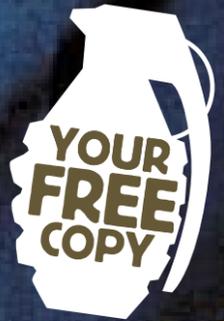


the REYKJAVÍK
GRAPEVINE



Iceland has no army.
But Icelanders are carrying arms in Afghanistan.

DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION

DO WE LIKE PAEDOPHILES
more than pot-smokers?

A BEGINNERS' GUIDE
to whaling

IS THERE LIFE
after Davíð?

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albums, books and films
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the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

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LETTERS

Complaints, criticism, suggestions, praise, money in new, unmarked bills, anything at all: Contact letters@grapevine.is or send your mail to: The Reykjavik Grapevine, Hafnarstræti 15, 101 Reykjavik

Whilst chatting with a friend on the corner of Austurstræti and Pósthússtræti the other day I was approached by a group of tourists - how did I know they were tourists? The umbrellas and German accent were a giveaway - one of the tourists proceeded to ask me if I could direct them to downtown Reykjavik. My immediate reaction was either he is taking the piss or he has not done his homework - I opted for the latter and told him apologetically that look no further, this is it - even though I did not mention the war he gave me that kind of very funny ha ha lost dog look and walked away looking for a second opinion.
GW.

What war? The war in Iraq? Germans are pacifists these days. Losing a war does that to you. Winning one makes you want more, which is perhaps why the US has been almost constantly involved in wars since 1945.

I like your magazine. I'd like it much more if it didn't attack my typographic and grammatical sensibilities with alarming frequency. I hope you can improve your publication by absorbing and applying the following information.

This is an apostrophe: '
 This is not an apostrophe: ´
 On an Icelandic keyboard, an apostrophe may be input by pressing the key that, when pressed in conjunction with the shift key, produces a question mark.

The apostrophe is used in place of one or more other characters that have been removed for brevity. The neuter singular possessive pronoun, "its", is only three letters to begin with; it hasn't been shortened and doesn't need an apostrophe.

Example: It's said that a leopard cannot change its spots.

Dashes are often misused, but that doesn't mean you have to. See <http://graphicdesign.about.com/od/typesetting/a/usingdashes.htm>

The use of single and double quotes around words, phrases, and quotations should be consistent.

Currently, all of these things are done correctly by some authors some of the time. An editor's job includes making sure these things are consistently correct throughout each issue.

Happy editing!

I always have happy editing. In fact, I'm a very happy editor. I'll happily give this an overhaul as soon as this paper is out.

Hi
 Whilst I accept that it is the job and prerogative of the editor and co-editor to edit, I feel that the severe editing, re-writing, re-titling and consequent overall loss of meaning of my article without my consent and being informed went a bit far. It would seem to be rather more than pure coincidence that the parts cut, namely, Morgunblaðið, Björk, 66 North, Cintamani, Þrír Frakkar, Magnús Magnússon, are about advertisers and other articles in the newspaper. If as your email of 26 July, in which you say, "...I want you to be a columnist independent of the paper..." is to mean anything, then the editing, re-writing and re-titling without my knowledge or consent, seems inappropriate. If you had discussed the changes with me, then I would have withdrawn the article, as in the format that it now appears is most unsatisfactory to me. Maybe you would like to consider an apology in the next issue? I have drafted one for your convenience.

An apology
 The article in Issue #7 of Grapevine contained an article entitled 'Hassan's World'. Grapevine would like to point out that this article was severely edited, re-worded and re-titled by Grapevine staff without the author's knowledge or consent. Hassan has pointed out that this

seriously affected the article's objective and overall loss of meaning. He has made it clear that he is unhappy with the changes made and if he had been made aware of the changes, he would have preferred the article not to be published. Grapevine acknowledges Hassan's comments and unreservedly apologises.

Regards
Hassan

There you go.

Good morning,
 I've just come back to Italy after a very beautiful trip around Iceland. During my stay on the island, by chance, I came to read your article dated 19th August about a fact of racism involving some "Southern European men". Well, after having read all the letter your final commentary left me really amazed. How can you generalize in that way affirming that Italians are "the root of racism"?? How can you confuse an unpolite behaviour of some stupid guys with the word racism? Don't you think that sentences like that are based only on prejudices and for sure aren't very polite towards a whole European country like Italy? I'm the first to apologize if a small part of Italians had an unpolite behaviour, but if you generalize like that, I'm sorry, but I will start to believe that the real racists are you. By the way, Italy isn't the only southern European country. The men subject of the article could have been Spanish, Greek, southern French.... Anyway I suggest you to come down to visit Southern Europe, you will notice that the people are much more friendly and less racist compared to many Northern countries.
 Best regards from Rome
 Carlo Magistrelli

Jeez... Somebody wrote in saying that the root cause of racism was oogling Southern Europeans in hot tubs. I did the only sensible thing and made fun of this suggestion. Apparently, not everyone got it.

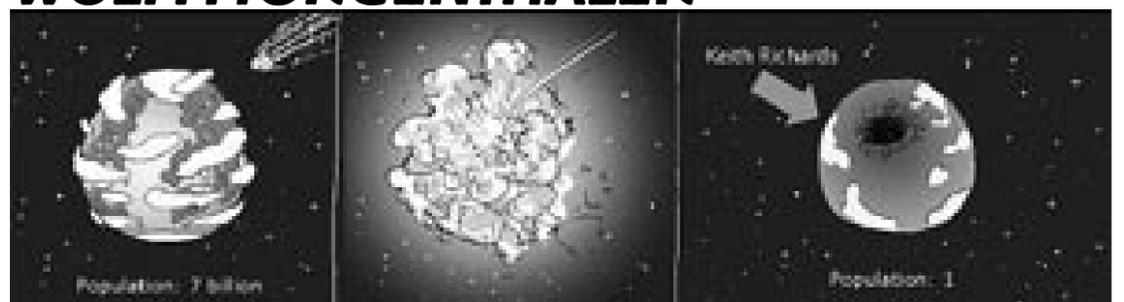
First of all I would like to thank u, for having an English newspaper, for American people like us, I would like to say and hopefully u will print this out. Here goes, Iceland is becoming to be one of the worlds best tourist attractions, and I think that Icelanders, especially kids, should be taught how to be polite with the foreigners, especially Asian people, yah they all look funny with there chinky eyes, but they are not stupid, nor poor, some Asian people that come here are very rich, and dignified. I see teenagers mocking them and making fun of them, and even mature people. I know that this is your country, but you guys should learn to accept other nations and colors. U can teach people how to be nice and not rude. I myself experience it. Never in my life was I discriminated against in America. I take the bus here and everybody looks at me like I am from a different planet. Its funny to you, as you read it but not for me. Yah I am Asian looking but born and raised in America...after all without the tourists the Icelandic economy would be low...why am I here? Because I fell in love. What beauty Iceland has...I would like to die here if I can...

Remember, children, be nice and not rude to one another.

Sirs:
 I was amazed how many locals have dark hair and eyes (quite unlike Copenhagen) until the excellent Perlan Museum indicated that of the original settlers over 50% of women and 20% of men were of Celtic descent. The Norse in the 9th Century established cities along coastlines and since Ireland was densely populated it may have been easy to bring these people for a new adventure. A book I browsed through mentioned Celtic blood might be dominant according to blood samples.
 Donald
 PS. No need to give my name

The Vikings actually founded Dublin, which may explain why the Irish are more handsome than the English. And the Irish blood here might explain why the Icelandic are more sarcastic than Norwegians. Then again, it may just be the weather.

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COUNTRY OF CONSTANT SORROW

by Valur Gunnarsson, editor

History is constantly being rewritten. The Islamic fundamentalists of Afghanistan are our enemies. Hence, they have always been our enemies. Russia is our friend in the struggle against Islamic terrorists. It has always been our friend. But doesn't it sometimes seem as if you're haunted by visions of a different past?

Didn't the mujaheddin once appear on our screens along with the West's finest, Rambo and James Bond, liberating the freedom loving Afghans from the evil Russians? Just as the Berlin blockade brought us a change in bad guys in 1948, when the tyrannical Russians cut off the freedom loving Germans of Berlin, a city the Americans and Russians had taken turns reducing to rubble three years prior.

Afghanistan has always had a habit of stopping history dead in its tracks. Alexander, Timur Lenk, the Persians and the Moghuls all passed through, and failed to gain a permanent foothold due to fierce resistance. Even the mighty British Empire stopped its expansion at the borders of Afghanistan, their disastrous retreat through the Khyber pass in 1842 still being a synonym for suffering and defeat in the English mind. Both World Wars passed Afghanistan by. It wasn't until the Cold War that history finally caught up with the country. In 1978, the communist party of Afghanistan came to power in a coup. This led to the United States sponsoring anti-communist forces, and, as the inept regime tottered, the Soviet Union took matters into

its own hands and sent in the Red Army in December 1979. Ever since, the flow of world history has seemed to emanate from this mountainous backwater. With the Russian invasion, Afghanistan became a highway for every intriguing secret service in the world. The CIA, MI6, Pakistani ISI, Chinese military intelligence, the Saudis, the Egyptians, the French; all poured in arms and money, and Muslim international brigades were formed of volunteers to fight the Soviets. Even the Israelis sent in Russian arms captured from the Arabs in the 1973 war to support Islam, a decision it would come to regret when Palestinian volunteer veterans returned home to form Hamas.

Men like Osama bin Laden answered the call to Jihad in their thousands. Mercenaries, smugglers, religious fanatics; all gathered upon this mountain country, from which not only fundamentalism but also hard drugs were soon to spread throughout the world. The Islamic crusade was then sponsored by the United States to the tune of a billion dollars a year. The Soviets tried to play one tribe of against the other, but eventually had to withdraw in 1989 after heavy losses, the war

contributing in no small way to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Zia Al-Haq, the Pakistani dictator who has spearheaded the anti-Soviet effort, was at war's end killed in a mysterious plane crash, and Afghanistan seemed that it would once again disappear from the mainstream of history. It was abruptly abandoned by the powers who had taken such a keen interest in it during the anti-Soviet war, and left to rot. The arms that had been pouring into the country for ten years were now put to use in the civil war that followed the Russian withdrawal.

In an attempt to secure its Northern Border, Pakistan sponsored and trained the Taliban movement which took over the country in 1994, with reluctant US approval. Apart from occasional reports of violations of women's rights, no one knew or cared very much what was going on in Afghanistan. This all changed on the 11th of September 2001. Suddenly all eyes were on the country again as the attacks were blamed on America's former ally Osama, currently residing in Afghanistan. The US mounted yet another invasion. This time, there was no other superpower to supply

the Afghans, so resistance quickly collapsed. As always, thousands of innocent civilians were killed. But once the smoke cleared, a new situation presented itself. The international community could now make right what it had done wrong a decade before, and the long, hard task of reconstruction could begin. Or so it seemed. Again, the opportunity was left unused. Instead of concentrating on reconstruction, an ill thought out invasion of Iraq was instead mounted, and again Afghanistan was forgotten. Today, the US sponsored Prime Minister Karzai controls little outside the capital of Kabul, and a NATO force guards the capital's international airport. This force, as it happens, is led by an Icelander, Hallgrímur Sigurðsson. Documentary maker Kristinn Hrafnsson went over there, and reported back on what is really going on in the turf of Commander Halli. In this issue of Grapevine, we get an exclusive report on the daily life of the commander's men.

