



President's Report 2023 ICCT AGM:

Gwen Sigrid Morgan

(Prepared for November 26, 2023 for 1:30 pm Morningside Presbyterian Church which had to be postponed, and is now held at 2 pm January 28, 2024)

I am pleased to submit this President's Report for the 2022-2023. Please see the detailed report and note that there are two drafted motions submitted for discussion and to be voted on by the membership.

GOVERNANCE UPDATE:

I have been working hard the past year to bring the ICCT governance up-to-date with regulations. The ICCT is a not-for-profit organization first incorporated in 1972. As such, ICCT is required to keep records with Ontario Corporations up-to-date but the club had lost access to its online records. The hard copy records were lost during the social isolation phase of the pandemic when the Past President became ill and club records were lost. I initiated the legal process to regain access, which also engaging a legal firm for a small fee and completing several forms. We now have a key for online access and I went online and updated the records. Once this was done, the Executive met with the bank and our financial authorities were brought up-to-date also. Currently, the President, Secretary and Treasurer have signing authority on cheques and accounts with two signatures required for cheque writing. Each year, after the Annual General Meeting, we are required to update information on Board members and by-law changes with Ontario Corporation and this can now be done easily online.

The second goal from last year regarding governance was to ensure the accounts were audited as per our bylaws. This used to be done by a volunteer but ICCT has no volunteer step forward so the audit has not been done recently. Each year though, The Treasurer has prepared an excellent detailed accounting report in readiness for review. I approached our umbrella organization, the INLNA (Icelandic National League of North America) for support and the INLNA Treasurer, Dawn Harris, agreed to do the audit or help us find an auditor. Dawn has recommended Randy Baldwin from Gimli, who does a lot of volunteer work for the community locally. Randy is the President of Acornhill Partners Inc., a management consulting firm in Gimli Manitoba (email rbaldwin@acornhill.ca) who is willing to do the preparation of accounts for the next AGM.

Dawn also advised me that the articles of incorporation regarding not-for-profit organizations have changed such that an audit is no longer required. Audits are very expensive and unnecessary experience. ICCT is obligated to arrange for an annual, independent third party to look over the accounts and reports. Accounts are to be in order

such that if an audit were required the accounts and annual reports are ready for review. The latter is the case, as our Treasurer has prepared accounts for an audit for each AGM.

INLNA treasurer Dawn Harris has suggested the following wording for our future bylaw change: *“The members shall appoint a third party familiar with accounting and financial statements at each annual general meeting to prepare the financial statements and report of the finance committee. The financial statement and the report therein will be presented at the succeeding annual general meeting.”*

DRAFT of MOTION TO VOTED ON: The ICCT members will appoint Randy Baldwin, President, Acorn Partners Inc. Gimli Manitoba, to prepare the financial statements and reports of the ICCT finance committee to be presented at the 2024 ICCT Annual General Meeting.

BYLAW UPDATE REQUIRED:

The Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA) has changed and updated the governance of not-for-profit community organizations. According to the ONCA website, we have until **October 18, 2024** to review, update and file our updated governing documents with the Ontario government. Until then, the rules in our articles and bylaws continue to be valid provided they were valid. (see the website, Nonprofit Law Ontario <https://nonprofitlaw.cleo.on.ca/> Phone number is 204-781-1737.

I propose that we strike a Bylaws & Governance Committee to review and update our bylaws to comply with the new ONCA rules and regulations, as required from us by law. As the ONCA has set the absolute deadline for compliance as October 18th, 2024, this committee will need to have their work completed, and presented to the members for approval between 10 to 50 days before the AGM (which is the time period for proper notice of Bylaw changes). Ideally the committee will complete the review and update by June 30th, and send notice to the members on or before September 1st, for an AGM to be held no later than October 6th, 2024.

DRAFT of MOTION TO BE VOTED ON: The ICCT members will appoint a Chair and Bylaw and Governance Committee to review and update the ICCT bylaws and governance to be in compliance with the new regulations of the Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA) in time to comply with the ONCA firm deadline of October 18th, 2024. The Committee will be responsible for ensuring ICCT compliance with the ONCA. The Bylaw and Governance Committee will have the report prepared in time, and with proper notice, to be presented for approval at the next ICCT AGM.

