



# FÁLKINN

THE OFFICAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO

November/December 2006

ICCT FÁLKINN 47th Year Number 3

## Christmas Party November 26th

It's that time of year again, and we couldn't be more excited about the holidays! There will be lots of entertainment and crafts for the children and an opportunity to cross some of those gifts off your Christmas list with our holiday bazaar. There will also be a bake sale, so you'll have an opportunity to take home some wonderful Icelandic treats. And don't forget about a visit from Santa and dancing around the Christmas tree.

### Christmas Party Details

**Date:** Sunday, November 26th - 2:30 PM

**Location:** Grace Church on the Hill

**Cost:** \$5 Members/\$6 Non-Members (Children FREE!)



*The familiar "Yuleman" has already been seen discussing toys and such around town.*

To make this party the best it can be, we need some help from you! We are looking for donations of baking for afternoon snacking and to sell for the bake sale. If you are able to donate for the bake sale, please include the recipe with your baking so others may enjoy the goods after they are gone! Brenda Bjarnason is also looking for some Yuletide Lads and Lasses to perform in the play that was done last year during the Spadina House festival. There will be two rehearsals and Brenda can email the scripts to all those interested. If some children would like to do two roles, they can let her know. If returning children would like to have the role they performed last year, that would be marvellous. Anyone interested can contact Brenda by phone at: 416-769-0707, 416-604-0660 (this is the best number to leave voice mail) or email: [bbjarnason@rogers.com](mailto:bbjarnason@rogers.com).

Finally, we are also looking for vendors to sell goods in the Christmas bazaar. So if you are interested in having a table or know of anyone who would like to, please contact Kara Schuster phone: 905-828-1984; or email: [karaschuster@rogers.com](mailto:karaschuster@rogers.com) to reserve.

**IN THIS ISSUE:** Vilhjarmur Stefansson, Pétursson's Sphere, Þórarinsdóttir's Inner Light, ICE Hockey, Nordic Nights Film Series Highlights and more!



# FÁLKINN - THE FALCON

Fálkinn is the newsletter of the Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto and is published 6—8 times a year.

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## From the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers,

This issue marks a changing of the guard, of sorts. Tómas Gunnarsson, who has done an incredible job at the helm of Fálkinn these past few years, has now assumed the role of Icelandic Editor, leaving me the task of filling in his shoes as Lay-out and Content Editor. It is a job I undertake with considerable pride, following in the family footsteps of my late Uncle Sigurd who aptly manned the editor's desk at the Kodiak Daily Mirror on Kodiak Island, Alaska from 1955-1963.

As you wander into this transition issue of Fálkinn, let me leave you with a few poignant words from my favourite Icelandic-Canadian poet, Stephan G. Stephansson:

*Monuments crumble.*

*Works of the mind survive*

*The gales of time.*

*Men's names have shorter life.*

*Forgetful time may mask where honour's due*

*But mind's best edifices live and thrive.*

Happy reading,  
John Gudmundson

(Stephansson passage from "At the Forestry Station")

### Membership information:

Single \$20, Family \$25, Senior Couple \$20, Senior Single \$15.

**New Members:** Bertha Gudbjorg, Parkhill, Toronto; Doctors Asa and Jack MacDonell, Toronto; Jim and Ruth Watt, Orillia

**Donations :** Bertha Gudbjorg, Parkhill

## Letter From the President:

The ICCT would like to welcome our new Editor, John Gudmundson and congratulate him on this first newsletter. Thank you Tomas for all your hard work, and we can't wait for you to keep us updated on all things Icelandic as the Icelandic Editor. We would also welcome Lynn Thorkelson, who has agreed to understudy Mel as Treasurer, working towards taking on the role at next year's AGM in May. We would also like to thank Barry for his continued efforts in keeping our club's membership records in order. He has done a wonderful job and we are looking for someone to continue in his path and take on this very important role on our executive.

