



Years of Snorri

THE SNORRI PROGRAMS



1999-2019

Twenty Years of Snorri 1999–2019

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THE SNORRI FOUNDATION



Twenty Years of Snorri

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Velkomin!

OVER THE PAST YEAR, as I've worked on gathering stories for this magazine, I've had ample time to reflect on my own Snorri story. Eight years ago, I had never heard of the Snorri Program, but thanks to an uncharacteristic New Year's resolution and the magic of the internet, I found out about Snorri just in time to apply for the 2012 program. Staying in the Westfjords that summer with relatives who barely spoke English challenged me and kindled my desire to learn Icelandic. My host father kept insisting I had to return to study the language, and before we parted ways, he pressed some money into my hand and instructed me to buy a dictionary and keep learning until I could return. I did both, and in 2014, I moved to Reykjavík to study at the university, something I never would have done without Snorri. Five and a half years later, I'm still here, finishing my master's in translation studies and serving on the board of the Snorri Foundation. It's no exaggeration to say that Snorri completely changed the course of my life, and I am far from the only one with such a story to tell.

In fact, as you flip through the pages of this magazine, you'll see that although each person's story is unique, they all share one common theme: connection. Each and every participant arrives with a deep desire to connect to their roots. Many forge lasting bonds with their host families and not least of all with each other. It's safe to say that no one who participates in Snorri – or its sister programs, Snorri Plus and Snorri West – returns home unchanged.

The success of an endeavor like the Snorri Program requires a perfect combination of factors. It took vision, tenacity, generosity, a little bit of serendipity, and a

lot of hard work and dedication to bring the program to life and help it grow and thrive. This magazine is our way of celebrating the past twenty years and saying thank you to everyone who has helped make Snorri what it is today. To each and every eager participant and generous sponsor, to the project managers who have consistently gone above and beyond, to the board members working faithfully behind the scenes, to the families who have taken a leap of faith and opened their homes – thank you. You are the heart of this program.

In celebrating this milestone and looking back fondly on the past two decades, we also look to the future. Snorri will inevitably continue to grow, adapt, and evolve over time, but as long as the central focus of the program remains the same, I have no doubt that hundreds more people will write their own life-changing Snorri stories in the years to come.

Takk fyrir að lesa! ■



Julie Summers
Editor
Snorri 2012

Looking Ahead to the Next Twenty Years

HOW DO WE FOLLOW IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF GIANTS? How do we secure the ongoing success of a program that so many, from both sides of the ocean, have built over the past twenty years? How do we keep the Snorri Program vibrant and help it grow for the next twenty years – and beyond? The new chair of the Snorri Foundation must inevitably engage with these questions.

Our primary aim is to strengthen the bonds between people of Icelandic descent in North America and the people of Iceland. This aim has been met with great success not least by connecting new generations of Icelandic descendants in North America with new generations of Icelanders. Visitors from North America connect with their Icelandic roots, Icelandic culture, and Icelandic nature; while visitors from Iceland to North America learn about how the descendants of Icelandic immigrants have managed to hold on to their heritage.

Increasingly, future generations will inherit a diversity of origins and histories. In an age of migration, people want to be good citizens where they live, but may nevertheless wish to explore the culture that nourishes their roots. The Snorri Program has

proven that this can not only be done, but be done well. In its own unique way, the Snorri Program can be an example to the world.

The founders of the Snorri Program have made great strides over the past twenty years. I am honored to continue that trajectory, finding new ways to connect and collaborate with everyone who cherishes this important endeavor. ■

Hulda Karen Daníelsdóttir
Chair of the Snorri Foundation



**Board of the
Snorri Foundation,
appointed 2019**

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Expanding and Nurturing the Snorri Family

OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS, the Snorri Program has proven its worth as one of the most effective means of cultivating a closer relationship between Icelanders and the descendants of Icelandic emigrants to North America.

In total, over 300 young people of Icelandic descent have had the opportunity to meet their long-lost relatives and learn about Iceland's language and culture. Through the reciprocal Snorri West program, about 90 young Icelanders have visited settlement areas in North America and met the descendants of Icelandic immigrants. And over 200 Americans and Canadians have participated in Snorri Plus, which gives individuals over 30, as well as couples, friends, siblings, and families, the opportunity to meet Icelandic relatives and experience Iceland's nature and culture in a personal way.

Many a participant has struggled to find the words to describe how they feel at the end of the Snorri experience. These young people leave the country changed, their lives having taken on a new dimension. They've discovered previously unknown relatives, their concept of family has grown, and their horizons have widened.

The fact is that most Snorris forge unbreakable bonds with their long-lost Icelandic relatives as well as with their fellow participants. Snorris return to North America with new knowledge and experiences under their belts and are eager to tell others about the program. Many Snorris have returned to Iceland, often bringing their family and friends along. Some Icelandic host families have traveled to North America to visit their Snorris. Families have grown closer, the ties between our countries have been strengthened, and gatherings of Icelanders and people of Icelandic descent are now commonplace.

The Snorri Programs have earned a sterling reputation both in Iceland and North America, with alumni and many others testifying to the programs' excellence and lasting impact. Promoting these programs and giving as many people as possible the

chance to meet their Icelandic relatives and experience Icelandic nature and culture is a worthwhile and rewarding task. Moving forward, this will continue to be the Snorri Foundation's primary focus.

Our partner organization, the alumni volunteer-led Snorri Alumni Association, will hopefully continue working to build a community of Snorri alumni, provide alumni with more opportunities to stay involved, and make it easier to organize future reunions and other events from time to time.

On behalf of the board of the Snorri Foundation, I send greetings to the whole Snorri family and extend our deep gratitude to everyone who, with enthusiasm, tireless work, and generous donations, has supported Snorri over the years. There would be no Snorri without you. ■

Halldór Árnason
Outgoing Chair of the Snorri Foundation



A History of Twenty Successful Years

LAST YEAR I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE of visiting the regions settled by Icelanders in Canada and the United States of America. It was a bit like discovering in oneself a hitherto unknown vital organ. Hidden in these communities is a large slice of Icelandic history that began when an estimated fifteen thousand people, around one-fifth of the entire population of Iceland at the time, made their way westwards across the Atlantic. Abandoning mountains, sands and glaciers, these settlers arrived on the coast of an unfamiliar land and made their homes where endless plains stretched as far as the eye could see. It was colder than Iceland, and also warmer, the flies bigger, the pandemics different, the language unfamiliar. But they never forgot their roots back in Iceland.

The great westward migration across the ocean is a reminder of how harsh the living conditions could be in Iceland in the nineteenth century, how so many suffered poverty and want, and how tiny the nation often seemed in its conflict with the often merciless forces of nature. But this history took place in the period leading up to Iceland's sovereignty and independence. The western Icelanders founded a new community on the other side of the Atlantic, a community which is now our common heritage.

The Snorri Program has given young people in North America an opportunity to acquire this same understanding and find in themselves their own missing "vital organ" that I mentioned, by visiting Iceland and discovering a contemporary Icelandic community that is markedly different from the community their ancestors left in the nineteenth century. The fact is that even though Icelanders and western Icelanders are separated by an ocean in space and a century in time, when we meet it is always like greeting old friends. The Snorri Program has had a huge significance in preserving and strengthening this relationship, and the interest shown by young people has nurtured the cultural heritage that we share.

In a world where everyone appears to be permanently online, and reaching out across the world to people on a distant continent takes a matter of seconds, it is more important than ever to know one's roots and origin. Using that knowledge, each and every one of us can contribute to the diversity of the world and gain a better understanding of the people in our time who are migrating between continents and seeking a new life in new communities. The Snorri Program has been invaluable in expanding the horizons of young people and helping them to discover their roots. It is my hope that the program will continue to do so in the future. ■

Katrín Jakobsdóttir
Prime Minister of Iceland



Photo courtesy of the Office of the Prime Minister

A Greeting from the President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson

THE MIGRATIONS OF PEOPLE FROM ICELAND to North America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were an important chapter in the country's history, opening up new opportunities for those who took the step of settling in a new land. At the same time, they were largely triggered by the difficulties that people faced in Iceland during that period.

Most Icelanders take a special pride in the fact that many of their cousins in the New World are keen to stay in touch with “the old country” and many people in Iceland are also interested in making sure that the bonds between families and these nations remain intact. Thus, the Snorri Program, which was aimed at cultivating this unique relationship, was welcomed on both sides of the Atlantic.

The origins of the program go back to 1999, when nineteen young people of Icelandic descent from North America spent a few weeks staying with their relatives in Iceland. Under the program, more than three hundred have since followed in their footsteps.

The Snorri West program was established in 2001, enabling young people from Iceland to spend a few weeks visiting the parts of Manitoba where

the Icelandic pioneers in Canada put down roots. To date, I believe, about 90 young people from Iceland have now made use of this opportunity.

Exchange programs of this type have great value: they increase understanding between nations, reminding us of our origins and perhaps also of what we can learn from history.

Eliza and I had the good fortune to visit the Icelandic communities in Manitoba earlier this year and we greatly enjoyed meeting many people of Icelandic descent and hearing about the fortunes of their ancestors who made the decision to emigrate from Iceland in those difficult years.

I also recall pleasant occasions when, as a lecturer in History at the University of Iceland, I taught young people in the Snorri Program Icelandic history and talked to them about contemporary Iceland.

It is a pleasure for me to congratulate all those who have been involved in the Snorri Program on this occasion and to note the success they have attained in stimulating and strengthening contact between us in Iceland and our relatives and friends in North America. ■



Protecting Cultural Heritage in a Changing World: An Interview with Lilja D. Alfreðsdóttir

As Iceland's Minister of Education, Science, and Culture since November 2017, Lilja Dögg Alfreðsdóttir has worked to protect and strengthen Iceland's tremendous cultural heritage. Since 2012, the ministry has been a leading sponsor of the Snorri Program, showing that the government recognizes the importance of investing in Icelandic cultural heritage in North America as well as at home. This past summer, on a trip to visit settlement areas, Lilja met people of Icelandic descent, experienced the Icelandic festivals in Manitoba and North Dakota, and saw how *Vestur-Íslendingar* have preserved their cultural heritage across the ocean. We asked Lilja a few questions about her trip, the importance of cultural exchange opportunities, and her hopes for the future.

Can you tell us a little bit about your trip this past summer?

MY VISIT TO NORTH DAKOTA AND MANITOBA earlier this year was truly one of the most memorable experiences of my life. Before my visit, like most Icelanders, I was quite familiar with the history of the *Vesturfarar*, the Icelandic emigrants. However, my visit really took me by surprise on a much more personal and emotional level. I met with people of Icelandic descent, some of whom had Icelandic names. At Betel retirement home, I met a wonderful lady called Lilja, and then I met another who bore my daughter's name, Signý. I had the feeling I was discovering a distant family on the other side of the world, which sparked my curiosity to learn more about this fascinating newfound "family" of mine.

My trip took me to many interesting places and events such as the Deuce of August festival in Mountain and Íslendingadagurinn in Gimli. These festivals, which draw so many people every year, showed me how well the Icelandic diaspora keeps the memory of the settlement alive. I visited places with Icelandic names like Þingvellir, Hvítastein, and Engimýri, the home of Sigtryggur Jónasson, a pivotal player in the early development of the settlement. To my amazement, some members of the oldest generation still speak Icelandic! I was also very happy to discover how many young people cherish their origins and learn the language in order

to stay connected to their roots. Many of them come to Iceland and learn about our flourishing contemporary culture as well. ▶



Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture



Lilja Alfreðsdóttir (left) with her *nafna* (name twin), Lilja, at Betel retirement home in Manitoba.

Why do you believe investing in cultural exchange opportunities like the Snorri Program is important? Why should Icelanders care about their ancestors who emigrated and their living relatives in North America?

The Icelandic diaspora in North America is an immensely important part of our history, and the people of Iceland feel a responsibility to maintain ties to this aspect of our heritage. Our beloved mother tongue, the Icelandic language, is an integral part of Icelandic culture. During my visit, I met with my Canadian colleagues, Manitoba's Minister of Education and Minister of Culture, discussing issues of common interest, like providing excellent language education for our children and the role of culture, arts, and creative thought in today's fast-changing world. One of the highlights of the trip was my visit to the Icelandic department at the University of Manitoba, which has been central in fostering the relationship between Iceland and Manitoba for 70 years. The Icelandic government has charged the University of Iceland with supporting the Department of Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba for the next three years.

During my visit, I learned of the importance of the different Snorri Programs in offering hundreds of people of Icelandic origin in North America and young people in Iceland an opportunity to discover their shared heritage. I want to extend my deepest thanks to all the people who have played a role in the Snorri Programs:

the founders, sponsors, board members, project managers, and everyone else who has helped keep the programs alive and thriving over the past two decades. I also want to thank all the participants who have invested time in cultivating their Icelandic heritage.

What is your vision for the future when it comes to connections between Icelanders and people of Icelandic descent in North America?

In today's globalized world, Icelanders in Iceland and people of Icelandic descent in North America share a similar outlook on life. We adhere to similar principles and values and dream of creating the best possible future for new generations. We share a vision of taking on the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution by developing what can be called soft power, that is, shaping international relations through attraction, cooperation, and cultural influence rather than force. We consider education, languages, arts, creativity, critical thinking, innovation, and new technology to be the most important qualities for successful societies and economies. I see a continued good connection between us in Iceland and people of Icelandic descent in North America based on opportunities being created through the Snorri Programs, as well as through other new ways of increased communication and cooperation. ■

Changing Lives Through Snorri

An Interview with Almar Grímsson and Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

Few names are as widely associated with the Snorri Program as Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir and Almar Grímsson. Almar, fondly known as Afi Almar by many participants, helped shape the program in the very beginning and was Chair of the Snorri Foundation until 2010. As program manager from 2000-2019, Ásta Sól impacted the lives of hundreds of alumni and has an unparalleled knowledge of all things Snorri. Ásta Sól (ÁSK) and Almar (AG) answered a few questions about their experiences with the program.

How did each of you come to be involved in the Snorri Program?

AG At a Nordic Association meeting in 1997, we were discussing President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson's visits to Icelandic settlement areas in North America. We were impressed with this positive development in strengthening ties between Iceland and people of Icelandic descent. My colleague Óðinn posed a simple question: "Why don't we design a program for young people of Icelandic descent, similar to Nordjobb?" The ball started rolling, and I was called to take the lead in exploring the feasibility of starting such a program.

ÁSK My interest began back in 1996 when I met Kristin Good, a Winnipegger of Icelandic descent, at the University of Iceland student bar. I spent the summer of 1998 with Kristin in Manitoba, volunteering at Icelandic Camp and celebrating Íslendingadagurinn in Gimli. Back in Winnipeg, I found out my 80-year-old relative, Rúna Magnússon, had been running all over Gimli during the festival looking for me. When I had coffee at Rúna's and saw a picture of my grandparents in an album from her trip to Iceland in the 70s, I realized just how close we were and that I was a link between the past and the future. That moment changed my life forever.

I knew I had to do something to help other people experience such moments of connection. I joined INL-Iceland in 1998, and just like in any good relationship, one thing led to another. Ultimately, the former chair of INL-Iceland, Reynir Gunnlaugsson, encouraged me to apply for the project manager position, and I was hired on the spot.

Almar, what challenges did the program face at the very beginning?

AG The biggest challenge for us in the early years was continually needing to secure funding. Keeping the program on the rails was, in fact, a day-to-day, week-to-week battle. We were cautious about the future and agreed to take things one step at a time. The first year, we didn't even know if we'd get enough applications and were pleased to receive 19. We decided to accept them all, even though we'd set 15 as the ideal number. The first year was an overwhelming success, so our next task was to find sponsors for the following year. Once we had, we looked for a full-time program manager, and we were fortunate to hire Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir. Over the next ten years, I had a very good working relationship with Ásta Sól and was impressed with how she put her heart and soul into the program.



Kristin Good (left) and Ásta Sól in Minneapolis in 1998.

Photo courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

Ásta, when you started in 2000, did you imagine the program would still be going strong after twenty years?

ÁSK We all hoped so, but it was hard to know how it would all turn out. At the beginning, we took things one year at a time. The board talked about running the program for ten years. In the fall of 2001, they actually concluded they couldn't sustain the program due to lack of funding, and I was laid off. I still remember where I was and what was said. But in my mind, ending it was never an option, so I decided I would work pro-bono until we could secure funding for at least another year. My family and friends thought I was crazy, but I was on a mission.

When did you know this program was something truly special?

AG At the first group's "graduation" in 1999, I recall feeling that we'd been correct in our assumption that the program would encourage young people of Icelandic descent to discover their roots and thereby strengthen relations between Iceland and Icelandic communities in North America.

ÁSK I knew as soon as my first group arrived on June 23, 2000 that I had something really special in my hands, but I had to put in a lot of work to keep it special over the years too. Every time I thought I knew everything, I learned something new. Every time I thought I had seen every possible problem, I encountered a new one. That's also what made things so interesting.

Ásta, how did the program change over your 19-year career?

ÁSK Since 2000, the layout has been more or less the same, but no two years were identical. I never wanted the participants to feel like I was bored with my job, and I liked trying new things to keep it interesting. Snorri Plus began as a fall project, but it was changed to overlap with Reykjavík Culture Night in the second year. It also became more polished with each passing year.



2000 Snorri alumni Margret Magnusson (second from left) and Gwennie (Byron) Beard (holding her son) with Ásta Sól and Almar outside the Nordic Association office in June 2005.

What was the most rewarding part of your job? The most difficult?

ÁSK The most difficult parts were probably lack of understanding about how much work it really was, time away from family, and lack of sleep. The most rewarding was knowing that my work changed lives. I'm so thankful for all the friendships I gained. I'm probably in touch with a former Snorri every single day. Also, the willingness of hundreds of Icelanders to open their homes and meet people of Icelandic descent they didn't even know existed shows true character and respect for this important part of our history. They should all receive medals for their generosity!



Ten years after resigning from the board of the Snorri Foundation, Almar welcomed 2019 Snorris (from left) Anna Glasgow, Shelby Byron, Kjersten Gaminek, and Arthur Waddell to his home in Hafnarfjörður.

Photos courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir (top) and Kjersten Gaminek (bottom)

What do you think is at the heart of Snorri's success over all these years?

AG The Snorri Program met an urgent need to connect young people to their Icelandic heritage, and the Snorri Alumni Association has also created a network of friendship on both sides of the ocean. People across Canada and the US appreciate the way the program has created a new force to strengthen and secure the ties between us. I would also like to emphasize the genealogical information participants have received, first through Íslendingabók and, in recent years, through Icelandic Roots.

ÁSK All the Snorris are the heart of the program. The keys to success are dedication, determination, understanding of the program's core goals, tolerance and acceptance of others, and great intuition.

Do either of you have any particularly special memories from your time with Snorri?

AG My mind is flooded with good memories and it's hard to single out any particular event. As a result of my involvement with Snorri and the INL, I've made so many strong friendships with Snorris and other individuals all over North America. This has added a whole new dimension to life for me, my wife Anna Björk, our family in Iceland, and our numerous relatives in the US and Canada.

ÁSK I have so many fond memories. Some are very personal and not mine to share, but they live in the hearts of those who experienced them and some of us who witnessed them. Some are quite mundane but just as important. I'll share two simple but meaningful moments. In 2004, one participant did her homestay on a farm with a relative who spoke no English. He was dropping her off at my house, and as they said their goodbyes, he in Icelandic and she in English, they hugged and cried, even though they couldn't understand each other. In 2007, I was at my office helping a Snorri call more relatives. As I was speaking to one of them on the phone, I heard the participant crying. When I hung up, I asked if he was okay. He told me he'd become overwhelmed with emotion when I gave him a signal that these people wanted to meet him.

How would you summarize your contribution to Snorri?

AG I believe it was my destiny to be present when the idea of creating the program first came up and to do my best to make it happen. It was a life-changing experience for me, and I can truly say that I put my heart and soul into this program. My contributions to strengthening ties between Iceland and people of Icelandic descent were recently recognized when I became the first recipient of the INLNA's Strong is the Bond award.

ÁSK Snorri was never just a job for me, it was a lifestyle. I put everything I had into the program from the get-go and was determined to make every participant's experience unique and memorable. Being part of this history is a legacy that will live on in the hearts and minds of around 600 Snorris. I'm grateful to each and every one of them for trusting me with their experiences, and I know my work with each Snorri shaped not only their present while on the program, but also their future.

What are your hopes for the future of Snorri?

AG I hope the program's good foundation will hold strong and it will continue for years to come. It may require adjustments here and there, but the program has clearly proven its value in strengthening the bonds between Iceland and people of Icelandic descent in North America.

ÁSK I hope the future organizers realize what a beautiful delicate gift they have and treat it with care. In the right hands, the program can live on for a long time, and it is my sincere wish that it will. ■



Photo courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

Ásta Sól reunited with Snorri women from 2006, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2017 at an alumni meetup in summer 2019.

The Saga of Snorri

From idea to reality

THE SEED THAT WOULD GROW into the Snorri Program was planted in late summer 1997 among members of the board and staff of the Nordic Association of Iceland (NA), including Nordjobb Program Manager Óðinn Albertsson. The idea was to establish a program for young North Americans of Icelandic descent to visit Iceland, loosely modeled on Nordjobb, a cooperative youth exchange program for young people from all five Nordic countries. Around the same time, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was working to revitalize the Icelandic National League of Iceland (INL-Iceland), which was established in 1939 but had been dormant for some time. The timing was perfect, and the Nordic Association and INL-Iceland joined forces to establish the Snorri Program, named for Snorri Þorfinnsson, the first European born in North America. The goal was to give young people of Icelandic descent the opportunity to embark on a six-week adventure and discover their Icelandic roots.

Much of 1998 went into laying the groundwork for this innovative program. An advisory committee was formed to determine whether the idea was feasible. Members of the committee included former President of Iceland Vigdís Finnbogadóttir; Haraldur Bessason, former chair of the Icelandic department at the University of Manitoba; and Einar Benediktsson, then-managing director of the Millennium Commission of Iceland, which was established in the run-up to the year 2000 with the goal of

strengthening ties between Iceland and North America and particularly people of Icelandic descent. The decision was made to move forward in planning the program, with INL-Iceland President Steinn Logi Björnsson and NA board member Almar Grímsson at the helm. The program proposal was presented to a meeting of the Icelandic American Chamber of Commerce in Minneapolis to great applause. A few months later, the first public announcement was made at Íslendingadagurinn in Gimli by festival president Susie Erickson-Jacobson.

1999: the pioneer year

The inaugural tour was planned and managed by a team of Nordic Association employees and board members: Kristín Kvaran, chair; Sigurlín Sveinbjarnardóttir, managing director; Almar Grímsson and Úlfur Sigur-

Continues on page 16 ►



The first-ever Snorri group with President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson at Bessastaðir.

Twenty Years

Twenty years full of change, growth, and adventure.



Óðinn Albertsson and others at the Nordic Association (NA) begin developing an idea for a summer program for young North Americans of Icelandic descent and an advisory committee is formed. INL-Iceland is revitalized after years of inactivity.

1997

INL-Iceland and NA sign an agreement to officially establish the Snorri Program. Almar Grímsson named first Chair of the Snorri Program. First Snorri group, 18 Canadians and 1 American, comes to Iceland. SNORRI STORIES: PAGE 22

1999

Snorri West established. First group visits Manitoba under the leadership of project manager Wanda Anderson. SNORRI WEST STORIES: PAGE 52
Snorri Alumni Association (SAA) founded and Tricia Signý McKay (Snorri 2001) named first president. REMEMBERING TRICIA: PAGE 75



2001

1998

Program begins to take shape and is announced in Iceland and North America.

