



Connect

INLUS is Five Years Old! Spring 2024

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Connect newsletter welcomes your submissions!

Send your news, ideas, photos, and articles to: info@inlus.org

Connect newsletter is published quarterly.

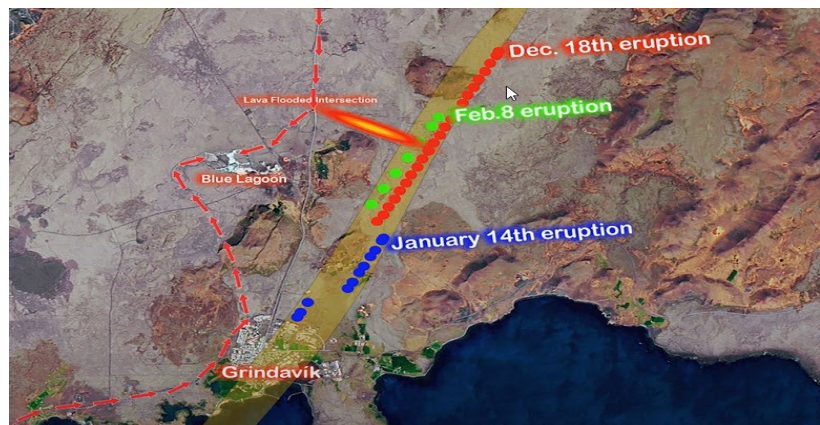
The Three R's –Icelandic Edition

This edition of the *Connect* features the three Icelandic R's: Runes, Reykjavík Rendezvous, and a Ring Road Rondeau. You'll also get a glimpse into the past through a series of postcards that slumbered for decades in a trunk, plus a front seat at an historic protest, and an eruption update. Add in local club news, an annual report, a new series of Icelandic language courses forming, a new leader at the INLUS to meet, and this *Connect* is bursting at the seams!

Grindavík Eruptions Update

Gylfi Gylfason, who presented the 2022 INLUS webinar on the volcanic activity on the Reykjanes Peninsula, continues to report on the magma developments around the South Iceland fishing community of Grindavík. His latest video report on his "Just Icelandic" YouTube channel provides an update on the economic damage the eruptions are having on the winter fishing industry.

Gylfi reports that the safe harbor of Grindavík, the town's fish processing facilities and its proximity to "Iceland's best fishing grounds," makes Grindavík an important link to this vital industry. But the damage to the community caused by the eruptions has dealt a severe blow this year.



Screenshot from a recent Just Icelandic video courtesy of Gylfi Gylfason

His report, "New Photo Tour Footage And The Uncertain Future of Grindavík," provides an in-depth look at all the challenges the community is facing and the efforts being made to address the problems. You can view the entire video on his "Just Icelandic" YouTube channel.

You can find his 2022 INLUS webinar at: [INLUS Volcano Webinar](#)

It's Not Too Late To Join!

2024 Snorri Plus Registration is still available at:

[Snorri.is](https://snorri.is)



There are several openings still available, so register today before the trip is all booked up.

Get in on the journey of a lifetime!

info@snorri.is

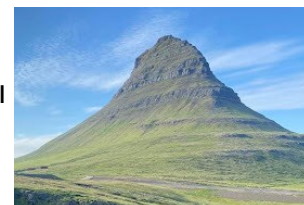
Runes, Travel Beyond Reykjavik, and an Ambassador's Farewell Visit...

The INLUS Webinar Series is hosting a trio of webinars in March and April.



Tuesday, March, 19 at 1 pm Eastern, noon Central, 11 am Mountain, 10 am Pacific: Runes 101: The Alphabet of the Vikings. The webinar will feature Henrik Williams, Professor of Runology at Uppsala University, Sweden.

Tuesday, April 16 at 5 pm Eastern, 4 pm Central, 3 pm Mountain, 2 pm Pacific: INLUS business member Hey Iceland will tell us about new travel opportunities in Iceland. They will highlight the summer season as well as suggestions for fall and winter travel seasons.