UPDATES ON THE OTHER PRESIDENT’S ACTIVITIES:

FALKINN NEWSLETTER:

This past year I took on the role of Falkinn Editor, in addition to continuing to do the writing for the Falkinn Newsletter. This is a big commitment of time but very important to the club. Peter, our Treasurer, continued to do the final formatting and email out to the membership. The newsletter aims to highlight and record ICCT activities and apprise and update members on the wider Icelandic community. Madeline Stapleton has now stepped up to take over as

the editor of the Falkinn. She created a new format for the newsletter, which is more efficient to use and looks fantastic! I and Peter will continue on the Newsletter committee. Please consider contributing articles, information as it enriches our whole community.

ICELANDIC LANGUAGE CLASSES:

Last year, I organized online Icelandic language classes. Our teacher was Járngerðer Guttormsdóttir, from Iceland, the daughter of my Amma's first cousin's son (I did that on purpose ☺) Járngerðer is a primary school teacher in Reykjavik, and mother of two very young boys. She was an excellent teacher, and our online group had both ICCT, and INLNA members from across Canada and the U.S.A., joining in. The classes were recorded on Zoom and available for review. Jargarder was particularly good at teaching us how to get our mouth around those unusual vowels in the Icelandic language. It was great to have the recordings to go back to. Jargardur is ready to come back online to teach both the beginner and advanced classes. We will start them up again in the new year.

I am happy to announce that Peggy MacFarlane Purdue will be joining the ICCT Board as the new Language Classes Coordinator. Junior Chang is stepping down. He has held the position, as well as taught the Icelandic classes, for several years. Junior and his family have permanently moved to Vancouver. Thank you, Junior and wishing you all the best.

ICCT ICELANDIC LIBRARY:

This summer I reorganized the ICCT library materials which I had earlier in the year picked up from former president Kara Schuster, who has been housing the collection for some years. I unpacked and sorted through about 45 boxes of books and materials. I purchased new shelves (my own expense). I then divided the books into sections by Icelandic language and English for easy display. We have some very old, leather-bound editions in Icelandic, and another full bank of shelves of modern novels. At the Christmas social, members were invited to the Icelandic Room to see the new library. Reynur Sæmundsson, who is Icelandic, was able to tell us that we have some valuable old volumes in our collection.

There are a lot of back issues of journals and loose papers of sheet music and travel pamphlets. There are also several DVDs. I purchased clean legal boxes and separated books, journals and materials by language. We have 20 plus boxes of old magazine and two boxes of DVDS, plus music records and CDs. Rachel Norman, our Book Club leader, also has a number of ICCT library books at her house.

ICCT needs volunteers who could help update the catalogue of books, DVDs and other materials for the ICCT record. There is an old list of what was in the library fifteen years ago. ICCT is asking the recipients of our youth grants and scholarship to give back to the community with 10 hours of volunteer work. This could be one easy and very helpful way to give back to the club.

There has been discussion on the Board as to what to do with the library materials in the long term. I favour seeing if Manitoba would be interested in the rare and historic books. There is discussion of modern books being sold in the Thorrablot silent auction. Meanwhile, the books are in a dry, safe place and all the packed materials are in clean labelled boxes. I assumed the cost of the boxes as a donation to the club.

ICELETTERS PROJECT:

Over the past year, I have spent a lot of time trying to tie up the legal end of producing the new book, with a new introduction and preface, of Betty Jane Wylie's *Letters to Icelanders: Exploring the Northern Soul*. The cover of this new book is a photograph by Icelandic photographer, Siggi Anton (Peter Norman's cousin) <https://www.instagram.com/siggianton/> Betty Jane's new Letters to Icelanders is an absolutely lovely heirloom for our club members and the wider Icelandic community. Especially delightful is the story of the troll who is afraid of the dark.