2000

Decode Genetics pledges financial support to secure the program's future. Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir welcomes her first group as project manager. INTERVIEW WITH ÁSTA SÓL AND ALMAR: PAGE 8

2002



Snorri Foundation incorporated on October 17. Icelandic government begins providing funding. Almar and Ásta Sól announce addition of Snorri Plus at INLNA convention in Minneapolis to great applause.

of Snorri

Here are just a few milestones along the way.



Snorri Plus debuts.

READ MORE ON PAGE 60

Róbert Trausti Árnason appointed
Chair of the Snorri Foundation.

Two Icelanders participate in Snorri West Ontario and Quebec, the first attempt to expand Snorri West outside of Manitoba.



Ásta Sól travels to Brazil on behalf of INL-Iceland and Snorri to build relationships with descendants of Icelanders who emigrated there. A group trip to Brazil planned for the next year is canceled after the economic crash.

Landsbankinn signs a landmark sponsorship agreement with the Snorri Foundation.

Katherine Jonsson of Spruce Grove, AB honored as the 100th Snorri participant.



2003

2005

2007

2004

2006

2008



Leif Einarson (Snorri 2004) and Brad Hirst (Snorri 2002) become co-presidents of the SAA. Almar Grímsson reappointed Chair of the Snorri Foundation.

Ragnheiður Diljá Gunnarsdóttir (SW 2006) named president of the SAA.

Iceland's economy collapses, with significant financial consequences for the program. The tenth group travels to Iceland, and the Snorri Foundation publishes a 10-Year Anniversary Magazine to commemorate the first decade.





Smallest Snorri group to date visits Iceland, with just 11 participants. Snorri West takes a hiatus pending restructuring. A number of organizations enter into talks to secure the program's future. Mallory Swanson (Snorri 2011) takes over as president of the SAA.

Laura Olafson (Snorri 2009) takes over as president of the SAA. Ten years have elapsed since the first group arrived. A total of 147 people have now participated, an average of 15 per year.

The program reaches 200 participants. The largest-ever Snorri Plus group arrives in Iceland, with 20 participants – a record that will be matched in 2016. Ásta Sól's production company Bergsól releases *The Wayfarers: Seeking Identity*, a documentary about the Snorri Program. The Snorri Foundation is one of several sponsors.



2009

2011

2013

2010



Almar Grímsson resigns as Chair of the Snorri Foundation and is replaced by Halldór Árnason. Program feels the effects of 2008 economic collapse, with drastically reduced government funding and below-average participation. Alexía Björg Jóhannesdóttir acts as program manager for six months.



2012



Snorri West re-emerges under the umbrella of the INLNA, with participants traveling to different areas of North America on a rotating basis. Gail Einarson-McCleery named program director.

Program continues to recover from the economic crisis, securing significant funding from three Icelandic companies and the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture. Guttormsson Family Foundation established and begins supporting Snorri applicants from the US as well as the Snorri West program. READ MORE ON PAGE 42

2014

Ástrós Signýjardóttir manages the program this year.

US-based non-profit Icelandic Roots begins providing scholarships for Snorris as well as directly supporting the programs.

READ MORE ON PAGE 38

Snorri Alumni Internship established through the initiative of Canadian Ambassador to Iceland Stewart Wheeler.

MEET THE FIRST INTERNS: PAGE 69



Úlfur Sigurmundsson resigns from the board of the Snorri Foundation. He had served continuously from the beginning.



Ásta Sól departs after 19 years with the Snorri Program. Sandra Björg Ernudóttir, Ástrós Signýjardóttir, and the board manage this year's programs.

ALUMNI SAY THANK YOU: PAGE 73

Snorri welcomes its 300th participant. The Snorri Program celebrates reaching 20 years with a reunion in Hofsós, on July 22-24.

Kjersten Gaminek of Winnipeg (Snorri 2019) takes over as SAA President.

MEET KJERSTEN: PAGE 72

Hulda Karen Daniélsdóttir named new Chair of the Snorri Foundation in November.

2015

2017

2019

2016

2018



Jody Arman-Jones takes over management of Snorri West. INTERVIEW WITH JODY: PAGE 51
A record total of 42 people participate in the programs, with 16 Snorris, 20 Snorri Plus, 4 Snorri West, and 2 alumni interns.



The Snorri Deaf project begins on a trial basis, with two Deaf individuals from Iceland traveling to North America.

mundsson, board members; and Óðinn Albertsson, with Reynir Gunnlaugsson and Margrét Pétursdóttir also assisting. The first group stepped foot on Icelandic soil in June 1999. With 19 participants, it was the largest group to date. That first year, the program mostly followed the structure of Nordjobb, with a week-long orientation and cultural program in Reykjavík, a four-week home stay, and a week-long adventure tour. The program was an immediate success. However, after careful evaluation, the decision was made to have subsequent groups spend two weeks in Reykjavík to strengthen the educational and cultural aspect of the program. As a result, the home stay was reduced to three weeks. The sixth week remained set aside for an adventure tour, including two days in Hofsó, home of the Icelandic Emigration Centre.

A team effort: sponsors, volunteers, and dedicated staff

From the beginning, three equally important pillars have formed the foundation of the Snorri Programs: financial contributions from numerous sponsors, the voluntary work of the Snorri Foundation board and other dedicated volunteers; and since the second year of the program, a highly motivated and dedicated program manager.



Ásta Sól in
tour guide
mode on the
2007
adventure
tour.

After the program's successful start, with funding secured for the following year, recruiting a full-time program manager became a priority. In March 2000, Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir began what would end up being a 19-year career with the Snorri Program. Besides her professional qualifications, Ásta Sól demonstrated a deep understanding of the program's goals, having personally had a life-changing experience meeting long-lost relatives in Manitoba just a few years ▶



Photos courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

earlier. With each Snorri group, Ásta Sól worked to ensure that each participant felt welcome and had a meaningful experience exploring their roots.

The launch of the Snorri Program was made possible by a generous grant from the Leifur Eiríksson Millennium Commission of Iceland. Decode Genetics' pledge of support in 2000 helped ensure the program's continuation. A major milestone was reached in 2002, when the Icelandic government signed on to support the program for the first time. Over the years, various government entities have provided vital support. Iceland's flag carrier, Icelandair, has been a major sponsor throughout the program's twenty-year history, offering discounted fares to and from North American destinations for program participants. In 2007, another significant partnership was forged when Icelandic bank Landsbankinn signed a sponsorship agreement with the Snorri Foundation. Without the generous support of these and other main sponsors, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to operate the program at such high standards. In addition, local businesses, organizations, and municipalities across Iceland have been critical to the success of the program. Because Snorris are unable to obtain work permits for short-term work in Iceland, they are essentially volunteers in their job placements. However, their local "employers" forward their would-be salary to the program, providing critical funding. This model is still employed today.

Besides the Icelandic government and various private companies supporting the program, a number of organizations have sponsored individual participants over the years. From the very beginning, Canada Iceland Foundation stepped in and gave each participant a grant to help cover expenses. Shortly thereafter, the Icelandic clubs in Calgary and Edmonton began offering substantial sponsorships to local participants, and other clubs across North America later followed suit.

Besides financial support, the program has always relied heavily on volunteers. While the program manager, driver-guides, and some contracted professionals have been compensated for their work, the board of the Snorri Foundation, host families around the country, and countless others have donated their time and efforts to make the program a success. Throughout the pages of this magazine, you'll find some of their stories.

Photo courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

New programs established

In 2001, Snorri West was founded, realizing one of the original aims of creating a reciprocal program for young Icelanders. One of the key figures in starting the program was Eric Stefanson, a member of the Manitoba Legislature who was deeply involved in promoting ties between Iceland and Canada. Snorri West gave Icelanders the opportunity to visit Manitoba and learn about the history and lifestyle of so-called "Western Icelanders," descendants of Icelandic immigrants. In 2003, Snorri Plus became the third program, meeting popular demand for a similar program for people who were past the age limit for Snorri.



Sandra Hansen (Snorri Plus 2006) relaxing in Grettislaug in Skagafjörður.

The second decade: from financial struggles to further expansion

After ten successful years, the second decade of Snorri began with financial struggles, ripple effects of the 2008 economic collapse. In 2010, Icelandic government funding, critical to the program's success, was down 55% from the previous year. Participation was below average for three years after the crash, with 12 Snorris each in 2009 and 2010 and an all-time low of 11 in 2011. But as the economy recovered, so did the program's finances. In 2012, the Icelandic Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture signed a contract guaranteeing funding for the next three years. That agreement has since been

renewed. In addition, Eimskip and Skipti pledged significant financial support, and Landsbankinn, restructured and recovering after the financial crisis, signed a new sponsorship agreement.

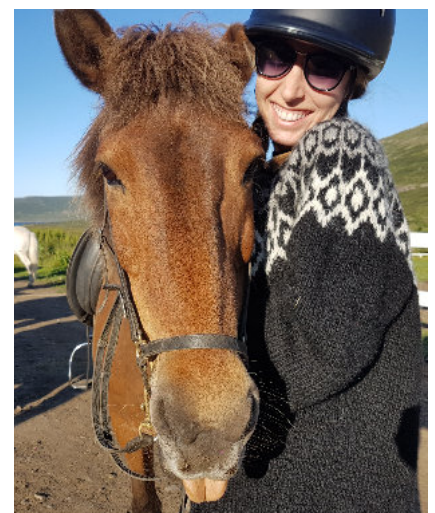
In North America, two new funding sources emerged to support participants. Founded in 2012, the Guttormsson Family Foundation aimed to encourage more American participation by exclusively sponsoring US Snorris. The foundation also donated money to Snorri West. And in 2015, US-based non-profit Icelandic Roots also began awarding scholarships and contributing to operational costs.

Snorri Plus has remained more or less unchanged from the beginning, offering individuals over 30, as well as couples and families, a two-week adventure in Reykjavík and beyond. But the second decade was a period of significant change for Snorri West. After 10 years running Snorri West in Manitoba, Wanda Anderson stepped down, and at first there was no clear path forward for the program. After a year-long hiatus, the program was reintroduced in 2012, this time under the leadership of Gail Einarson-McCleery and the Icelandic National League of North America. With an emphasis on volunteers from INL member clubs, and a new rotating corridor structure with multiple destinations across North America, the new program has thrived.

In 2015, spearheaded by former Ambassador of Canada to Iceland Stewart Wheeler, the Snorri Alumni Internship (SAI) was established. The SAI gives two Snorri alumni, one American and one Canadian, the chance to return to Iceland and spend a summer volunteering at the Icelandic Emigration Centre in Hofsós. The program is a collaboration between the Emigration Centre, the US and Canadian embassies, INL-Iceland, the Snorri Foundation, and Icelandair. With the introduction of the SAI, 2016 was a record year for participation, with 42 participants in four programs. In 2019, the Snorri Program welcomed its 300th participant.

Finally, in 2018, the board of INL-Iceland approved a proposal for a provisional project called Snorri Deaf, intended to cultivate bilateral cultural exchange for Deaf Icelanders and Deaf individuals of Icelandic descent. While Snorri Deaf is not directly affiliated with the other Snorri programs, the board allowed the Snorri name to be used to reflect the core values the programs share.

Over the past two decades, as Snorri has grown and evolved, over 600 people have participated in our programs, and hundreds of others have played a part in our story – staff, volunteers, host families, sponsors, and more. Throughout the pages of this magazine, you'll meet just a few of these people and hear how Snorri has impacted their lives. ■



(left) Tenneile Sigfusson (Snorri Plus 2017) on the boat to Drangey, (center) Lopapeysa models Ashley Thorvaldson and Stewart Elliott (Snorri 2005) at Skaftafell, and (right) Katharine Lombardo (Snorri 2016) ready for an adventure on horseback.

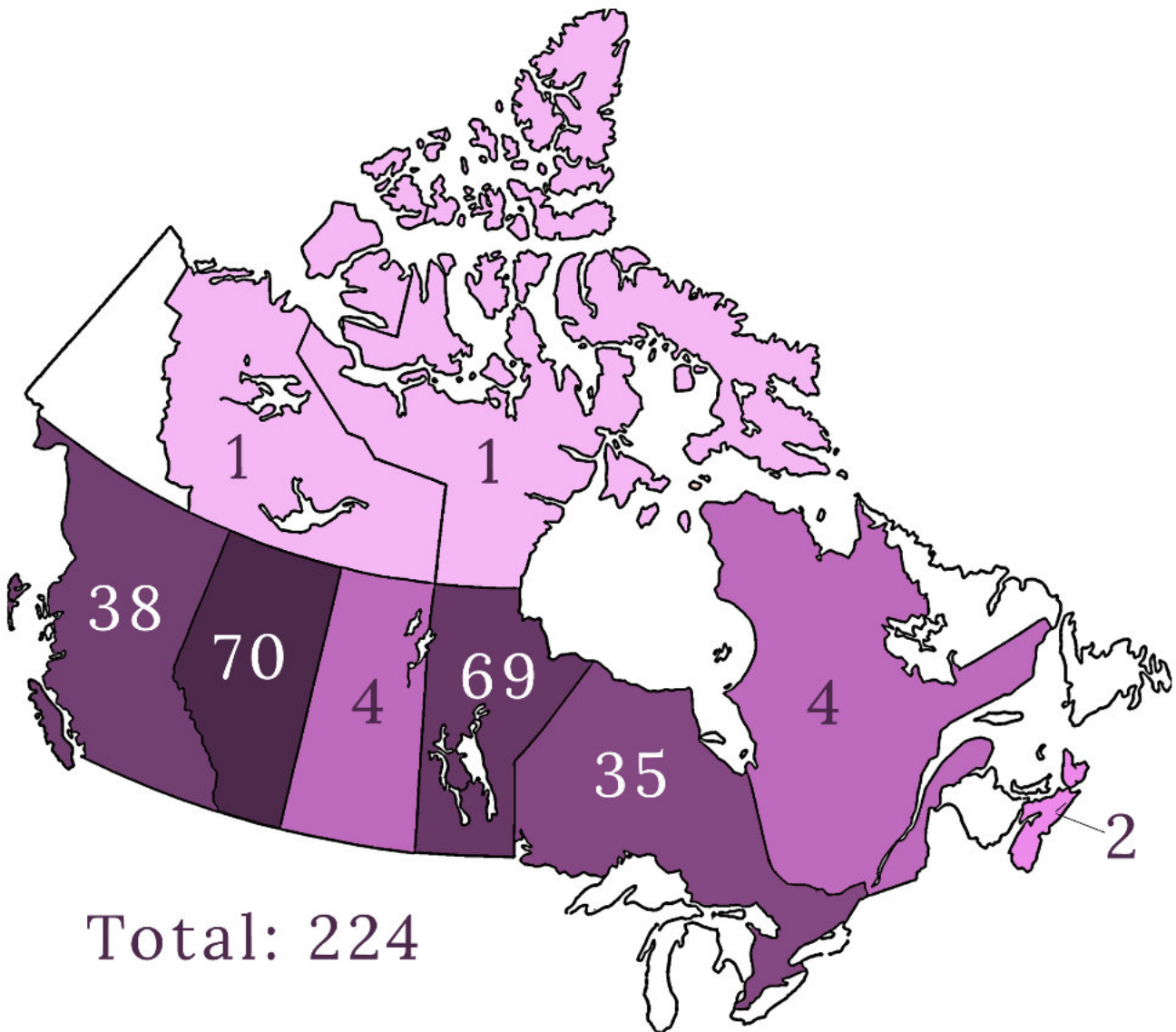
The Snorri Program: Since 1999

Twenty years after the program began, there are over 300 Snorri alumni in the world. After the summer of a lifetime, many return to North America, finish school, establish careers, start families, and get involved in their local Icelandic clubs or find other ways to make their heritage a part of their daily lives. Countless Snorris have returned to Iceland to visit, often bringing friends and family. Some have moved to Iceland to study, and a few have even settled there permanently. Still others are scattered across the globe, living their lives in countries far away from both Iceland and North America. But wherever you may be in the world, you'll always be a Snorri – and you may find that there's another Snorri closer than you think.

SNORRIS

by

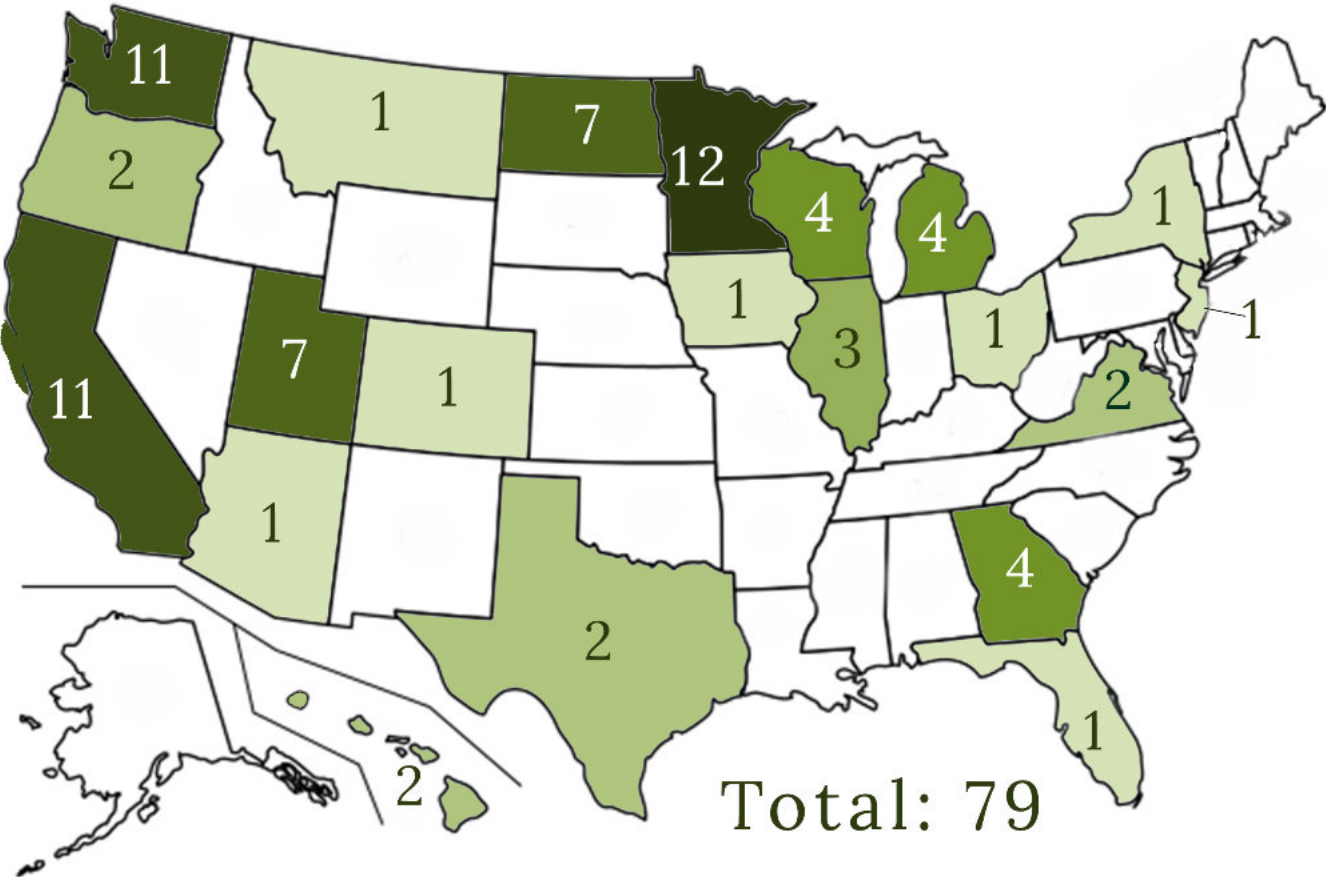
PROVINCE/TERRITORY



SNORRIS

by

STATE



Ripples of Iceland Around the World



Shawn Ross Bryant
From Nanaimo, BC
Lives in Daejeon,
South Korea
Snorri 2000

Shawn (right) has encountered Icelandic in unexpected places and situations around the world, including on a T-shirt in Korea.

I WAS A PARTICIPANT IN THE SNORRI PROGRAM in the summer of 2000. It was undoubtedly a memorable and impactful experience for my eighteen-year-old self. I was energized by the midnight sun, seduced by the nightlife, awestruck by the natural beauty, and intrigued by the curious sounds of the language that rang so familiar and yet so foreign in my ears. I loved meeting distant cousins, sailing to Drangey, camping at Ásbyrgi, and bathing at Hveravellir. However, the most memorable experience, the gift that the program has given me, is the legacy of connection to Iceland.

For me, Snorri was not a round trip but an open door – and I stepped through. Even though the schedule of the program had ended, the effects, the legacy, continued. It led me back to Iceland, to university studies, to göngur, and to encounters further afield with the strangely pervasive tiny cultural world of Iceland. I sang “Á Sprengisandi” with Icelandic tourists in Havana. I ran into Icelanders in Costa Rica. I spoke Icelandic to the doctor in my

“For me, Snorri was not a round trip but an open door – and I stepped through.”

hometown in Canada. Last month in a Starbucks in Korea I could hardly believe my ears when I heard the song “Vor í Vaglaskógi” coming out of the speakers.

My most lasting memory, a ripple and a resonance of the Snorri Program, came in 2006 when I accompanied Dascomb Barddal, a Brazilian of Icelandic heritage, around Iceland. We stopped at a small farmhouse in the valley for which he was named. I was translating the words between Portuguese and Icelandic, but I was also a vessel for the emotions and sentiments of the encounter. There came a moment, overwhelmed by all the experiences, when I needed a break and a breath of air. The old woman of the house must have seen my discomfort; she sat me down, held my hand, and said in Icelandic, “It is not easy searching for the source of life.” I wept in that tiny farmhouse, neither really tears of sadness nor of joy, but of connection to something greater than myself.

That is the gift that the Snorri Program has given me. In many unexpected ways, Snorri was a catalyst for

connecting me to my origins, to the source of life that the old woman in Bárðardalur helped me feel, and therefore, in the spirit of the hero's journey, to return home and to carry that gift with me into the larger world. ■



At the sound sculpture Tvisöngur in Seyðisfjörður.

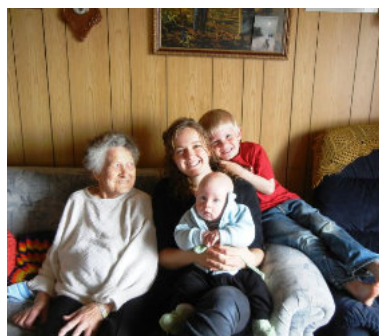
Erin Johnson
Minneapolis, MN
Lives in Reykjavík, IS
Snorri 2013

The very first thing we did when I arrived out east was go to Skógardagurinn Mikli in Hallormsstaður. It was a festival of the forest. They had free food galore – even a whole cow roasting in a van. I explored the forest with my young cousins, many of whom were just beginning to learn English, so I learned quite a bit of Icelandic from them! I had *lummur* and *ketilkaffi* and *skátabrauð* (bread roasted on a stick over a fire). Also, going to see Mugison in concert... I had to put on one of those rain suits because it was pouring. He just showed up on a boat, played a show, and sailed away. And I don't think anything will beat staying on the ancestral farm with my relatives. I painted a fence, tended sheep, and lived the good country life. Waking up to the sheep baaing and the sun shining in at 3 AM... I'll never forget those moments! ■

Photos courtesy of Erin Johnson (top), Michelle Anderson (middle), and Emily McDonald (bottom)

Since Snorri, Shawn has lived in Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, and Switzerland and has traveled extensively. He is currently an assistant professor at Endicott College of International Studies in Daejeon, South Korea and has an ongoing affiliation as faculty of the MA program in Peace Studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

I was lucky enough to do an individual internship about family structure through my university while I was on the Snorri Program. Family structure and history was then a large part of the remainder of my studies after returning. I have since graduated, but my husband and I now have a side hobby business (*Coriaria.com*) that focuses on strengthening families. We have several products – many of which are inspired by my time in Iceland – including an upcoming one that relates to genealogy and memory preservation. ■



Michelle Anderson
(Curtin)
American Fork, UT
Snorri 2011

Michelle with relatives young and old during her homestay.

