarships which are offered or processed by The Canada Iceland Foundation.

Emilia Palmason Student Aid Fund

Two awards of \$500.00 each to be given annually. The recipients must be of good moral character, Icelandic descent, college calibre and primarily in need of help to continue their studies in high school, college or at University level. They are asked to sign a pledge that "somewhere along the highway of life" they will try to provide comparable help to another needy student. Closing date for applications **June 30th, 1985.**

Thorvaldson Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500.00 to be awarded annually. This annual scholarship will be awarded to a student in University or proceeding into a University in Canada or the United States. The recipient must demonstrate financial need and high scholastic ability. Closing date for applications **September 15, 1985.**

Einar Pall and Ingibjorg Jonsson Memorial Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500.00 to be awarded annually. Award to be determined by academic standing and leadership qualities. To be offered to a High School graduate proceeding to a Canadian University or the University of Iceland. Closing date for applications **September 15, 1985.**

The Canadian Iceland Foundation Scholarship

One scholarship of \$500.00 to be awarded annually. Award to be determined by academic standing and leadership qualities. To be offered to a University student studying towards a degree in any Canadian University. Closing date for applications **September 15, 1985.**

Students wishing to apply are asked to submit applications with supporting documents indicating which scholarship they wish to apply for. Information and application forms are available by telephoning 475-8064 or contacting:

**Canada Iceland Foundation
c/o M. Westdal, Secretary
40 Garnet Bay, Winnipeg Manitoba
R3T 0L6**

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IN THE NEWS

From the Newsletter of the Icelandic Canadian Club of B.C.

INTRIGUING ICELAND DISPLAY



(From left) Mrs. Bjorg Savage, Club Princess Leila Esmail and Mrs. Gunna Dahlgren wore beautiful Icelandic costumes to the Delta Museum on May 12th while young Sandra Asgeirsson examined the Guest Book.

The "Intriguing Iceland" display held at the Delta Museum and Archives from May 12th till June 24th was a great success. Many Club members enjoyed visiting it and a number of people of Icelandic descent learned about our community for the first time. To everyone who loaned articles for the display we offer our thanks and especially to Alda Steele and Linda Asgeirsson who organized both the loan of items and the opening-day luncheon.

The following is part of a letter received from Mary Brown and Daphne Savage, Curator, of the Delta Museum:

"... We at the Delta Museum and Archives would like to thank each and every person in the Icelandic community who assisted by loaning treasured items for the exhibit and our special thanks to the ladies who provided such a delicious Icelandic tea to compliment a memorable opening day.

To your Consul, Mr. Sigurdson, and his charming wife, may we express our grati-

tude for the gracious welcoming words extended to our guests and our thanks to your President, Mr. Robert Asgeirsson, for his assistance in the ceremonies."

The Museum's display, entitled "Commemorative Collectibles," recalled noteworthy events pictured on a varied collection of china, silver, pottery, fabric, wood and other backgrounds. It was presented from July 7th to August 12th at the Museum, 4858 Delta Street, Ladner, B.C. (Phone: 946-9322).

(Club President, Bob Asgeirsson, is dying to know who put a second pin at the farmstead Arngerdareyri in Isafjardardjup on the map at the Delta Museum which marked the birthplaces of the ancestors of those visiting the display. If it was you, please phone him at 937-3745.)

* * *
HÖFN A.G.M.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Icelandic Care Home (Höfn) Society on June 5th, two new directors were elected — Verona Anderson and Walter Thorfinnson.

On June 28th the Board of Directors met and elected the following officers:

- President Erling Bjarnason
- Vice-President Carl Josephson
- Secretary Herman Eyford
- Treasurer Aldis Straker

Committees were elected as follows, with the first-named Chairman:

1. Executive Committee: the four officers named above.
2. Finance Committee: Erling Bjarnason, Aldis Straker, Carl Josephson, Carl Bjornson.
3. Building Committee: Gunnthor Hen-

rickson, Carl Bjornson, Herman Eyford, Carl Josephson.

4. Residents Liaison Committee: Walter Thorfinnson, Verona Anderson, Herman Eyford.
5. Safety Committee: Aldis Straker, Gunnthor Henrickson, Walter Thorfinnson.
6. Personnel Committee: Carl Josephson, Walter Thorfinnson, Verona Anderson.
7. Nominating Committee: Carl Bjornson, Gunnthor Henrickson, Erling Bjarnason.
8. Solskin Representative to the Board: Bjorg Savage.

It is planned to have the Icelandic books housed in new secure and waterproof bookcases in the lower lounge at Höfn, and to make them available to the Icelandic community on a loan basis, operating like a public library. This will take some time to organize and an announcement will be made when arrangements are completed.

The Anniversary Tea was held at Höfn on September 30 and, as always, was catered by the Solskin Ladies Auxiliary.

* * *

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we approach the end of this term of office for the present Club executive, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my hard-working friends who have made my task as your President both a joy and an honour. The year has been full of activities revolving on the theme of maintaining our heritage and each member has taken it to heart and put real effort into planning and realizing this past year's calendar of events.

I am pleased to tell you that our present membership total is just around the 400 mark. What a remarkable achievement in just one year! I THINK THIS MAKES US THE LARGEST ICELANDIC CLUB IN NORTH AMERICA.

