

ICELANDIC NATIONAL LEAGUE OF NORTH AMERICA

Newsletter – March 2008

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This is the third of several newsletters featuring the members of the 2007 – 08 executive.

GWEN JOHNSON MANN



Olivia Guðrun Gwendolyn Johnson was born in Esterhazy, Saskatchewan on August 4, 1942. Her grandparents were pioneers to the Icelandic Settlements north of Churchbridge, SK. Her paternal grandparents, Bjorn Jonsson and Ólafía Stefánsdóttir emigrated in 1886 and her maternal grandparents Eyjolfur Hinrikson and Ingibjörg Björnsdóttir in 1903. Gwen's father, Steve died from cancer when she was 3 1/2 years old. Her mother, Joa and 3 older brothers, Leo, Art and Don raised her on a mixed farm. Gwen received her education in Churchbridge, then took nurse's training at Yorkton, graduating in 1963 and began her work career with the Provincial Public Health Department. In 1966, she received a diploma in Public Health Nursing from the University of Saskatchewan and continued working in Public Health until retirement.

In 1966, Gwen married Lloyd Mann, who graduated from U of SK as a chemical engineer in 1968. His work career in the oil industry took the family to many locations, Edmonton, Slave Lake, Calgary, San Francisco and back to Calgary. In each of these venues, Gwen worked in Public Health and retired from the Calgary Health Region in 1997 after working in many different capacities during her work career.

Gwen wanted to go to Iceland so joined the Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary in 1994. She was met by such an enthusiastic group of people willing to help her that she immediately felt right at home and became involved. That fall, they hosted the Fall Feast at their home. She traveled to Iceland the next year. She started with the Executive as secretary and has held different positions, vice-president, President, INL representative, membership and now assists with LEIC history. She is presently Convention Director and acting as historian for the Icelandic National league of North America. Gwen is Co-Convener of the 89th Annual INL Convention which will be held in Calgary on April 25, 26, 27, 2008.

Gwen enjoys many activities. She helped to organize the Curling at the Family Leisure Centre in Calgary, then in Springbank when they moved to that area. She enjoys golfing and worked on the women's executive at the Pinebrook Golf Course. Family History is a great interest and she is working on both the Mann and Johnson genealogy. She has made available a history book to 100 members of the Mann Family. Other interests include traveling, cooking, sewing and photography.

Lloyd and Gwen have a son Douglas who works as a cabinetmaker near Calgary and a daughter Sheralyn who trained in computer science and is married to Jason Brovald. They have two children, Audrey and Isaac. Visiting with their families and friends is the greatest enjoyment for Lloyd and Gwen.

BERNICE LILYAN JOHANNSON ANDERSEN

Bernice Lilyan Andersen, was born and raised in Markerville. Her parents Johann Haldor and Ellen Lilyan Johannson are buried in Tindastoll cemetery. Her grandparents Fredrick Kjartán and Guðlinu Þórlaugu Johnson(Dalasýsla)and Sigtriggur(Glaumbæ, Reykjadal)and Sigriður Helga Johannson and parents Jóhann Halldórsson and Halldóra Gunnarsdóttir are also buried there, as well as maternal great grandparents Guðmundar and Elin Illugason and Kristján Jónsson(Þverá) and Guðfinna Sveinsdóttir (Kirkjuól). The grandparents & great grandparents were born in Iceland with the exception of grandfather Fred who was born to Icelandic immigrants in Garðar, North Dakota. Although born in Alberta, Bernice`s parents first language was Icelandic.

Bernice started school in Markerville, later attended Spruce View then Red Deer Composite High School. She trained as Medical Laboratory Technologist at NAIT in Edmonton graduating in 1966. Bernice worked in this field for 25 years, then 8 years with Canadian Blood Service. She studied aromatherapy, grew her own herbs and made delightful potions for family and friends. Bernice also attended gift shows and sales all over Alberta and into Saskatchewan offering her beautiful bottles for sale.

Over the years Bernice has enjoyed travelling and reading. Sports have been important part of her life; basketball, softball, curling and now it`s golf, hiking and X-country skiing.

Fred Andersen married Bernice in 1966 in the Markerville church. They had two children Laurel and Lindsay. Laurel is working with the University of Lethbridge as the Manager of the Foreign Students Department. Sadly, Lindsay is now with his grand, great grand and great great grand parents in Tindastóll cemetery.

As an F.B.I., Full Blooded Icelander, Bernice has taken a very active role in the Markerville Stephan G. Stephansson Icelandic Society and loves all things Icelandic and Danish. (Fred is a Great Dane). She has been on the board of directors and has served on many committees over the years. Bernice was the Alberta Fjallkona in 1981. She has attended many INL of NA conferences in Canada and the one held in Minneapolis. She has travelled to Iceland twice and hopes one day, to go back as a Snorri plus. In 1989 Bernice helped host a reception lunch on the Creamery lawn in Markerville for President Vigdis and dined with her in Parliament House in Edmonton. Bernice was president of the SGSIS when President Olafur Grimsson visited Markerville in 1999.