One of the best aspects of Icelandic culture I encountered and remember most is the hospitality. It didn't matter who stopped by or how many, my family invited everyone in for *kaffitími* every day, with all the baked goods that go along with that. It was wonderful! ■

Emily McDonald
(Wurgler)
Hampton, VA
Snorri 2013

Hiking on Esja.



Ten Years of World Travel Began with Snorri

**Eileen Aldis
McCurdy
London, ON
Snorri 2008**

ARRIVING IN ICELAND FELT LIKE RETURNING HOME to a place I'd never been. I wasn't going to Iceland, I was going back. This is a feeling I think other Western Icelanders can relate to. It was June 2008 and I had recently finished my undergraduate degree in bioethics, philosophy, and German. Growing up, my mom taught us to be proud of our Icelandic heritage. Other kids might have played cops and robbers; my brother and I played Vikings. Going "back" to Iceland was always in my plans and the honour of going as a Snorri made it even more special. I knew in my heart the trip would be life-changing, but I never imagined its full impact.

As I watched from my window seat on the plane, I thought about my great-grandfather, Helgi. He left Iceland in 1901 and missed it for the rest of his life. Before departing for Canada, he shot his horse; he couldn't bear for someone else to have it. His dog escaped a bullet but paddled after the ship as Helgi sailed out of Borgarnes. The dog followed until it drowned, exhausted. I imagined those scenes and how painful it must have been to leave home. I thought about how Helgi had made a new home and how, without him enduring the pain of leaving, I wouldn't be here. Snorri is all about connecting with your roots and already, still in the sky, I felt deeply rooted to the land below. I saw fingers of rock that

seemed to stretch and curl into waves of welcome. I felt overcome knowing all that had transpired to bring me here, over 100 years after Helgi left. I like to think how pleased he'd be to know that, through me, he did return.

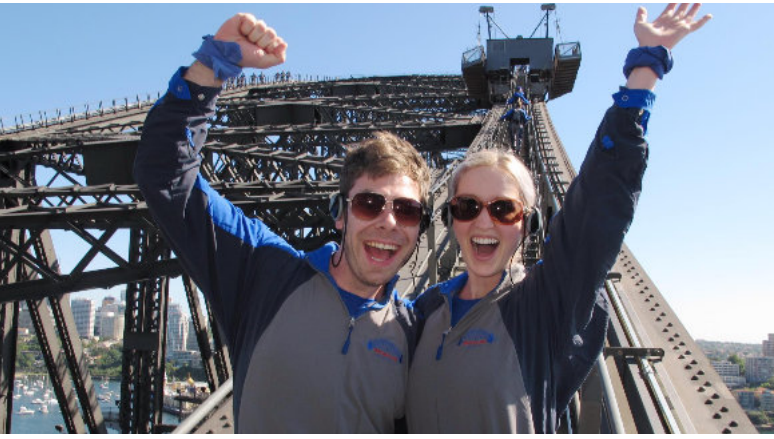
I met most of the other Snorris before leaving Canada, so when we all stood outside the airport as our luggage was loaded onto the bus, I immediately identified the one Snorri I didn't know yet and walked up to say hello. What I didn't realize is that the man I'd just met, Marc Whiteway, would in time become my partner in life and in business. Of everything I discovered in Iceland, Marc was by far the most surprising and the best.

After six of the most formative and memorable weeks of my life, we returned to Canada. By now Marc and I were inseparable. I started work as a television host, writer, and producer, while Marc left his job at MuchMusic to join the CBC as an editor, videographer, and director. We moved in together a while later in Toronto. For my 25th birthday, Marc planned a surprise trip. He packed my bag and I had no idea where we were going until arriving at the airport. When Marc told me we were returning to Iceland for the first time since we met, I burst into happy tears: my favourite place with my favourite person. We

Photo courtesy of Eileen McCurdy



Eileen and Marc exploring Bruges, Belgium by boat.



Climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge in Sydney, Australia.

touched down for a layover just long enough for a quick dip at the Blue Lagoon, then flew on to Spain and Morocco. We stopped in Iceland again on the way back and drove the circumference of the island, testing the limits of how many hot dogs the human body can handle (answer: no limit yet detected, but more research necessary).

people ask what Aldis means, I'm always proud to tell them it's Icelandic. We've now made over 200 travel videos and our YouTube channel is growing fast. We have more than sixty thousand subscribers and our channel has over 7.5 million views. We continue to work in media, and sharing our travels on YouTube has become part of our business too. Some of our recent partnerships include Air Canada, Taiwan Tourism, Puerto Vallarta Tourism, and the Toronto International Film Festival. Our passion for travel has led us to more than fifty countries and the dream continues. Any time we can stop over in Iceland, we load up on hot dogs, *kókomjólk*, and *skyr*.

It all began with Snorri and I'm forever grateful. As I looked down from that plane's window seat, the rocks below seemed to hint that Icelanders are built of something just as sturdy. I've spent my life wandering the world and never felt lost, but Iceland was the first time

“I’ve spent my life wandering the world and never felt lost, but Iceland was the first time I came home to a place I’d never been.”

In 2011, I moved to Sydney, Australia to start my master's studies. Marc soon joined me and we spent all our free time enjoying Australia, like scuba diving the Great Barrier Reef, climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and camping in the outback. I think it's fair to attribute our wandering spirits to our Viking heritage. After I graduated, we moved to Melbourne for a time, then returned to Canada and teamed up to start a production company, Bellows Media. While staying very busy working together, we pursued our shared love of travel with trips through California, Europe, and Venezuela. At the beginning of 2017, we decided to take the show on the road. We left our home in Toronto, sold most of our stuff, and bought one-way tickets to pursue our dream of seeing as much of the world as possible. We share this grand adventure on our YouTube channel, which is named after my first and middle names: Eileen Aldis. When

Photos courtesy of Eileen McCurdy

I came home to a place I'd never been. I know now that home is a feeling you carry in your heart, leaving pieces with people and place around the world. That's the real magic of home: it's anywhere you are. ■



Follow Eileen and Marc's adventures at www.youtube.com/eileenaldis.



Jumping for joy during a stopover in Iceland on Eileen's surprise birthday trip.

Holly Millar
From West Vancouver, BC
Lives in Berlin, Germany
Snorri 2014

Travelling to Iceland with the Snorri Program was a totally life-changing experience for me. I actually have not lived in Canada since I left for the Snorri trip almost five years ago – it sparked one of the biggest adventures of my life. After Iceland, I travelled Europe, lived in France, and when my visa ran out, I decided to get another visa and move to Berlin. I have been here ever since. In Iceland and in Berlin I fell in love with a European life, the open-minded people, and being way out of my comfort zone. My favourite memory from the Snorri trip was going running up mountains, through fjords, in Reykjavik, and by the ocean. This summer, I went back to Iceland for the first time since my Snorri trip. I showed my parents all my favourite places and we stayed in Sauðárkrókur where I lived with my host family. ■



My most treasured memory of the Snorri trip was being able to speak with and record the stories of Gísli the accordion player at Öldrunarheimili Akureyrar. He shared with me his boyhood memories of puffins – how he had found some stowed away in an old abandoned shop and nurtured them in his family home (much to the distress of his mother) until they were ready to make the migration.

I found that in contrast to Australians, who prefer more to speak of current affairs or hypothetical situations, Icelanders love to share their stories. They may embellish them a little in the telling, but these stories are unguarded, vulnerable, and straight from the heart. My family shared much of their history with me, and I was honoured to hear them every time. I hope that I can go back one day with a much more attentive pen, and record some of them so I don't forget as easily. ■

Jon Solmundson
From Gimli, MB
Lives in Perth, Western
Australia
Snorri 2015

Two Einars, Ten Years, and Over a Dozen Snorris

EINAR PÁLSSON AND EINAR ÓSKARSSON don't just share a first name; they both live in Borgarnes, work at the same company, and for over ten years now, both Einars and their wives have been welcoming Snorris into their hearts and homes. They even share common emigrant ancestors, a married couple who moved to Canada around the turn of the 20th century; Einar Óskarsson is related to one-half of the emigrant couple, the lady, and Einar Pálsson's wife Guðrún Jónsdóttir is related to the gentleman.

When Einar and Guðrún, better known as Gunna, visited Canada in 2000, they connected with some of Gunna's long-lost relatives. So when they received a call back in Iceland asking them to consider hosting Snorri participants, they didn't hesitate. In 2008, Einar and Gunna welcomed their first Snorri, Eileen Aldis McCurdy of Ontario, to their home in Borgarnes. That same year, a short distance away, Einar Óskarsson and Sóley Sigurþórsdóttir welcomed Natalie Wirth of Winnipeg to their farm, Tungulækur. Both Einars have hosted several times since then, and because of the common ancestors, many Snorris are actually related to both families in some way. Einar and Sóley most recently welcomed 2019 Snorris Mackenzie Tilleman of Montana and Jade Goodman of Ontario. Einar says they always try to do something fun away from the farm with each participant, like hiking in Þórsmörk. Some participants have returned to visit Tungulækur and even brought more relatives with them. When we spoke to them, Einar and Sóley had a trip to Canada planned this fall and were hoping to visit some of their Snorris.

The two Einars,
Einar Óskarsson (left)
and Einar G. Pálsson.

Cousins grow closer during Snorri experience

Since 2008, Einar Pálsson and Gunna have welcomed seven Snorris to their home in Borgarnes, most recently Sophie Olsen and Nuka Olsen-Hakongak. Sophie and Nuka are first cousins but live in different provinces and say they weren't very close before the trip, so when they both applied for the program in 2017, it was without the other's knowledge. Sophie and Nuka admit they were a bit nervous about meeting their host family, but their fears were quickly allayed as they all got to know each other on the drive back to Borgarnes. Neither one experienced much culture shock. "Because I grew up in Nunavut, I felt I shared so many similarities with Iceland and the Icelandic way of life," says Nuka. "[My hometown] Cambridge Bay has a population of about 1700 people, roughly the same as Borgarnes. I'm used to having a colder summer and 24-hour daylight." As for Sophie, she says the hardest adjustment was just learning how to clean at the bed and breakfast – "just because I'm not really great at cleaning. I don't think Nuka had an issue with this!"



One of the cousins' most memorable experiences was going on a five-day hiking trip with Einar and 30 other Icelanders, hiking about six hours a day. "I challenged myself physically and faced my fear of heights on some of the steep slopes," says Sophie. She also recalls people's reaction to hearing her middle name: "Whenever I told people my middle name was 'Kisa,' which means 'pussycat' in Icelandic, they would laugh. They could not understand how my middle name was 'cat!'"

Despite being close relatives, Sophie says she and Nuka didn't really know each other very well before the trip: "We weren't that close before the trip, and I didn't know what spending six weeks together would be like. It was awesome! We connected so well, and we've been so much closer ever since."



Sóley Sigurpórsdóttir with three 2016 Snorris (Matthew McCurdy, Laura Halliday, and Gabrielle Johnson) at Hraunfossar.



Nuka and Sophie learned some traditional Icelandic folk dances with hosts Einar Pálsson and Gunna Jónsdóttir.

For his part, Einar says he and Gunna have enjoyed welcoming diverse people from diverse backgrounds, and especially enjoyed talking to Nuka about life in Nunavut. Einar says they highly recommend the host family experience: "To other families considering taking in Snorris, I would say from experience, don't hesitate! We've enjoyed it very much and are still in contact with most of the people we've hosted." It's a sentiment shared by Einar Óskarsson. "All our Snorris have been extremely pleasant and friendly people, so it's truly been a joy to have them with us." ■

Julie Summers

From Snorri Participant to Saga Scholar

PARTICIPATING IN THE SNORRI PROGRAM changed my life forever. I came to Iceland knowing my personal understanding of what being Icelandic was, but I had a desire to unlock a deeper relationship with Iceland and its people. When I visited Borgarnes and the Settlement Exhibit (*Landnámssetur*) there, I became enthralled by the sagas. I felt a connection to my Canadian sensibilities when I learned there was a ball game played on ice with sticks in early Icelandic history. I also gained a strong connection to my family in East Iceland where I made a pilgrimage to many family farms, some of them no longer inhabited.

When I got back home to Winnipeg, I wanted to find a way to continue my relationship with Iceland. I did that by enrolling at the University of Manitoba and taking Icelandic language courses. I have always had a strong inclination to learn Icelandic. When I was a young boy, I asked my amma how to swear in Icelandic. My amma was a very kind and sensitive woman who did not like saying a bad word to or about anyone, so the best I got was, "farðu burt!" Yet in the meantime I learned all sorts of things and filled up a page of phrases and various bits of information. My mom would speak kitchen language like "viltu kaffi," and my dad would speak garage language. When fixing



Ryan Johnson
From Winnipeg, MB
Lives in Reykjavík, IS
Snorri 2007

the car with dad, I remember him saying, “jæja þá,” and when he wanted me to stop doing something he didn’t like, he would emphatically say, “hættu þessu!”

After completing a degree in Icelandic Studies in Winnipeg, I was able to procure the government grant to take a BA in Icelandic as a Second Language at the University of Iceland. I completed my second BA there in two years and then moved on to take an MA in Icelandic literature in the Department of Icelandic and

started a project that is very important to the preservation of our cultural heritage in North America, the Fragile Heritage Project. We have been in search of Icelandic-language documents in private and public holdings across the US and Canada. Our main aim is to digitize, not acquire, the documents of our forebears, especially from Icelandic settlers who emigrated to Canada and the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Without Snorri ... this amazing lifelong journey would never have gotten off the ground.

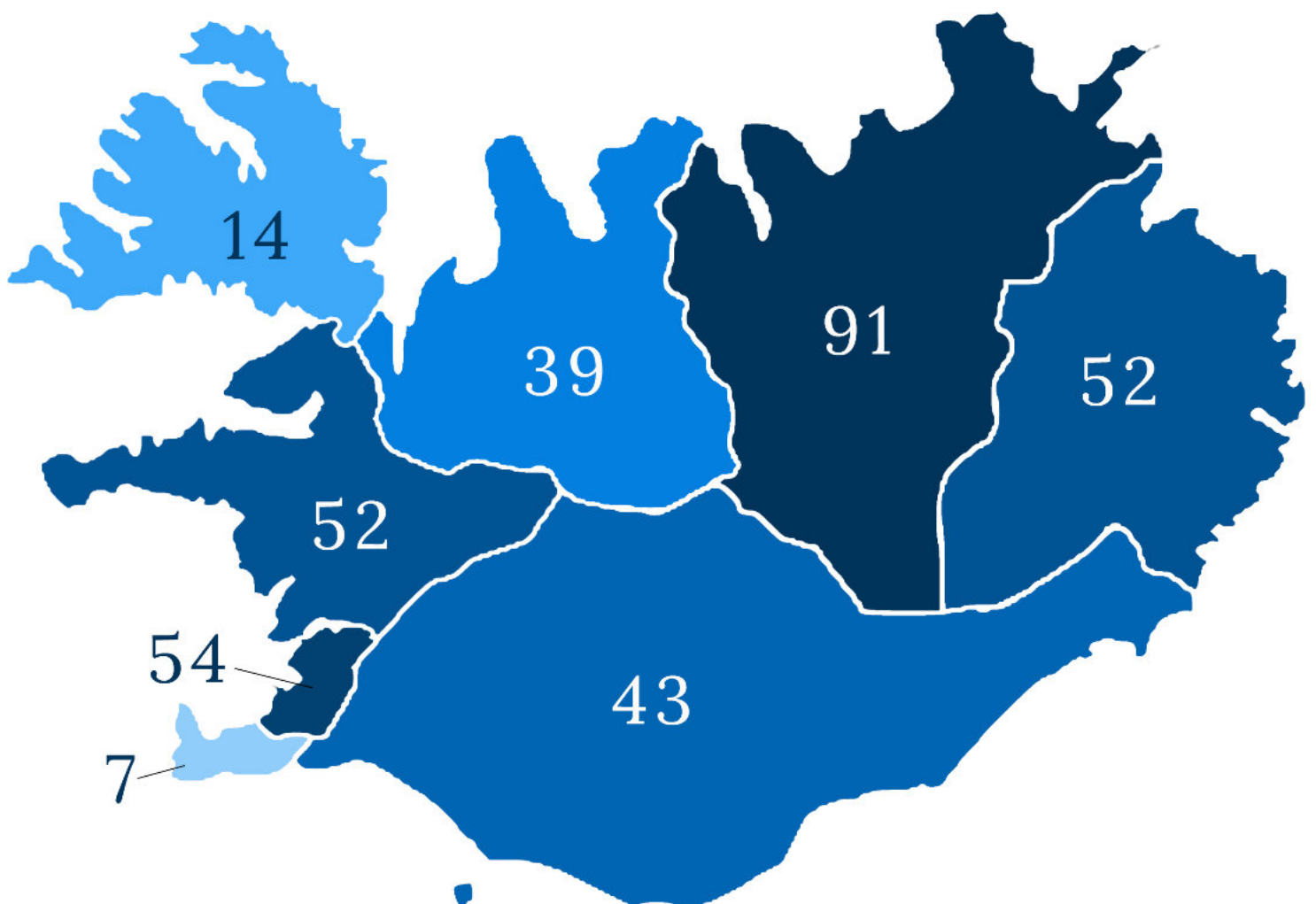
Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Iceland. After completing that degree, I began to search for a PhD program. I decided on the Department of History and Philosophy at the University of Iceland.

Early in my PhD, I took up a role as a co-researcher with Katelin Parsons, a Winnipegger who

Without Snorri and especially former project manager Ásta Sól, this amazing lifelong journey would never have gotten off the ground. I urge anyone interested in their Icelandic heritage to start their own journey with the Snorri Program. It is truly the opportunity of a lifetime. ■



SNORRI HOMESTAY LOCATIONS



*Note: Many Snorris stayed in more than one place for their homestays, so the total number of homestays is greater than the total number of Snorri alumni

Alyssa Cartwright
Sooke, BC
Lives in
Akureyri, IS
Snorri 2016



Alyssa (center) with her mom, aunts, and now-fiancé Pálmi in summer 2018.

By the end of my first two weeks on the program, I knew I had to find a way to come back for even longer than six weeks. Eventually, I decided I wanted to return to Iceland for at least a year, long enough to really get a feel for the culture, traditions, and language, to experience all four seasons, and to feel more like a resident than a tourist. I began planning for the big move to Akureyri. It took just over a year to figure out how to make it work, then another couple months to book and plan. Within a week of my arrival, I had an apartment with a Canadian-Icelandic roommate and a job in a meat factory where I didn't have to be self-conscious of my inability to speak Icelandic. A little over three months into living here, I met Pálmi, and just before the one-year anniversary of our first date, while visiting Canada for Christmas last year, we got engaged. So I guess my goal of staying in Iceland at least one year has not only come true, but turned out to be just the beginning of what will now be a very intertwined life between Canada and Iceland. ■

One of the most important takeaways from my Snorri experience was getting a chance to learn and interact with the Icelandic language – a language with a rich and beautiful history, one that Icelanders go to great lengths to nurture and protect. Since Snorri, I have lived abroad in several other places and studied other languages. Immediately after Snorri, I studied abroad in Spain and Chile. After graduating college, I worked for a summer in Paraguay and then spent two years teaching English in Korea. Since returning to the US in 2015, I have also started learning the Somali language. In each of these experiences, I encountered people who have their own passionate relationship with their languages, even if those relationships are different than the one Icelanders have with their language. And yet, I would find similar themes throughout – just like Icelanders, Somalis use a patronymic naming system. Just like Icelanders, the people in Paraguay are very proud of their native indigenous language, Guaraní, and have guaranteed its use for all important texts and legal documents. Just like Icelanders, Koreans revere historical figures who were important in developing the language; in their case, King Sejong, who single-handedly created the alphabet Koreans use today. And just like Icelanders, Ethiopians often take in a big puff of air whenever they say 'yes/já!' ■



Isaac with one of his students in Korea.

Isaac Muscanto
St. Paul, MN
Snorri 2010

Photos courtesy of (top) Alyssa Cartwright and (bottom) Isaac Muscanto

Over a Dozen Adventure Tours and Counting

I KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY SNORRI who has arrived back in Reykjavík after the final week adventure tour and wished they could do it all over again. For most of us, that's not an option, but Kent Lárus Björnsson is an exception. Driving Snorris around Iceland since 2006, Kent has been on more Snorri adventure tours than anyone but Ásta Sól herself – 14, to be precise.

He may not technically be a Snorri, but there's no doubt that Kent is an integral part of the Snorri family. Born and raised in Gimli, Kent is 100% of Icelandic descent. After a family trip to Iceland in 1979, he decided he wanted to return and stay longer. Over the next 20 years, he bounced back and forth between Iceland and Canada. In Iceland, he worked at a knitting factory, a couple of fish processing plants, and even on a fishing boat. In Canada, he completed a BA in Political Science with a minor in Icelandic. Then, nearly 18 years ago, Kent got a job at a high school in Reykjavík and made the move permanent.

From truck driving to tour guiding

As a young adult, Kent dreamed of working in the foreign service, but he ended up finding another way to promote international cooperation: tour guiding. He may not have planned it, but guiding turned out to be the perfect way for Kent to combine his experience as a truck driver with his deep knowledge of Iceland and passion for his own Icelandic heritage.



Photo courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

Kent and co-pilot Ásta Sól on one of many trips together.

As far back as 1978, still just a teenager, Kent worked as a driver for a group of young Icelanders visiting Canada – sort of a precursor to Snorri West, in fact. Just before moving to Iceland in 2000, Kent guided a group of Freemasons on a visit to Canada, and the following summer, he led a choir from Ísafjörður on a North American adventure. From there, the ball kept rolling, and Kent decided to attend the Tourist Guide School of Iceland to further hone his skills.

Behind the wheel with Snorri

Kent's involvement with the Snorri Program actually dates back to the early 2000s, when he served on the board of both the Snorri Program and the INL of Iceland. But it was shortly after graduating from the guide school, in the summer of 2006, that Kent began working for the program in a new capacity – from behind the wheel. He has now driven for 14 Snorri tours and several Snorri Plus day trips. He even became an honorary Snorri himself when he joined the 2018 Snorri Westers for part of their trip, having always dreamed of visiting Newfoundland.

Kent says his favorite part of the job is meeting new and interesting young people. While he's never gotten the van stuck on a Snorri trip, he admits to having gotten a bit lost once or twice. Every year is memorable in its own way, he says. Some of his favorite memories include camping on the island of Flatey, climbing Drangey (Kent says he did make it all the way to the top once, despite his fear of heights), snowmobiling atop Vatnajökull, camping in terrible weather ▶

Did you know?

Kent has driven over 25,000 kilometers with Snorri groups over the past 14 years – usually around 1700 kilometers each year!

more than once, and swimming in Krossneslaug at 2 AM. His favorite places to take groups are Flatey, Djúpavík, the Westfjords, and of course, Hofsós.

Besides his job at the school and his yearly gigs with the Snorri Program, Kent leads group and private tours both in Iceland and abroad and even teaches at the guide school he once attended. He is an avid traveler himself, having visited nearly 40

countries. Granted citizenship in 2008, Kent has no plans to leave Iceland just yet, though he hopes to spend more time in Canada in the future. And he says he'll keep working with the Snorri Program as long as they keep asking him back. ■

Julie Summers



Kent (left) getting in touch with his Viking roots with the 2018 Snorri Westers (L-R) Sigmundur Geir Sigmundsson, Ívar Gautsson, Daði Geir Samúelsson, and Dagrún Malmquist Jónsdóttir at L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland.

Heather (right) finally got to fulfill her lifelong dream of scuba diving at Silfra.