This is a great opportunity to be involved in the club and connect with other members. Or, if you are a natural seller and have a flair for finding the newest Icelandic products, you may be just what we are looking for to take on the role of merchandiser! Please contact Kara Schuster for information on any of the openings or to volunteer for any of these exciting roles.

Kara Shuster  
ICCT President

# Letters and Announcements

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the article in the September/October Fálkinn. I appreciate your interest in my work.

For your readers' information, the show opening at The Toronto Free Gallery has been moved to Thursday, November 2.

Thank you once again.

Ione Thorkelsson

*(ed. please see back page for further information on Ione's upcoming shows)*

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Dear Readers,

The video "Iceland During World War II" is now available at the library at the Scandinavian House. It is a very interesting and educational tape documenting the British and American occupation of Iceland.

If you would like to borrow or own this tape please contact Stella Hansen at 416-267-4766.

Stella Hansen

Dear Members,

A vibrant library always needs new books and meaningful programs of interest to its users. The ICCT is in charge of a small but a very remarkable library housed in the Scandinavian Centre in Toronto. Books, periodicals, video tapes and recordings in Icelandic and English are found on its shelves, all of them relating in one way or other to Icelandic or Icelandic-Canadian topics.

Most of the library holdings have come from people of Icelandic descent in the Toronto area, who have placed them in the care of the ICCT. To run the ICCT library adequately is not an easy task, the main problem being that of a somewhat limited access for borrowers.

Members of the ICCT executive have discussed the future of the library and wish to get the opinion and advice of the ICCT membership. Therefore, a questionnaire relating to our deliberations will appear in the first issue of The Falcon in 2007. We kindly ask you to answer our questions. Your views are of the greatest importance to us.

The future of our library concerns each and every one of us.

Margrét Björgvinsdóttir  
ICCT Librarian

The rapidly improving Icelandic hockey program (spearheaded by last year's International Ice Hockey Federation Division Three World Champions) owes a great deal of its success to a small group of Icelandic-Canadian players - specifically, the determined sons of Icelandic immigrants who represented Canada in the 1920 Olympics and won the first ever Gold Medal in Olympic hockey history. That team, the now legendary Winnipeg Falcons, serves as the inspiration for the Icelandic Hockey Federation's team logo (pictured at right).

The Icelandic Falcon, the largest falcon in the world, is the cornerstone of the logo. The supporting glacier and volcanic fire are powerful and familiar symbols that refer directly to "the land of ice and fire".

But note, on close inspection you will notice the shape of the flame is in the form of the Canadian Maple Leaf - a true homage to the legacy of that historic Icelandic-Canadian team, and the spirit they inspire in the Icelandic national players to this day.

## ICE Hockey



For more information on the Icelandic-Canadian connection see:  
<http://www.winnipegfalcons.com/>

# VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON: CANADA'S GREAT ARCTIC EXPLORER

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*By Barry Stinson*

**S** In the small community of Arnes, Manitoba located some 19 km north of Gimli there is a small park and monument dedicated to the memory of Vilhjalmur Stefansson-Canada's great Arctic explorer. It was here in Arnes that Stefansson, the youngest of five children, was born on 3 November 1879 to Icelandic immigrant parents, Johann Stefansson and Ingibjorg Johannesdottir.

After suffering extreme hardship from flooding, famine, disease and the death of two of their children the Stefansson family moved to another Icelandic community in Pembina County, North Dakota in 1881.

Vilhjalmur received most of his early education from his father and by 1898 he had saved enough money to enrol in the University of North Dakota. By this time, in addition to English and Icelandic, he had already learned to speak Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and German. Four years later he was expelled for reasons of insubordination and defiance for inciting a protest within the student body. Vilhjalmur then quickly enrolled at the University of Iowa where he was awarded a B.A. and followed this by a term at Harvard where he studied in the graduate school of anthropology.