Johann, better know as Little Joe Johannson, Bernice`s father, was the SGSIS first president and loved his Icelandic heritage. He was very instrumental in getting the Stephansson House designated a Historic site and then later restored by the provincial government. Next, our society bought the Creamery building and was able to get it designated, as a Historic Resource, and restored. Today our club`s biggest responsibility is operating the Creamery as a museum. Historic Resource Designation and then restoration of the Fensala Hall has just recently been completed. We are now seeking similar designation for the Markerville Church and doing restoration work once again.



Our Icelandic Society has been a very active club since 1974; restoring century old buildings and recording their history, requires a lot of volunteer time and fund raising to make these projects happen. Markerville, a hamlet of about 50 people with surrounding farm and acreage families, is a fortunate draw to our members and volunteer's from the community at large, as well as former Markerville residents. Only about 60% of our members have Icelandic heritage.

Bernice has a sister Shirley Ann Dye of Red Deer and a brother Fred Sigtriggur Johannson of Sylvan Lake. Another brother, Leslie Harold and a baby sister Gloria Hope sadly, also rest in Tindastóll cemetery. This summer the Stephan G. Stephansson Icelandic Society and the Tindastoll Cemetery Society are planning a "Day of Remembrance", a day when we will honour those gone before us. That day will hold very special meaning to Bernice.

DR. RONALD GOODMAN



Dr. Ron Goodman was born at Kandahar in the Vatnabyggd area of Saskatchewan during the Depression years, the only child of Halley (Hallur) and Hazel Goodman (Gudmundson). His grandmother had immigrated with her ten children from the Ólafsfjörður district of northern Iceland early in the twentieth century and settled north of Kandahar where the family earned a living by farming and fishing. Ron was educated at the University of Saskatchewan and obtained his PhD at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. A nuclear physicist, Dr. Goodman worked with the Canadian Government as a glaciologist in the Canadian Arctic, the Rocky Mountains and Scandinavia, later becoming known around the world as an expert on oil spills.

The bulk of Ron's career was spent with Exxon and Imperial Oil. Ron has been flown in to consult on many major oil spills in the world, including the *Exxon Valdez* disaster in 1989. Ron has been consultant to the International Maritime Organization for Laws of the Sea regarding marine pollution, and sat on several national and international committees concerned with environmental issues. A recent assignment took him to the Galapagos Islands where he acted as consultant to the Government of Ecuador, and more recently to the Alberta Minister of the Environment on the Wabamum Lake spill. . He has published more than 200 professional papers; has been a contributor to many books, and scientific and academic journals in his field.

Although retired, Ron continues to write and publish as an Adjunct Professor of the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Calgary.

Ron is a long-time member of the Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club and has filled many significant executive roles over the years, including twice as president. He is a past president of the Calgary Scandinavian Centre and has recently been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Lögberg-Heimskringla. Ron was instrumental in producing the 2006 and 2007 INL calendars. He is presently a Director at large in the Icelandic National League. He wears his Icelandic heritage proudly. He and his wife, Hélène, have often opened their home in the foothills of Alberta for club functions and to entertain visiting Icelanders. Ron has become the Leif Eiriksson Club's permanent Santa Claus at Christmas parties, needing no artificial enhancement of beard or girth!

Margret Louise Indridason Grisdale INL Director of Communications

Margret's parents were Sveinn and Olafia Indridason. Her grandparents were born in Iceland emigrating to Canada in the 1800's. They were Thorsteinn Indridason of Mountain, North Dakota and his wife Thorbjorg Sveinsdottir Solvason; and Sigurdur Vigfusson Melsted and his wife Thorunn Olafsdottir. Margret Louise Indridason (her legal name) was born on November 7, 1937 in Oxbow, Saskatchewan. She received her education in Oxbow and at Robertson Secretarial School in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She worked in Regina, Sask. and Vancouver B.C. before marrying John Edward (Ted) Grisdale from Alberta. They lived in Estevan, Sask., Whitecourt, St. Albert and finally settling in Calgary in 1966. They have four sons, three living in Calgary, and the oldest, John lives in Denver, CO. They have six grandchildren with twins expected in April or May (that is to the President of the Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club) and another child expected in June to the second oldest, Dan and Tamara. As a mother of four sons she was involved in their activities, especially with her youngest son Brent's diving. Margret was Vice President of Administration for the Canadian Amateur Diving Association from 1987 – 1998 and she was a National Junior Age Group Judging official 1987 - 1997. She was a judge at 3 Canada Games.

Margret's involvement with the Leif Eiriksson Icelandic Club of Calgary has been varied. She has been President of the Club, Events Co-Ordinator, publisher of the newsletter for several years, and works at the Casinos. Margret is presently on the Board of Directors for the Icelandic National League as Communication Chairperson and is Co-convenor along with Gwen Mann for the 89th Annual INL Convention.

Her elder granddaughter Kristin was a Snorri participant in 2003. She was married in 2005 and is now expecting her first child in September. Her three grandsons have participated in the Christmas program acting as sons of Gryla and they are all proud of their Icelandic heritage.

Margret was crowned Alberta Fjallkona in 2004; this was a very proud and emotional year for her. Her moments of distinction for the club were when the President of Iceland, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson visited in 1999 and also when Halldor Blondal visited Calgary in 2000. She is very proud to call herself a Canadian Icelander and is presently working on her genealogy which is almost complete. She has visited Iceland twice and that is where she fell in love with everything Icelandic.



More biographies in the next newsletter

From your Communications Director, Margaret Grisdale, February, 2008