Tuesday, April 30 at 1 pm Eastern, noon Central, 11 am Mountain, 10 am Pacific: Iceland's Ambassador to the United States, Bergdís Ellertsdóttir will be interviewed by Iceland's Honorary Consul to Colorado, Ingibjörg Stefánsdóttir. Ambassador Bergdís completes her post in the U.S. in May.

Webinar links are on the [INLUS.org](https://inlus.org) calendar.

Ring Road Musical Odyssey

Have you ever found yourself traveling on Iceland's "Ring Road" and thought "I wished I had a steady stream of Icelandic music to play for this trip through the stunning Icelandic landscape?"

One Icelandic musician, Svavar Knutur, has answered that question by putting together a 153 song playlist that offers an eclectic mix of Icelandic musicianship to accompany your next Ring Road journey.

Svavar wanted to solve two problems. First, CD players have disappeared from newer model vehicles, meaning one can't bring their tunes along to play on their driving journey in a rental car. Second, online streaming services feature big-name artists, leaving out the lesser known independent artists from small nations, such as Iceland.

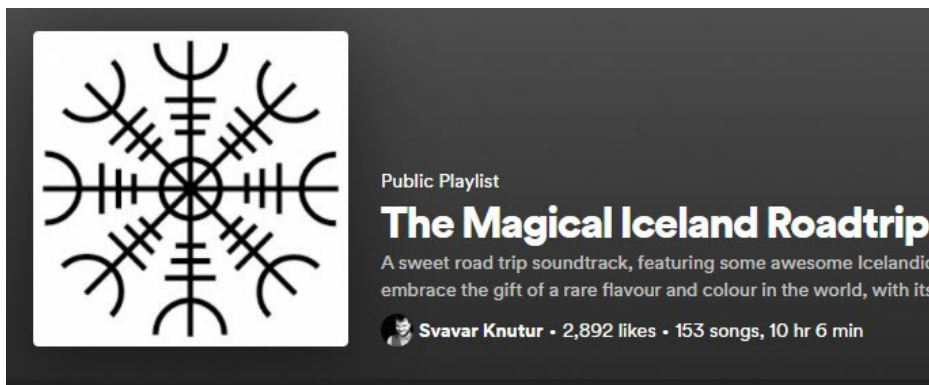
Svavar found an elegant solution to each issue by curating "The Magical Icelandic Road Trip" playlist on the streaming service, Spotify. "Listening to music that doesn't come from mainstream is an extra mental work and hustle for listeners," he said in a posting on his Facebook page. His "Ring Road Musical Odyssey" playlist makes it easy for listeners to get a great sampling of contemporary Icelandic music as they cruise on down the road.

“it is important to introduce tourists and visitors to the country to the music industry as soon as possible during the trip,” he said, so that “tourists do not miss out on the culture and heritage of the country they visit.”

“Independent artists,” he said should, “create playlists on Spotify and other streaming platforms, to introduce their listeners to other artists in the scene.” He sees his Magical Icelandic Road Trip as one step in that direction that he hopes will strengthen audiences for independent artists.

“I’ve made other playlists promoting my fellow artists and my audience community has responded very positively to this. It also makes me happy to bring new listeners to fellow independent artists,” he said.

“I would like to see more of this, artists sharing each other with their communities, to try to bring a bigger piece of the pie back to independent artists, but also regions and towns making playlists with their local music. Because I know that most travelers really like to be introduced to the music of the country where they are travelling, even if it can sometimes be a challenge,” he added.



If you are a Spotify streamer, you can find Svavar’s “The Magical Icelandic Road Trip” here: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7ioT2Af861o94RrIBTgbaR?si=24fld3869c3843f2>

Icelandic Language Classes Start in March

Our Icelandic language classes, taught by David Johnson and Birna Sigurbjörnsdóttir, have been very popular. Our series of four different levels of classes just ended at the end of February. Over 55 individuals participated in the last round of live, on-line classes.

We’re proud to have reached nearly 200 language learners with these online classes over the years, working to provide stronger foundations for their language learning journey.

Another series of six-week classes will be offered starting the week of March 17th. If interested, we suggest you learn more or register as soon as possible at <https://inlus.org/travel-culture/icelandic-language/language-classes-march-2024/>.