We hope you enjoy this last Grapevine of the summer, which also happens to be the first Grapevine of the winter. See you again in October.

Who's in charge of foreign affairs?

by Robert Jackson, co-editor

Having talked to the opposition regarding the governments position on Afghanistan, we tried to get the governments' point of view. This proved more difficult than expected. The minister of Foreign Affairs, soon to be Prime Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson, is away from his office and was therefore unable to give an interview regarding government policy. An approach was made to Prime minister Davíð Oddsson, but turned down on the grounds that he was away on sick leave. While Grapevine spent time being bounced from one department to another it seemed not an unreasonable question to find out who was in fact responsible for Foreign affairs when the minister is on vacation and the Prime Minister is on sick leave. At first the answer was "We don't know" and then after a number of

phone calls it turns out that the man of charge of Iceland's hot line to the President of the United States is the Minister of Agriculture, Guðni Ágústsson. Now, if George Bush were to ring up in a crisis the answer he would get is a resounding "Ha?", for sadly the Minister of Agriculture does not speak English, very well. Perhaps this would put him on equal footing with the President. Their conversation might sound something like this:

GWB on the hotline to the Minister of Agriculture. Sir, I would like to talk to you about the war on Teur'ism.

Guðni. Awoken from his sleep. Ha? Pause for a minute...Ha? Teur'ism?... Já,...já I'm responsible for Túrism. What problem do you

have with Túrists?

GWB to himself. (Jeez where's this guy been for the last three years?) Teurrists... Teurrists, I said. Foreign minister, I just thought I'd let you know that we'll be sending teurrist suspects to our facility at Keflavík for questioning. We need your help on this one. Human rights activists are all over our facilities in Iraq these days.

Guðni: to himself. (Seems a strange time to do a consumer survey of visitors to the Airport but he seems to know what he wants) Já já , frábært. You ask as many questions of as many tourists as you like. Only, please remind them of the Blue Lagoon. Is there anything else I can help you with, Mr. President?

GWB. (Sensing an opportunity) We were thinking about locating a few newcleur silos over you way. Do you any problem with that?

Guðni. Pauses for even longer (new... clear...silos?) his mind is racing and he thinks hard to himself. (he must know we don't produce much wheat...oh well...) Yes Mr President, I'm sure that will not be a problem. Maybe one or two at first though.

GWB. Trying hard not to show his elation. I have to say Minister that I 'preciate your attitude...I'll let you know the next time we need your help in liberating a country.

Guðni: Góða Nótt, Mr President.

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16 HOTELS
AROUND ICELAND

ARE WE IN NORTH KOREA?



Star.is is a website paid for by the government. It is supposed to be a news and information website and is run by the Ministry of Industry, the Icelandic National Power Company and others. STAR has become an official preparation committee for the dam and aluminium smelter in the east of Iceland. Let's look at some examples of the news from this website:

by Andri Snær Magnason

"The opponents of the Kárahnjúkar dam use lies and untruths." Below this heading is an open letter which is supposed to "bring to attention the lying crap which is being spun against the dam at Kárahnjúkar." In the letter the natural scientist Guðmundur Pálsson is accused of "lying" when he points out the connection between the Kárahnjúkar dam and the possible damming of Jökulsá á Fjöllum. His "lies" are said "to be similar to the lies of Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir [member of parliament] used on television when she said that the location of the dam is a volcanically active area." Star.is had earlier written about Guðmundur's course on the vegetation north of Vatnajökull, held at Endurmenntunarsstofnun Háskóla Íslands (Continuing Education of the University of Iceland) using the words: "Endurmenntunarsstofnun HÍ in a propaganda war against

the Kárahnjúkar dam!" With Guðmundur's course the University is said to "have done its share in agitating against the Kárahnjúkar dam". This is a brutal attack from an official source against the freedom of speech, professional credibility and financial income of a scholar. Star is totally disregards the laws on state media which explicitly state that they shall uphold democratic ground rules as well as human rights and freedom of speech and opinions.

It's the same scenario all over. Ómar Ragnarsson, a respected media personality, is said to be in "a holy war against dams and large scale industry" when he recently published a very neutral book showcasing the pros and cons of the Kárahnjúkar dam. Steinunn Sigurðardóttir, a novelist, is said to have "presented a skewed view" on television while María Ellingsen is an international actress who is said to have lied on a local radio station.

The president of INCA (Iceland Natural Conservation Association) is trod upon, his words are said to be "crap and nonsense", headlines declaring "Árni Finnsson still lying and thoroughly at that." It is also stated that "Árni Finnsson, the president of INCA doesn't hesitate to veer far off the truth in his fight against the dam." Friðrik Sófússon, a director of the Icelandic National Power Company, is quoted as saying that INCA is a puppet of foreigners and is working against Icelandic interests. Should directors of state enterprises use such nationalistic verbalisms and tailor "Icelandic interests" to their own?

No one is allowed to defend themselves, but everything connected to the dam and large scale industries is shown in a positive and almost religious light. "I only meet smiling people," says Smári Geirsson, an East Icelander and very pro-dam. While the rangers at Drekafljög flew the Icelandic flag half-mast, "most

Icelanders rejoiced the signing of the contract, the general public of Iceland rejoiced the Alcoa board decision..." he continues. Are we in North Korea? Star.is is only the tip of the iceberg, just a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of euros being spent to deliver "information" to the nation through public relations companies where ex-reporters seem free from the constraining ethics of the press. This propaganda is paid by the state to control the will of the majority and therefore a "democratic verdict."

The obvious questions are: who is writing this anonymous propaganda, how much has it cost the nation and what politicians are responsible for this pathetic development? The president of Alcoa said that there will "always be people who oppose progress." If star.is is the method to drive progress through, then the price is not only Icelandic nature but democracy itself.

"A handful of men imposing their destructive dream...?"

by Anonymous

I am a man. I am one of the handful...well, if you can call a thousand men a handful, which I guess it is, in the grand scheme of things. But am I a bad man?

I am guilty. That much is true. I work at Kárahnjúkar. I chose to come here. I didn't have to. I volunteered to help build the dam so I suppose I am guilty, in my own small way, for whatever it brings. But does that make me a bad man?

I am proud of what I do. I mean I build things...in my own small way. At the end of each day I can show you what I have done. I have created something. A lot of people these days do fancy stuff, working in offices, being busy. I don't know what they do, stuff to do with

business or management or finance. But I know what I do. I can show you what I do. I build tunnels.

I can't tell you if what I build is good or bad. I mean, this is not my country. They aren't my hills that will be stranded as islands. It's not my grass that will be drowned. All I know is that, so to speak, I put one stone on top of another. At the end of each day I have made a little tower of black stones. I have changed my environment...but hopefully there is some benefit for others. Do you know what those little towers of

stones are for? You know, the ones you see on the hill. Are they there to mark out the way for travelers? A welcome beacon for someone lost in the fog? Or are they just some sort of monument? An edifice to some proud man; a man who wanted to make his mark on the world?

I am a man. I know what I want. I am tired. I want to sleep. It was a long day underground. I dream. I want to buy a house in the sun. I want to watch my children run laughing in the garden, while I sit at a table...maybe with an espresso

in one of those fancy metal cups. Perhaps I will even have a new laptop on my table. I want all of that and I want the sky to be blue and the air to be clean. In other words I want a lake, to make clean electricity, to make shiny metal. Just like people before me here, like a traveler on the hill adding a stone to the cairn, like a sheep farmer adding another sod of turf to his house, I want to build a better future.

That is my destructive dream ... but does that make me a bad man?

News in brief

Warning protest

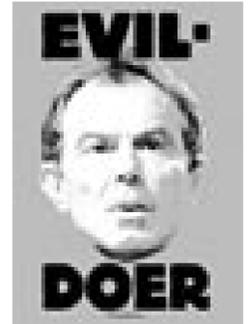
The Environmental group Earth First visited the Icelandic Embassy in London to protest about the Kárahnjúkar dam and the Alcoa plant. "Neither can be considered of benefit to the Icelandic people since they will destroy, or at least damage their most important asset, Nature" said their leader. The group pledged a continued campaign against the scheme.

Anytime Bill, anytime...



Ex-president Bill Clinton made a fleeting visit to the capital. The world's most famous hotdog stand, also Grapevine's staff canteen, played host to Bill. To Maja, the stand clerks disappointment, he only wanted mustard on his dog, rather than a "ein með öllu" But things are looking up for business as a summit between former world leaders Boris Yeltsin and Helmut Kohl is expected to take place there.

Who wears the trousers time...



UK Prime Minister's wife Cherie Blair spoke to a packed house of Icelandic Women to discuss women and the law. Highlights of her keynote speech shown on RUV News focused on house work and domestic matters. "I literally had to force Tony to take a week's paternity leave and I can't remember when I last saw him wash up," she declared to eager reporters.

Coalition of the Willing - part deux



Foreign Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson announced his creation of a coalition of allies to join Iceland's forthcoming invasion of Svalberg. So far both the UK and the US have declined their support. Tensions have been mounting over fishing rights in the area and shuttle diplomacy has not worked. Iceland's forces in Afghanistan have been put on Arctic warfare alert, and a full draft may be unavoidable.

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OUT OF BALANCE:

Sex and Drug Offenses in Iceland

by Paul Fontaine-Nikolov

Iceland's rate of drug intake is low compared to the rest of Europe. Since 2001, only 23 smugglers have been arrested trying to bring drugs into the country. Despite this, Iceland spent 180 million krónur (about 2.5 million USD) in 2002 to fight the influx of controlled substances, with the result being a steady decline in arrests. Being sentenced to pay a fine is rare in a smuggling case; almost all those convicted serve jail time, the maximum sentence being ten years. It's worth mentioning that Icelandic law makes no distinction between one drug or another – sentences are based on the weight of the substance seized.

For this reason, it could be argued that an intrepid drug dealer would come to the conclusion that since he faces the same sentence for a kilo of hash as he does for a kilo of cocaine, he might as well have a go at trying to smuggle in the more profitable (and more deadly) substance. In effect, this kind of sentencing actually encourages drug dealers to bring more dangerous substances into the country. Despite this, due to stiff sentencing and government funding, the drug supply seems to be dwindling.

Are drugs worse than rape?

Compare this to sex crimes in Iceland: reported rapes in Iceland are well ahead of every other Nordic country – between 300 and 400 women visit rape trauma centers in Iceland each year. Yet there are no figures available on how much

money the Icelandic government has spent trying to prevent rape and child sexual abuse. While the sentence for rape in Iceland is one to sixteen years, the Icelandic Penal Code reserves that punishment for rapes of threat or force alone. Rapes of coercion and child sexual abuse carry a sentence of only zero to six years. The vast majority of the time, however, the sentence will be a fine – log onto the Iceland Supreme Court website and one can see fines of a few hundred thousand krónur meted out to people who have been convicted of sexually abusing children.