Less delightful has been the attitude of the American publishers who bought out the original Canadian company that published the Betty Jane's book. Wiley Publishers have acknowledged the copyright reversion to the author several times on phone and in email but have not sent the requested letter of acknowledgement or copy of the copyright reversion letter. (I have kept a file and copies of all correspondence with Wiley.) Betty Jane has lost her copy of the reversion letter or, more likely she thinks, it is in the archived boxes of her personal materials being held at the University of Manitoba. We have been working Warren Sheffer, a lawyer from the Writers' Guild, since the beginning of this process. Mr Sheffer cannot complete the legal transfer of copyright to ICCT without a hard copy of the reversion letter. Apparently, there are cases similar to this, in which the publisher does not release materials, just in case the work of an elderly writer becomes popular again or is made into a movie. Still, it is disappointing that Betty Jane's generous offer to transfer the copyright of the original Letters to Icelanders to ICCT can not be completed at present.

INLNA 2023 CONVENTION IN BANFF ALBERTA, MAY 2023

As president, I attended the INLNA (Icelandic National League of North America) Convention which was held in Banff, Alberta and hosted by the Calgary club, Leif Erikkson Icelandic Club of Calgary. It was the first live, in-person convention since the pandemic. It was an amazing event with informative speakers, the AMG and Awards Ceremony and wonderful meals and socials to meet people from all across Canada, USA and Iceland. It was my first time attending an INLNA convention, and I was greatly impressed. This is a very worthwhile event to support and attend!

The ICCT Board had an influx of youthful new members, fellow Snorris who Elizabeth Handley-Derry met during her summer on the Snorri program in Iceland and invited to join the Board. Four new members have come in with much energy and enthusiasm, taking on key roles in organizing, hosting and representing the ICCT club. They all applied for and received INLNA Convention Youth grants to cover registration at the Convention. ICCT gave a further \$250 to support their attendance to the convention.

ICCT nominated Betty Jane Wylie for the Joan Inga Eyolfson Cadham Award to recognize individuals who have been outstanding in the promotion of Icelandic culture and heritage by way of literature, arts or media. Betty Jane won the award and ICCT provided financial support to make Betty Jane's attendance at the convention possible. Betty Jane made a wonderful acceptance speech and was greatly honoured with a standing ovation at the Convention Awards ceremony.

There are several key ICCT events throughout the year that I volunteer time towards like the Thorrablot, Icelandic Picnic, Author's Social and Christmas celebration. Detailed reports of

these events are in the ICCT Board minutes and printed in the Falkinn newsletter. Chairs of the Committees will give brief reports at this AGM.

For, **Thorablót 2023** the theme was: Western Icelanders: Far from Iceland-Close to Home. We all came together to host a really fun gala and raise money for the scholarship and Snorri grants. Madeline Stapleton's map of Iceland, where people could pin where their families emigrated from was a great hit! Lindy Vopnfjörð performed. The Sigtryggrying Vikings joined us in full costume and gave a rousing demonstration of sword skills and offered an amazing craft for the children.

I worked with Glen Thordason in the fund-raising sub-committee writing letters and soliciting donations. Major sponsorship came from Donald K. Johnson, Icelandir, Via Rail, Therma Kota, Chantry Breezes, Kimber Valley Farms and the Blue lagoon. Sharon Hanson organized and ran the Silent Auction and many members contributed items to make it a success. Irem, and created a slide presentation to show on early Icelandic immigration history to Canada which complemented Madeline Stapleton's presentation. Costs were still higher than in previous years but we were able to transfer \$4500 to the youth grants fund.

Youth Grants went to Carol Stinson, \$1000.00 and Caitlin Armstrong, \$1000 Snorri Grant.

Icelandic National Day Picnic was a big event this year sponsored by Ambassador Hynur Guddmonson, the Icelandic Embassy in Ottawa and Icelandair. It featured a performance by Icelandic rising Salome Katrine and our own Lindy Vopnfjörð. The Embassy donated Icelandic hotdogs and trimmings as well. Arden Jackson organized sponsorships through Icelandic Glacial Water, cooked the hotdogs and catered the food. A full report from Arden is part of the ICCTBoard minutes.

Saga Connections hosted two online seminars and another live event in Toronto plus excursion to take in Icelandic inspired books at the Author's festival.