Classes are carefully paced and as stress-free as possible. Any specific questions about classes can be directed to david@inlus.org

A Window in Time: The Correspondence of Early Settlers

by Lauren Fields, Susan Sigurdson, Kathy Thorlakson, Judy Geir, and Krislyn Woolever

The INLUS Reading Group (a self-run, voluntary participation group that meets on Sunday evenings via Zoom) finished their second book *Árstíðir* by Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir last fall and started the new year with a very different type of reading: postcards, stored in a trunk and tucked away for a hundred years.

Reading Group members Susan Sigurdson, Kathy Thorlakson, and Judy Geir discovered the trunk filled with postcards thirty years ago but put them out of mind since, at the time, none of them could read the Icelandic messages. The postcards took on new meaning when they were recently rediscovered and the three realized that through participating in INLUS classes and the Reading Group, they could now translate them! Susan scanned a selection and the Reading Group spent three weeks learning about early Icelandic homesteads in the United States.

These postcards represent everyday missives from a North Dakota homestead founded in 1888 in Thingvalla Township, Pembina County, three miles south of Mountain, North Dakota, where Grimsi (Hallgrimur Bergman Sigurdson) and his wife Olla (Halldora Olöf Halldorson) settled. (Grimsi and Olla are the grandparents to reading group members Kathy, Susan, Judy). The selection of postcards that we read spanned the years 1909 to 1945.

The correspondence shows everyday moments and a language frozen in time. A one cent stamp could convey the news of the day or well wishes describing a vacation. There are birth announcements, Christmas well wishes, and thank you notes for flowers received after surgery. And a one cent stamp can also inform the recipient "I have nothing to say except that I have been meaning to send you something for a while."

Etymologically, and despite being a group of early language learners, we could spot the differences between modern Icelandic from the books we had been reading and Icelandic written in the United States in the early 1900s. The evolution of the language occurring in





Iceland was not transferred to the settlements across the Atlantic and the evidence of this can be seen in the cursive script; in 1929 Icelandic adopted using *é* in place of “*je*” in words such as “*pér*” but the correspondence of 1945 starts “*Ég þakka þjer oskur vel...*” (I thank you very much...). Letters such as “*c*” and “*z*” were more recently dropped from the Icelandic alphabet but can still be seen here. Where Iceland instituted its language committee to develop Icelandic words that conform to grammar rules for new words and concepts (think: laptop computer, cellphones, and other inventions), any new words would also have had to migrate across the Atlantic and we saw instances of English words peppered sparingly through some of the text.

The final postcard we reviewed included a death announcement. The postcard was sent to Grimsi in Wynyard SK, Canada where he had traveled to visit his mother Kristin Thorsteinsdottir Kraksson and sister Jona. Kristin had moved to Wynyard with two sons to homestead after Grimsi and Olla married and began living on the Kraksson homestead in Pembina County. By now we were familiar with Olla’s sloping script as she told her husband about the death of Anna Sigurbjöss, a neighbor woman (wife of Sigurbjorn Gudmundsson). With just this name and date of death Kathy, with her work with Icelandic Roots, and Krislyn with Ancestry.com shared details about this woman’s life that brought her off the page and painted a picture of the relationships of a community. The postmarked date in 1911 (two years after Grimsi and Olla’s marriage) shows it was forwarded back to North Dakota when it apparently arrived in Wynyard after Grimsi’s departure for home. This detail makes you think about what travel in late fall in 1911 must have been like, and knowing that the distance was 425 miles, makes you wonder how long the journey took.



The Day Iceland Stood Still

– Film is Finished



This documentary is about the day in 1975 when 90% of Iceland's women walked off the job and out of their homes, catapulting the country to its status as one of the world's best places to be a woman.

Filmmakers Pamela Hogan and Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdóttir brought the film to a "sneak preview" at Reykjavik's International Film Festival on October 1, 2023. The film played to an enthusiastic sold-out crowd and received a standing ovation at Háskólabíó Cinema.