Drugs, while certainly damaging to both mind and body, are nonetheless bought and sold on a foundation of supply and demand – consent is the essence of the drug trade. There is, of course, no consent involved in

rape or child sexual abuse. There is something very wrong with a legislative and judicial system which punishes more harshly crimes of non-violent consent than it does crimes of violent sexual force. In an effort to try to understand why the system is set up in this way, I talked to the people who fight in the trenches of the legal system: the lawyers.

Adding insult to injury

Herdís Hjálmsdóttir is a prosecutor with years of experience in drugs and sex crimes: "In my experience," she said, "of all the rapes which are even reported to the police, I'd say only about 25% actually make it into court. Of those, only half end in a conviction."

According to Icelandic law, a prosecutor has the right to decide

that a sex offense case won't result in a conviction and can refuse to take it to trial – a right most lawyers in the world have. But what is disturbing is that once a prosecutor has rejected a case, the victim can never file the suit again with another prosecutor. It wasn't until 1999 that a victim even had the right to have a lawyer present as council at all times, such as during police questioning. Even if a prosecutor does take on a case, it's ultimately the police who decide whether or not the prosecution can have access to the accused's criminal file and how much of it the prosecution may see. Conversely, defense has unlimited access to any and all information regarding the victim. Even if after all this a conviction is reached, not only does the accused almost always end up just paying a fine, but insult is added to injury in that victims must pay out of their own pocket for any therapy they might require as a result of their trauma, unless the victim is a child. Yet even in the case of a child, state funded therapy is temporary, and there is no follow-up done to see how the child is adjusting to adulthood.

Mandatory jail time?

"I personally don't think longer sentences are the answer," Herdís adds, "but I would like to see heavier fines. In all fairness, Iceland does have the harshest sentencing for sex offenses in Scandinavia."

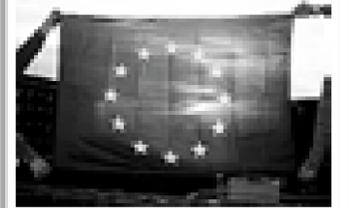
Katrín Anna Guðmundsdóttir, from the Feminist Association of Iceland, expresses similar concerns. "One of the biggest problems for me is the lack of sentences," she says. "When rapists and child molesters walk away with a fine, it sends a message to victims that the courts won't protect them. We need to lengthen sentencing for sex offenses."

This may explain why only ten percent of the victims of rape and sexual abuse who got to Stígamót, a rape crisis centre in Reykjavík, will end up reporting the crime to the police. Other factors, Katrín says, would be the prejudice that many rape victims feel is directed towards them should the case not end in a conviction, as well as the fact that most victims know their attackers personally, which makes it extremely intimidating to take them to court. The state is simply not doing enough. Mandatory jail time for conviction of a sex offense is not unusual in the world, nor is state-funded therapy and follow up for victims, as well as state funded sex offense education. Iceland can and should set an example with such measures not only for the rest of Europe, but for her own people.



News in brief

Icelanders in favour of EU



A recent poll has shown that around 2/3 of the population wish to enter into negotiations regarding membership of the EU. This is roughly the same result as in recent years. The results are not expected to influence government policy, which remains set against membership.

Cheap energy for sale



Major industrial companies Rio Tinto Zinc, BHP Billiton, Russal and governmental favourite Alcoa are all set to visit the country in the autumn to review the opportunity of creating an aluminium smelter in the North of the country. Their reason for being here? Cheap government subsidised electricity and minimal enforcement of environmental regulations.

Trust busters

The minister of industry and commerce has suggested instituting anti-cartel laws in Iceland. Expect a dirtfight with the free press saying this goes against fundamental human rights and the Independence party press insisting the future of the country is at stake. Whatever the outcome, expect a lot of insults and few real changes.

But what to they think of the hot dogs?



The Queen of Sweden are set do begin their visit to Iceland on the 9th. They said in a recent interview that Iceland and Sweden are unified by the Icelandic language. Iceland's own royalty, Dorrit visited the aluminium smelter at Straumsvík to pay homage to its woman in charge Rannveig. But after Clinton, who cares?

Lækjargötu 8, 101 Reykjavík



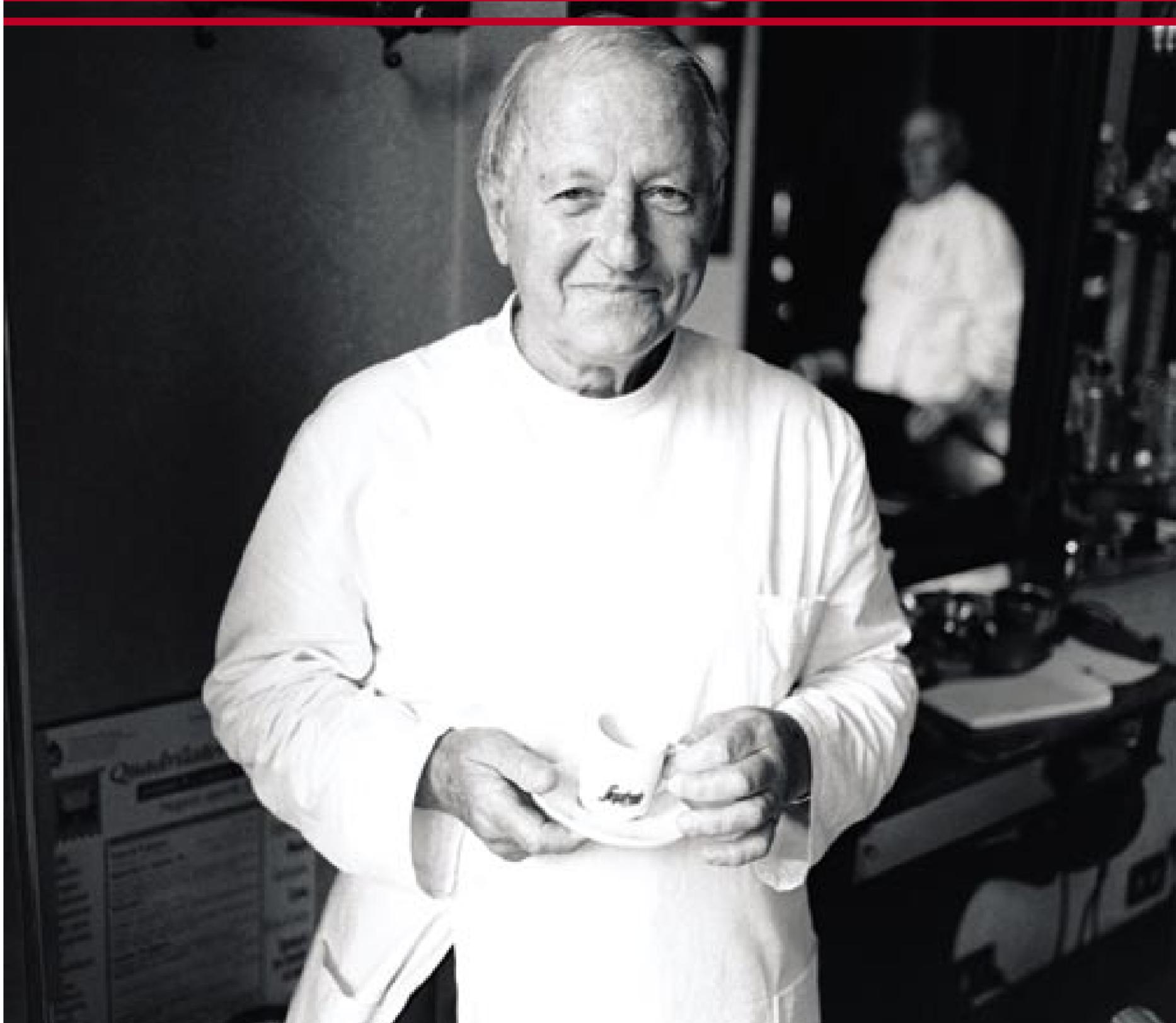
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ICELAND'S FOREIGN WARS



ICELAND VS. IRELAND

9th-10th Centuries

The first battles fought on Icelandic soil were probably those fought by Norwegian Vikings and unarmed Irish monks who had settled here before the Vikings first arrived. The Vikings won a resounding victory. The biggest Icelandic-Irish engagement took place on the Westman Islands, where national hero Ingólfur Árnason massacred his blood brothers slaves. Most of the war was, however, fought on Irish soil, the Irish pitting more defenceless monks against the Viking hordes. The war came to an end in the early 11th Century: according to Icelandic historians, when Icelanders became Christian and gave up attacking monks; according to Irish historians, when the Vikings were defeated by Brian Boru at the battle of Clontarf in 1014.



ICELAND VS. AMERICA

Early 11th Century

Leif Ericsson led an expedition to America around the year 1000, but this did not incur hostilities as he did not come upon any inhabitants. Soon after Þorfinnur led a party west comprising between 65 and 160 persons, and came upon natives whom they immediately took to killing. One of the natives got a hold of a Viking axe and hit a friend with it. When he saw the effect it had, he threw the axe into the sea. Many of the natives were slaughtered, but the Icelanders were not as resilient as the Frenchmen, Englishmen and Spaniards that came later - they got bored of the killing of Native Americans and left.



ICELAND VS. NORWAY

1262

Icelanders were at this time too busy killing each other to have much interest in killing Norwegians. The king of Norway hence became king of Iceland unopposed, and was to remain so until the crown passed to the Queen of Denmark in 1397. It now seems likely that there will be a resumption of hostilities over fishing rights in the Svalbard area.



ICELAND VS. DENMARK

1550-51

Having been subservient to the king for almost 300 years, there was suddenly an uprising in 1550 when the Danes tried to introduce Lutheranism. The Catholic bishop was arrested on orders of the King, but his loyal Icelandic Lutherans decided that 'incarceration' means 'in the ground', and behead him. The bishop's daughter ordered revenge, and the King's local followers, as well as every Dane in the country (about 14 of them), are tracked down and killed. After which the king silently reimposed his own authority, as well as Lutheranism.



ICELAND VS. TURKEY

1627

A somewhat mistitled affair, as the Turks in question were actually from Algeria and Morocco, probably led by a Dutchman. One of the ships attacked Grindavík and captured 15 Icelanders and a few Danes, as well as a Danish merchant ship. Shots were exchanged with the fortress at Bessastaðir and the Turkish ship was stranded, but they made away on the merchant vessel with their prize. Two ships attacked the east fjords, capturing 110 Icelanders and killing nine. They then, along with a third ship, attacked the Westman Islands, burned the houses, killed 40 people and captured another 242. Twenty-seven of these were bought back and returned 10 years later. For centuries afterwards it was legal to kill any Turk upon these shores.