**Heather Erlen
Toronto, ON
Snorri 2015**

During Snorri, I researched my mother's lineage back to the woman who made the voyage from Iceland to Canada and survived the brutal winters there. Her story resonated with me and what I want my family's story to tell when I bear children. This woman's last name was Erlendsdóttir, which I realize showcases her father's name. But to honour her and the transition from Iceland to Canada, I blended the names' histories to make my name Heather Erlen. The more I looked at other possible names, the more this one stood out in my mind; it had the right flow and felt like it truly belonged to me. Back in Canada, I took the legal steps to officially change my name, not because I wed, but because I had discovered a name that truly suits who I am, my maternal lineage, and the feminine power that will be in my family for generations to come. ■



Photos courtesy of (top) Loretta Decker at Parks Canada and (bottom) Heather Erlen



**Amber Drake
Maui, HI
Snorri 2018**

I fell in love with Snæfellsness. Stykkishólmur is where my great-great-grandmother grew up, as well as a lot of my other relatives for generations. We stayed the night at the hostel there, and I really felt a connection to that little town. To be able to stand in the same place they lived was really amazing. I remember a few of us stayed up pretty late to walk on top of the little hill next to the harbor, and the sunset was breathtaking; the sky looked like cotton candy! We had a lot of fun taking silly pictures and hanging out that night. ■

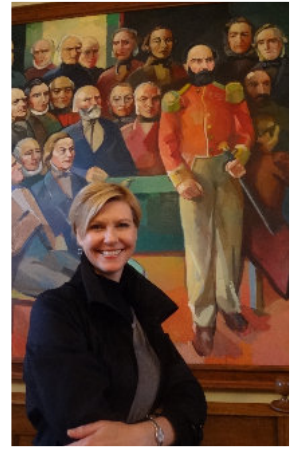
Amber checking out the Punk Museum in downtown Reykjavík.

In 2003, I found myself sitting outside a rural petrol station in North Iceland. I had just been dropped off by a regional bus and had no idea where I was, and didn't really know who was coming to collect me. But it felt familiar – clear blue skies, rugged landscape, hardworking farmhands coming and going, lots of sheep. This was the start of my Snorri homestay near Blönduós. I felt very connected to that landscape and way of life, and now 16 years later I find myself in very similar surroundings, on the other side of the world. I've lived on the South Island of New Zealand for 11 years and I loved it from the start, in part because I connected immediately with the landscape and way of life. It reminded me of Iceland. There are clear blue skies, rugged geothermal landscapes, hardworking rural mentalities and lots (lots!) of sheep. The weather is very similar. People wear woolly jumpers and eat lots of lamb. The senses of humour and humility are very similar. And indigenous Māori folklore even has its own stories of fairies and elves. ■

Photos courtesy of Amber Drake and Kristin Hillman

**Kristin Hillman
From Grand Forks, ND
Lives in New Zealand
Snorri 2003**





Supporters

The Snorri Programs' success over the past 20 years would not have been possible without the help of countless volunteers, donors, and other supporters. From the President of Iceland, to every person who has spread the word about Snorri, from all the host families in Iceland and North America who have opened their homes, to foundations that have donated thousands of dollars toward scholarships and operating costs, each and every supporter has made a difference.

Thanks to generous grants from donors in Iceland and North America, the Snorri Foundation is able to considerably subsidize the program for young adults, and participants pay only a fraction of the actual cost. Still, the price tag often presents a challenge for young people, many of whom are in school, paying off student loans, or trying to establish their careers. Thankfully, a variety of generous organizations and individuals have stepped up over the past twenty years to help alleviate the financial burden.

From the very beginning, the Canada Iceland Foundation has awarded grants to Canadian applicants, thanks largely to the enthusiastic support of then-president Jón Timothy Samson. In addition, a number of Icelandic clubs across North America offer scholarships each year. And in more recent years, two organizations have emerged to help make the Snorri dream come true for dozens of young people: the Guttormsson Family Foundation and Icelandic Roots. Turn the page to read about these two organizations and some of the young people who have benefited from their generosity, as well as several individuals who have supported the program in a variety of other ways.

Connecting to the Past and Investing in the Future: Icelandic Roots' Support of Snorri

FOUNDED BY NORTH DAKOTA NATIVE SUNNA FURSTENAU in 2013, Icelandic Roots is a US-based nonprofit dedicated to building ties between Iceland and people of Icelandic descent in North America and preserving our shared story. Icelandic Roots houses an extensive and ever-growing genealogy database, but more than that, it's an active community where people are encouraged to explore their roots and share their stories. These core values of connection, exploration, and cooperation align perfectly with the Snorri Program, so it's no surprise that Icelandic Roots has been supporting Snorris since 2015, offering scholarships to both Canadian and American participants and also donating directly to help cover operational costs.

In the early years, when Icelandic Roots was still struggling to establish itself financially, Sunna and her husband Jeff often donated personally to ensure that no one would miss out on the Snorri experience for lack of funding. These days, with the organization

more financially secure, scholarship funds come out of membership fees and other donations. The number of scholarships and total amount awarded each year varies depending on available funding and participants' needs. In total, Icelandic Roots has awarded 18 Snorri scholarships so far, ranging from \$750 to \$2000 each, depending on need. In addition, since 2016, Icelandic Roots has donated directly to the Snorri Foundation, with funds designated for Icelandic language instruction during the first two weeks of the program, creation of advertising materials, and promotion of social media content.

In addition to the flagship program and Snorri Plus, Icelandic Roots supports Snorri West, donating time to help locate participants' relatives in North America and giving participants free access to the database for two months. Icelandic Roots has also been an ardent supporter of the fledgling Snorri Deaf program, which began on a trial basis in 2018. ▶

Photo courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir



Sunna (center) with 2015 scholarship recipients, (from left) Frances Morin, Heather Erlen, Kelsey Jonsson, and Alex Williams.

That year, Sunna traveled to Iceland to provide a free four-hour seminar at the Icelandic Association of the Deaf (*Félag heyrnarlausra*) and Icelandic Roots donated over \$1500 for flights, food, and other travel costs for the pioneering participants, two Icelandic women who visited Minnesota, North Dakota, and Manitoba, as well as the sign language interpreter who accompanied them.

For Sunna, supporting the Snorri Program is not just a way to help young people have a great summer, it's an investment in their future and in the future of Iceland–North America relations. In fact, as she sees it, participating in the Snorri Program should really just be the beginning: “While I fully support the Snorri Program, it's important that we give young people more opportunities beyond their six weeks in Iceland. To me, the program is the base and the starting point, but we need to keep people involved after their trip.”

To that end, Icelandic Roots also designates scholarship funds to help Snorri alumni and others to pursue further education that will contribute to the community in some way. For example, Julie Summers (2012), Erin Jones (2013), and Erin Johnson (2013) received language grants to support their studies in Icelandic at the University of Iceland, and Natalie

Guttormsson (2014) received a grant to study web design, a skill that is already benefiting Icelandic Roots as Natalie helps to maintain and improve the organization's website. Other Snorri alumni on the Icelandic Roots team include Matt Gaudet (2014), Mallory Swanson (2011), David Johnson (Snorri Plus 2012), Ferne Gudnason (Snorri Plus 2010, 2011, 2012), and Dave Jonasson (Snorri Plus 2018).

Sunna is always delighted to see Snorri alumni giving back and getting more involved in North America. “There is so much opportunity for young people to share their talents,” she says. “I hope more Snorri participants will take a small amount of time and give back to their local club or get involved internationally through organizations like Icelandic Roots. Together, we can keep this shared story going!” ■

In 2019, Icelandic Roots awarded \$10,000 in Snorri scholarships, more than ever before. To donate, learn more about Icelandic Roots' scholarship program, or find out how to contribute your talents, visit icelandicroots.com or email support@icelandicroots.com.

Julie Summers

During the internship component, I was living with my distant cousin in Selfoss – near where my ancestors' farm was – and volunteering at Þingvellir National Park. On the last day of my internship, my supervisor told me to take the day off and go for a hike. He recommended that I summit a mountain in the north of the park called Ármannsfell. My great grandfather, Guðjón Jónsson, adopted the surname Armann when he became an American – changed eventually to Arman – which is my mother's maiden name. There have always been theories as to where it came from, as it is not a common name in Iceland. The hike took six hours, there were barely any trails, and much of the journey was through a cloud. But it was an unforgettable experience, both physically and spiritually, and the highlight of my time in Iceland. I had these sentimental wonderings the whole trek that maybe Guðjón Armann made the same pilgrimage before he decided to start a new life in the new world. The Icelandic Roots scholarship absolutely made it possible for me to participate in the program. Without it, I would not have been able to afford to take six weeks off and have such an unforgettable experience. ■

Photo courtesy of Alex Williams

**Alexander
Williams
Denver, CO
Snorri 2015**



From Icelandic Roots to Icelandic Textbooks

Winnipegger Ben Boxall, or Benni as he's come to be known, received an Icelandic Roots scholarship in 2018. Now he's working on a degree in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba, which he says was directly inspired by his time on the Snorri Program: "Being able to study the language of my ancestors is an experience I never would have known I wanted before traveling to Iceland." We asked Ben a few questions about his experience:

What was most memorable?

I most appreciated feeling like I was part of day-to-day Icelandic life during our first two weeks in Reykjavík. I had a blast farming with my family and taking the sheep up to the highlands, and the tour of the Westfjords is also something I will never forget (especially during the rain storms...). Overall it was such an amazing, densely packed summer that it's hard to qualify any particular event as the most memorable, but there's nothing I wouldn't want to experience again.

How has Snorri changed your life?

I am still in contact with almost everyone from my trip, and we see each other when we can. I still talk with my family in Borgarfjörður, and whenever I go back I make sure to go and spend time with them as well. When I came back from Iceland I was noticeably more grounded as a person and saw things from a new perspective. I've become more involved in the

community as well. Eventually I would like to teach Icelandic language classes and inspire more people to participate in the Snorri Program. I have several media projects in the works for both Icelandic Roots and the community. I wrote a poem in Icelandic that was published in the *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, and I'll be contributing more in the future.

Any advice for future Snorris?

Learn as much Icelandic as you can before you go – enough to talk your way back into Lebowski Bar at 3:00 on a Friday night... Trust me.

Any final thoughts?

The Snorri Program has definitely created lifelong bonds across the ocean and positively impacted lives for 20 years. I will do everything I can to ensure it continues for future participants. ■

Photo courtesy of Amber Drake

Benni and fellow 2018 Snorris (left to right) Arden Burtnik, Amber Drake, Lauren Thomas, and Danielle Marwick showing off their lopapeysas.



I have gotten to know the Snorri Program through my wonderful friend Ásta Sól, who recruited me a couple years ago to meet with Snorri groups, sing songs, and tell them Icelandic stories. It was with a deep sense of pride, duty, and joy that I accepted, and it has certainly been a most rewarding adventure. I was thoroughly impressed with the way these young people embraced and were in turn embraced by their Icelandic relatives and how eager they were to learn about their old country's culture, history, and also humour, which is one of the most important aspects of any people. I also came to understand how this project has both built bridges between those families so long parted and strengthened the foundations upon which those bridges stand. I was also deeply touched by Ásta Sól's dedication to her work, to these young people, and to the cause of bringing together our long-lost families. ■

Svavar Knútur

A well-known musician in Iceland and abroad, Svavar has met with many Snorri groups over the years to share music, stories, and folklore.



Svavar (far right) with the 2012 Snorris after sharing the magic of music with them.

The Snorri Program has worked wonders and it may be the single most important project to achieve the ultimate goal, that is to educate the young and introduce our countries and cultures to future generations, forge friendship and understanding between us all, and make sure the love and respect continues to live on in our hearts and most of all pass the torch. The Snorri Program has given us a future. ■

Atli Ásmundsson *Consul General in Winnipeg, 2004–2013*

Atli was adviser to Minister for Foreign Affairs Halldór Ásgrímsson from 1995 to 2002 and played a key role in revitalizing INL-Iceland in 1997. He was instrumental in paving the way for Snorri and has always been a staunch supporter of the program.

Atli Ásmundsson with his wife, Þrúður Helgadóttir.



Remembering Steve Guttormsson

The Guttormsson Family Foundation has awarded scholarships to over 20 American Snorri participants. We spoke with Rosemary Guttormsson, wife of the late Dr. Steve Guttormsson, about his love of Iceland and the origins of the foundation.

SINCE 2012, 32 AMERICANS HAVE participated in the Snorri Program. Twenty-one of them received substantial financial support from a single generous family in Minnesota. Every year, the Guttormsson Family Foundation (GFF) has awarded two to five scholarships of up to \$2000 USD each. The late Dr. Stefan Paul Guttormsson, better known as Steve, launched the foundation to honor the memory of his afi, the Rev. Guttormur Guttormsson, and his father, Bishop Stefan Thorsteinn Guttormsson. Steve and his wife Rosemary were aware of the Snorri Program from the very beginning; their son Jake was part of the second-ever Snorri group in 2000. Several years later, recognizing a need for greater financial support of American applicants, Steve took action and founded the GFF.

Steve was a loving husband, father of three, and proud afi of three. Besides his family and his work as a physician, Steve's greatest passion was for his heritage. He was deeply proud of being Icelandic, and he visited his ancestral homeland five times. Steve was an active member of the Icelandic community in Minnesota and beyond, previously serving



Photo courtesy of Rosemary Guttormsson

on the board of the Icelandic National League of North America and the Icelandic American Association of Minnesota. At the time of his death, he was on the board of the Nordic Center in Duluth. And the Guttormssons' philanthropy extended far beyond the Snorri Program. They also designated significant grants to the East Iceland Immigration Centre in Vopnafjörður and the Icelandic Saga and Heritage Association (formerly the Saga Trail Association).

Though Steve had been dealing with health issues for years, his sudden passing in May 2017 at age 69 came as a shock to his family and friends. When they started the foundation, the Guttormssons set aside a certain sum of money for Snorri scholarships. With that funding dwindling, and also citing tax consider-

ations, Rosemary decided that 2019 would be the last year of the GFF. But even though this year marks the end of the foundation, it is not the end of the Guttormsson family's support of the Snorri Program. Rosemary will offer one scholarship per year out of her own pocket, starting in 2020, to continue to honor the memory of her late husband and his proud Icelandic heritage. ■

For more information, or to thank the Guttormsson family for their support of the Snorri Program, please contact Rosemary at roseyrta@mac.com.

Julie Summers and Rosemary Guttormsson

One of the first-ever recipients of the GFF scholarship was Amanda Allen, who shared a bit about her Snorri experience and what the Guttormssons' support meant to her.

**Amanda
Allen**
Seattle, WA
Snorri 2012



Amanda at the Blue Lagoon after Snorri graduation in 2012.

GROWING UP IN BLAINE, WASHINGTON, I was surrounded by people with names like Sigurdsson, Magnússon, Olgeirsson, Freeman and Lindal. A tiny commercial fishing harbor and last stop before the Canadian border, Blaine is an Icelandic settlement estab-

lished in 1888. Making *vinarterta* with my mom and great aunt every winter break and attending Christmas Eve candlelight services at the Blaine Free Church Unitarian (built and dedicated by Northwest Icelanders in 1929), I felt a magical

connection to this tiny far-away nation that I whimsically daydreamed about for many years.

Fast forward to late 2011. Laid up after leg surgery, I decided 2012 would be the year I would finally save up and take myself to Iceland. Through all my online research, my internet search algorithms were pulling up all sorts of ad suggestions, and one day on Facebook I noticed a small ad for the Snorri Program and thought it was absolutely too good to be true. Hold on! There are other people my age who want to delve in head first to explore their family origin? Sign me up!

When I applied for the program, I was 28 and had been out of college for five years, running my own photography business, and I was a little hesitant to sign up for a regimented schedule and more studying. Still, I felt the call to apply and see where this

thinking to myself, “I’ve had dreams about this place.” I was exactly in my element, and I was home.”

Grateful for Guttormssons’ support

I was lucky and appreciative to be one of the first two recipients of the Guttormsson Family Foundation. I greatly enjoyed my initial Skype conversations with Steve and Rosemary, and loved how much Steve knew about the Icelanders who settled in Blaine. At the 94th INL convention in Seattle in 2013, I was finally able to meet Steve and Rosemary in person. I’ll always be grateful for their generosity. Though I have yet to travel back to Iceland since 2012, it’s with me everyday, through and through, and making the leap with the Snorri Program is still the best gift I have ever given myself. ■

“Even through constant language barriers, I found a common language of humor and strong work ethic when staying with distant family members I’d just met but felt an immediate strong bond with.”

could take me. My initial fear quickly melted away into discovery and comfort. My experience on the program was an intensely cerebral and spiritual one.

Even through constant language barriers, I found a common language of humor and strong work ethic when staying with distant family members I’d just met but felt an immediate strong bond with. My cousin Valdi and I joked about how our family are the lesser-loved sort of Icelanders: short in stature, ruddy skinned, dark-haired. We laughed and agreed that we obviously have troll DNA.

I also recall the day I flew from Reykjavík to Ísafjörður and my cousin Sonja was driving us back through winding roads to Þingeyri. I was staring out the window at the dreamy landscape in the bright evening sun, having an intense feeling of déjà vu and



Steve Guttormsson with the first two recipients of the GFF scholarship, Julie Summers (left) and Amanda Allen, both of Washington state.

Photo courtesy of Julie Summers

Presidential Support for Snorri

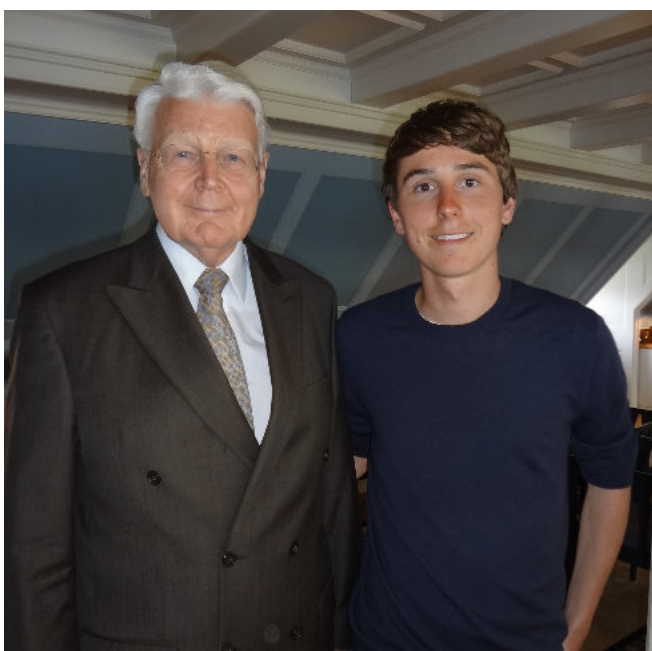
From the time that Snorri was little more than an idea, all the way to the present day, when the Snorri alumni family totals over 600 people, the presidents of Iceland have been staunch supporters of the programs' efforts to strengthen the bonds between Iceland and North America.



Emily Ode (Snorri 2004) with President Vigdís Finnbogadóttir at the 2015 INL convention in Minneapolis.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected president in 1980 and served for 16 years. During her term in office, she visited many Icelandic settlements in Canada and the US and became fascinated by the idea of establishing a program to bring young people of Icelandic descent to Iceland. In 1998, she was invited to join an advisory committee exploring the feasibility of such a program. Vigdís suggested naming the new program “The Amma Program” in honor of all the Icelandic ammas in North America who would be pleased to see their grandchildren learn about their heritage. However, the committee eventually settled on naming the program after Snorri Þorfinnsson, the first European child born in North America.

Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson was President of Iceland from 1996 to 2016. In 1997, he and his late wife Guðrún Katrín Þorbergsdóttir visited a number of Icelandic settlements in the US and Canada. This tour was widely reported in Icelandic media and helped inspire the founding of the Snorri Program. Ólafur Ragnar applauded the idea from the beginning and demonstrated his support by hosting almost all the Snorri groups from 1999 to 2016 at the presidential residence, Bessastaðir.



President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson and Stefan Hermanowicz (Snorri 2011) at Bessastaðir (right).



Guðni Th. Jóhannesson was elected president in 2016, and just a few weeks after taking office, he hosted a reception for that year's Snorri Plus group. He is tireless in publicly demonstrating his appreciation of the Snorri Program. Along with his wife, Canadian-born First Lady Eliza Reid, he visited Winnipeg earlier this year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Icelandic National League of North America, a clear token of his great support for maintaining strong bonds between Iceland and people of Icelandic descent. ■

2018 Snorris listening intently to President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson during a visit to Bessastaðir.



Snorri lengi lifi! Long live Snorri!

The Snorri Program is one of the most brilliant endeavors undertaken by INL-Iceland in decades. When I became Consul General for Iceland in Canada and Special Envoy for Icelandic Millennium Affairs, the situation was quite grim. The INL convention held in Toronto in May 1999 bore testament to that, with a mere 40-50 people in attendance. This past spring, I was one of about 300 people who attended the INLNA's 100th annual convention in Winnipeg. It was a fantastic and well-planned event and clear proof that a revolution has taken place. There are two reasons for that. One is the Snorri Program, which I would actually call the Snorri Movement. Over the past 20 years, over 300 young North Americans of Icelandic descent have participated, returning to Canada or the US bursting with enthusiasm for strengthening the ties between Iceland and people of Icelandic descent. Now it is the duty of those who have been at the forefront of this movement in North America to open their doors to the Snorris. They are the future of the INL. It's truly incredible that the program has been so successful in getting Icelandic families to open their homes to these young people. Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir worked a miracle there and for that deserves to be recognized.

Tuttugu ár, til hamingju Snorrrar! Congratulations on twenty years! ■

Svavar Gestsson

Svavar Gestsson is a former member of Parliament, government minister, and ambassador. In 1999, he became the first Consul General for Iceland in Canada, a post he held until 2001. He served on the board of INL-Iceland from 2010 to 2017.

“Tungumál eru lykill að heiminum”

Being involved with Snorri is so rewarding. I love spending time with these groups of young people who are so curious about the culture of their ancestors that they're ready to step outside their comfort zones and embark on an adventure in Iceland. As in all adventures, there are obstacles along the way that draw the group together and help each participant grow. The language is one of these obstacles.

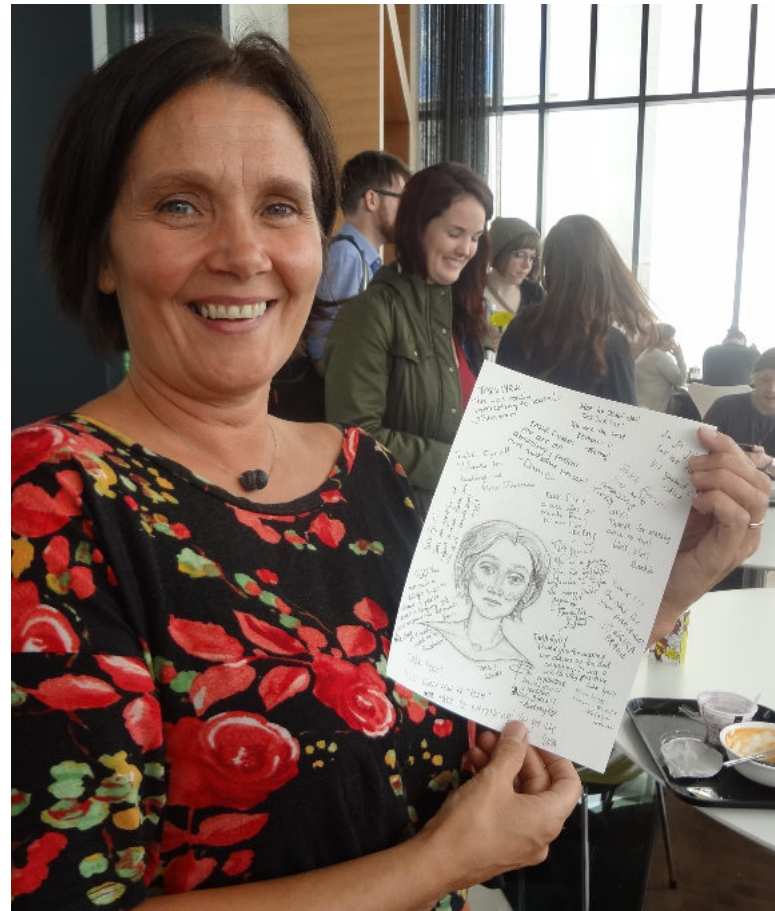
Learning another language offers insight into another culture and way of thinking, through words like *elda* (to cook), rooted in *eldur* (fire), and *eldhús* (kitchen), made up of *eldur* and *hús* (house), as there used to be a separate house with a fireplace for cooking. And *eldsnemma*, meaning to rise very early, a reference to the person who woke up first and *blés lífi í eldinn*, got the fire going.

