



Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE

Twenty-ninth Annual
Ceremony
at the
Jón Sigurdsson Statue
Manitoba Legislative Grounds
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Friday, June 17th, 2011

In Celebration of
The First Jón Sigurdsson Day
in Manitoba,
The Sixty-Seventh Anniversary
of
Iceland's Independence Day
and the
200th Anniversary of the Birth of
Jón Sigurðsson

Agenda for Wreath Laying Ceremony - Jón Sigurdsson Statue
Legislative Grounds - June 17, 2011

- 6:30 pm: The Bústaðakirkjukór choir performs at the steps of the Legislative Building
- 6:45 pm: Procession to the Jón Sigurdsson Statue
- Anthems: O Canada Ó Guð Vars Lands
- Welcome: Ingrid Slobodian
President, Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE
- Greetings: Ingrid Slobodian
Introduction and greetings from dignitaries
- Guest Speaker: Ambassador Svavar Gestsson
Introduction by Consul General of Iceland,
Atli Ásmundsson
- Wreath laying: Introduction of the Fjallkona 2011
Kathi Thorarinson Neal, President
Icelandic Festival of Manitoba
- Message: Fjallkona Vi Bjarnason Hilton
- Poem: "Winnipeg Jón" by David Gislason
Read by Thor Eyolfson

Ambassador Svavar Gestsson

Ambassador Svavar Gestsson and his wife Guðrún Ágústsdóttir are our guests of honour today. Ambassador Gestsson served as Consul General for Iceland in Manitoba from 1999 to 2001 opening up Iceland's first diplomatic office in Canada. He also oversaw and spearheaded Iceland's extensive Millennium Events Program in Canada consisting of several hundred events all over the country.

Following his tenure in Manitoba, Ambassador Gestsson became Iceland's Ambassador to Sweden and later Denmark also responsible for Tunisia, Turkey, Israel, Romania, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania as well as being a Special Envoy to the African Union. Before coming to Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Gestsson had an illustrious career as a parliamentarian, a federal minister and a newspaper editor.

Ambassador Gestsson is now retired and devotes much of his time to writing. He is now a member of the board of The Icelandic National League of Iceland.

Dignitaries: His Honour, The Honourable Philip S. Lee, C.M., O.M.
and Her Honour Anita Lee
The Honourable Greg Selinger, Premier of Manitoba
Consul General of Iceland, Atli Ásmundsson
and Prúður Helgadóttir
Councillor Grant Nordman, City of Winnipeg
Ambassador Svavar Gestsson and Guðrún Ágústsdóttir

Fjallkona 2011 Vi Bjarnason Hilton

Attendants: Kiera Hilton and Rachelle Bourget
Escort: Tim Arnason

Jón Sigurðsson Statue

Jón Sigurðsson is considered the key individual in the fight for Icelandic autonomy from Danish rule and he was the first president of the modern day Icelandic Althing. In 1910, Icelanders began discussing erecting a statue of Jón Sigurðsson to commemorate the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Many Icelanders in North America wanted to be a part of this Icelandic initiative. It was decided by North American Icelanders to undertake a fundraising project with the goal of raising 10,000 krónur. This project was a great success with 10,415 krónur raised. (approximately \$2,800.00) This money was donated by 6,000 individuals from various Icelandic settlements in North America.

The money was received with gratitude in Iceland and the Icelanders decided to have two statues made and to send one as a gift to the Icelanders in North America.

The statue arrived in Winnipeg in 1912. After much discussion, in 1921, the statue was erected on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislative Building where it stands today. The statue of Jón Sigurðsson was the first statue to be erected on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislative Building. It is located east of the building and faces east toward Iceland.



Representatives of Icelandic Organizations in Manitoba

Mrs. Ingrid Slobodian, President, Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE

Mr. Ron Johnson, President, Icelandic Canadian Frón

Mr. Tim Samson, President, Canada Iceland Foundation

Dr. Birna Bjarnadóttir, Chair of Icelandic Studies,
University of Manitoba

Ms. Sigrid Johnson, Head Librarian, Icelandic Collection, U of M

Mrs. Gail Einarson-McCleery, President,
Icelandic National League of North America