My wife, Linda, has been a very great

help to me through the last year in the production of this newsletter. She also worked behind the scenes in the planning of the Intriguing Iceland Display as well as raising \$350 for the Iceland Forestry Association through the sale of "Icelanders Are Irresistible" T-shirts. Other donations brought the total to \$900, which Ragnar Magnus recently delivered to Iceland.

I do hope that you will take an interest in the affairs of your Club and come out to the Annual General Meeting. We need your input and ideas for future activities. We would be most grateful, of course, for any volunteer help you might offer. We are looking for new executive members who might like to assist us in any way. Please give me a call — at 937-3745 or Lara Thor-darson at 321-8861.

—Bob Asgeirsson.

We appreciate Bob's offer to endeavour to increase the number of subscribers in B.C. to The Icelandic Canadian.

* * *

PRESIDENT VIGDIS RE-ELECTED UNOPPOSED

Vigdis Finnbogadottir, President of Iceland, has been re-elected unopposed for a second term. The President, who was first elected in 1980, was sworn in for another four years in August.

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AUGUST STAFHOLT NEWS BLAINE, WASHINGTON

Once again it is time for the Washington Northwest Fair and we plan on entering a few needle craft items with Adolph Anderson entering another house. It is always exciting to gather items to go to Lynden for everyone to see.

Circus . . . circus and everyone begins to bubble with excitement growing. The big top circus that came to the Blaine Harbor was attended by residents Freya Bourne, Elsie Meiers, Isabel Gault, Olga White, Emily Engleseth, Lynn Rehfeld, Otto Poll, and Yvonne Rothwell our volunteer. Our thanks to all who made it possible . . . to Jerry Bradon for his help with bus transportation and Lary West for his help and to the staff who had everyone ready and waiting. You were all great!!! Everyone had fun and Jessie Bohlman and Helen Bergman attended too and all were pleased with their experience in the "How to Eat a Sno-Cone", cotton candy and later a trip to the drive-in for ice cream cones . . . What an evening!!!

Insofar as the writer's mother, Dagbjort Vopnfjord, was once a resident of this fine home, he is pleased to note that the kind people in charge of it are continuing to offer the same dedicated compassionate service to people in their golden years as was accorded to his mother in years gone by.

* * *

FROM THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ICELANDIC ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO

The Icelandic Association of Chicago's celebration of the 40-year anniversary of The Republic of Iceland was a festive event. It was held in the spacious and beautifully decorated University Club at the Orrington Hotel in Evanston, Illinois, on Sunday, June 17, 1984. Attendance exceeded our projections by far with every

last of sixty seats taken at the sit-down luncheon. And what a great response to Newsletter's suggestion that parents invite and bring their sons and daughters: we never had so many young people at an association function as came that day!

The association invited as our honored guests the consuls of the other Nordic countries. The following consuls attended: Consul General of Denmark Knud W. Rasmussen, Consul of Finland Frederik Niemi, Consul General of Iceland and Mrs. Paul Sveinbjörn Johnson and Consul General of Norway and Mrs. Bjarne Solheim. The association thanks the consuls and their wives for coming because their presence as the official representatives of four Nordic countries added distinction to the anniversary celebration.

Aslaug R. Johnson, Chairman of the 17-of-June Committee, was as strikingly beautiful and dignified in her Icelandic national costume as any Fjallkona on that day at Austurvöllur in Reykjavik (fjallkona: mountain queen, symbolizing Iceland). She addressed us on the subject: Every Nation Must Preserve its History. Paul Sveinbjörn Johnson gave the keynote address in which he described, among other, the evolution of Iceland into a highly developed modern society, and Iceland's impact on international affairs. The Consuls of Norway and Denmark affirmed the bonds of friendship that unite the peoples of Iceland and the other Nordic countries. Lovisa Ruesch, President, gave a poetry reading. Following the program there was a short movie.

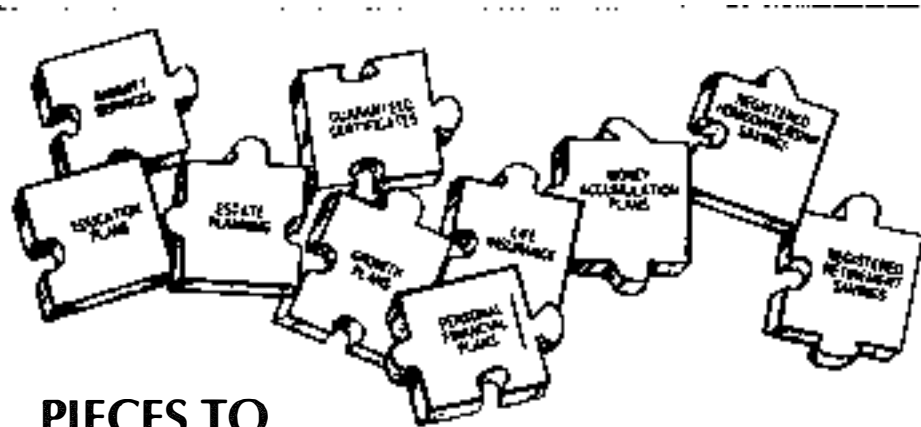
DANCING MAIDENS OF BABYLON

by Paul A. Sigurdson

Through their raiment, flimsy, flowing,
Bodies glowing virgin-small;
Through nothing hid their nakedness.
Innocence covered all.

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