Twenty-two days later on October 24, 2023, was the 48th anniversary of the 1975 Women's Day Off. Iceland's women again took to the streets in the biggest demonstration in the country's history, declaring that because they're a global beacon for women's rights, they have a responsibility to fully close the remaining wage gap and address gender-based violence. The filmmakers were there capturing images of the crowd of 100,000.



Filming the crowd in the 2023 protest

One out of four Icelanders took part in the 2023 protest.

Filmmaker Hogan reports that they are now editing this powerful new footage into the ending of the film. They are also applying to film festivals to exhibit the film and work out a distribution strategy.

Here is a link <https://vimeo.com/864899113/0770baa81f> to the first couple of minutes of the film, in lieu of a proper trailer which is in process. The first woman who speaks in this clip is the legendary Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, the world's first democratically chosen female President, who was elected five years after the Woman's Day Off and served for 16 years.

To learn more about the 1975 protest, [view the 2022 INLUS webinar](#) featuring filmmaker Pamela Hogan as she talks about the history and working on the documentary.

2024 INLUS Annual Meeting

Brought Changes

The INLUS board met in January and voted in a new slate of officers. Doug Hanson became the new president and Dianne O’Konski moved into the past-president role. The board members thanked Dianne for her years of service along with past-president Sunna Furstenau, who concluded her board role. Rob Olason became vice-president and David Johnson became treasurer. The board also welcomed new board member Hjördís (Dísa) Guðjónsdóttir. Read about Dísa in the article on page eight.

The board keeps the INLUS moving forward by focusing on the core goals of the INLUS mission: Building a vibrant community of individuals, families, Icelandic clubs, organizations and businesses to bring Icelandic culture and heritage alive throughout the United States. To that end, the board is sourcing and scheduling online events throughout the year, including webinars, author’s corners, the vibrant Icelandic language classes and the Icelandic reading group. The INLUS also is a supporter of Icelandic programs such as the Snorri Program, contributing scholarships to participants as just one example.

Another part of the INLUS mission is keeping members informed through the newsletter and social media outlets of the INLUS activities, the activities of INLUS clubs and member organizations. The board aims to bring more opportunities to members and always welcomes input from our members. If you have a suggestion or would like to join us as a volunteer, contact us at info@inlus.org.

Thanks for supporting the INLUS mission through your membership and donations.

[Read the 2023 INLUS Annual Report by clicking this link.](#)

Passionate about Icelandic culture and heritage?

So are we!

Join us in the quest to celebrate Icelandic culture whether in Iceland or North America.

Become a member of the INLUS or renew your membership and let’s celebrate together!

[Click Here to Join!](#)



Three INLUS Presidents with Iceland’s President, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson.

(L-R): Sunna Furstenau, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, Dianne O’Konski, and Douglas Hanson

2024 INLUS Leadership:

Douglas Hanson, president

Rob Olason, vice-president

David Johnson, treasurer

Dianne O’Konski, past president

Lauren Fields, board member

H. Dísa Guðjónsdóttir, board member

Check out all the recent INLUS webinars on our webinar page:

Including the most recent recording, Njal's Saga Tapestry Project:



Know of an event in your area that would be of interest to the INLUS community?

Send news, photos and stories to:

info@inlus.org

Hjördís (Dísa) Guðjónsdóttir Joins the INLUS Board

At the January 2024 INLUS Annual Meeting, Hjördís (Dísa) Guðjónsdóttir became the newest board member of the INLUS. She brings great enthusiasm and energy to her new role along with many years of experience in leadership roles in many Icelandic organizations in the United States.

"I am delighted to have the opportunity to join the leadership team of the



Hjördís (Dísa) Guðjónsdóttir

Icelandic National League of the United States. I was born in Iceland, grew up in Seattle, and have lived in California, Arizona, Virginia/Washington D.C., Colorado, Japan, and Iceland with my husband and four children," she said.

"Each move involved the task of finding the local Icelandic community, even in Japan (where my family once constituted 10% of the Icelandic population)."

"I have been part of the leadership team of the Icelandic Association of Washington D.C, The Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle, and the Seattle-Reykjavik Sister City Association."

"I am the founder of the website: Iceland Here and Abroad that culminates my passion for promoting Iceland's worldwide connections. I come to the table with a global perspective and recognize that much has changed since the first Icelandic organizations were created in the late 1800's."