ICELAND VS. JÖRGEN JÖRGENSEN

1809

Jörgen was a Danish adventurer sponsored by an English soap manufacturer to find materials here for soap making. They arrived here onboard a British naval vessel, but the Danish overlord Trampe refused the Englishmen trading rights on the grounds that Denmark was at war with Britain. Trampe was arrested without further ado, hence putting, for the time being, an end to Danish rule in Iceland. Jörgen proclaimed himself Protector of Iceland, gave the country a constitution and promised lower taxes. Another British vessel arrived a hundred days later, and when the captain found out what had happened he deposed Jörgen and took him back to England. Danish rule was quietly reinstated.



ICELAND VS. THE BRITISH EMPIRE

1940-1976

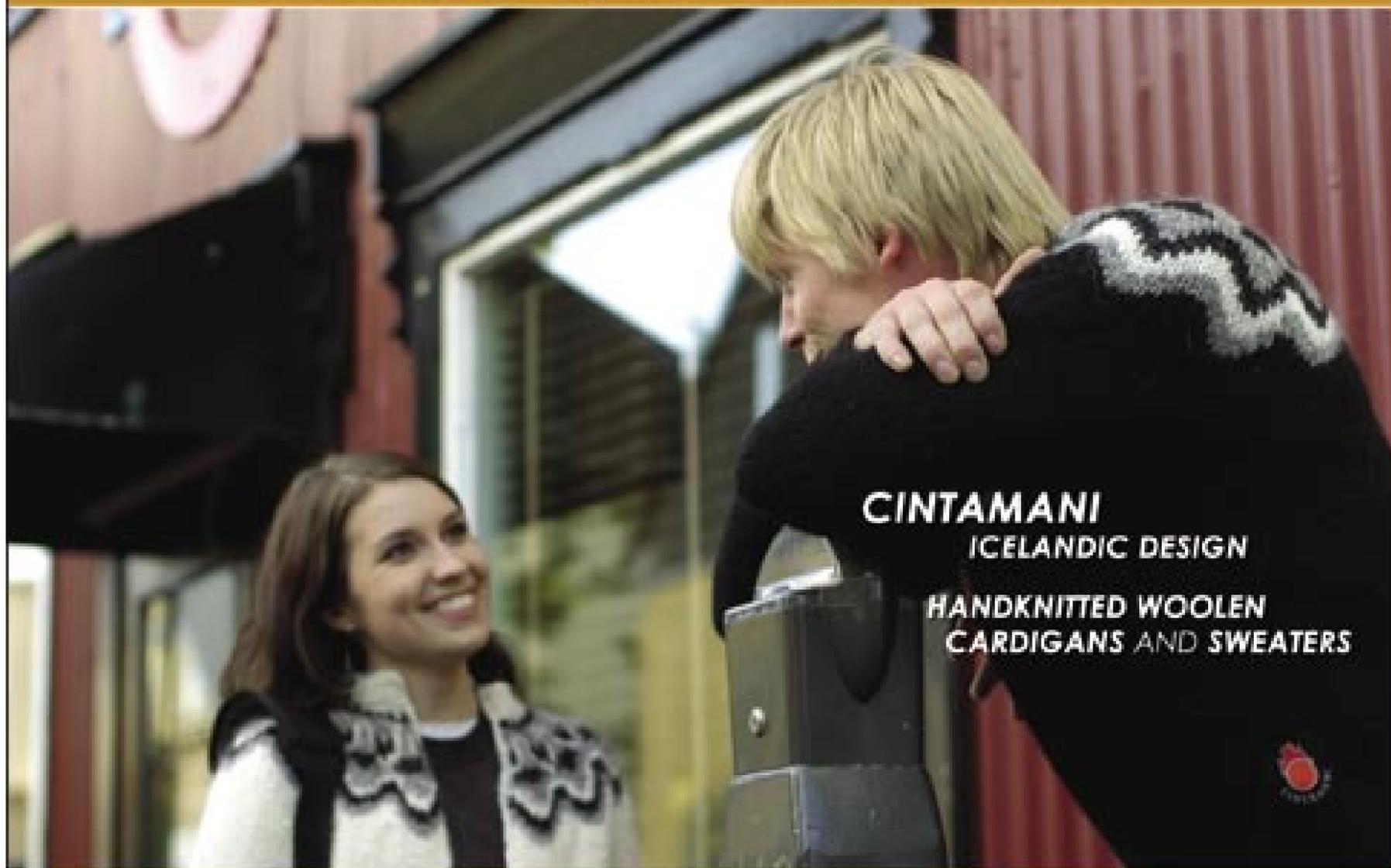
World War II was fought between Iceland and Britain on the morning of May 10th 1940. Britain invaded and occupied the country amidst the protests of a drunk poet by the harbour and the door of the phone company was broken down, but compensation was later paid. A five year Anglo-American occupation followed, with the Americans at the time of writing still in control of Miðnesheiði close to Keflavík. A more bloody Anglo-Icelandic clash took place in the years 1958-1976 over cod, resulting in several British frigates being damaged. The "Cod War" ended with full victory for Iceland.



ICELAND VS. AFGHANISTAN

Following Bush's lead, Davíð Oddsson seemed intent on becoming known as the "War Prime Minister." He promptly declared war on both Iraq and the Taliban in Afghanistan. As Iceland has no army, he sent the first contingent of civilians to Kabul, where they wear uniforms, carry guns and guard an airport.

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by Valur Gunnarsson

WHERE WILL THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY GO FROM HERE?

On September 15th, a new Prime Minister will take office in Iceland. This will not be a result of the new election, however. Then why are we changing Prime Ministers? It seems to be the result of an inside deal. Samfylkingin apparently offered Halldór Ásgrímsson, head of the Progressive Party, the Prime Ministership in a coalition government after the 2003 election.

Halldór had then been Prime Minister in Davíð Oddsson's government for eight years, and seems to have been loath to change partners. Oddsson, who still had the largest number of votes, had to outbid his rivals, as the Progressive Party were the only feasible partners. However, after 12 years of Premiership he could not look as if he had lost the election. So they came up with a compromise solution where Oddsson retained his chair for a year, before allowing Halldór to take his turn. This has led to a general cabinet reshuffling, which seemed to move Oddsson into foreign affairs, and has left minister of the environment Siv Friðleifsdóttir out in the cold, angering the party's female constituents. What any of this has to do with democracy is anyone's guess. But another question is: where does the Independence Party go from here?

Its core has always been big business: Eimskip shipping company and Icelandair, the two companies that controlled access to and from the country being the backbone, a conglomerate known as the Octopus. Now the Octopus has been broken up, and the major financial power players, Björgólfur of Landsbankinn and Jón Ásgeir of Bónus, do not form part of the old ruling elite. Jón Ásgeir does not belong to the Independence Party and seems more disposed towards Samfylkingin. So what does the party do when it no longer represents big business? Two courses of action seem open. It might, as it has done in the past, incorporate the nouveau riche into its ranks. But the animosity between it and them seems too deeply rooted to go away anytime soon, although there's nothing as likely to bring old adversaries together as hope of financial gain.

The other possibility is more interesting. What if the party has lost its ties to the money men forever? What if the new króna billionaires opt for Samfylkingin instead, as they have been doing? The Independence Party was the party that upheld the old family monopolies over the economy. Now that new families have moved in, it may become the very party to go in for breaking monopolies up. They've already tried, and failed, to impose a media law. Who knows what's next? Perhaps they'll set laws in motion that allow us to see who is funding what party. When they had money on their side, they had no interest in that, but now that this has changed, so may their policy. The party might then be forced to become what they always said they were, the party of the people. Wouldn't that be ironic?



Davíð Oddsson: Life imitates satire

Davíð Oddsson started his career as a man of the people. He was the first student at his secondary school to be elected Inspector Scholae, or student representative, who was not the son of a leading politician. At the same time, he also starred in Alfred Jarry's play Ubu Roy, as the corrupt king of the title. The play became a huge success, toured the country and was even shown on national television. When Oddsson graduated from secondary school in 1970, two years after the people who had started there with him, he seemed torn between the two possible directions his life could take, art or politics. For a while he considered studying drama in Japan. As it turned out, he married his high school sweetheart and studied law at the University of Iceland, meanwhile working at the Reykjavík City Theatre office. Along with two other school friends, director Hrafn Gunnlaugsson and writer Þórarinn Eldjárn, he started the popular radio program Útvarp Matthildur, which engaged in frequent political satire. Davíð could well have continued his

career down this route. Instead, he got an even closer look at how Icelandic politics worked as parliament correspondent for Morgunblaðið. It has been surmised that in observing politicians at work, he decided he could do better. He fought his way to become candidate for Mayor for the Independence Party, the son of a single mother from Selfoss often outmanoeuvring far better connections and more established politicians. After a ten year stint as mayor, he finally became Prime Minister. When he took office, the Octopus was at the peak of its powers. Rival conglomerate Sambandið, sometimes called the Squid, had been broken up. It was deemed safe to open up the economy and privatise state industry, assuming that the interests Davíð Oddsson was watchdog for could snap them up at their leisure. But the Octopus was slow and lazy, and the new money men, some of whom had made their fortune abroad, snapped up the newly nationalised industries. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the

media. In the early 90's, all party affiliated newspapers apart from Morgunblaðið, which for a while reigned supreme, had folded. Ten years later, two out of three daily newspapers and virtually all non-state run TV and radio stations had been merged into a single conglomerate, Northern Lights, owned by the owner of a supermarket chain and one of the newly rich. Meanwhile, Davíð Oddsson still reigned supreme in the Independence Party, having surrounded himself with what seemed like a group of yes-men. His last act of office was to push through a media bill that would have restricted media ownership and broken up Northern Lights. This was only halted by the first presidential intervention in the history of the Republic. Hence Davíð Oddsson, who, with a combination of skill and charm, fought his way to the top of Icelandic society, is abandoning the field in the hand of his enemies. Or, as Ubu Roy would say, "Merde!"



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“EXCUSE ME, DID I JUST HEAR YOU SAY WICIOUS?”

by Marcie Hume

It's one of the nation's great mysteries, but not one that Icelanders are keen on investigating. Sometimes they find it insulting, but mostly they just don't get what's so funny.

It's the old switcheroo, the tendency of Icelanders to replace the 'v' in any English word with a 'w' sound. Many argue that the common phonetic mishap doesn't matter one bit. They can't hear the difference, and anyway, no meaning is lost through this small alteration.

I've tried to explain why this substitution is funny, noting that it gives the speaker a very special sound that just happens to be comical to the American ear. But I'm actually not certain what it is; all I know is that for native English speakers, the first time they hear an Icelander make the v-to-w substitution, there is no going back.

I hear it everyday: available, wolleyball, wericose weins, and of course, the old favourite, wery. The latter is incredibly common and has now become part of my English-speaking life. Although there is sometimes a mutual switch in a v-for-a-w way (“How is the veather today?”), the 'w' replacement is by far the favourite.

To try to be fair, foreigners are not without their common and (I guess) uproarious mistakes. Has any foreigner out there ever done the good ol' double-L sound where it was not needed, like in gallabuxur (jeans)? The conversation is brought to its knees.