*Stefansson Monument in Arnes*

Stefansson spent the summers of 1904 and 1905 in Iceland as a physical anthropologist and subsequently joined an Anglo-American Arctic expedition from 1906-07 to Herschel Island in the Beaufort Sea where he began studying the language and culture of the Inuit and the Mackenzie River Indians.

In 1908, after arranging for the American Museum of Natural History to sponsor him and his University of Iowa classmate zoologist Rudolph Anderson on a joint expedition, Stefansson returned to the Arctic and remained for four years. The pair travelled to Herschel Island, Cape Parry and the south side of Victoria Island where they encountered a previously unknown primitive group of Inuits known as the Copper Inuits who made and used copper tools. Stefansson theorized that since many of these natives had European features and some had blue eyes that they were a mixture of natives and early Norse explorers or of the lost expedition of Sir John Franklin. Although his theory was not accepted it gave Stefansson a lot of notoriety and publicity. During this expedition Stefansson entered into an intimate relationship with an Inuit woman, Fannie Pannigabluk with whom he had a son, Alex Stefansson born in 1910. Although Stefansson never acknowledged Alex as his son he provided financially for him. The Anglican missionary who baptized Alex in 1915 recorded Fannie and Alex as Stefansson's wife and child.

Stefansson took an oath of allegiance to the King resuming his Canadian citizenship in 1913 and was appointed overall leader of a Canadian government funded Arctic venture consisting of two parties – a southern party headed by his colleague and deputy Rudolph Anderson and a northern party headed by Stefansson. Stefansson's task was "to discover new land, if any exists north of the conti-

nent of North America". The combined task force consisted of more than seventy people including fifteen trained scientists of which only two had Arctic experience. Stefansson was eager to get moving and had left too little time for planning and organization of the expedition involving the provision of supplies and training of the scientists in polar conditions. The result was a lack of confidence in Stefansson's leadership and judgment qualities by many of the team members. Nevertheless the expedition sailed from Seattle in an old wooden 247 ton vessel, the *Karluk* accompanied by two schooners to carry extra equipment. By August of 1913 the *Karluk* had outdistanced her supply schooners and was hopelessly stuck fast in ice out of sight of land. Stefansson left the vessel to hunt for fresh meat but when he returned the ship had drifted out of sight. Stefansson believed the *Karluk* was in no great danger even without his leadership and continued his exploration without the *Karluk* team for the next 4 years. In 1914 the *Karluk* crushed by ice, sank causing 11 deaths and great hardships for the survivors. During the period between 1914 and 1918 he discovered and named one hundred thousand square miles of land masses in Canada including Brock, Borden, Meighen, and Loughheed islands. In addition he outlined the continental shelf from Alaska to Prince Patrick Island. In 1918 after a serious illness Stefansson returned from his explorations- never to return to the Arctic.

Following his last expedition Stefansson formed the "Stefansson Arctic Exploration and Development Company" for the purpose of claiming Wrangel Island for Canada. Under Stefansson's direction four young men and one Inuit seamstress set off for Wrangel for this purpose but the four men perished during the attempt. The resulting negative publicity made Stefansson a *persona non grata* in Canada for many years.

In the 1920's Stefansson embarked on lecture tours, writing and collecting books and manuscripts which eventually totalled 25,000 items. Prior to World War II the US government commissioned him to prepare a manual for Arctic survival and he was re-naturalized as an American citizen around this time. During World War II Stefansson consulted on the Alaska highway and numerous other projects for the US military.

## **Monument Translation: "I know what I have experienced and I know what it has meant to me"**

Stefansson was by no means unattracted to women. In addition to his Arctic "marriage" to Fannie Pannigabluk he had a 5 year love affair with Betty Brainerd and a 17 year relationship with Fanny Hurst, the best selling novelist. When he was 62 Stefansson married Evelyn Baird, a twenty-eight year old divorcee.