"Members are on the move, whether it is for work, school, or fun. I look forward to being a part of creating connections within our communities in the United States so that one can find a home wherever they may land and experience a variety of Icelandic organizations as they travel or plant their roots in a new location."

"Lastly, I acknowledge the important role that the younger generation plays in preserving Icelandic culture and organizations. Hence, I recognize the most important task of all: to share our culture, history, and Icelandic connections with them so that they can carry it forward."

"Please feel free to reach out with ideas on how we can work together to grow our communities. Reach me at disa@inlus.org."

Local Club News



Howard Hobbs performs his lyrics, "It's Hard to be Western Icelandic" at Hekla club's Þorri "Happy Hour" in February.

Seattle Elects New Leaders

The Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle elected 2024 officers at their January 2024 Annual General Meeting. The newly elected officers begin their terms March 1, 2024.

New club president Sölvi Sigmarsson said, "I want to thank you all your confidence in me. I am both honored and thrilled to take on this role and will do my best to lead the club forward! Working alongside my fellow board members we hope to grow the club in both memberships and engagement."

Other newly elected leaders are Olgeir Olgeirsson, vice president; Jeidee Wang, membership secretary; Siobhan Wharton, recording secretary; and Joel Robinson, treasurer.

Iceland Day, June 14th!

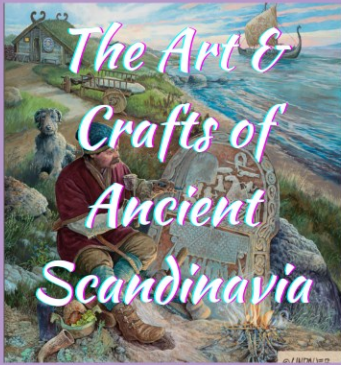
The Icelandic Association of Utah's annual Iceland Day tradition continues on June 14, 2024 at the Spanish Fork City Park. Admission is free. Food will be available to purchase from a variety of food trucks. There will be music and activities, including the Jones-Hughes Pioneer Heritage Park which is open for this special event.



Congratulations to the Icelandic Club of Greater Seattle on their hugely successful ÞORRABLÓT!

Icelandic Hekla Club

SAMKOMA 2024



Sunday,
April 28, 2024
noon - 3:00 pm
Norway House

Keynote Speaker,
D. Sven Lindauer
illustrator,
artist, author
www.lindauerart.com

For tickets or
more information
info@heklaclub.org

Mountain Feast

Bring on the hakarl! The 11th annual Thorrablot was hosted by the Icelandic Communities Association in Mountain, North Dakota on Saturday, February 24. It was a sold-out event with all the Icelandic trimmings.



The Icelandic Hekla Club's 2024 Samkoma is Sunday, April 28, 2024, at Norway House in Minneapolis, Minnesota from noon to 3 pm.

The keynote speaker is D. Sven Lindauer, formerly with National Geographic now an award winning illustrator, artist and author. His topic will be "Art and Crafts of Ancient Scandinavia," also the title of his first of five books featuring life in long ago Nordic lands. Not only has Sven created the artwork for the book, but also written the text after extensive research. Immediately following our event, he will be journeying to Decorah, Iowa where his work will be a featured exhibit at the Vesterheim Museum.

The event concludes with a raffle drawing for \$1,000 USD Icelandair gift certificates, generously donated by Icelandair. The proceeds of the raffle will support the Val Bjornson Icelandic Exchange Scholarship between the University of Minnesota and Háskóli Íslands (the University of Iceland). Hekla Club has supported this fund since its inception in 1982, and in this 42nd year has three student recipients, two from Iceland at the Twin Cities campus, while one Minnesotan studying in Iceland.

Live and silent auctions were held during the course of the evening. Julia Swanson entertained with a recap of her Snorri adventure, and eleven local Icelandic projects received grants from the club. Julie Hall den Boer won the special door prize: an Icelandair voucher. Julie is a past INLUS Board member.

Planning is well underway for the 125 anniversary of the Deuce of August in Mountain, August 1-4. It will be a memorable weekend!

www.INLUS.org

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