Actually, no Icelander really cares when things like that happen. It's not that funny to them, which is why it seems even worse to laugh when an Icelander tells you that, for example, it's wery nice to see you.

But there are times when the magic 'w' simply cannot and, for

the sake of humour, should not be ignored. I recently stayed in Borgarnes, opting to spend an evening at Motel Venus. This one was unbeatable as far as bang-for-your-buck action with the w-switch. I mean, we've got the word weiner, and we've got the word penis...how has the

word "wenus" been avoided until now? It's headed for the W Hall of Fame.

Sometimes I just slip the 'w' in for entertainment value. I can't stop. And I've been told time and time again that no one will notice, which makes it the perfect harmless

amusement. If there's another native English speaker around, even better. Sure it sounds faintly wicked and, okay, not that exciting as far as practical jokes go. But foreigners need some way to entertain themselves at parties where everyone is speaking that crazy island language.

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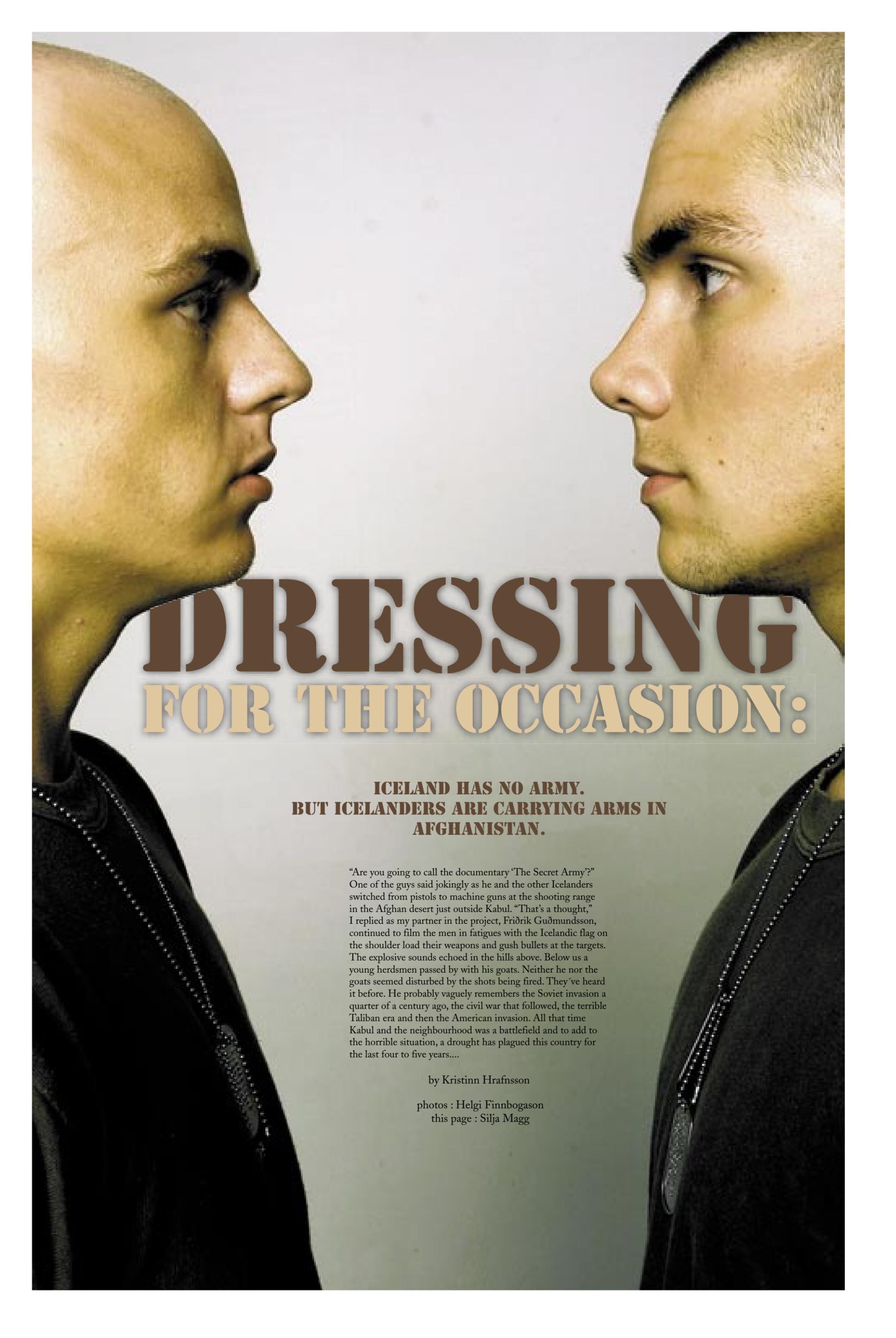


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DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION:

**ICELAND HAS NO ARMY.
BUT ICELANDERS ARE CARRYING ARMS IN
AFGHANISTAN.**

“Are you going to call the documentary ‘The Secret Army?’” One of the guys said jokingly as he and the other Icelanders switched from pistols to machine guns at the shooting range in the Afghan desert just outside Kabul. “That’s a thought,” I replied as my partner in the project, Friðrik Guðmundsson, continued to film the men in fatigues with the Icelandic flag on the shoulder load their weapons and gush bullets at the targets. The explosive sounds echoed in the hills above. Below us a young herdsman passed by with his goats. Neither he nor the goats seemed disturbed by the shots being fired. They’ve heard it before. He probably vaguely remembers the Soviet invasion a quarter of a century ago, the civil war that followed, the terrible Taliban era and then the American invasion. All that time Kabul and the neighbourhood was a battlefield and to add to the horrible situation, a drought has plagued this country for the last four to five years....

by Kristinn Hrafnsson

photos : Helgi Finnbogason
this page : Silja Magg



“WE ARE NOT SOLDIERS”

The Icelandic “soldiers” are representatives of one of the richest countries in the world who suddenly find themselves in a country that’s in the running for the seat at the bottom. The guys are part of a fifteen men team sent by the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit to Afghanistan to serve in Garrison KAIA (Kabul Airport) where NATO has pledged to safeguard and rebuild this important link to the outside world. The Icelandic men perform civilian duties at the airport; they are air-traffic controllers, firemen, engineers and handymen but they are all part of the nearly 2,000 multinational forces stationed at KAIA Garrison.

“We are not soldiers,” says Master Sergeant Gíslason, and Major Ævarsson agrees. “The only military training we had is the three weeks in Norway before we came. But as we have to bear light arms constantly and be prepared to use the machine guns, we better know how to handle these weapons,” Master Sergeant Finnbogason tells me in order to explain that the day at the shooting range was not mere fun. Soldiers or not, the Icelanders are working side by side and often outranking professional soldiers from the multinational force at Garrison KAIA, which is comprised from 24 NATO countries.

The Icelandic team drives back into Kabul, passing hundreds of Russian tanks left behind in the retreat that some claim was the beginning of the end for the Soviet empire. We turn onto road Violet which is the military term for Jallabad road.

“It’s on this road that most westerners have lost their lives recently,” I’m informed, “But more than 90% of the population here are all for our presence,” he adds to make me feel better. We pass the Norwegian Garrison as a reminder that small nations can lose men in this battle-zone. In late May a Norwegian soldier lost his life in Kabul, and the first thing the Icelanders had to do when arriving there in early June, was to stand at the airport to honour the Norwegian who was being flown back to his homeland in a coffin. “It was dreadful,” they tell me, “We had just arrived and this was a reminder that the situation is far from safe in the city.”

INHALING EXCREMENT

We drive to Camp KAIA and by the side of the road children jump back and forth over the open sewage. “No wonder this country has the highest infant mortality in the world,” I think as I try to suppress information I had just received. Airborne germs from the sewage make it certain that every time you inhale you are breathing in the remains of another man’s excrement. “If you get a small scratch here it won’t heal”, the men tell me, “You have to get medicine instantly or things can become pretty bad.”

Unfortunately this is not an option for most of the 24-25 million Afghans living in the country. Death looms around the corner due to causes that would hardly call for a visit to a clinic if you were living in Reykjavik. We enter KAIA through the heavily guarded gate; the men have to test the firing mechanisms to prove that they are empty before storing the bullets in a separate place. Driving to the main building the first thing one notices is the Icelandic flag flying first in a row of the flags of all the nations that have sent troops to this NATO project. Garrison KAIA is under Icelandic command and at the helm is Hallgrímur Sigurðsson, who everybody knows by the name Commander Halli.

THE COMMANDER

“Attention!” the Belgian second in command shouts to the line up in front of camp Kaia’s main building as Commander Halli steps onto the ramp in easy steps. The soldiers from Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Slovakia, Iceland, Turkey and other nations stand to attention to greet the commander. Commander Halli walks the line and hands out medals ever to those who are heading home after three month missions, both medals from NATO and the first medals handed out by The Icelandic Crisis Response Unit. The Icelandic men proudly receive their medals, the Kabul sun shining on the polished gold Icelandic crest pinned to the blue Icelandic berets. Behind them sits a Hercules propeller plane, an Apache helicopter from the Dutch air force and a Black Hawk

from the Turks on each side.

“We are really scoring points by controlling this project,” the commander tells me afterwards. “For decades Iceland has stood on the sideline in NATO as a poor receiver but now we are drawing respect in the family of nations within NATO. I strongly believe NATO is badly in need of a transformation and I believe Iceland can play a critical role in this transformation.”

Commander Halli is a man uniforms love. One wonders how he was transformed into a high ranking military commander in a NATO army. I vaguely remember him from a few years ago when he was one of the leaders in the Grafarvogur suburban reform committee. He was then an air traffic controller in Reykjavik, living in the suburbs, fighting the city to improve the traffic into Grafarvogur and other important suburban projects. Soon after he led the Icelandic effort to rebuild and hand over to civilian control the airport in Pristina, Kosovo, and from there he was sent to Afghanistan to become the Commander of Kabul Airport.

SHOVELLING THE SHIT

Commander Halli frequently meets President Karzai and other senior officials in the Afghan government, that has yet to prove its legitimacy in the forthcoming election in October. The elections have electrified the tension in the country and many NGOs have condemned the election being pushed forth when Afghanistan has no central authority. Everyone knows Karzai (sometimes snubbed as the Major of Kabul) only has power in the country because the Americans want him to be the ruler. Most Kabulians seem to want him to stay on for the simple reason that they are desperate for peace after decades of conflict. But Kabulians are only a fraction of the whole population. By estimates, between two and three million people live in Kabul. Nine out of ten live in the rural areas, many of them controlled by warlords such as Ismail Khan and the Uzbek Dostum whom everybody knows cannot read and write (although it isn’t mentioned publicly), but most of the nation is illiterate anyway and Afghans have learned that the measure of power is fire-power and the number of men you have under

arms. Luckily for the warlords opium growth has surged in the last two years since the end of Taliban rule, and it is estimated that now 80% of the world’s heroin has its origin in Afghanistan. The warlords, get their cut, profiting from Western misery. But Commander Halli and others at KAIA Camp believe they are doing a positive reconstructive job in this country.