But the most rewarding thing about being involved with this program is not about the language, it's getting to meet the group again at the end of their six-week adventure and seeing how they've grown. There's a new, powerful force that rises up within them, and they shine differently than before they came to Iceland. I'm sure that this magic will stay with them throughout their lifetimes and hopefully ripple down to future generations.

Til hamingju með 20 ára afmælið og takk fyrir mig! ■

Sigríður Kristinsdóttir

Sirrý, as most people know her, is an adjunct lecturer in Icelandic at the University of Iceland and has introduced many groups of Snorri to the Icelandic language. Language is an important part of the Snorri experience, and groups spend about two hours a day in the classroom during their two weeks in Reykjavík.



Sirrý showing off a thank-you card from the 2015 Snorri.



Sirrý og duglegi 2017 Snorrahópurinn.

Supporters



Snorri West: Since 2001

One of the original aims of Snorri was to create a reciprocal program to bring young Icelanders to North America, and that goal was met when Snorri West began in 2001. While Snorri West has grown and evolved over the years, the heart of the program remains the same: giving young Icelanders the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of their emigrant ancestors and explore the culture, language, stories, and nature of North America. To date, nearly 100 Icelanders have participated.

From its inception in 2001 until 2010, Snorri West operated under the direction of the United Icelandic Appeal with Wanda Anderson as project manager. All groups spent six weeks in Manitoba; there was also a one-time program in Ontario and Quebec in 2007. After a successful decade, the decision was made to take a break and reevaluate the program. The program did not run in 2011, but after thorough consideration, the Icelandic National League of North America (INLNA) committed to guaranteeing the future of Snorri West, in collaboration with the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba, the Icelandic American Association of Minnesota, the Icelandic Hekla Club, and several individuals in North Dakota. Sarah Isleifson of Gimli became interim director until Gail Einarson-McCleery of Toronto took over in 2012. ►

That year, a revitalized Snorri West emerged, with a new four-week program model that incorporated volunteers from INL member clubs across North America and took into account the vastness of Canada and the US and the large number of Icelandic settlements outside Manitoba. The new model divided North America into four corridors: Pacific Coast, Midwest, Central, and East Coast. The program cycles through the corridors regularly, with each year's participants visiting one corridor on a rotating basis. Highlights of each corridor include:

- **Pacific Coast** Seattle, Point Roberts, and Blaine, Washington; Vancouver, Victoria, and Nanaimo, British Columbia.
- **Midwest** Salt Lake City and Spanish Fork, Utah; Edmonton, Markerville, Calgary, and Drumheller, Alberta; Saskatoon, Vatnabyggð, and Regina, Saskatchewan.
- **Central** Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Minnesota, Minnesota; Mountain and other Icelandic communities in North Dakota; Brandon, Winnipeg, Gimli, New Iceland and the Interlake, Manitoba.
- **East Coast** Washington, D.C.; Toronto and Ottawa, Ontario; L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland; Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Snorri West groups have ranged from just two participants to eight, with four being the average in recent years. Unlike their North American counterparts, Snorri West participants don't have a specific family and work period on their trip, but are hosted by local families throughout their four-week stay.

With the exception of paid support staff in Iceland, Snorri West has always been an entirely volunteer effort and would not be possible without all the many local coordinators and volunteers that do the planning and implement the day-to-day itinerary for the program. The current director is Jody Arman-Jones of Farmington, Minnesota, who joined Gail in 2015 and took over leadership in 2016.

An Interview with Jody Arman-Jones, Snorri West Director

Jody Arman-Jones has been involved with the Snorri Program in some capacity for nearly a decade. She participated in Snorri Plus in 2012, her daughter, Erin, was a Snorri in 2013, and Jody has been Director of Snorri West since 2016. We asked Jody a few questions about her job and her ties to Iceland.

What is your personal connection to Iceland?

My ancestors arrived in Grafton, North Dakota from East Iceland in 1883, and others from the south in 1892. My first visit to Iceland was in 1976, but at the time, I had very little information about my family history and didn't locate any relatives on that trip, though I did hear about Ármannsfell, a mountain near Þingvellir that is the source of our anglicized surname. Fast forward to 1990, when an Icelandic cousin came to study at the University of Minnesota. She went through the phone book and called all the Armans she could find. That call led to a developing relationship and much greater understanding of our Icelandic heritage.

How did you get involved with Snorri?

I was aware of Snorri from its inception but didn't know about Snorri Plus or Snorri West. In 2011, my family attended the wedding of a friend who married an Icelander. That event led to so many new connections and a deep desire to learn as much as I could about my ties to Iceland. I discovered Snorri Plus and participated in 2012. That same year, my family helped host the two Snorri West participants. In 2015, I was recruited to be the local coordinator for Snorri West in Minnesota, and the following year, I took over as Snorri West Director.

What exactly does your job entail?

The director's duties are year-round, and I recently estimated a time commitment of about 100 hours a month. I think of our year as running from August through July. In August, the current year ends with participants' presentation at the INL-Iceland convention, evaluations are due and thank-yous sent ►



Jody (center) with former Snorri West Directors Gail Einarson-McCleery (left) and Wanda Anderson at the 2019 Icelandic National League of North America convention in Winnipeg.

out. In the fall, the website is updated, application deadlines determined and tentative travel bookings reserved. The winter months are busy with promotional tasks, and interviews are held in early March. Local coordinators and volunteers are recruited, and spring is very busy for them as they work out details of the summer's itinerary. At this time we also try to identify local coordinators for the following year's corridor. Orientation is held in Iceland at the end of May, and the trip itself is four weeks, any time from mid-June to early August, depending on events in that year's destinations.

What's most challenging about your job?

As with many projects, there is never enough time, especially when working with an all-volunteer team in North America.

What's most rewarding?

All the wonderful, giving, amazing people with whom I come in contact, and in some cases, the long-term relationships that have been formed.

What does the future hold for Snorri West?

I hope we can continue along similar lines as the current program, though I'd love to figure out a way to welcome more participants at once (our largest group to date has been five), to visit additional destinations, and to more fully reimburse host clubs. ■

Responses have been edited for space and clarity.

Opening Hearts and Homes Across North America

Every year, the Snorri West program relies on kind, knowledgeable local families and Icelandic club members to share their homes and hometowns with participants. Not all have a personal connection to Snorri, but many did Snorri or Snorri Plus themselves or have a family member who did. We spoke to a few Snorri West hosts about their involvement with the program.

Brooke Henrikson
Markerville, AB

The Stephan G. Stephansson Icelandic Society and Historic Markerville community have hosted two groups of Snorri West participants, in 2013 and 2017. Manager Brooke Henrikson said her favorite experience with Snorri Westers is introducing them to Canadian foods like Tim Horton's and Alberta beef, adding, "My daughter Kayli [Snorri 2012] took them to a local rodeo, and it was extremely fun for them to dress in western wear and party with local cowboys and the community." Brooke has kept in touch with participants via social media and even welcomed Sandra Björg Ernudóttir (SW 2017) when she returned to conduct research for her bachelor's thesis. Brooke said she doesn't hesitate to recommend hosting: "Hosting Snorri West participants is a very gratifying experience and I encourage everyone to host. Long-lasting relationships are formed through this program. It was so exhilarating to see Canada through the participants' eyes and explore the ties between our two countries." ■

SW 2017 participants with their hosts in Alberta,
Fred and Bernice Andersen
and Bjarni and Brooke Henrikson.



Photo courtesy of Bernice Andersen

Sharon and Ted Yeadon Campbell River, BC

A number of host families have gotten involved with Snorri West after participating in Snorri Plus themselves. After hearing about Snorri for years, Sharon Yeadon and her husband Ted signed up for Snorri Plus in 2012 and found out just before departure that cousins Heather and Johann Schreiner would also be on their trip. Sharon says they enjoyed the trip immensely and met at least 100 cousins. "I met so many relatives, I hardly remember any names any more!"

Sharon says travelling as a couple was fun, but there were also many singles on the trip, and everyone became travel friends. She has a hard time pinpointing a single highlight: "Climbing Drangey was an adventure – not sure we'd need to do it again, but we loved it. We enjoyed the classes, learning about Iceland's volcanic and geologic history. We were awed by the diversity of the landscapes and just the beauty all around."

Because of their great experience with Snorri Plus, the Yeadons got involved with Snorri West, hosting all four participants at their former home in New Westminster, BC in 2015. "It was a pleasure hosting these young ambassadors from Iceland, and our daily chats about their lives, plans, hopes, and interests made for a lovely time. Their enthusiasm for everything they saw and did was heartwarming to see." Sharon also highly recommends the hosting experience. "We would host again in a heartbeat!" ■

Stephanie and Andrea Hillman Seattle, WA

Also on the West Coast, sisters Stephanie and Andrea Hillman were preparing to host the 2019 Snorri West group when we spoke with them. The Hillman sisters live in Seattle, but growing up in Mountain, North Dakota instilled them with pride in their Icelandic heritage, says Andrea. They've both studied and lived overseas and "value travel as an amazing way to meld one's worldview." Seven years ago, they spent 18 days in the "theme park for nature lovers" that is Iceland: "there was something else stunningly beautiful every time we steered the car in a new direction," says Andrea. "We felt at home in Iceland, and found the people there really did feel like our everyday neighbors, friends, and family, despite the obvious geographic and linguistic differences!"

Hosting Snorri West seemed like the perfect opportunity to combine their strong sense of heritage, love of travel, and pride in their Northwest home, says Andrea. "We're hoping to be able to offer these young women a glimpse into Western Washington culture and a chance to connect with people in the area who share a common interest in Icelandic culture, travel, and the outdoors." Thanks to Icelandic Roots, they even discovered ahead of time that one of the Snorri Westers is a relative! ■



Andrea (left) and Stephanie Hillman at Seattle's iconic Pike Place Market, one of many West Coast landmarks the 2019 Snorri West participants got to explore this past summer.



Sharon and Ted on Drangey Island.



The 2019 Snorri West women enjoying a colorful day out and about in Seattle.

Snorri West Trips Spark Thesis Topics

In recent years, three Snorri West participants writing their theses at the University of Iceland have turned to their time in North America for inspiration. Here's a quick look at their topics.

Sandra Björg Ernudóttir

Snorri West 2017

BA in Folkloristics, June 2018

"I'm What Now?!" Identity Formation Among 21st-Century Western Icelanders"

When she embarked on her Snorri trip, Sandra didn't have a clue what she wanted to focus on in the BA thesis she had to write when school started up again. But while traveling around Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Utah, she became fascinated by the descendants of Icelandic immigrants and decided to write about the Snorri Program and how it shapes the "Western Icelandic" identity. The trip ended in July 2017, and by October, Sandra was already returning to North America to conduct research. She chose to focus on Alberta, interviewing seven Snorri alumni in the province and trying to get to the bottom of how their Icelandic heritage shapes their worldview. Her conclusion? "Their identity is a blend of heritage and choice." Tradition bearers, often grandparents, pass along their heritage to younger generations. For instance, an amma might teach her grandchildren to make *pönnukökur* so thin you can see through them. On the other hand, young people who travel to Iceland often end up with a greater desire to preserve their heritage than anyone else could have instilled in them. ■



Sandra Björg Ernudóttir

Photo courtesy of Sandra Björg Ernudóttir

„Misjafnar
verða farir til
manna“

“Travel is broadening in
unexpected ways.”

Svarfdæla saga

Gunnlaug Birta Þorgrímsdóttir**Snorri West 2016****BA in Icelandic, January 2018****“Viltu koma með mér í barinn?” Preposition Use and Case Markings in Icelandic as a Heritage Language and Icelandic as a Second Language”**

Gunnlaug Birta had never visited North America before Snorri West. Traveling around Manitoba, Minnesota and North Dakota, she was fascinated by the Western Icelanders’ culture – and especially by those who still spoke some Icelandic. But their Icelandic didn’t exactly sound like Gunnlaug’s Icelandic, and that difference led her to an interesting topic for her bachelor’s thesis: comparing so-called “Western Icelandic,” or Icelandic as it is spoken as a heritage language in North America, to Icelandic as it is spoken by modern-day immigrants in Iceland. Gunnlaug studied handwritten letters from one Icelandic immigrant who wrote to family back home over a period of 70 years. Then she conducted a survey among students in Icelandic as a Second Language at the university. She focused on one particular aspect of their language: the use of prepositions, which are notoriously tricky for language learners. The results? Both groups of language users tend to make the same grammatical mistakes, though one group acquired the language in childhood and the other did not. ■



Gunnlaug Birta showing off her completed thesis outside Aðalbygging on the University of Iceland campus.

Gerður Gautsdóttir**Snorri West 2013****MA in Tourism Studies, May 2017****“Strong is the Bond: Western Icelanders Traveling to Iceland”**

Similar to Sandra, Gerður focused on the idea of identity among the Western Icelandic diaspora and on what is known as roots tourism or genealogy tourism, in which people travel to countries where they have ancestral connections. Rather than traveling back to North America, she surveyed 2016 Snorri and Snorri Plus participants during their time in Iceland and conducted more in-depth interviews with eight people. “I couldn’t have found a more exciting topic, and it was fun to see how interested people were in my project,” says Gerður. ■



Gerður (second from the right) with relatives from Saskatchewan.

Áhugasmir geta lesið öll þrjú verkefni í heild sinni á skemman.is.

I dreamed of participating in this program for some time, but until recently I didn't know I had relatives who moved to North America. By chance, I read about Jónína Björnsdóttir, my great-great-grandmother's half sister, who moved to Blaine, WA with her mother and stepfather. And just my luck, Snorri West visited the West Coast this year. After being accepted to the program, I got access to the Icelandic Roots genealogy database, where I was able to look up information about Jónína. I got really excited when I saw that, according to the database, her youngest son out of seven children, Peter Hallson, was still alive at the age of 83. With the help of Snorri West's many volunteers, we located Peter, my first cousin three times removed. He happened to be on an eight-day biking trip up in the mountains when we first got in touch.

For me, the highlight of the whole trip was meeting Peter. We had much to catch up on and plenty of stories to exchange. He brought along all sorts of papers and articles related to our shared family history. I found it especially fascinating to see a photocopy of my great-aunt's passport and the stamps she got in it the one time she visited Iceland as an adult. I know now that she met her sister, my great-great-grandmother, during that trip; unfortunately, the connection did not last. When Peter visited Iceland with his sisters in the 80s, they were unable to get in touch with any relatives. That makes it all the more precious to have had the opportunity to connect and renew the family bond between us. ■

Photo courtesy of Karítas Hrundar Pálsdóttir



Karítas and Peter Hallson

**Karítas Hrundar
Pálsdóttir
Reykjavík,
Iceland
Snorri West 2019**



Snorri Plus: Since 2003

In 2003, Snorri was expanded to include a shorter option for anyone past the age limit for the original program, including couples or family members traveling together as well as people who are not of Icelandic descent but have a deep interest in Iceland. Over the years, individuals from their twenties to their nineties have participated, as well as couples, siblings, mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, sometimes even three generations of family members all together!

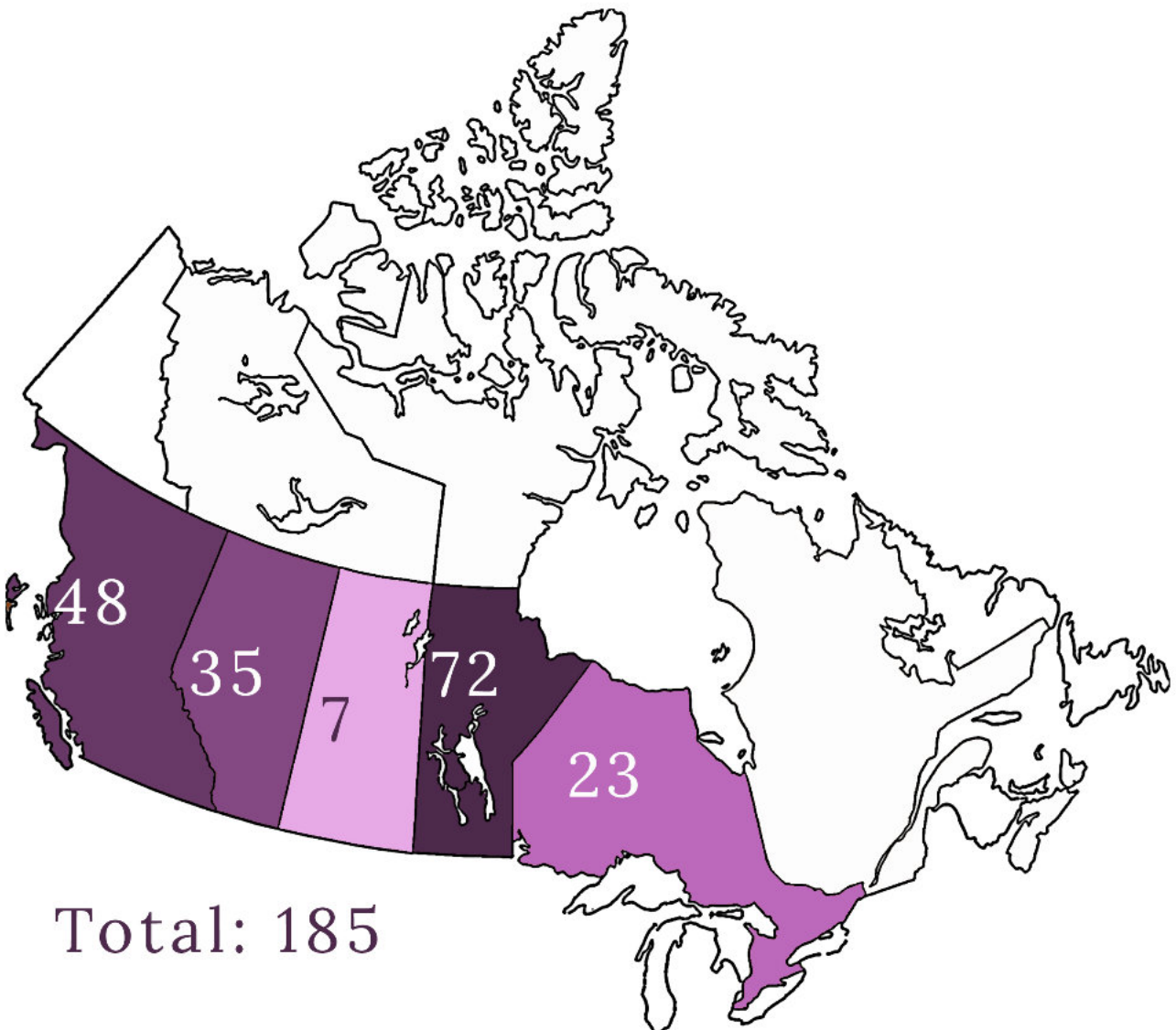
For two weeks in the late summer, Snorri Plus participants from all over Canada and the US travel to Iceland, exploring history, culture, nature, language, and of course genealogy. One unique aspect of Snorri Plus is the opportunity participants have to explore their profession (or former profession, if they're retired) in Iceland. Just like their younger counterparts, Snorri Plus participants finish off their program with an adventure tour around the country.

Since 2003, over 200 people have participated in Snorri Plus. Here are some of their stories.

SNORRI PLUS

by

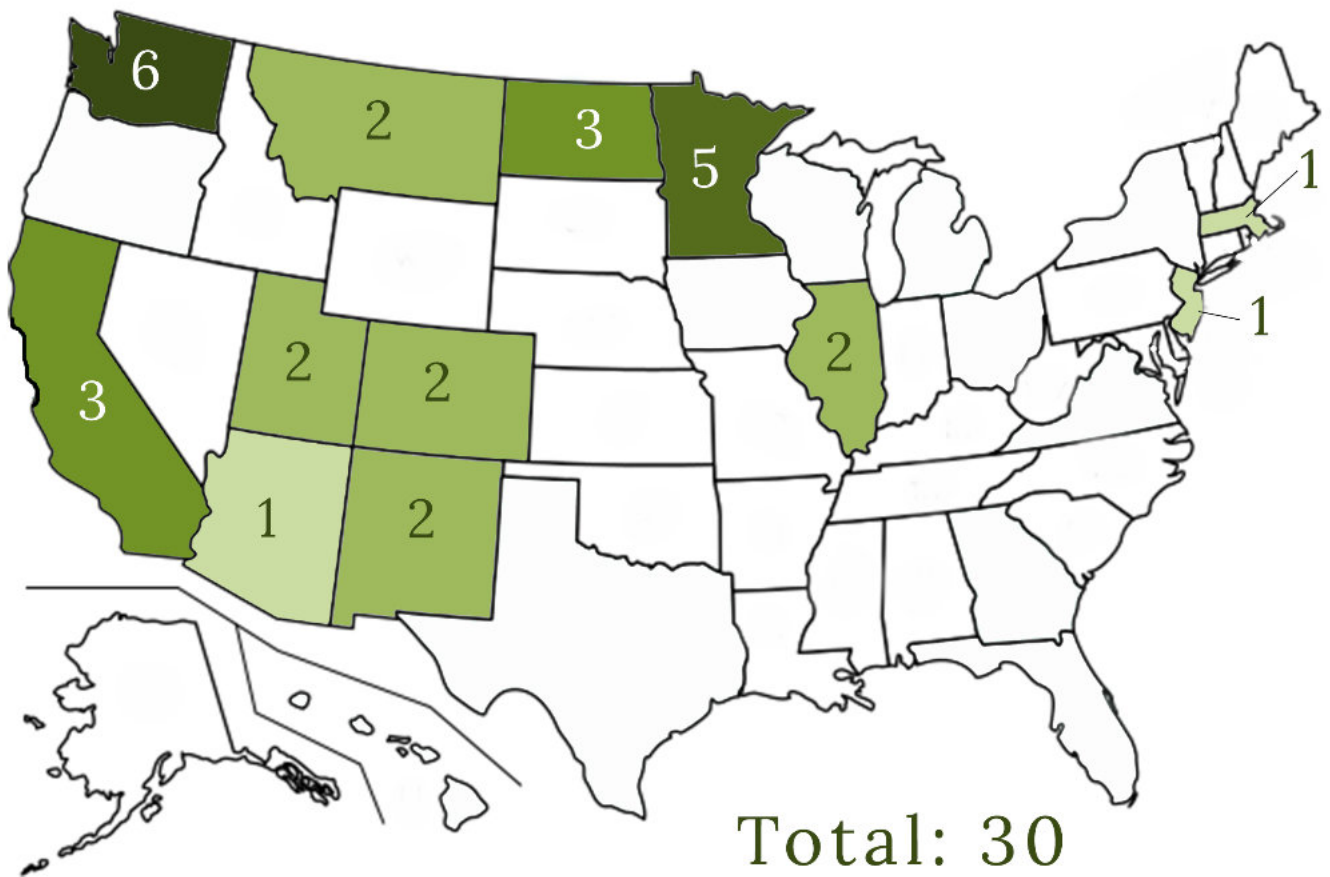
PROVINCE/TERRITORY



SNORRI PLUS

_____ by _____

STATE



**Jeannie Fox
St. Paul, MN
Snorri Plus
2017**

Coming Home

I GREW UP ON A FARM IN SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA. With my Icelandic grandparents on a neighboring farm, I was raised with stories of Icelandic homesteaders who came to the area from Canada in the late 1800s, and I had a deep appreciation for my heritage. It always made me feel special, as none of my childhood friends had ties to this tiny island in the North Atlantic. For years, I longed to visit. Relatives would return from trips of their own, bringing back pictures of flowing lava and shrink-wrapped bags of *harðfiskur*. As a young adult, I was accepted to the University of Iceland (HÍ). Ultimately, I couldn't navigate the steps

needed to make the move across the ocean, or the rigors of classes then still taught primarily in Icelandic, a language very familiar to me but not yet mastered.