Stefansson wrote numerous articles, manuals and books including an autobiography published after his death. In 1951 Stefansson moved his library to Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire and served as an honorary professor emeritus, Director of Polar Studies and continued his research, writing and public speaking

On 26 August 1962 following a stroke, Stefansson, in his eighty-third year died in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Stefansson's memory is kept alive in a number of locations including Stefansson Island off the coast of Victoria Island, the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Akureyri, Iceland, a bust in the National Gallery of Ottawa and the monument in Arnes.

# SPHERE

*By Gail Einarson-McCleery*

Icelandic artist Finnbogi Pétursson's creation 'Sphere' touched down in Toronto at the Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art on October 25th.

A large crowd was in attendance and enjoyed watching the reflections on the ceiling, as changes were signalled by four speakers in the room playing the sinusoidal wave. This wave is an elementary form of sound and a pitch that is central to most Icelandic singing.

Finnbogi uses water to 'trap' the sound, which then rhythmically moves the water, as light, which is also a sinusoidal wave, enables these waves to be projected. The floor was a popular place to lie to best observe the effects!



*Sphere*



*Portrait of the Artist - Finnbogi Pétursson*

Finnbogi's creation was featured at the Venice Biennale in 2001, where curator Scott McLeod first saw it and decided he must show it in Toronto.

In addition, Finnbogi participated in a residency at the electronic media art gallery and production facility InterAccess, and the results can be seen at 9 Ossington Avenue.

Finnbogi is an established professional artist who has been exhibiting internationally since the early 1980s. Just this week he was awarded another award in Iceland for his work. He lives and works in Reykjavik.

The opening reception was sponsored by the Embassy of Iceland, and the exhibition continues to November 25th at 401 Richmond St. W., Suite 124.

Check out the ICCT website at:  
**<http://icct.info>**



*Steinunn Þórarinsdóttir with friends*



*Steinunn with Gail, Þorður, Markus and Odon*

# Inner Light

*By Gail Einarson-McCleery*

"INNER LIGHT", Steinunn Þórarinsdóttir's latest show, opened in Toronto on Thursday, September 21st and ran to October 14th. Present to declare the show open was Ambassador Markús Örn Antonsson.

The works are being shown by her gallerist, Odon Wagner, who has opened a charming new gallery, full of light, called Odon Wagner Contemporary Gallery on Davenport Road in Toronto.

The works varied in size, material and construction, including life sized figures. Especially popular was one of her works seated on a bench outside the gallery, several people took the opportunity to sit down beside him!

*Steinnun's sons Þorður and Toti with friend (right)*



Inside, we were treated to many of her creations, ably curated by Laura Peturson (herself of Icelandic descent). Upstairs we could view a video created by Steinunn's husband Jón, which featured most of her work, including those **in situ** all around the world.

Odon said, 'Steinunn's figures do not need any introduction. Their noble, simplified faces invite the viewer to see well past the fleeting outer appearances of the human being and they themselves 'introduce' the viewer deep into the mystical spheres of inner spirituality.'

Steinunn was born, lives and works in Reykjavik. She studied sculpture in England from 1974 to 1979 and in Italy from 1979 to 1980. She has been working professionally for over 20 years and has exhibited widely in Japan, USA and Australia. Her works are in private, public and corporate collections in many countries. She has been commissioned to make site-specific sculptures for a variety of locations and has participated in international festivals such as 'Sculpture by the Sea' in Sydney, Australia.

The large crowd of art lovers, including Icelanders, enjoyed the opening and a taste of that Icelandic Canadian treat, Vinarterta. The beautiful catalogue specially prepared for the exhibition can be viewed at: [www.odonwagnergallery.com](http://www.odonwagnergallery.com) Odon Wagner Contemporary Gallery is located at 172 Davenport Road in Toronto.