“Every Afghan tells me that if we [NATO] leave this country an all out civil war would brake out instantly again”, the Commander tells me in his HQ at KAIA. “People in Iceland don’t realize that we have a role here in helping to rebuild this country – a contribution that is appreciated by most Afghans.”

When I mention the criticism by some people in Iceland that an Icelandic army has been almost secretly formed in Afghanistan, Commander Halli becomes outspoken. “It is almost intolerable that some Icelanders, even MPs standing in the Althingi podium, should speak such nonsense. They are speaking out of total ignorance. One should expect that people who criticise this project do it based on knowledge and not ignorance.” Halli pats the pistol strapped to his thigh. “We are bearing arms here in Kabul but it is for the reasons of security. One has to dress for the occasion, you see,” he adds. “If you have to go to the barn to shovel the shit you don’t put on dance shoes and take a fancy walking stick in hand – you grab the shovel after you have put on your Wellingtons. It’s as simply as that.”

SIR OR ÓLI?

Outside the HQ soldiers in different types of uniforms walk past and I have become accustomed to trying to make out the flags on the shoulders to see where they are from. I have no sense of rank markings and the Icelanders tell me they are fairly relaxed when it comes to respecting rank. “We sometimes forget that everything has to go through the right chain of command,” major Ævarsson tells me, “We do not have the same background of military culture as other countries.” “I tried in vain to get my men to call me Óli, but they insisted on sticking to ‘Sir,’ Major Ólafsson, a 27 year old Political Science student at the University of Iceland, tells me. He is in charge of 130



people at Garrison KAIA. “They are soldiers and explained to me that it is not right for our relationship to become too relaxed. In their eyes I might be the person to demand that they confront enemy fire to take that hill. So I let them call me ‘Sir,’ Ólafsson adds. Commander Halli walks towards us but has to stop and greet the Major of the Turkish Blackhawk helicopter unit stationed at KAIA. “A great guy,” Halli tells me, “the most experienced helicopter pilot Turkey has. Over 6,000 hours flown – he has had men on his helicopter killed in battle and has stepped unharmed out of his helicopter with five bullets in the protection in his back seat.” A few days later we fly with the Turkish Major on a patrolling flight over Kabul. The doors are open and on each side the heavy guns are manned by the Turks. We fly over the city that has been shelled so often and for so long, one wonders why anything is left.

HALLI THE BULLDOZER

Not much *is*. Mostly small houses or huts built out of mud bricks. The Palace has been shot to pieces and is barely standing. Commander Halli looks over the city. “We are doing a much appreciated job here, but it will take a long time until we see considerable improvements in Afghanistan. But we Icelanders have a lot to offer, not least the Icelandic mentality to just go and do the job.” I had just recently heard that when Halli was in Kosovo he had been called “The Bulldozer.” Halli is a man who wants things to move quickly and admits that a considerable part of his job is about cutting through red tape within the military establishment and dealing with the local authorities. Halli has gotten quite experienced in pushing his agenda through, as one observes sitting in on meetings he has with men like Foreign minister Abdullah and other ministers in the Afghan government. Everybody praises Halli enthusiastically for his command and the

Icelandic contribution. Back at Garrison KAIA I observe Halli’s addition to the garrison’s emblem, his encircled slogan “There are no problems – just solutions.” Halli impatiently wants improvements quickly but things can be painfully slow to improve. “It will take two years to totally de-mine just the airport area,” Halli tells me and adds the latest figures from that project, “a little over a thousand mines found so far with only a portion of the place de-mined.” The land mine infestation of the country is the worst in the world, apparent from the many people with arms and legs missing on the streets of Kabul. Many of them are beggars since they can’t work. “Two weeks ago an Afghan worker took a shortcut through the airport area and was blown up,” I’m told. “It took hours to get to him as we had to de-mine a path towards him. He died in a hospital couple of days later.” At KAIA you don’t wander away from the marked safe path.

BUNKER PARTY

The stillness of the night is broken by the alarming sounds ordering everybody to get out of bed, put on their protective gear and head to the bunker arms in hand. A rocket has been fired at KAIA. The men call it a bunker party – it’s the fourth this summer. Nobody has been injured and only one of the rockets has actually exploded within the airport area. “The terrorists are badly equipped so they have a problem aiming these rockets,” I’m told. Commander Halli tells me that the danger should neither be over nor under-estimated. “But I have to say that I feel pretty safe here at KAIA – at least safer than I would feel in downtown Reykjavik late Saturday night.” The day after we leave Afghanistan, 17 people are killed in an explosion in downtown Kabul. With elections coming up in a month it is certain that things will heat up quite a bit in this country of constant sorrow.

“They have no right to take our name and use it like this.”

Interview by Robert Jackson.



reminds you of Van Gogh’s self portrait. He has a lean, intense face with pale eyes that reside above a stubbled chin. When we meet at his parliamentary office, he needs little prompting to launch into the government for their taking the country away from a centuries old tradition of pacifism. “It makes me terribly uncomfortable to see what we have signed up for. It is part of a bigger picture that involves Iceland not only in Afghanistan but also in support of the war in Iraq. At home we are now doubling the size of the Viking Squad, our customs officers are armed and the Minister of Justice is proposing ideas about an Icelandic military. Put all the pieces together and you get the picture that Iceland is no longer a nation of peace without an army; instead we are a country prepared to support war efforts. And it is wrong. None of this effort and the money it costs improves Icelandic society nor makes it a better place to live.” Steingrímur has been a vociferous opponent of what he sees as a radical change in the princi-

There’s something about Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, leader of the opposition. that

ples that have underpinned foreign policy since Independence. “It is politically motivated and very sad to see how the present government has, in steps and without a true mandate from the electorate, taken Iceland away from its traditional position. I sit on the foreign affairs committee; we only found out about our joining ‘The Coalition of the Willing’ through foreign media coverage of the Bush-Blair summit in the Azores. We weren’t consulted.” The major protagonists in the Iraq war have held lengthy enquiries into the circumstances surrounding their going to war but it hasn’t happened here. “I’ve been pushing for one, but so far the reaction has been ‘it’s in the past so what does it matter?’ But I will be putting it in the agenda in the next session. We really do need to know how we have got to the stage where two people, Davíð and Halldór, can act bilaterally without consulting even their own parties, let alone the people, through their elected parliament. They have no right to take our Icelandic name and reputation and use it like this. We need a full enquiry.” Steingrímur is at pains to point out that despite his opposition to them being there, he sup-

ports the Icelanders who are currently working in Kabul. “I am of course worried for them. It hasn’t been thought out. They carry weapons, but what are the rules for their using them? They are civilians, but they are wearing military uniforms and working in a warzone. What happens if something goes wrong, is their insurance still valid? Will they be treated as civilians? I ask these questions to the Foreign Minister and the replies I get are vague and evasive.” Steingrímur has been on the political scene here long enough to know that little is going to change with Davíð and Halldór reversing roles next week but he senses, probably correctly, that there is a growing unease about where this is all taking the country. Sending the Crisis Response Unit to Kabul was the right thing to do, not only with regard to Iceland’s membership of NATO, but also its further promotion as a world player and its need to be seen at this sensitive time as willing supporters of American foreign policy. There are real issues, though, about the way it has all been handled, issues that won’t go away and that may levy a political price in the future.



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COLUMN



A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO WHALING

by Haukur Már Helgason

People have contacted me asking about the art of domestic whaling, and so I've decided to set up a small Q&A column, answering at least the most frequently repeated questions.

1. Is whaling a dangerous sport?

First of all, whaling is not a sport. It is an art. Like martial arts, its essence is emancipation, the liberation of man from him/herself. Of course it involves danger. Life is dangerous, whales are big. But those who conduct it wisely are likely to outlast their first whale. Once you have mastered the art of whaling, you do not forget it, much like cycling. Having said that, even the most experienced whale-hunters may fall prey to laziness, weariness or habit. No two whales are the same.

2. Don't you need a big boat for whaling?

No! That's precisely what domestic whaling is all about, emancipatory whaling. There is nothing in common between those ignorant industrial beasts that do their whaling on large ships producing any other factory-like commodity, alienated from their work, alienated from themselves, alienated from life and alienated from the whale, on the one hand, and private whaling on the other. The fact that both are called by the same name, whaling, is merely an obscure contingency. A domestic whaler may or may not use a boat. There are advanced whalers that swim to meet their prey. Needless to say, this is not recommended for beginners. But no real whaler goes with a boat any bigger than 12 feet, nor does he use engines to drive his or her boat. What is needed is:

1. Knowledge of the whale-schools' mating spots.
2. Skills in reproducing their affectionate songs. (Notice, the first two points in the list have to do with knowledge and know-how. This is no coincidence. The most important aspects of whaling do lie within you, not 'out there'.)
3. A small row-boat.
4. A tow, capable of holding 2-20 tons, depending on species (and the whaler's capabilities). At least 200m -- remember, you do not want to go under with the whale.
5. A bate: fish, fish intestines or a smaller whale than the one to be hunted.
6. A sword.

Some whalers have been known to take a radio or a mobile phone with them, in case of emergency, as well as other such equipment: a whistle, life vests etc. I cannot but understand this in the case of beginners and novices, but do keep in mind that any such precautions hold back your advancement and will sooner or later have to be dismissed.

3. Are there female whalers?

Potentially, yes.

4. Is there a society of whalers?

No, nor can there be. A whaler is a man (or woman) alone. Two whalers do not meet, they have encounters.

5. What exactly is the procedure of whaling (with the above-mentioned equipment)?

Row. Halt. Lure the whale to you with song and bate. Carress it. Get a line around its tail or other protrusive parts. Stab it with the sword. It will not die from the first wound, it will go berserk. Hold on to your boat. Whatever happens, hold on to your boat and the whale gets tired and hopefully it loses energy as it bleeds. When it thus calms down, approach it yet again (or, more gracefully, get it to approach you), carress it and stab it. Repeat as needed. Under all normal circumstances, but dependent on the size and age of the whale, it will die within 12 hours from its first wound. Drag the whale to shore (no, whales do not sink upon their death, they float).

6. What are the origins of Emancipatory Whaling? Are there any historical relations to Rodeo or that Spanish sport with the bulls?

Emancipatory Whaling originates in the ancient wisdom of the Icelandic Eddas. They have only recently been revived by Meistari Þórbergur Þórðarson, who did his whaling naked without a boat in the mid 20th century, reaching perfection in grace and technique and, needless to say, absolute emancipation. Until the late 90s, Icelanders conducted their whaling privately and secretly. Now, as the art spreads around the world like fire in dry grass, timidity is needed no more; we openly celebrate and participate in this highest of spiritual arts, and we invite all humanity to partake in it. There are no known historical relations to other activities that nonetheless have surface similarities. Bulls are considerably smaller animals than whales.

7. Whales are not fish, are they?

No, but they admittedly have surface similarities to fish. Whales are among the most intelligent and most gracious mammals on earth, some say even more intelligent than people. There lies the dignity integrated in our art.