I married in August 2015. Matthew and I said our vows at Hallgrímskirkja, an icon of Icelandic progress and design. We spent a week driving the Ring Road, exploring the vast and mysterious landscape that is Iceland. But I still longed to know if I had people there, connections that ran deeper than road maps and tourist sites. These long-held desires were realized in August 2017, when I embarked on Snorri Plus. Now in my early 50s, no one at home spoke Icelandic any more, and the stories of my grandparents were fading into distant memories. But suddenly, in Reykjavík, I was surrounded by “real” Icelanders coming up to me with printed family trees in hand, provided by the dedicated and hard-working staff at the Snorri Foundation.

The beauty of Snorri Plus is that you not only learn about your personal ties to Iceland, but you are also thrust into modern-day Iceland with introductions to those in your chosen professional field. As a professor at Hamline University in St. Paul, I teach courses in nonprofit management and public administration. Then-project manager Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir did a stellar job of connecting me to academics at HÍ who share my professional focus of examining the relationships between nonprofit organizations and government: Ómar Kristmundsson in political science and Steinunn Hrafnadóttir in social work. The three of us have entered into a rich cultural and professional exchange, with them traveling to Minnesota to learn about nonprofits in the US and me returning to Iceland to lecture at the university. Spending time in the classroom at HÍ helped mediate the loss I felt at never having realized my dream of studying there.

I've already returned to Iceland four times, and I have deepening ties with my Icelandic relatives as well as fulfilling professional relationships. ▶



Jeannie feasting on tomato soup at Friðheimar greenhouse and restaurant.

Photo courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir

Without the Snorri Foundation, none of this would have happened. I would still be spending evenings and weekends reading Halldór Laxness or Icelandic folktales and dreaming of a far-away place that I felt so connected to. Instead, one beautiful August day in 2017, this farm kid stood on the fields my great-grandfather walked away from to sail out of the harbor of Vopnafjörður, along with hundreds of others in search of security and sustainability and a new life in America. While standing on what's left of the foundation of the old house, looking out to the sea, I knew I had come *home*. ■



(Left) Matthew and Jeannie outside Hallgrímskirkja on their wedding day.



(Right) At the 2019 Iceland Writers Retreat with First Lady and Iceland Writers Retreat co-founder Eliza Reid (right).

It All Started in the Hot Pot

MY JOURNEY TOWARD THE SNORRI PROGRAM began over 30 years ago when I was a student at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and wrote a paper on Iceland's social democracy. Over the course of my adult life, I gradually connected to long-lost relatives, first in Canada and later in Iceland. In 2005, my father Allen R. Bjornson was invited to Saskatchewan by cousins he hadn't seen since the 1940s. Going along and meeting a number of relatives felt like recovering long-lost strands from our family tapestry that was first woven in Iceland.

In 2007, I joined two of my Canadian cousins, Marilyn Walton [Snorri Plus 2011] and her niece Ferne Gudnason [Snorri Plus 2010, 2011 and 2012] for a trip around the Ring Road. It was a genealogy adventure, digging up clues and meeting long-lost relatives. One evening, relaxing in a hot pot in Mývatn, I met Finnur Baldursson and his friend Jónas Pétursson. While not close relatives of mine, they became integral parts of my Iceland experience.

When I returned to Iceland in 2015 with Snorri Plus, Finnur saw a local news report about the INL-Iceland convention, which our group attended. He recognized me among the crowd and sent a message to welcome me to Iceland. Later, as our group was settling in to our hotel in Reykjahlíð, Finnur's hometown, there was suddenly a knock at my door. It was Finnur; his son was working at the hotel reception, knew we had checked in, and called Finnur to let him know. There are 340,000 Icelanders, and I just so happened to be staying in this hotel. It felt like everything had come full circle.

Sadly, Finnur has since passed away, but I dedicate my Snorri journey in part to him and Jónas and to our serendipitous friendship that began with a conversation in a hot pot years ago. ■



Alicia and Finnur at the Mývatn Nature Baths.

**Alicia Bjornson
Alloway, NJ
Snorri Plus 2015**

The Shared Experience of Snorri

LIFE'S RICHNESS OFTEN FINDS ITS NEXUS in relationships and shared experiences. Those I met on the Snorri Program carved in me new perspectives and lasting friendships. Yes, Snorri provides insights into Icelandic culture, business, language, history, art, food, and geography, but it's sharing experiences with people during the program that adds the greatest flavor, texture, and richness.

How can you step aboard a boat at Stykkishólmur and share a meal of scallops, crabs, oysters, and mussels freshly culled from the ocean floor and not be changed for the better? How often can you sit on the grassy knoll of Viðey listening to the songs of Svavar Knútur, eating sack lunches with fellow Snorris, and not develop lasting friendships?

Life is richer now knowing Sigrún (both of them!), Jóhanna, Guðrún, Áslaug, Ragnhildur – to name a few of the cousins I never knew of or expected I would find. Life is oddly richer having seen the farms, churches, vistas, and graveyards of my ancestors – people I will never meet but now understand with more clarity. My living and deceased relatives show me that the meaning of family isn't discounted by the generations or miles that separate us, but by the love and affection we make room for in our hearts today.

Sharing adventures with my fellow 2011 "Samurai Seven" Snorri Siblings was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that keeps on giving. Until my last breath, Snorri memories will energize me and make my heart gallop. A huge part of that experience is attributable to the creative and tender genius of Ásta Sól, our beloved Den Mother, our driver and compatriot Kent Björns-son, and many others behind the scenes and those that had the vision to create and sustain this program for 20 years. I am forever richer and changed for the better. ■

**David Johnson
Indianapolis, IN
Snorri Plus
2011**



David Johnson and Krista Hermanson on a Viking Sushi tour.

Excerpt from "Saga 1"

*How did we come to this place
So far from home
And yet, home
Sharing this outward journey
Of emigration and facts and names and places
Seeking*

...

*What would Gudrun, my forebear, make of me?
Does her light shine in me
Have she and I anything recognizable to her
heart's eye in common
What echo of her do I carry
If any?
If at all.
Is it her poem that spills forth
Or wholly mine?*

*Or have I come full circle
Spinning on my own tail
Like a drunken, silly dog
Navel gazing and leaking poetry
No closer to answers?*

*My knowing is only this:
I will drink deeply of this land
This time and seeking that we share
The myriad things my heart has seen.
And in quiet moments
I will unpack them
My archives
And listen carefully,
Patiently
For answers.*

**Krista Hermanson
Calgary, AB
Snorri Plus 2011**

Snorri Plus Inspires Self-Published Sagas

BRIAN BORGFORD NEVER HAD MUCH OF A DESIRE to visit Iceland. A retired accountant, Brian was inspired to start writing after the birth of his first grandchild and has now self-published over 30 books. “I wanted to record all the family stories that accumulate over a lifetime – about my children, about me, about my parents,” says Brian. While he has also ventured into writing novels and children’s books, these days he mostly focuses on documenting significant events in his own life to leave behind for his descendants. Several of his books relate to his Icelandic heritage, including a biography of

jam-packed schedules. But the encouragement of Brian’s cousin Karen Botting, a 2007 Snorri Plus participant, helped convince him to sign them up for the trip in 2015.

It’s safe to say they did not regret their decision. Brian says the most memorable part of the trip was meeting relatives who took him on a tour of the areas where their common ancestors once lived. That day, Brian certainly experienced the emotional connection to Iceland that had been lacking for so long.

Two years after the trip, Brian finally released

Thorsteinn: Biography of an Icelander. He says his visit to Iceland was critical in piecing together the early years of his grandfather’s life: “My grandfather spent only twelve of his 85 years in his homeland, but it was his first twelve years, his formative years, and those years defined who he was and guided the remainder of his eventful life.” Brian gifted copies of the book to cousins across North America and even to the President of Iceland. While he acknowledges that it will never be a bestseller, Brian says he is proud to have completed the book: “It will always be a reminder of my first trip to the land of my heritage.”

Brian also turned his Snorri trip itself into a book, *Digging for Roots:*

Travels in Iceland, which he self-published in 2018. Not too many years ago, Brian figured he would never visit Iceland. Now, he is eager to return – perhaps to attend the Iceland Writer’s Retreat and further hone his writing skills. ■

You can find Brian’s books on Amazon by searching “Brian Borgford,” or email him at brianborgford@hotmail.com.

Julie Summers



Brian Borgford of Calgary (Snorri Plus 2015) with two of his self-published books.

his grandfather, who emigrated to Canada in 1886. But even after he began writing the biography, he remained convinced that there was no need to visit Iceland; he could easily conduct any necessary research online. As he puts it, he had an intellectual interest in his family story, but no emotional connection.

Brian and his wife Rochelle Bos are avid travelers. Now in their retirement, they tend to prefer relaxing vacations in sun-drenched locales to group trips with

I wasn't regaled with stories of Iceland as a child. I didn't learn any Icelandic, and any Icelandic food I ate was Americanized. But I felt a strong connection to my heritage, mostly due to a single item – my great-great-grandmother's Icelandic costume. So when I signed up for Snorri Plus, I thought for sure there'd be a big magical moment, something that would shout that I belonged. But that didn't happen.

Instead there were dozens, maybe hundreds of magical moments. From my husband pointing out that the Icelandair flight attendant and I had the same nose, to noticing that my gait was the same as many locals. From meeting my relatives, to visiting the family farm and hearing sagas that happened on that very land. From meeting the president to being invited to someone's home for a traditional feast. Scoring a recipe for *plokkfiskur* that had to be orally translated. Storytelling night and *hákarl* with black death. Bathing in hot springs, hitting the bars, soaking up every bit of culture I could in two weeks. I never did have that big magical moment, because every single second of Snorri Plus was magical. ■



Rhonda Ault-Adkins
Great Falls, MT
Snorri Plus 2017

Rhonda Adkins (right) and Jeannie Fox visited a farm where both their families have roots.



Snorri started when I was in college, and it seemed like a way to not only visit Iceland but connect with family and culture in a meaningful way. During college and my first career years, financial and time constraints kept me from applying. Then Snorri Plus was created. Fast forward to a point in time when I was able to save my pennies and had enough vacation days to make it a reality.

What surprised me most was how at home I felt in Iceland. I had this recurring, inexplicable feeling of connectedness, especially profound when reconnecting with my relatives near Húsavík. This sense of connectedness snuck into moments when I saw a gesture, heard a word, or tasted a food that was familiar, yet in a place I'd never been before. I feel grateful for the opportunity and am thankful to all in Iceland who allowed me and my fellow Snorris to connect in such meaningful ways. ■

Julie celebrating August the Deuce in 2018.

Julie Hall-den Boer
Tontitown, AR
Snorri Plus 2014

Photos courtesy of Rhonda Adkins (top) and Nancy Boe (bottom)

Snorri Families

All Snorris are one big family, in a very real sense – thanks to Íslendingabók, we can see how we're all related to one another. But over the years, many family members have experienced Snorri together – mothers and sons, fathers and daughters, siblings, cousins – and still other individuals have been inspired to apply after seeing a loved one have a wonderful adventure.

Della Magnusson and Anna Glasgow *Snorri Plus 2016 and Snorri 2019, Saskatoon, SK*

Della Icelandic was my father's first language, and he didn't speak English until he was 7 years old. He passed away at age 59, just 12 days after my daughter Anna was born, so she missed out on getting to know him and hearing his stories. Anna is named after my grandmother, Anna Holmfrídur Magnusson. She was really excited when I went to Iceland, so I encouraged her to apply to Snorri. My father was very proud of his Icelandic heritage and would have loved the opportunity to see Iceland and meet extended family. I believe he was watching over me with pride as I made my way through Iceland.

Anna I've been traveling since before I could walk and have been all over the world, but Iceland was always at the top of my list. I've always known I was Icelandic through my mom's side of the family, but that was about it. I really wanted to apply for Snorri after I saw how great an experience my mom had on Snorri Plus. When she came home, I got to see all her pictures and even talked to one of my relatives over the phone! I was pretty jealous of her trip and realized there was no better way to experience Iceland than to apply for Snorri myself. The thing I was probably most excited about was visiting the president! It's not every day you meet someone in charge of a country, and it's something I got to check off my bucket list. ■



Photos courtesy of Anna Glasgow

Della in Hofn, not far from her ancestors' home.



Anna taking in the mountain views on a sunny summer day in Reykjavik.



Dayna (front left) and her father Carl (back row, second from the right) with relatives. Dayna says the obvious family resemblance made for a very moving experience when they met.

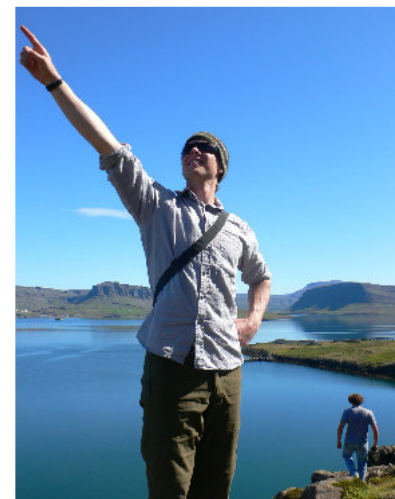
Dayna and Carl Helgason Snorri Plus 2008, Winnipeg, MB

In Icelandic, the word feðgin is used to describe a father and his daughter. It's the perfect term for Dayna and Carl Helgason, who participated in Snorri Plus together in 2008.

I had a friend who went to Iceland with her dad and brother, and it made me think about going with my dad. My dad is fully Icelandic and looks like a Viking. I wanted to do something with him that we could remember and would bring us closer together. I was grateful to be there with him and find his great-grandparents' pictures in a museum. They were pioneers who emigrated to Riverton, Manitoba.

I can't say there's any single day of the trip I'd want to relive – I would say that it was more how I felt every day. I felt at home. My dad and I felt we had so much in common with the intellectual, artistic, literature-loving people of Iceland. When we met one particular family connection, there was such a physical family resemblance that it was very moving. We also met other family members that I felt immediately connected to and maintain communication with 11 years later. ■

Photo courtesy of Dayna Helgason



Snorri Alumni Internship: Since 2015

Internship Program Brings Snorris Back to Iceland

LAUNCHED IN 2015, THE SNORRI ALUMNI INTERNSHIP (SAI) program gives two Snorri alumni each year the chance to return to Iceland and spend a summer volunteering at Vesturfarasetrið, the Icelandic Emigration Centre at Hofsós. While a number of organizations collaborate to make the program possible, including the Emigration Centre, the Snorri Foundation, INL-Iceland, Icelandair, and the US and Canadian embassies, it would not exist without the vision and efforts of Stewart Wheeler, former Canadian Ambassador to Iceland. Wheeler says he was “enchanted” by the Emigration Centre on his first visit there in 2003. As ambassador, he took every opportunity he could to stop in Hofsós while driving between Reykjavík and Akureyri. Through multiple visits, he got to know Valgeir Þorvaldsson, founder and director of the Emigration Centre: “I was always so impressed by Valgeir’s total dedication to the centre and to the selfless work of helping Vestur-Íslendingar connect to their history. He was so optimistic and committed to making this project work,

but I could also see that it was a huge job with little stable funding. He only had a couple of staff and was shouldering a huge burden himself.” Wheeler says he realized how much Valgeir had given to Canada and Canadians of Icelandic descent through the emigration centre, and he wondered how the Embassy could contribute.

Meanwhile, Wheeler had become familiar with the Snorri Program, welcoming participants at the Embassy each year: “I loved meeting them and hosting them when they first arrived and then seeing them again at their graduation when their experience was drawing to a close. I saw these young people come to Iceland, reconnect with their roots and their ancestors’ homeland in a way that seemed to change them for life... I knew many of them would be looking for ways to come back.”

While the Embassy did not have a large budget to support community programs, Wheeler says they did have some funding set aside to hire contractors from time to time, and they had a need for public

affairs work – people to conduct research, develop online content for social media, and help with other tasks. Suddenly, the pieces seemed to come together. Wheeler says he and Valgeir realized they could “harness the excitement and eagerness of Snorri participants” and give them an opportunity to continue building ties to Iceland, while at the same time providing both Valgeir and the Canadian Embassy with much-needed support. Before long, the US Embassy also signed on to the project. The Snorri Foundation was thrilled by the initiative, and former chairman Halldór Árnason and board members Eydís Egilsdóttir and Úlfur Sigurmundsson played key roles in developing the program. The Snorri Alumni Internship officially launched in 2015 and has run every year since. Wheeler says he is thrilled to know that the program has continued and looks back fondly on his involvement with Snorri: “I think it was one of the most meaningful programs I was involved with during my time in Iceland.” ■



Stewart Wheeler with 2015 Snorris Shannon Wright (left) and Frances Morin.

Stewart Wheeler was Canada’s Ambassador to Iceland from 2012 to 2016 and currently serves as Canada’s Chief of Protocol in Ottawa.

Julie Summers



Erika Rae Drake (SAI 2016) giving the 2016 Snorris a tour of the Emigration Centre.



(From left) 2016 Snorris Sean Wurgler, Matthew McCurdy, Alyssa Cartwright, and Katharine Lombardo at Hofsós. Two have returned as interns, Matthew in 2017 and Katharine in 2018.

Photos courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir (top, bottom right) and Kent Lárus Björnsson (bottom left)

Leading the Way: An Interview with SAI Pioneers Morgan Ann Czaja and Natalie Guttormsson

Natalie Guttormsson (NG) from Peterborough, Ontario and Morgan Ann Czaja (MC) of Hillsborough, New Jersey both participated in the Snorri Program in 2014. The following summer, they became the first-ever Snorri Alumni interns. Natalie and Morgan answered a few questions about what it was like to be pioneers of the internship program.

What made you want to apply for the Snorri Alumni Internship?

MC I had met with Valgeir and Þórhildur during my Snorri trip. We talked about how they wanted to start this internship program, and I happened to be in graduate school studying library science. When I got back to the US, I got in touch to see if I could intern and I was chosen!

NG The chance to spend the summer in picturesque Hofsós and to learn more about the emigration story.

How did your experience compare to your expectations?

MC As the first, I didn't know what to expect. I was able to organize the library collection at the Emigration Centre, work in an active museum, and help visitors with their genealogy research. It was fabulous!

NG Living in the natural beauty of Skagafjörður was

beyond my expectations. I learned far more than I ever imagined, not only about the history of Iceland, but about myself. My passion for genealogy was born out of that summer in Hofsós.

What was the most memorable part of your summer as an intern?

MC Being able to live in a small Icelandic town for an entire summer. I loved being there and being able to concentrate on nothing but the work, my master's project, and hanging out with the people around me at the Emigration Centre.

NG Meeting everyone who came to the museum. When people of Icelandic descent came in, it was fun to see if we were related. I also loved educating visitors from around the world about the emigration story and pointing out pictures of my relatives in the exhibit. It was a running game to see if people could

Photos courtesy of Morgan Czaja and Natalie Guttormsson.



Morgan Ann Czaja



Natalie Guttormsson

pick out my *langalangamma* in the family portrait. Another highlight was meeting Sunna Furstenau, director of Icelandic Roots and president of the INL of North America at the time, when she came to visit Hofsós. Since then, I've joined the Icelandic Roots team and gotten involved in the INL.



Morgan (left) and Natalie with Valgeir Porvaldsson, founder and director of Vesturfarasetrið.

Did your time as an intern change your perception of Iceland, the emigration story, or the relationship between Iceland and North America in some way?

MC Living in Hofsós helped me feel the connection between North America and Iceland every day. Visitors constantly came from the United States and Canada asking questions about their genealogy and how to start researching their own connections.

There was a consistent link being made every day.

NG It gave me a new respect for my ancestors. As homesick as I was at times, I often imagined my ancestors living in turf houses with no electricity, no days off to even dream about, no choice in who they lived with, no real opportunity until they emigrated. I'll never know my ancestors who emigrated, but after that summer, I felt closer to them. I understood why they would have wanted to leave and yet why they would have held onto traditions at the same time.

What advice do you have for future interns?

MC Do all the research you can! The access to print materials and the database helped me learn so much about my family in a very short amount of time. It made me feel closer to my ancestors.

NG Have a strategy for enduring loneliness. Don't be shy to ask for help. Practice your language skills whenever you can. And be prepared to take a million photos! ■

Responses have been edited for space and clarity.



Katharine Lombardo
Dallas, TX
Snorri 2016,
SAI 2018

Learning about my heritage and meeting so many of my relatives on my Snorri trip was such a blessing, and I was inspired to spend a summer helping others learn about their Icelandic heritage. I really fell in love with Hofsós and the relaxed pace of life there. My fellow intern Catherine and I enjoyed exploring our surroundings as we walked around town before and after work. It was a little different being in a small village of about 200 people, but I really loved how peaceful it felt. Meeting everyone who came into the museum, whether they had a history with Iceland or were just interested in it, was fascinating. My perception really expanded, seeing the variety of people from around the world so eager to learn about the emigration story and the connection between Iceland and North America. ■

Photos courtesy of Morgan Czaja (top) and Katharine Lombardo (bottom)

Snorri Alumni Association: Since 2001

From the very beginning, Snorri has been a life-changing experience for each and every participant. Snorris don't just leave Iceland with full hearts, tired bodies, and countless memories, they leave with an even greater passion for their heritage than they had before. They return home wanting to find ways to stay involved long after they've finished unpacking.

In August 2001, during the annual Íslendingadagurinn festival in Gimli, Manitoba, Snorri alumni met to discuss this drive for continued connection. After just two meetings, the Snorri Alumni Association (SAA) was born, and Tricia Signý McKay (Snorri 2001) was elected president. The following day, she formally announced the formation of the SAA to the public in a ceremony at Gimli Park.

The original aims of the SAA were to foster ties between young people in North America and Iceland; to actively promote the Snorri Program; and to build a stronger youth presence in the North American Icelandic community. The SAA has since expanded to include Snorri Plus and Snorri West alumni as well, but the central focus remains connection.

While the SAA has not always been very active, Snorri, Snorri Plus, and Snorri West alumni across Iceland and North America have become leaders in their local Icelandic organizations. Alumni hold meetups at major annual events, like the August festivals and INL conventions. And as of this year, the SAA has a new president.

What will the next twenty years of the Snorri Alumni Association bring? If you're an alum, it's up to you to decide!

Meet the New SAA President

The Snorri Alumni Association has a new president! Kjersten Gaminek, a 2019 Snorri from Winnipeg, has taken over for Mallory Swanson, who had served continuously since 2011. The SAA thanks Mallory for her service over the years and is excited to have Kjersten on board. We have a lot of exciting things in store, but we need your help. If you want to get involved, or just let us know what you'd like to see from the SAA, drop us a line at snorrialumni@gmail.com.



The SAA is now on Instagram! Follow us [@snorrialumni](https://www.instagram.com/snorrialumni).

New website and Facebook coming soon!

Greetings Fellow Snorri Alumni,

My name is Kjersten Gaminek. I'm from Winnipeg, Manitoba and I am 21 years old. I attend the Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, where I'm working on my undergrad in Arts and Humanities. I currently work part time as a baker and barista at a local bakeshop, but my dream is to become an early-years teacher.