Dr. Richard Sigurdson, Dean of Arts, University of Manitoba

Mr. Grant Stefanson, President, Lögberg-Heimskringla

Mr. William D. Valgardson, Editor, Lögberg-Heimskringla

Mrs. Lorna Tergesen, Managing Editor,
The Icelandic Connection Magazine

Mrs. Kathi Thorarinson Neal, President, Icelandic Festival of Manitoba

Mrs. Tammy Axelsson, Director, New Iceland Heritage Museum

Mr. Doug Olafson, President, Betel Home Foundation

Mr. Ernest Stefanson, President, Betel Heritage Foundation

Mrs. Selma Parsons, President, Scandinavian Cultural Centre, Winnipeg

Ms. Linda Sigurdson Colette, Lestrarfélagið Gleym-mér-ei

Mr. Brad Hirst, Icelandic Language Camp

Mrs. Lorna Tergesen, President, Gimli Icelandic Canadian Society

Ms. Maria Bear, President, Bruin Chapter, Selkirk

Mr. Bob Isleifson, President, Falkinn, Brandon

Mr. David Gíslason, President, Esjan, Arborg

Mrs. Ellen Steinthorson, President, Lundar Chapter INL

Mr. Harley Jonasson, President, Icelandic River Heritage Sites

Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE

The Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE is a chapter of IODE Canada, a women's charitable organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals through education support, community service and citizenship programs.

Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE will celebrate 100 years of service in 2016. Founded by Gudrun Skaptason, the first years were spent supporting our service men and women overseas and when they returned home. Today, the Chapter's main project is the Scholarship Program with 12-15 scholarships presented annually.

A wreath laying ceremony to commemorate Iceland's Day of Independence on June 17 was reinstated in 1982 by the Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE and has since been an annual event in partnership with the INL Chapter Icelandic Canadian Frón, the Consul General of Iceland, Mr. Atli Ásmundsson and Neil Bardal Funeral Centre.

Icelandic Canadian Frón

The Icelandic Canadian Frón is the Winnipeg Chapter of the Icelandic National League of North America. Icelandic Canadian Frón endeavours to promote and to preserve a healthy, vibrant Icelandic culture and heritage within Canadian society.

Throughout the year our club has several events that enrich our common heritage including: language classes; Thorablót; Kvennahlaup; Folklorama; and June 17, Iceland's Independence Day. We share the Scandinavian Centre with the Nordic organizations and many of our events are held in partnership with other Icelandic and Scandinavian groups. We are pleased to once again be partnering with the Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IODE, the Consul General of Iceland, Mr. Atli Ásmundsson and Neil Bardal Funeral Centre to commemorate Iceland's Independence Day.

Neil Bardal Funeral Centre

For many years, Neil Bardal played an integral role in the planning and organization of the June 17th celebration in Winnipeg. We are pleased that Eirík Bardal has joined the organizing committee for this annual event.

JÓN SIGURDSSON

1811 - 1879

The settling of Iceland began in 874 A.D. In 930, the Commonwealth or Republic of Iceland was founded. This first Commonwealth period lasted well over 300 years. In 1262 Iceland came under the Norwegian King, and by 1380 Iceland, together with Norway, came under the Danish Crown.

In 1833, Jón Sigurdsson sailed to Denmark intending to further his studies. However, he began teaching to make a living, and also worked in the archives of the library in Copenhagen. There he found the evidence he needed that, indeed, there was no reason why Iceland should remain under Danish rule.

In the 1830's, because changes had been made in the Danish political parties, two Icelanders were allowed a place in a certain level of the legislature. Jón Sigurdsson immediately demanded the Althing be reestablished.

In 1844, when the Althing was reestablished, Jón Sigurdsson was elected as president of the Icelandic parliament. He continued as president for the remainder of his life. At the Althing Jón pursued the changes he had been recommending for Iceland in his yearly magazine, Ný Felagsrit - eg. removal of the Danish merchant monopoly; construction of hospitals; establishment of schools to train tradesmen, farmers, doctors, ministers and lawyers. He had also advocated elementary schools in which teaching would be in the Icelandic language. A visionary statesman in the annals of the history of Iceland, most of the reforms he had advocated occurred after his death.

He continued to work in Denmark for Iceland's independence, returning to Iceland for the Althing sessions. He died in 1879, but he paved the way for the future freedom of Iceland. A new and better constitution became a reality in 1874; home rule occurred in 1904; independence was established by an 'Act of Union' in 1918; and Iceland became an autonomous republic once more in 1944.

Sponsored by:

Jón Sigurdsson Chapter IOE
Icelandic Canadian Frón Chapter, INL
Consulate General of Iceland,
Mr. Atli Asmundsson
Neil Bardal Funeral Centre