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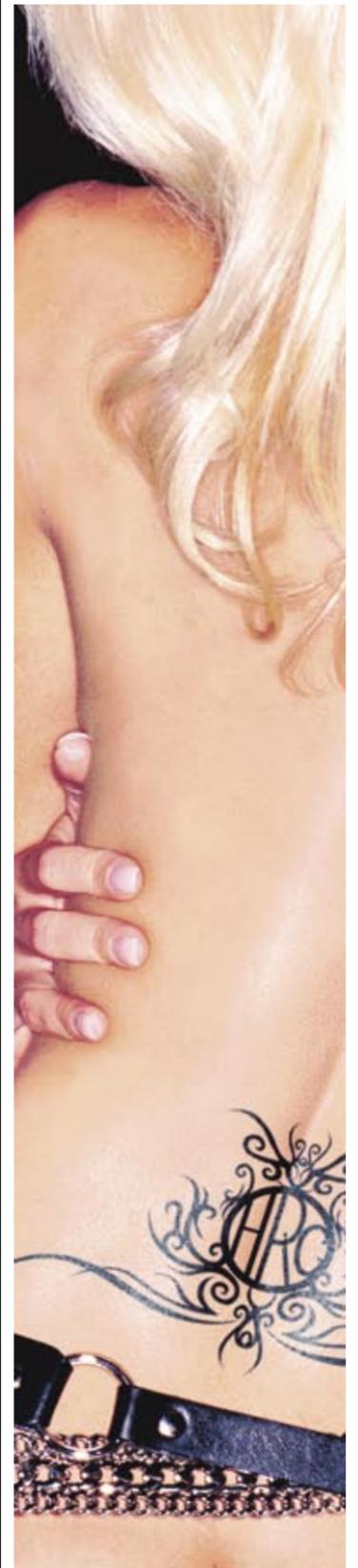


Mugi Goes to the Movies

by Jonas Moody

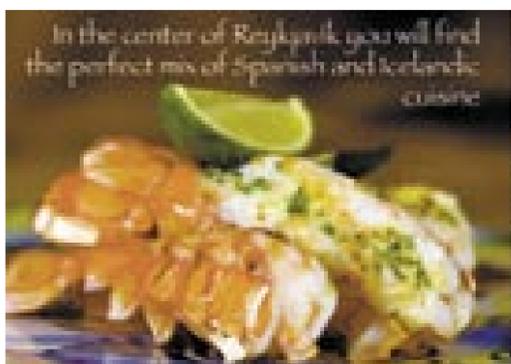
The six degrees of Mugison
Niceland is the story of a retarded young woman who loses her purpose in life and her retarded boyfriend who sets out to find it again for her. Mugison is a the story of a musically-inclined young man from the mountains of Ísafjörður who was fortuitously asked to score the soundtrack for Friðrik Þór's newest film, Niceland.

...cont. on page 22



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drinks all the time. Another owner is Reykjavík, and the bar figures prominently

wander in here for a game, as every table doubles as a chess board. One of the best places to meet locals for a chat, every night of the week.

20. Bar 11
Laugavegur 11

The rock hangout, be it live music or the riff-heavy jukebox. Many of Iceland's rock bands are regulars. Bands play and/or poetry is recited most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A good place to come down on Sundays, with a screening of cult films.

21. Café Victor
Hafnarstræti 1-3

Spelt with a c rather than with the more traditional k in order to be more cosmopolitan. This play seems to be working, as the bar has become something of a hangout for foreigners. The Viking ship sitting on top of the house might also add to the appeal. The crowd is very mixed, both in origin and age, and so is the music.

22. Jón Forseti
Abalstræti 10

The oldest house in Reykjavík is now, you guessed it, a gay club. Named after founding father and national hero Jón Sigurðsson, who lived there for a while, it now has various events, including concerts, plays and a gay cabaret, performed on a small stage that tries its best to look big with curtains and everything. So how long until they change George Washington's old place into a gay bar? You heard it here first.

23. Café List
Laugavegur 20a

"List" means "art", the art mostly consisting of jazz bands that play there frequently. Looks perhaps more like a hotel bar than a seedy jazz club, but the prices of beer has gone down, so they deserve our support.

24. Prikkið
Bankastræti 12

Used to be a traditional coffee house which has been around longer than any but, after a change of clientele, they now cater to a younger crowd. A diner during the day and a nightclub on weekends. You can also borrow games there, such as backgammon or chess.

25. Póstbarinn
Pósthússtræti 13

Situated by Austurvöllur, Póstbarinn is a bistro prized restaurant, a rare treat. It is also one of few restaurants in Reykjavík with decent outdoor service. Live Jazz once a week and check out the reasonably priced fish menu they have, only 1490ISK. Try the place.

26. Celtic Cross
Hverfisgata 26

Arguably the bar in town that comes closest to deserving the title of Irish, even though the Dubliner tries harder. Except for the coffin in the back, it's very much alive. Live music almost every night, a troubadour on the upper floor and a band in the basement, both doing their best to make a living as human jukeboxes.

CLUBS

27. Gaukur á Stöng
Tryggvagata 22

Iceland's oldest club is turning 20 this fall. During the day it's a pool pub and on weekend evenings there are live rock concerts by more mainstream bands. On weekends there is usually a lot of action with cover bands playing everything from Britney to the Beatles. Without exception you'll be charged at least 1000kr for entrance in the evenings. Crowd: 20+

28. Nasa
by Austurvöllur

Used to be a theatre, but is now a club. Great sound system and occasional live bands. The town's biggest club, but the high prices do limit the crowd somewhat. Admission 1000 krónur.

29. Mojito bar
Austurstræti 16

Situated on the 5th floor, and is only accessible by elevator. A place where you can run into MP's and business tycoons living it up. That might be some indication of the price range. The candleholders, for some inexplicable reason, are Turkish hashpipes. It's only open Fridays and Saturdays between 11 and 3.

30. Leikhúskjallarinn
Hverfisgata 19

Recently opened again and is gaining respect. It's a Restaurant during the day but a dance place during night (weekends of course). The crowd here is usually little more mature than in the other clubs. Talented DJs play with the drunken crowd. Crowd: 25+

RESTAURANTS

31. Pasta Basta
Klapparstíg 38

An affordable Italian place. The pasta is has generous portions and the salad with grilled chicken is a good light option. The garden is nice, with a glass ceiling protecting punters from the wind and the rain. It has paper covering the tables, and guests are supplied with crayons so the can decorate their surroundings as they wait for the meal.

32. Tveir Fiskar
Geirsgötu 9

Seafood restaurant, although they also do land-based animals. At lunchtime you can have a three course meal for 2300, which isn't too bad, all things considered. The chef has been awarded the Medal of the Order of the White Rose by the President of Finland.

33. Hornið
Hafnarstræti 15

Means "the corner" and the place lives up to its name. This is actually the oldest Italian restaurant in town, celebrating its 25th year, which says something about the scene here before then. Excellent quality pizza, pasta and salads and yet remaining one of the more affordable ones. Try the calzone.

34. Vox
Nordica Hotel

Perhaps a typical off-lobby restaurant, bistro, bar in a four-star hotel, the Vox looks at first glance like a fancy cafeteria spiced up for an official reception. But please do not let that glance throw you off! The restaurant has a modern interior with extremely un-Icelandic décor, however the kitchen saves the situation. Run by a master chef, a recent winner of the super gastro competition "Bocuse d'Or," the Menu is tops.

35. 3 Frakkar
Baldursgata 14

This is a restaurant that cannot be ignored. A very small place with an atmosphere. Here you may enjoy the house specialties of Icelandic traditional dishes prepared in the good, old-fashioned manner, including catfish, shark, and whale steaks. And of course much more. If you're lucky, Chef Úlfar Eysteinnsson, the owner, may be present regaling the clientele with wild whaling tales. Don't forget to ask Chef Úlfar for dark Icelandic pumpernickel bread with pure Icelandic butter, and don't forget to make a reservation!

36. Apotek
Austurstræti 16

Formerly the central drugstore of Reykjavík, established in the late 1800s, the Apotek is now a modern restaurant with an Art Deco interior. You can still see the names of the chief managing pharmacists/owners on the wall of the bar. Today, this "drugstore" serves a different type of milkshake. Now look for a sizzling visual kitchen (behind a glass wall) with a Super Menu! Apotek is an eating experience not to be missed.

37. Tapas
Vesturgata 3b

For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is well spent at Tapas, where you can vile away the evening having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes served. Recommended is the garlic fried lobster and lamb in apricot sauce. If you don't feel like getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge to lounge in, and the paintings there are worth a look.

38. Jónfrúin
Lækjargata 4

In this global age, it can be hard to find good smörrebröd even in Copenhagen. Never fear: out here in the colonies you can still find first rate smörrebröd at Jónfrúin. They even import their own eel directly from Denmark to make one of Scandinavia's delicacies.

39. Rossopomodoro
Laugavegur 40a

This is a new chain of eateries trying to move away from the American image of pizza joints. Originally a local Napoli venture, now a string of modestly cool restaurants striving to make it in Northern Europe. Iceland is one of the first places for Rossopomodoro outside Italy. A clever beginning in a country absolutely free from Neopolitan traditions. A modest wine list with good prices

40. Café Opera
Lækjargata 2

Situated right in the middle of downtown Reykjavík, the Opera is a popular place for those who missed the 10 o'clock kitchen deadline at restaurants further away from the discos and the midtown nightlife. Café Opera's kitchen is open weekdays until 23:30 and weekends until 01:00 in the morning. A fine cuisine with mouthwatering specialties is a first choice for many local gourmets.

FAST FOOD

41. Nonnabiti
Hafnarstræti 11

The owner is a miser who charges additionally for everything, but this is almost certainly the best junk food in the Greater Reykjavík area. The subs are great, none of that Subway commitment to healthy living, and they probably contribute significantly to the ever-increasing "size" of the nation. They also serve burgers and sandwiches, and have lunchtime offers.

42. Mama Taco's
Lækjargata 8

One of those places that seem to be always open, and hence you find yourself going to late on Saturday nights as consolation when it seems inevitable you'll be going home alone. And as consolations go, it's not bad. Rather reasonable by local standards, and they have all the tortillaish Mexican standards.

43. Bernhöftsbakari
Bergstaðstræti 13

A bakery with traditions going back some 150 years, although it has changed locations. Apart from a supermarket, a bakery is still the best way to fill your belly. Try the staple of Icelandic childhood and beyond: a snúður roll with chocolate milk.

44. Baejarins bestu
Tryggvagata

They claim to have the best hot dogs in town, and for once the product lives up to the hype. Ask for one with everything, and you'll get a dog in a bun with ketchup, mustard, remulade (don't ask), fried and raw onion. The standard Icelandic hotdog, only somehow it tastes better.

45. Pizza 67
Tryggvagata 26

The local pizza chain that's trying to take on the world, and who currently operate a place in the Faeroes and China, as well as all over Iceland. The have a Summer of Love theme, which doesn't really extend beyond the names of the pizzas, a few slogans and a few posters, but the pizzas are nice. They also do deliveries. They have a lunchtime buffet for 990, for those in search of quantity for the króna.