I participated in the Snorri Program this past summer, and I am already dreaming about my next visit to Iceland! When I completed the program, I could not believe it was over; I needed a way to stay connected to my peers from the Snorri Program, as well as all the incredible friends and family I met during my time abroad. The position of SAA President needed to be filled, so I immediately jumped into it.

My goals as your new SAA President are to:

1. Build and maintain connections among past Snorri, Snorri Plus, and Snorri West participants;
2. Keep Snorri alumni updated about amazing opportunities like the Snorri Alumni Internship, grants and scholarships for language learning, involvement with local Icelandic clubs, and more; and finally
3. Organize meet-ups and special events for Snorri alumni in Canada, the US, and Iceland.

I am very honoured to be working as your new SAA president, and I can't wait to connect with all of you!

Takk fyrir,

Kjersten Gaminek



Photo courtesy of Kjersten Gaminek

Kjersten strolling down Skólavörðustígur, with Hallgrímskirkja in the background.

Takk fyrir okkur, Ásta!

Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir was just 24 years old when she became project manager for the Snorri Program. Over the next 19 years, she welcomed more than 500 North Americans of Icelandic descent to Iceland, helping them connect with their roots in an unforgettable way. While countless individuals come together to create an unforgettable experience for each Snorri group, many of us would agree that Ásta was at the center of our Snorri experience. She has always gone above and beyond, giving of herself and regarding the program not merely as a job but as a central part of her life. For so many Snorris and others over the years, Ásta was not just a program manager; she was – and is – a sister, friend, daughter, and *frænka*. The Snorri Alumni Association would like to thank Ásta for her warmth, dedication, and tireless work over the years. It's hard to find the words to say thank you, but we'd like to try. ■



Ásta Sól with Mallory Swanson (in red sweatshirt) and other 2011 Snorri ladies at the top of Drangey.

*Mallory Swanson, Snorri 2011
President of the Snorri Alumni Association, 2011–2019*

When I first met Ásta I was greeted with a hug, smile and a feeling of family. She made us 16 new Snorris feel like we were home, as I am sure she has done for many, many other Snorris since. But my fondest memories of Ásta Sól are not necessarily from the Snorri Program but rather the events that followed. From conventions to reunions, barbecues to festivals, our friendship has stood the test of time. ■

*Brad Hirst
Selkirk, MB
Snorri 2002
Snorri Alumni Association President, 2004–2006*



Brad and Ásta at the 2012 INLNA convention in Brandon, Manitoba.

For me, Ásta Sól was the ‘soul’ of the Snorri Program, and I would guess that most past Snorris feel the same. Ásta, thank you for making Iceland a dream come true for me and a place to which I truly feel connected. Bravo for all your hard work, and here's to new and great adventures. ■

*Colleen Howard Waldegger
Vernon, BC
Snorri 2001*



Colleen and Ásta in Paris in 2006.

Ásta Sól met our group at the airport with a giant welcoming hug and smile – her embrace let me know that I was HOME! Ásta created an experience filled with authentic culture, food, people and adventures. Her tireless planning led to a life-changing experience for every person in the group. Ásta opened her heart and her life to all of the participants. Since my Snorri experience, I have visited Iceland a dozen times, all thanks to my wonderful adventure with Ásta! Ásta is the very heart of the Snorri Program for me, and I owe her a tremendous debt of gratitude! ■

Mary Lange
Seattle, WA
Snorri Plus 2015



Mary and Ásta on the boat to Drangey.

Photos courtesy of Ásta Sól Kristjánsdóttir



Remembering Tricia Signý McKay

January 7, 1977 – November 28, 2018

Tricia Signý McKay, Snorri 2001 and first president of the Snorri Alumni Association, passed away in 2018 at the age of 41 after a battle with ALS. She had a deep and lasting appreciation for her Icelandic heritage; besides her Snorri experiences, she attended Icelandic Camp as a child, returned to Iceland after Snorri to study Icelandic, and was a fixture of the Icelandic community in Manitoba. A few members of the Snorri family shared their favorite memories of Tricia.



Tricia Signý McKay
climbing the steps to
Drangey.

I met Tricia in the summer of 1998. It was her grandmother, Guðrún Magnússon, who brought us together. I had signed up to volunteer at a children's summer camp in Gimli, Manitoba. Shortly before heading there for the first time, I learned that my great-grandmother's sister had emigrated to North America from Bolungarvík. When Rúna, as Guðrún was called, heard about this, she was determined to meet this long-lost relative of hers. We met up at The Forks in Winnipeg with about 20 other relatives, including Tricia. That evening changed my life.

Tricia had an abiding love for her ancestral homeland and stayed with relatives in Bolungarvík and Hesteyri as a Snorri. When she returned from the Westfjords, she declared, "I'm so grateful for the culture shock." She later lived with me for a year while she was attending the University of Iceland.

Tricia called me on November 5 and told me she'd chosen November 28 as her dying day. During that conversation, she still cracked jokes and got me to laugh. Humor, levity, and joie de vivre, mixed with a good dose of sarcasm – that's the perfect way to describe Tricia's personality. "Unfortunately, my humor will die with me," was one of the last things you said to me, but I will never forget you, your laughter, or your warmth. My beloved Tricia, I'll remember you in the little things, and you will forever be a part of me. ■



Tricia (left) with Ásta Sól.

I was immediately drawn to Tricia the moment I met her in the Keflavik airport in 2001. Tricia had a big smile of welcome, in fact, I think she immediately hugged me even though we had never met before, and I knew I was going to enjoy getting to know this vibrant person.

Tricia was the life of the party, and she had a way of making just about anything fun. She would pick up rocks to look for trolls. She would sing a silly song on a long bus ride to lighten the mood. And she would have us all rolling on the ground laughing during language classes as she found clever, humorous ways of remembering long and difficult Icelandic words. “Colleen was going to be staying in ‘Hot Sauce’ which was close to ‘Soda Cracker,’” was Tricia’s way of saying ‘Hofsós’ and ‘Sauðárkrókur.’

But Tricia also had a serious side too. What made her such a good friend and person, I think, is that she always put others before herself. Her final message to all on Facebook were words of inspiration, of living life to its fullest, of not getting caught up in little things. It was a message of love and laughter and hope and it was Tricia. ■

Colleen Howard Waldegger
Snorri 2001



2001 Snorris
Tricia and
Colleen having
fun during a
lesson at the
University of
Iceland.



Tricia (center) with fellow Snorris Gaia Grace Willis and Daniel Hallett at Gullfoss.

Tricia Signý McKay was generous in so many ways. She brought humor, energy, and life to any gathering. She left her mark on Snorri by volunteering to be the first president of the Snorri Alumni Association. She never gave up fighting against a deadly disease, and when I visited Selkirk in 2017, even though she was very ill, she had told me that she wanted more than anything to have me bring some Icelandic goodies, which I did. Tricia is the first of the young Snorris to pass away and will always be remembered for her great contribution to the Snorri Program. ■

Almar Grímsson
Chair of the Snorri Foundation, 1999–2010



Almar and Tricia
in Gimli in 2001,
when the SAA was
officially founded.

Photos courtesy of Ásta Sól Krísjánsdóttir

Participant Lists

Participant's name *from • stayed in*



Snorri 1999

Adam Thorsteinson *Sayabec, QC • Höfn í Hornafirði*
 Andrea Christianson *Portage, MB • Flatey/Stykkishólmur*
 Aquila M. Oddný Samson *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri*
 Axel Bjornsson *Seattle, WA • Fellabær*
 Colleen Wilson *Oakville, MB • Ísafjörður*
 Heather Roed *Winnipeg, MB • Sauðárkrókur*
 Johanna Brierley *Winnipeg, MB • Dalvík*
 Katherine MacFadden *Port Alberni, BC • Höfn í Hornafirði*
 Krista Sigurdson *Vancouver, BC • Vopnafjörður*
 Kristian M. Sigurdson *Winnipeg, MB • Vopnafjörður*
 Leah Claire Allen *St. Norbert, MB • Sauðárkrókur*
 Lisa Erickson *Calgary, AB • Höfn í Hornafirði*
 Matthew Hoye *Ottawa, ON • Vopnafjörður*
 Nathan A. Bjornson *Bobcaygeon, ON • Egilsstaðir*
 Runa Anne Bjarnason *Golden, BC • Borgarfjörður*
 Steven Mills *Calgary, AB • Kópasker*
 Tanya Hiebert *Langley, BC • Akureyri*
 Thor Magnusson *Burnaby, BC • Reyðarfjörður*
 Tricia J. Thorson *Calgary, AB • Biskupstungur*



Snorri 2000

Adam Sommerfeld *Ottawa, ON • Stykkishólmur*
 Carley Sawers *Vancouver, BC • Vopnafjörður*
 Erica M. Wick *Madison, WI • Akureyri*
 Erika Bardal *Vancouver, BC • Húsavík*
 Gwennie Beard *Cavalier, ND • Akureyri*
 Jacob Guttormsson *Duluth, MN • Vopnafjörður*
 Jenna Bardal *Winnipeg, MB • Húsavík*
 Kristin Hildahl *Winnipeg, MB • Garðabær*
 Margret Magnusson *Calgary, AB • Akureyri*
 Matthew Scott Shirley *Olympia, WA • Húnaþing vestra*
 Richard Long *Milehouse, BC • Reyðarfjörður*
 Sally Rae Olafson *Winnipeg, MB • Varmahlíð*
 Shawn Ross Bryant *Nanaimo, BC • Akureyri*

Snorri 2001

Colleen Howard *Vernon, BC • Hofsós*
 Daniel M. Hallett *Edmonton, AB • Ísafjörður*
 Deirdre Sigrid Syms *Wilcox, SK • Keflavík*
 Donald Thorkelson *Lundar, MB • Húsavík*
 Gaia Grace Willis *Edmonton, AB • Akureyri*
 Helgi Gunnar Thorvaldson *Edmonton, AB • Dalbær II, Flúðir*
 Ivar Jonasson *Arborg, MB • Akureyri*
 Julian Davis *Delta, BC • Böðvarsholt, Snæfellsnes*
 Lilli Kerby *Rossland, BC • Barðaströnd/Reykjavík*
 Shawna Elisabeth Liles *Gimli, MB • Siglufjörður*
 Thora McInnis *Arborg, MB • Akureyri*
 Tricia Signý McKay *Selkirk, MB • Bolungarvík*



Snorri Participants

Snorri West 2001

Laufey Lind Sigurðardóttir *Hafnarfjörður*
Ragnheiður Ásta Sigurðardóttir *Reykjavík*

Snorri 2002

Andrew R. Jonsson *Seattle, WA • Borgarnes*
Arlene Brandson *Lundar, MB • Húsavík*
Calvin Krenbrenk *St. Albert, AB • Akureyri*
Courtenay Johnson *Selkirk, MB • Brennistaðir, Eastfjords*
Erica Evans *San Francisco, CA • Hrafnagil, Akureyri*
Erin Thordarson *Gimli, MB • Húsavík*
Jennifer Denbow *Athens, OH • Reykjavík*
Kara Schuster *Mississauga, ON • Vopnafjörður*
Karen Tomasson *Regina, SK • Akureyri*
Kristina MacNaughton *Edmonton, AB • Akranes*
Kristinn Johnson *Arborg, MB • Akureyri*
Laurie Schwartz *Edmonton, AB • Akureyri*
Melissa Eylands *Grand Forks, ND • Hvammstangi*
Paul Visscher *Minneapolis, MN • Ísafjörður*
Robert Bradley Hirst *Selkirk, MB • Vopnafjörður*
Stephanie Jonsson *Spruce Grove, AB • Njarðvík*

Snorri West 2002

Ástrós Una Jóhannesdóttir *Reykjavík*
Berglind Jana Ásgrímsdóttir *Reykjavík*
Erla Dögg Ólafsdóttir *Reykjavík*
Íris Björg Þorvaldsdóttir *Akranes*

Snorri 2003

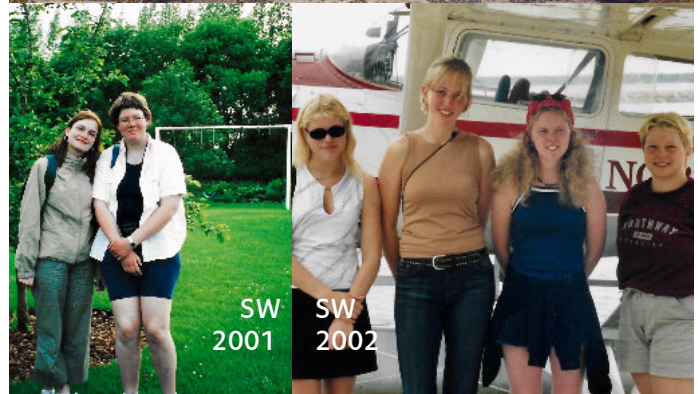
Aaron Willis *Toronto, ON • Akureyri*
Andrew Hjalmarsen Evans *Costa Mesa, CA • Akureyri*
Benjamin Sebastian Henry *Victoria, BC • Vopnafjörður*
Crystal Salmonson *Auburn, CA • Akureyri*
Danielle Laxdal *Winnipeg, MB • Vígholtsstaðir, Búðardalur*
Dawn Dowhayko *Winnipeg, MB • Egilsstaðir*
Dwight D. Jonsson *Seattle, WA • Borgarnes*
Erin Johnson *Los Gatos, CA • Egilsstaðir*
Heather Crozier *St. Albert, AB • Reykjavík*
Jennifer Holand *Fargo, ND • Akureyri*
Kristin Grisdale *Calgary, AB • Borgarnes*
Kristin Hillman *Grand Forks, ND • Holt II, Blönduós*
Kristjan Adam Heimir Boe *St. Albert, AB • Akureyri*
Michael Sproule *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri*
Sarah Arnason *Charlottesville, VA • Vopnafjörður*

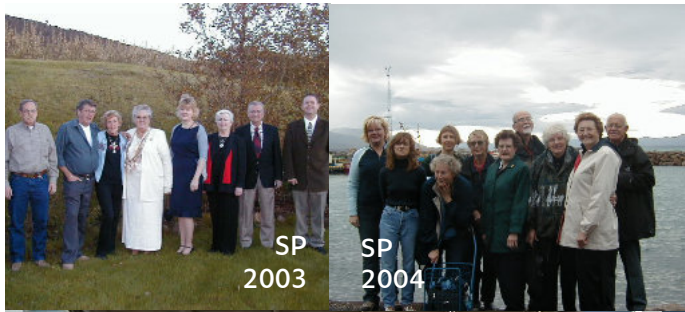
Snorri Plus 2003

Arlan Steinolfson *Fargo, ND*
Eirikur Johnson *Winnipeg, MB*
Elva Jónasson *Winnipeg, MB*
Fred Bjarnason *Victoria, BC*
Jaqueline Walker *Gimli, MB*
Steingrímur Jónasson *Winnipeg, MB*
Willow Helgason *Winnipeg, MB*

Snorri West 2003

Aðalheiður Dóra Albertsdóttir *Reykjavík*
Eva Huld Ívarsdóttir *Akureyri*
Heba Margrét Harðardóttir *Reykjavík*
Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir *Reykjavík*
Valgerður Stella Kristjánsdóttir *Reykjavík*





Snorri 2004

- Ainsley Gretchen *West St. Paul, MB • Kolugil, Hvammstangi*
- Brigit Waples *Winnipeg, MB • Steinar II, Borgarnes*
- Brynja Bjarnason *Marshallfield, WI • Akranes*
- Emily Ode *St. Paul, MN • Akureyri*
- Eric Johnson *Los Gatos, CA • Húsavík*
- John Eric Erickson *Riverton, MB • Húsavík*
- Jonathon Grace *Goderich, ON • Hvammsvík, Hvalfjörður*
- Kelly Bjarnason *Calgary, AB • Selfoss*
- Kelly Stephens *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri*
- Kris Skaro *Williston, ND • Akureyri*
- Leif Einarson *Maple Ridge, BC • Höfn í Hörnafirði*
- Lori Sveinbjornson *Wynyard, SK • Stykkishólmur*
- Rachelle Gislason *Victoria, BC • Borgarfjörður eystri*
- Ryan Sigurdson *Edmonton, AB • Akranes*
- Shannon Davie *North Vancouver, BC • Mosfellsbær*

Snorri Plus 2004

- Alda Johnson *Selkirk, MB*
- Boyd McDonald *Kitchener, ON*
- Carolyn Arnason *Kitchener, ON*
- Ethel Markusson *Gimli, MB*
- Gordon Valgardson *Lethbridge, AB*
- Ingibjorg Solmundson *Gimli, MB*
- Joan Young *Victoria, BC*
- Margaret Kernsted *Winnipeg, MB*
- Serena Goebel *Winnipeg, MB*
- Thordis Reedel *Coquitlam, BC*

Snorri West 2004

- Anna Dóra Axelsdóttir *Reykjavík*
- Fanný Rut Meldal Frostadóttir *Akureyri*
- Geir Konráð Theodorsson *Borgarnes*
- Guðrún Meyvantsdóttir *Reykjavík*
- Kristín Elísabet Gunnarsdóttir *Hafnarfjörður*
- Linda Björk Ómarsdóttir *Reykjavík*
- Magnús Sigurðsson *Reykjavík*
- Sigrún Björg Aradóttir *Dalvík*

Snorri 2005

- Ashley Thorvaldson *North Delta, BC • Stykkishólmur*
- Bonnie Thor Kornahrens *Goleta, CA • Syðra-Langholt, Flúðir*
- Carly Jónína Klassen *McAllen, TX • Akranes*
- Erik Ásgeirsson *West Bloomfield, MI • Birtingaholt, Flúðir*
- Heather Cobb *Winnipeg, MB • Reyðarfjörður*
- Katherine Jonsson *Spruce Grove, AB • Reykjanesbær*
- Kelsey Bolter *Calgary, AB • Akureyri*
- Kimberly Irwin *Dawson Creek, BC • Reykjavík*
- Kristjana Loptson *Guelph, ON • Seyðisfjörður*
- Lesley Elin Robertson *Winnipeg, MB • Hveragerði*
- Mathew Hobson *Norbert, MB • Bakkagerði, Egilsstaðir*
- Sarah Drake *Calgary, AB • Akureyri*
- Sean Martin Tuhoy Bettis *Tigard, OR • Reykjanesbær*
- Stewart Elliott *Gimli, MB • Stífla, Hvalsövellur*

Snorri Plus 2005

- Billie Ann Howard *Vernon, BC*
- Brian Howard *Vernon, BC*
- Cecelia Byron *Coon Rapids, MN*
- Chris Byron *Coon Rapids, MN*
- Gail Einarson-McCleery *Toronto, ON*
- George Teather *Orleans, ON*

Snorri Participants

Joan Waterous *Brantford, ON*
 Vicky Teather *Orleans, ON*

Snorri West 2005

Ásthildur Gunnarsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Einar Baldvin Haraldsson *Reykjavík*
 Guðný Rut Guðnadóttir *Grundarfjörður*
 Hjalti Magnússon *Reykjavík*
 Kristín Þóra Jökulsdóttir *Keflavík*
 Sigríður Magnúsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Sóley Jónsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Þórdís Reynisdóttir *Reykjavík*

Snorri 2006

Bryan Hermansson *Redwood City, CA • Reykjavík/Garðabær*
 Daniel Gange *Winnipeg, MB • Borgarnes*
 Erica Grahalm *Toronto, ON • Möðruvellir II, Akureyri*
 Heather Stephens *Winnipeg, MB • Vatn, Hofsó*
 Joseph Scholberg *Chicago, IL • Akureyri*
 Kristin Grahalm *Toronto, ON • Kópavogur/Reykjavík*
 Kristin Lilja Emilsson *Urbana, IL • Selfoss*
 Kristjan Sigfusson *Winnipeg, MB • Egilsstaðir*
 Kristján Þór Kornmayer *Alpharetta, GA • Reykjavík*
 Layne Douglas Fingald *Lundar, MB • Akranes*
 Leanne Roed *Winnipeg, MB • Sauðárkrókur*
 Megan Williams *London, ON • Ísafjörður*
 Melissa Anderson *Coquitlam, BC • Garðakot/Sauðárkrókur*
 Olivia Ortega *Vacaville, CA • Hafnarfjörður*
 Tarak Kjartanson Oswald *Winnipeg, MB • Eskifjörður/Reykjavík*

Snorri Plus 2006

Agnes Cooke *Calgary, AB*
 Arnold Felix Page *Winnipeg, MB*
 Clinton Mooney *Calgary, AB*
 Freda Olafsson *Brandon, MB*
 Jill Tomasson Goodwin *Kitchener, ON*
 John Haldor Hofteig *Glenview, IL*
 Lorna Holmes *Mississauga, ON*
 Olivia Tomasson *Vancouver, BC*
 Peter Martin Holmes *Stittsville, ON*
 Sandra Hansen *Bracebridge, ON*
 Steven Holmes *Vancouver, BC*
 Thomas Gordon McInnis *Brandon, MB*

Snorri West 2006

Ásta Hermannsdóttir *Stykkishólmur*
 Bergrún Magnúsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Kristbjörg Sveinbjörnsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Laufey Sif Ingólfssdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Ragnheiður Gunnarsdóttir *Akureyri*
 Signý Egilsdóttir *Hella*
 Snorri Arinbjarnar *Reykjavík*
 Sveinn Ólafsson *Reykjavík*

Snorri 2007

Adrienne Naomi Selbie *Kingston, ON • Norðurfjörður*
 Anna Davison *Pembroke, ON • Egilsstaðir*
 Anna Kathleen Millar *West Vancouver, BC • Stykkishólmur*
 Arndis Bildfell *Fort McMurray, AB • Hólmur, Höfn í Hornafirði*
 Beth Irene McReynolds *Calgary, AB • Silfrastaðir, Varmahlíð*
 Brandur Hallson Leach *Calgary, AB • Sauðárkrókur*





- Brett Lamoureux *Winnipeg, MB • Akranes*
- Bronwyn Marie Mroz *Farmington, MI • Akureyri*
- Bryn Livingstone *Yellowknife, NT • Akureyri*
- Jonina Rae Riglin *Victoria, BC • Hella*
- Miria Dawn Olson *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri*
- Ryan Eric Johnson *Winnipeg, MB • Egilsstaðir*
- Sara Lindsey Loftson *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri*
- Stewart Robertson *Winnipeg, MB • Reyðarfjörður*

Snorri Plus 2007

- Amanda Hargis *Villanueva, NM*
- Arnette Anderson *Edmonton, AB*
- Barbara Johnson *Winnipeg, MB*
- Beverly Anderson *Calgary, AB*
- David Garrett *Seattle, WA*
- Dorothy Johnson *Stonewall, MB*
- Elizabeth Ann Magnusson Lawrence *Portales, NM*
- Elizabeth Arend *Poulsbo, WA*
- Haldor Bjarnason *Mercer Island, WA*
- Karen Botting *Winnipeg, MB*
- Leigh Syms *Winnipeg, MB*
- Linda Wilkinson *Brandon, MB*
- Ronald Johnson *Winnipeg, MB*
- Shirley Una Syms *Winnipeg, MB*
- Solveig Christie *Calgary, AB*
- Susan Lee Garrett *Seattle, WA*

Snorri West 2007

- Andrea Björnsdóttir *Garðabær*
- Eygló Einarsdóttir *Akureyri*
- Hrafnhildur Sigmarsdóttir *Reykjavík*
- Íris Eva Hauksdóttir *Akureyri*
- Katrín Lilja Jónsdóttir *Reykjavík*
- Lára Dögg Gústafsdóttir *Akureyri*
- Sindri Aron Viktorsson *Reykjavík*
- Þóra Björk Samúelsdóttir *Súðavík*