## Upcoming Events

- **Ione Thorkelsson's show** at Toronto Free Gallery, 660 Queen St. East opens Thursday November 2nd (6 to 9 p.m.). A second show at Material Matters, 215 Spadina Avenue, opens Saturday November 4th as originally advertised (2 to 6 p.m.) Website: [www.materialmatters.ca](http://www.materialmatters.ca)
- **Dress rehearsals** for the children's Christmas Party play begin on November 5th. Union regulations ensure that milk and cookies will be served at regular intervals. Please contact Brenda Bjarnason at 416-604-0660 for details.
- **ICELAND- The Base For Your Business** November 9th - see below for details
- **WRATH OF GODS** (The Making of Beowulf) November 14th, 10pm on CBC Newsworld
- **Kukkia ja Sidontaa** November 29th at 7 p.m.
- **Woodmouse** December 27th
- **NFB Animation Workshops** begin on December 27th - see below for details

### CHRISTMAS ANIMATION WORKSHOPS

NFB Animation Workshops will run daily at 10 am, 12:30 pm and 3 pm December 27 to 31st and January 2 - 7 Workshops are \$5 or FREE with the donation of a non perishable food item or a cash donation. All donations will be contributed to the Daily Break Food Bank of Toronto To reserve a space, please call the NFB Media-theque at 416-973-3012. **Woodmouse** will follow the workshops.

## INVEST IN ICELAND

The Invest in Iceland Agency together with the Embassy of Iceland's breakfast seminar in Toronto will highlight Reykjavik as an attractive location for the administration of financial transactions. Iceland offers attractive tax legislation with an emphasis on globalization. Companies with operations in Iceland enjoy one of the lowest tax rates in Europe (18%), a developed infrastructure and streamlined regulatory filing demands. The seminar will take place at St Andrew's Club & Conference Centre with opening remarks by Ambassador Markus Örn Antonson. If you or your business colleagues want to learn more about investing in Iceland please call (416) 586-1922 or e-mail at: [icelandrspv@national.ca](mailto:icelandrspv@national.ca) to book a space. If you want further information, contact Jon Johnson, Consul General, at (416) 597-4121 or by e-mail at [jjohnson@goodmans.ca](mailto:jjohnson@goodmans.ca).

## Nordic Films



*Kukkia ja Sidontaa*

The next film in the Nordic Nights series at the NFB is from Finland and will be screened on Wednesday, November 29th at 7.00 p.m.

**Kukkia ja Sidontaa** (Flowers and Binding) from 2004, is a 'serious comedy' by director Janne Kuusi about a small sausage factory in an even smaller town. Women receive flower bouquets, men are sharpening their knives for the Don Juan. You get the picture. The film will be shown in Finnish with English subtitles. Admission is free.

**Woodmouse - Life on the Run** is a dramatic wildlife film about two woodmice and their struggle to survival in harsh Icelandic climate. The film is an expedition into the microcosmic world of the Icelandic woodmice, as experienced through the eyes and ears of two mice. Strange as it sounds, the largest and most fertile woodmice in the world can be found in Iceland, a country with hardly any woods.

Produced by Þorfinnur Guðnason in association with National Geographic Television, the Icelandic Institute of Natural History, the National Centre for Educational Materials and the National Association for the Protection of the Icelandic Environment. It screens December 27th at the NFB (see Christmas Animation Workshops at left)

### \* Special Announcement \*

Icelandair has announced a relaunch of their Halifax flights, starting May 17 2007, three weekly flights to begin with and a continuation through the winter season.

The travel agency Heimsferdir in Reykjavík will soon announce officially their operation of weekly flights to Montreal, starting late May 2007. This will be promoted as tour opportunities in both directions, a city program in Montreal for Icelanders and possibilities for family vacations in Canada. They will sell similar tours for Canadians into Iceland. People will be able to buy air tickets only or complete tour programs with land arrangement included.

We are still working on a new fully-fledged Air Transportation Agreement between Iceland and Canada, based on the "open-skies" principle and possibilities for various other destinations for Icelandic carriers in Canada.

Best regards.  
Markús Örn Antonsson  
Ambassador of Iceland