- Georgina Rayner, *Memories: From Handwritten Diaries of Imba Phinney*. Georgina shared her mother's stories of the family who emigrated from Iceland to settle in Keewatin and how the Icelandic community supported each other. Imba was a single mother of five and gives us stories of courage, friendship and generosity that are truly inspiring.
- Ryan Eyford, professor at the University of Winnipeg and author of *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the West*. Prof Eyford picked up the story of the Kinmount emigrants in telling us about the policies that framed the choice and settlement of Gimli Manitoba.
- Andreeanne Michon, Meet the Artist event, free gallery tour and talk at The Image Centre, Gould Street.
- Makoto Yukimura, author and artist of the popular Japanese Manga *Vinland Saga* books and Netflix series, presentation at the Toronto International Festival of Authors, Harbourfront Centre.

EVENTS & COMMITTEES

THE TRAVEL SHOW was amazing. Madeline Stapleton organized and hosted an interesting array of guests and information on travelling to Iceland. We rented the church basement and had a delicious spread of Icelandic inspired desserts.

ICCT BOOK CLUB: Rachel Young continues as the host and Chair of the book club. She meets with her group every September to choose the books and films for the year. The list is published on the ICCT website. Book discussion are online and film discussion are in person. All members are more than welcome to join.

NORDIC NIGHTS: Nordic Nights co-chairs Katrine Handley Derry and Jack Dodds continue to work with the Finnish Consulate, Laura McSwiggan and University of Toronto film professor Anu Muhonen to offer six films a year: three Icelandic and three Finnish. Peter Norman continues to provide technical support as well as organize and track fees, payments and donations. The big news this past year is that in September Nordic Nights moved to being a hybrid event. Many thanks to ICCT Secretary Richard Eriksson who approached his friend Mike Pezzi about using his condo film room for Nordic Nights. Mike lives in the Tiff Bell Lightbox tower block which has a small film viewing theatre, just the perfect size for our film night. Mike Pezzi offers this space for free. A big thank you to Mike! The Nordic Nights team has figured out all the kinks in running a hybrid online and live film event and it is a huge success. The model of partnering with another Nordic group for events is something we should consider for other club activities.

PÖNNUKÖKUR SOCIAL, KIMBER VALLEY FARM CHRISTMAS MARKET AND CHRISTMAS GATHERING

ICCT had several activities around the Christmas season. Madelaine Ashley led several club members through the steps of making the perfect pönnukökur. No one needed assistance on eating them afterwards! Several of us took an excursion to shop and taste delights at the Kimber Valley Farm Christmas Market. To celebrate Christmas, we came together at my home for cooking decorating, games, vínarterta and coffee.

THANK YOU TO ALL

I have served as President of the ICCT for two years now, stepping into the role a year earlier during the pandemic when our president became ill. It has been a real pleasure to serve as VP and President of the ICCT. I have had an amazing team to work with and I want to thank them for their time and support in guiding me in this role. A special thanks to Gail Einarson-McCleery whose stewardship was vital.

I started coming to the ICCT Thorrablót as a young child and it is those fond childhood memories that brought me back to the club years later. Continuing the tradition, I brought my children to the Thorrablót, Christmas celebration and picnics where they learned to take great pride in their Icelandic heritage. This is what the club is about: celebration, connection, and heritage. It has been wonderful to have my daughters, Katrine and Elizabeth, join me on the Board and to see the young Snorri alumni come into the organization with their youthful energy and enthusiasm.

Through my Board roles as VP and then President, and in doing Saga Connections, I have had the pleasure to get to know many of you and your families on a deeper level. I also became involved in our umbrella organization, INLNA and started to subscribe to the Lögberg Heimskringla. I have met so many wonderful people from across Canada, USA and Iceland and my knowledge and appreciation of our Icelandic heritage has deepened through my volunteer activities. I see how incredible the fortitude, ingenuity and creativity of this small

band of people is. I am proud to be an Icelandic-Canadian. I appreciate all that I have received from the ICCT. Truly, in giving to the community one receives back tenfold.

I will continue to support and serve in our clubs. I am moving on to become more involved in our umbrella organization, the INLNA (Icelandic National League of North American). I will be staying on the ICCT board to plan the upcoming Thorraþlót, the Kinmount 150 Celebration and host more Saga Connections. I look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events.

Takk fyrir,
Gwen Sigrid Morgan