Snorri West ON/QC 2007

- Friðný Ósk Hermannsdóttir *Akureyri*
- Unnur Kristinsdóttir *Keflavík*

Snorri 2008

- Alexander Carl Bjornson *Victoria, BC • Vopnafjörður/Akureyri*
- Brad Heron *Winnipeg, MB • Selfoss*
- Cheryl Johnson *Winnipeg, MB • Dalvík*
- Eileen Aldis McCurdy *London, ON • Akureyri/Borgarnes*
- Heather Gummo *Calgary, AB • Egilsstaðir*
- Jane McReynolds *Calgary, AB • Silfrastaðir, Varmahlíð*
- Jay Reykdal *Edmonton, AB • Egilsstaðir*
- Katie Hinds *Modesto, CA • Höfn í Hornafirði/Reykjavík*
- Lyle Floyd Christensen *Elk Ridge, UT • Vestmannaeyjar*
- Marc Whiteway *Toronto, ON • Bíldudalur/Kópavogur*
- Natalie Wirth *Winnipeg, MB • Tungulækur, Borgarnes*
- Páll Magnús Kornmayer *Alpharetta, GA • Reykjavík*
- T.J. Michael Grisdale *Calgary, AB • Siglufjörður*
- Tara Dawson *Aurora, ON • Núpi, Kópasker*

Snorri Plus 2008

- Carl Helgason *Winnipeg, MB*
- Claire Lee *Oakville, ON*
- Clark Leighton Gregory *Winnipeg, MB*
- Dayna Helgason *Winnipeg, MB*

Snorri Participants

Gail Einarson-McCleery *Toronto, ON*
 Harold Jonasson *Brandon, MB*
 Harold Roman *Oakville, ON*
 Jennifer Benediktson *Guelph, ON*
 Karen Apps *North Saanich, BC*
 Karen Skogstad *Victoria, BC*
 Louis Henry Howard *Ottawa, ON*
 Marilyne Anderson *Coquitlam, BC*
 Norma Jonasson *Brandon, MB*
 Sara Benediktson *Barrie, ON*
 Sigrid Bjarnason *Gabriola, BC*

Snorri West 2008

Gunnar Örn Arnarson *Hellissandur*
 Karlotta Helgadóttir *Reykjavik*
 Sindri Snær Þorsteinsson *Hornafjörður*
 Snorri Elís Halldórsson *Laugarvatn*

Snorri 2009

Brittany Anne Flamank *Langley, BC • Akureyri*
 Daniel McLean Leifson *Spanish Fork, UT • Akureyri*
 Jensina Julia Barbara Rogers *North Vancouver, BC • Egilsstaðir*
 Jessica May Thorkelson *Lundar, MB • Búðardalur*
 Jocelyn Moir *Sylvan Lake, AB • Mývatn*
 Jonathan David Winslow Hughes *Edmonds, WA • Stykkishólmur*
 Laura Irene Olafson *Winnipeg, MB • Hofsó*
 Leif Halldór Ásgeirsson *West Bloomfield, MI • Flúðir*
 Raili Mae Bjarnson *Pleasant Grove, UT • Húsavík*
 Rebekah Mason *Salem, UT • Hvammstangi*
 Shawna-Fay McNaughton *Edmonton, AB • Akranes*
 Tiffany Ann Sigurdson *Sylvan Lake, AB • Akureyri*

Snorri Plus 2009

Christine Frost *Toronto, ON*
 Cynthia Pickering *Calgary, AB*
 Donna Staples *Brandon, MB*
 Doreen Verhelst *Brandon, MB*
 Marcia Brierley *Winnipeg, MB*
 Melissa Brierley *Toronto, ON*
 Nancy Stephenson *West Vancouver, BC*
 Shelley McReynolds *Calgary, AB*
 Sveinfríður Irene Wright *Calgary, AB*
 Wayne Douglas Pickering *Calgary, AB*

Snorri West 2009

Ásrún Esther Magnúsdóttir *Borgarnes*
 Heimir Heimisson *Reykjavík*
 Lára Guðlaug Jónasdóttir *Hafnarfjörður*
 Ólafur Haukur Árnason *Reykjavík*
 Rakel Gyða Pálsdóttir *Garðabær*
 Sigrún Antonsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Steinunn Ylfa Harðardóttir *Kópavogur*
 Thelma Björk Wilson *Seltjarnarnes*

Snorri 2010

Autumn Whiteway *Calgary, AB • Höfn í Hornafirði*
 Christine Schimnowski *Winnipeg, MB • Patreksfjörður*
 Holly Long *Calgary, AB • Seyðisfjörður*
 Iléana Eilis Soley Gutnick *Outremont, QC • Egilsstaðir*
 Isaac Leon Muscanto *Roseville, MN • Eyjafjörður/Akureyri*
 Jesse Chisholm-Beatson *Stratford, ON • Eskifjörður*
 Jodi Amy *Southampton, ON • Akureyri*





SP
2010



SW
2010



2011



SP
2011



2012

Joseph Bowen *Minneapolis, MN • Kirkjulækur/Hvolsvöllur*
 Kara Bodvarson *Medicine Hat, AB • Skagaströnd*
 Kristjana Britton *Winnipeg, MB • Breið, Varmahlíð*
 Stephanie Bokenfohr *Calgary, AB • Höfn í Hornafirði*
 Teal Johannson-Knox *Hanmer, ON • Stífla, Hvolsvöllur*

Snorri Plus 2010

Alice Marlene Linneberg *Spruce View, AB*
 Bernice Lilyan Andersen *Markerville, AB*
 Beverly Ethel Heron *Chilliwack, BC*
 Charlene Gay Charette *Winnipeg, MB*
 Ferne Marie Gudnason *Lacombe, AB*
 Kathleen Ellen MacIver *Winnipeg, MB*
 Lawrence Allen Gudnason *Selkirk, MB*
 Linda Carol Komus *Winnipeg, MB*
 Lois Diane Streeton *Prince Albert, SK*
 Svala Arnason Dunn *Cold Lake, AB*

Snorri West 2010

Bryndís Sveinsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Eydís Eva Bergsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Halla Laufey Hauksdóttir *Akureyri*
 Karólína Árnadóttir *Akureyri*

Snorri 2011

Alison Auður Mroz *Farmington, MI • Akureyri*
 Amy Maginley *Calgary, AB • Grindavík*
 Anna Lína Kornmayer *Alpharetta, GA • Reykjavík/Kópavogur*
 Janis Susanne Grant *Ewa Beach, HI • Vestmannaeyjar/Akranes*
 Mallory Swanson *Moorhead, MN • Fáskrúðsfjörður*
 Michelle Delta Curtin *Highland, UT • Brekkur I, Vík í Mýrdal*
 Sarah Painter *Winnipeg, MB • Staðarbakki I, Hörgárdalur*
 Stefan George Jackson Snow *Caledon, ON • Miðhópur, V-Húnavatnssýsla*
 Stefán Þór Hermanowicz *Irvine, CA • Reykjavík*
 Theodore James Michael Martin *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri*
 Thorin Gunnar Hallson Leach *Calgary, AB • Sakka, Dalvík*

Snorri Plus 2011

Dale Johannson *Winnipeg, MB*
 David Johnson *Seattle, WA*
 Ferne Gudnason *Lacombe, AB*
 Garth Lane *St. Albert, AB*
 Krista Hermanson *Calgary, AB*
 Lin Floyd *St. George, UT*
 Marilyn Walton *Brandon, MB*

Snorri 2012

Alexandra Nieuwenhuyse-Sigvaldason *St. Albert, AB • Bóndabær við Hellu*
 Amanda Grace Allen *Seattle, WA • Þingeyri/Kópavogur*
 Ashley Rieseberg *Calgary, AB • Neskaupstaður*
 Bethany Economos *Thief River Falls, MN • Syðra-Áland, Þórshöfn*
 Breanna Mawhinney *Edmonton, AB • Tungulækur, Borgarnes/Syðra-Langholt, Flúðir*
 Christin Burgess *Winnipeg, MB • Seyðisfjörður*
 Jolene Helgason *Red Deer, AB • Egilsstaðir/Selfoss*
 Julie Summers *Battle Ground, WA • Patreksfjörður/Seltjarnarnes*
 Kathryn Pallen *Victoria, BC • Tungulækur/Litla-Brekka, Borgarnes*
 Kayli Dru Henrikson *Calgary, AB • Hafnarfjörður*
 Kelsey Shouldice *Calgary, AB • Húsavík*
 Marshall Gallaway *Brandon, MB • Sandgerði*
 Patrick Heywood *North Vancouver, BC • Hrútsstaðir, Búðardalur*
 Sacha Gudmundsson *Burlington, ON • Borgarfjörður/Kópavogur*
 Sean Grisdale *Calgary, AB • Borgarnes*
 Wyatt Turner *Vacaville, CA • Reykjavík*

Snorri Participants

Snorri Plus 2012

Cathryn Jane Lawrence *Vancouver, BC*
Christopher Thomas Magnusson *Golden, BC*
Edward Merrill Yeadon *New Westminster, BC*
Ferne Gudnason *Lacombe, AB*
Heather Schreiner *Selkirk, MB*
Jody Ann Arman-Jones *Farmington, MN*
Johann Schreiner *Selkirk, MB*
Robert Johnson *Lumsden, SK*
Sandra Joyce Johnson *Lumsden, SK*
Sharon Rosalyn Yeadon *New Westminster, BC*
Susan Margret Helgason *Vancouver, BC*

Snorri West 2012

Gísli Rúnar Gíslason *Hafnarfjörður*
Karen Óskarsdóttir *Hella*

Snorri 2013

Amy Cassandra Robock *Edmonton, AB • Neskaupstaður*
Christina Margaret Casey *Winnipeg, MB • Stykkishólmur/Kópavogur/Reykjavík*
Eden Elizabeth Lane *St. Albert, AB • Höfn í Hornafirði*
Emily Constance Payne *Vancouver, BC • Egilsstaðir*
Emily Diane Wurgler *Ottertail, MN • Hraun II, Skagafjörður*
Erin Mae Johnson *Minneapolis, MN • Hallormsstaður/Seyðisfjörður*
Erin Arman Jones *Farmington, MN • Selfoss*
Freyja Ellen Laxdal *Calgary, AB • Eskifjörður*
Hannah Isolde Goodman *Halifax, NS • Reykjavík*
Jacob Stephen Halliday *Toronto, ON • Borgarnes*
Jennifer Johanna Dolores Kahler *Gimli, MB • Hvammstangi*
Madeline Victoria Pekary *Manotick, ON • Vopnafjörður*
Michael Einar Jonasson *Winnipeg, MB • Ólafsvík*
Nicholas R. Lieber *Elk Grove Village, IL • Hvammstangi*

Snorri Plus 2013

Aliyah Gabrielle Loftson Waldman *Winnipeg, MB*
Aron Laxton *Mission, BC*
Carmen Pearce *Spruce Grove, AB*
Cyndy Dawn Morin *Calgary, AB*
David Edward Loftson *Winnipeg, MB*
Diane Palmason *Comox, BC*
Eleanor Samson *Winnipeg, MB*
Erika Bjorg Sammons *Winnipeg, MB*
Jaimie Sigfusson *Saskatoon, SK*
Jeffrey Phillips *Winnipeg, MB*
Joan Christensen *Toronto, ON*
Jón Timothy Samson *Winnipeg, MB*
Jonas Sammons *Winnipeg, MB*
Julia Malik *Arlington, MA*
Louise Michel Waldman *Winnipeg, MB*
Margaret Grisdale *Calgary, AB*
Marsha B. Thorlaxson *Los Osos, CA*
Mona Phillips *Winnipeg, MB*
Susan Sammons *Winnipeg, MB*
Teri Lee Waddell Nicholson *Brandon, MB*

Snorri West 2013

Gerður Gautsdóttir *Reykjavík*
Hulda Lilja Hannesdóttir *Reykjavík*
Svandís Einarsdóttir *Reykjavík*
Þorbjörg Ída Ívarsdóttir *Akureyri*





2014

Snorri 2014

- Crystaline Brown *Kirkland, WA • Borgarnes*
- Hannah Thorlaksson *New Westminster, BC • Seyðisfjörður*
- Hayley Anderson *Edmonton, AB • Akureyri*
- Holly Millar *West Vancouver, BC • Sauðárkrókur*
- Jacob Kruse *Marshfield, WI • Ísafjörður*
- Josie Anderson *Honeyville, UT • Borgarfjörður eystri*
- Kelsey Amelia Wittrock *Calgary, AB • Hvammstangi*
- Matthew Gaudet *Sherwood Park, AB • Reykjavík*
- Megan Myrdal *Fargo, ND • Garðabær*
- Michael Thor Spencer *Abbotsford, BC • Akureyri/Sauðárkrókur*
- Morgan Ann Czaja *Hillsborough, NJ • Reykjavík*
- Natalie Guttormsson *Peterborough, ON • Reyðarfjörður*
- Sidney Lines *Mesa, AZ • Stokkseyri*
- Stephen Gummo *Calgary, AB • Blönduós*



SP
2014

Snorri Plus 2014

- Bethany Butler *Victoria, BC*
- David Bertnick *Winnipeg, MB*
- Donald George Peterson *Ottawa, ON*
- Douglas John Thordarson *Vancouver, BC*
- Elizabeth Blair Lockhart *Vancouver, BC*
- Elizabeth Margaret Kathman *Grand Forks, ND*
- Guy Leonard Johnson *Winnipeg, MB*
- Heather Jocelyn Lockhart *Vancouver, BC*
- Julie Christine Hall *Rogers, AZ*
- Margaret Bjarnason Amirault *Vancouver, BC*
- Margaret Rankin *Vancouver, BC*
- Mary Lynn Wittenberg *Vancouver, BC*
- Naomi Julia Dyer *Vancouver, BC*
- Robert Marsland Rankin *Vancouver, BC*
- Roslyn Janine Roberts *Winnipeg, MB*
- Sara Lyn Pfaff *Tappen, ND*
- Susan Elaine Johnson *Winnipeg, MB*
- Vorna Butler *Victoria, BC*



SW
2014

Snorri West 2014

- Anna Guðrún Ragnarsdóttir *Reykjavík*
- Hilmar Páll Hannesson *Reykjavík*
- Kristján Sævald Pétursson *Reykjavík*
- Signý Æsa Káradóttir *Reykjavík*

Snorri 2015

- Alexander Elias Williams *Lakewood, CO • Selfoss/Grund, Eyjafjörður*
- Audrey Frances Findlay *Toronto, ON • Blönduós/Stekkjardalur, Blönduós*
- Curtis A. Grisdale *Calgary, AB • Blönduós/Sveinsstaðir, Blönduós*
- Danielle Marie Christianson *Spanish Fork, UT • Vestmannaeyjar*
- Erika Rae Drake *Calgary, AB • Akureyri/Hafnarfjörður*
- Eva Jean Gudmundsson *Fredericksburg, VA • Einarstaðir, Húsavík*
- Frances Nelles Morin *North Vancouver, BC • Smyrlabjörg/Höfn í Hornafirði*
- Genevieve Denise Borgia Delaquis *Victoria, BC • Sauðárkrókur/Bústaðir, Varmahlíð*
- Heather Lynn McCreedy *Calgary, AB • Mosfellsbær/Reykjavík*
- Jon Halldor Solmundson *Gimli, MB • Akureyri*
- Kelsey Jonsson *Seattle, WA • Njarðvík/Hveragerði/Hraun, Ölfusi*
- Lauren Brooke Hanson *Winnipeg, MB • Ísafjörður/Reykjavík*
- Maxwell Jeffery Thomas *Winnipeg, MB • Fellabær/Egilsstaðir*
- Natalya Jensen *De Pere, WI • Seglbúðir, Kirkjubæjarklaustur*
- Samantha Dawn Garnett Eyford *St. Albert, AB • Hallandi I, Akureyri*
- Shannon Nicole Wright *Calgary, AB • Heiðarbær, Selfoss*



2015

Snorri Participants

Snorri Plus 2015

Alicia M. Bjornson *Alloway, NJ*
Brian Thomas Borgford *Calgary, AB*
Collette Caron *Creston, BC*
Donna Faye Toro *Escondido, CA*
Donna Hammerlindl-Wollis *St. Albert, AB*
Dorothy Lorraine Ilnicki *Edmonton, AB*
Eric Anton Verster *Vancouver, BC*
George Duane Bjarnason *Lake Country, BC*
Hugh Wollis *St. Albert, AB*
Judith Ann Roe *Neepawa, MB*
Linda Bjarnason *Lake Country, BC*
Mary M. Lange *Sequim, WA*
Nancy Stephenson *West Vancouver, BC*
Orma Mary Baker *Penticton, BC*
Rochelle Dawn Bos *Calgary, AB*

Snorri West 2015

Anna Lís Benediktsdóttir *Reykjavík*
Guðmundur Ingi Halldórsson *Reykjavík*
María Guðnadóttir *Akureyri*
Valgerður Ingólfssdóttir *Reykjavík*

Snorri Alumni Internship 2015

Morgan Ann Czaja *Hillsborough, NJ*
Natalie Guttormsson *Peterborough, ON*

Snorri 2016

Alyssa Dawn Cartwright *Victoria, BC • Akureyri*
Anders William Gudmundsson *Burlington, ON • Brekkukot, Borgarnes*
Christopher Samuel Cote *Lethbridge, AB • Dalsel, Hvalsövellur*
Gabrielle Johnson *Toronto, ON • Borgarnes*
James Dillon Callahan Johnson *Canton, GA • Reyðarfjörður*
Jennifer Jean Graham *Edmonton, AB • Egilsstaðir*
Justin Douglas Gailey *Port Angeles, WA • Garðabær/Árgil, Selfoss*
Katharine Alexandra Lombardo *Mansfield, TX • Stykkishólmur*
Kimberly J. Miller *Edmonton, AB • Selfoss*
Laura Jayne Halliday *Toronto, ON • Borgarnes*
Matthew Magnus McCurdy *London, ON • Tungulækur, Borgarnes*
Rebecca Rae Hayman *Kelowna, BC • Akureyri*
Sean Frederick Wurgler *Brooklyn Center, MN • Löngumýri, Skagafjörður*
Thomas Arnason McNeil *Montréal, QC • Tjörn, Svarfarðardalur*
Veronica Taylor Sigurdson *Ottawa, ON • Akureyri*
Zoë Lexis Gellert *Red Deer, AB • Reykjavík*

Snorri Plus 2016

Alfreda Duffy *Calgary, AB*
Constance DeLeenheer *Vernon, BC*
Coreena Muise *Calgary, AB*
Della Magnusson *Saskatoon, SK*
Diane Nelles *North Vancouver, BC*
Dudley DeLeenheer *Vernon, BC*
Garth Lane *St. Albert, AB*
James Morin *North Vancouver, BC*
Karen Erickson *Winnipeg, MB*
Larry Erickson *Winnipeg, MB*
Leslie Kristjanson Browne *Windsor, ON*
Lora Kristine Olafson *Arborg, MB*
Nancy Doyle *Fort Nelson, BC*
Pamala Briske *Jandens, SK*
Patricia Kristjana Odegard *Winnipeg, MB*





Reva Muise *Calgary, AB*
 Samuel Burgess *Victoria, BC*
 Sara Erickson *Tyndall, MB*
 Thomas Duffy *Calgary, AB*
 Valerie Burgess *Victoria, BC*

Snorri West 2016

Gunnlaug Birta Þorgrímsdóttir *Búðardalur*
 Sesselja Ólafsdóttir *Akureyri*
 Tómas Helgi Tómasson *Reykjavík*
 Vala Margrét Jóhannsdóttir *Keflavík*

Snorri Alumni Internship 2016

Erika Rae Drake *Calgary, AB*
 Mallory Swanson *Moorhead, MN*

Snorri 2017

Aidan Edward Elman Alto Guttormson *Winnipeg, MB • Egilsstaðir*
 Alexandra Danielle Higgins *Saratoga Springs, NY • Akurgerði, Ölfus*
 Breanne Christie Bergvinson *West Kelowna, BC • Reykjavík*
 Caitlin Leila Oleson *Ottawa, ON • Dalvík*
 Cassidy Quinn Newfield *Red Deer, AB • Reykjavík/Seltjarnarnes*
 Erika Sigurlin Thorsteinson *Winnipeg, MB • Dalvík/Reykjavík*
 John Anthony Forrest Woolaver *Halifax, NS • Akureyri*
 Jonina Tess Hallgrimson *Winnipeg, MB • Grundarfjörður*
 Lauren Courtney McSkimming *Toronto, ON • Akureyri*
 Marni Jonina Russell *Edmonton, AB • Akureyri*
 Nicole Leigh Baker *Calgary, AB • Kópavogur/Seyðisfjörður*
 Nuka Catherine Pangon Olsen-Hakongak *Cambridge Bay, NU • Borgarnes*
 Quinn Nicole Pallister *Winnipeg, MB • Akureyri/Fjöll, Kelduhverfi*
 Sophie Kisa Orydzuk Olsen *Edmonton, AB • Borgarnes*

Snorri Plus 2017

Alexis Sigfusson *Lundar, MB*
 Ashley Sigfusson *Lundar, MB*
 Blake Sigfusson *Lundar, MB*
 Brian Sigfusson *Lundar, MB*
 Hope Sigfusson *Lundar, MB*
 Jean Marie Isfeld Fox *St. Paul, MN*
 Laurie Gudmundson *Lundar, MB*
 Lonnie Adkins *Great Falls, MT*
 Margaret Bryant *Nanaimo, BC*
 Michael Johnson *Lundar, MB*
 Patricia Brennecke *Mahtomedi, MN*
 Randy Gudmundson *Lundar, MB*
 Rhonda Adkins *Great Falls, MT*
 Tara Truemner *Regina, SK*
 Tenneile Sigfusson *Lundar, MB*

Snorri West 2017

Egill Sveinbjörnsson *Reykjavík*
 Guðmundur Ragnar Frímánn *Reykjavík*
 Lína Dóra Hannesdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Marta María Halldórsdóttir *Reykjavík*
 Sandra Björg Ernudóttir *Reykjavík*

Snorri Alumni Internship 2017

Donna Faye Toro *Escondido, CA*
 Matthew Magnus McCurdy *London, ON*

Snorri Participants

Snorri 2018

Amber Camille Drake *Lahaina, HI • Reykjavík/Kópavogur*
Arden Burtnik *Edmonton, AB • Tungulækur, Borgarnes*
Benjamin Lawrence Sigurdson Boxall *Winnipeg, MB • Ásgarður, Borgarfjörður*
Bridget Kathleen Behrens *Woodbury, MN • Akureyri*
Danielle Elizabet Marwick *Victoria, BC • Sauðárkrókur*
David Bruce Jackson Snow *Caledon, ON • Sílastaðir, Eyjafjörður*
Erik James Marc Sherwin *Calgary, AB • Hundastapi, Borgarfjörður*
Jordan Dean Baldwin *London, ON • Bakki, Dalvík*
Kari Bjorge Swanson *Sioux City, IA • Refsstaður II, Vopnafjörður*
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Snorri West 2018

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Dagrún Malmquist Jónsdóttir *Garðabær*
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SNORRI WEST

Langar þig að...
Upplifa skemmtilegasta sumar lífs þíns?
Fræðast um sögu Vesturfara og ferðast
um slóðir þeirra?
Kynnast ólíkri menningu?
Kynnast ættingjum í Vesturheimi?
Njóta stórbrotinnar náttúrufegurðar
Norður-Ameríku?
Synda, fara í fjallgöngur eða kayakferðir,
taka þátt í Íslendingahátíðum?
Eignast nýja vini fyrir lífstíð?

Snorri West er fjögurra vikna ferðalag
í Norður-Ameríku fyrir ungt fólk
á aldrinum 18-28 ára.

Umsóknarfrestur í febrúar ár hvert.



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