46. Eldsmíðjan
Bragagata 38a

Oven-baked pizzas simply don't get much better than this. It is slightly more expensive than other pizzerias, but well worth it. A wide selection of toppings, including that sorely missed pizza delight, snails. You can also turn the chef loose and let him decide what goes on it - you'll rarely be disappointed. Take away, order delivery, or eat in at the cosy restaurant upstairs. The paintings are worth a peek as well.

47. Vitabar
Bergþórugata 21

Actually a bar, but best known for its hamburgers. A burger with fries for 500 is one of the best meal deals in town, but special mention must go to the Forget-Me-Not blue cheese and garlic extravaganza. The Viking beer always feels particularly cold and refreshing here.

48. First Vegetarian (Á naestu grösum)
Laugavegur 20b

Used to be called One Woman Restaurant, as there was always the same woman working there. Has new owners and a larger staff, but the theme is still vegetarian, with one vegan and one wheat-free dish always on offer. The only vegetarian restaurant licensed to carry beer and wine. Remains on the right side of the 1000 krónur bill at lunchtime, slips slightly over in the evening.

49. Hlöllli
By Ingólfsborg

Where Nonni used to work before he went solo, due to creative differences no doubt. They have a somewhat larger selection of subs than Nonni, and they also have smaller sizes for kids and weight watchers. Brave souls might want to try the Gúmmi-Bátur (rubber boat), which might seem like an oversized relative of the ever-present pulsa.

50. Reykjavík Bagel Company
Laugavegur 81

Situated a bit from the immediate centre but close to Hlemmur bus-stop. Bagels, wraps and coffee that might make you feel better in the morning than the more hardcore fast foods farther down the street.

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Hamborgarabúllan, Tryggvagata 4-6, 511-1888.
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Reykjavík has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty much anywhere in the Reykjavík area. It's a slow system and you might have to change buses a couple of times to get where you want to, though usually things run smoothly and on time. The price of a single fare is 220kr for an adult (60kr for children under 12). If you are in town for more than a few days, then the nine ticket package for 1500kr would be a better deal. Bus cards valid for two weeks, a month or three months are also available. You have to pay as you step on board and it has to be the exact amount, unless you want to pay more for your ride. The driver cannot give you change. You can ask the driver for a free, time-limited transfer ticket if you need two buses to complete your journey.

The bus system is closed at night. You can catch your first bus between 6:40 and 7:00 in the morning, and last call is around 24:00. The main bus stops in Reykjavík are Hlemmur and Lækjartorg, where you'll be able to get all the information you need.



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"...the meals were simply the best I have enjoyed in an Icelandic restaurant this year."

Food and wine critic – Morgunblaðið Daily Newspaper September 7th 2003

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 Árbæjarsafn Folk Museum, Kistuhylur 4, p: 557-1111
 Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, Sigtún, p: 553-2155
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It seems that this prolific young man--singer, songwriter, festival organizer, and now film scorer--has his fingers in a lot of pies around the country. I can't seem to talk to anyone involved with Icelandic music without his name popping up. Gunnar Tynes from Múm characterizes the situation, "there is actually a lot of good music in Iceland, but it's not the popular music. So few people are listening to musicians like Mugison. I don't understand." With the release of Friðrik Þór's international co-production, perhaps the melodies of Mugison will be able to reach more ears.

Mugison's ridiculous luck

"I watched the movie about a million times to start with," Mugison explains, "then I started to put the music together while looking at some scenes." The music is a real deviation from Mugison's previous album, Lonely Mountain. Some tracks like 2 birds are rather traditional in form, a guitar and two crooning voices. Other tracks like Patrick Swayze incorporate clips from the film followed by a sampled and computer-generated soundscape. Another track of note

is I'd ask (finale), a marching lament executed with an accordion and a chorus of Mugison's voices. Overall the music is evocative in only a way movie music can be, but despite the fact that its visual counterpart is missing, the album puts forth a palpable mood of melancholy and nostalgia. "I'm not a conscious musician, so I don't really know how it happens. I just know I'm ridiculously lucky. This guy must be insane to trust a kid to make his soundtrack!"

"Champagne"

However, the soundtrack is far from kid's stuff. The entire record is laced with luminal sounds: water, breathing, distant talking, rattles, and pops. These tracks were painstakingly rendered. It's a slow film and it needs lots of music. When I asked [Friðrik Þór] what kind of music he was thinking about, he just said 'champagne!' to me and hung up the phone." The film has done well in the film festival circuit and will premier in Iceland soon. Mugison is currently working on his next album which should be out in the middle of October.

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Thursday September 9th
 Bands: Líkn and Nr.0

Friday September 10th
 Bands: Drepp and Saktmóðigur

Saturday September 11th
 Bands: Nix Nolte's big band

Saturday September 18th
 Bands: Worm is Green and AmPop

Smiðjustíg 6. p: 551 5522

PICKS MOVIES and THEATRE

City Theatre, 5/9, 12/9, 19/9, 26/9.
HAKKEBAKKE FOREST
 The smaller animals of Hakkebakke Forest are threatened by larger animals who try to eat them or steal their food. But what will happen if the animals vote for a law that says that all the animals of the forest are to be friends?

City Theatre, 17/9, 25/9, 30/9.
THINGS ARE GOING GREAT
 Different aspects of Icelandic society revealed through the story of Ragnheiður Birna, a young woman determined to become an artist who goes through a tornado of crazy situations, but she never loses faith in herself. Only the world remains to be convinced!

City Theatre, 3/9, 4/9, 9/9, 10/9, 11/9, 18/9, 23/9, 24/9
EDITH PIAF
 An unforgettable voice. A unique life; the upbringing among whores and criminals in Paris, and the incredible rise from the gutter to the most glorious music halls of the world. A new play with songs about the woman behind the legend

City Theatre, Premiere 24/9, 26/9.
BLACK MILK
 In a run down waiting room of a rural railway station, a young couple from the city has descended on a village to sell toasters that don't work. A new play written by one of Russia's most interesting contemporary young writers.



BELCHING UP THE AMERICAN DREAM

by Marcie Hume

Morgan Spurlock, like the Big Mac, is a classic: he's a New Yorker who grew up somewhere in the rest of America (West Virginia in this instance) but ended up in the big city. He is fast-talking and articulate, ready to thrash out the travesties of American culture. If you went to a liberal arts college in America, this guy could have been one of your talkative acquaintances in film class, the one who always raised his hand. But he's maintained the country-boy vibe, too, not to mention the type of moustache that I honestly haven't seen since I last drove through Nebraska

The guy could talk about America for hours. Most of the jive is the familiar anti-corporation variety, but he definitely presents it with gusto. When he really gets going, you can tell that he has been doing a lot of interviews. "Fifteen hundred interviews so far... at least. About fifteen today," he says. He goes from chatting about his life directly into orating about the film in a sort of pre-planned spiel.

But what can you expect from a guy who's been travelling around the world and isn't even close to being finished? He's even carrying a dress shirt when I first meet him, the one he wore on the news, and in true docu-style form, it's also one that he wears regularly in the film.

"Our American way of life has been franchised," he says loudly, his interview-voice in top form, "and I think on a global level, people need to be asking themselves 'Do we really want to look and taste just like America?' I go to all these great cities, and I just think 'Why does there need to be a KFC here?' When people travel they should experience something beyond Starbucks."

It's a basic yet valid point, one that any American is virtually obliged to make upon entering a foreign city. Although I do love a good Starbucks, and you know, they've got those pamphlets about free trade, supporting Guatemalan family growers...

Morgan's face lights up. "Oh man, you can't be a journalist and buy Starbucks! Of course they have literature about free trade! But they have kids picking beans for a penny an hour in Guatemala, they've taken over a huge part of the land, come on!" Neither one of us knows if this is true, and we look at each other for a moment. But his general mantra is that you really can't know what information is being hidden.

"And yes, my sex life is back to normal, thank you!" I love a good non-sequitur, but I have no idea what he's talking about. Maybe he doesn't remember that the movie hasn't, at the time of the interview, opened here yet. I smirk and pretend to write it down. After all, he seems like a nice guy who's just done a lot of interviews about hamburgers and liver failure.

Everyone grabs at a slice of the apple pie

The film has had amazing exposure for a little movie made for \$65,000 (spare change compared to most movie budgets, and funded completely by Morgan himself). Even before the movie was released, a man in Reykjavik began eating only BooztBar products for 30 days, having been sponsored by the company to do so. "People with their agendas always jump on," Morgan says with the most sarcastic tone I've heard yet, but he speaks in that assured way that makes what he's saying seem like the most obvious thing in the world. "There are people doing that all over the place, probably 50 of them in America, in Holland, here...everybody has their own agenda and the last thing I'm gonna do is say that I support BooztBar or something."

Yep, everyone always has their own agenda. We talk about the metaphorical guy who hears about Super Size Me while in a drive-thru and thinks, "I should have done that when I thought of it a year ago!" Morgan's impression of this guy involves a flat-handed slap to his own forehead. We make the thwarted expression of the guy who had "eat only McDs" on his list right next to "invent hydroelectric phone" and a million other things. There's always that person with endless big ideas who says 'I thought of that before someone else did' and 'I should have acted on that back when I thought of it.'

But Morgan is big into such ideas, since that's what Super Size Me was: an idea he had while sitting on the sofa, watching the news story of two obese American girls who were suing McDonalds for serving them such monstrous food. And acting on random, inspired ideas is, after all, the purest form of the American dream.

"Yeah, this is one reason why I love America. People have started grouping me with Michael Moore, saying that we are both making these anti-American films. But that's not the goal of this movie at all. Documentary has become the last great medium of free expression, and our First Amendment right to express these kinds of things."

The notion of the American dream, though frequently referenced in satirical ways in social/political films, really is the foundation of Morgan's success with the film. The prevalence of this film is confirmation that one person can have a massive effect on such an overwhelming force as the fast food industry. And it seems that with the pursuit of the American dream, shock value doesn't have to be left out. "I do hope it inspires people who have big ideas like that...and they see that it's possible to run out there, follow through with it. I hope it affects that guy in the drive-thru who said 'I thought of that too!' I hope it empowers him."

Selling indie america to Iceland

Later in the evening I watch Morgan being interviewed on the news, wearing the special shirt. He's lot more polished and smiley that he was before. I have to remember that this film really has brought a new kind of attention to these matters, and sure he should be proud.

At the opening of the film at Háskólabíó that evening, Morgan answers some questions, merging in his answers from the news. He pulls his girlfriend up on stage and says "Our sex life is back to normal, thank you!"

Screenings start roughly every two hours, at 18, 20 and 22. However, with films getting ever longer, starting times may vary. There are usually ads and trailers for roughly 15 minutes from announced starting time. Almost all films have a short intermission. The still running films may not precise, the premiers are usually correct.

MOVIES : LISTINGS : september 3 - september 30



Hverfisgata 54
Phone: 551-9000
www.regnboginn.is

PREMIERS:

3. sept. Dís
10. sept. Girl Next Door
17. sept. Man on Fire
24. sept. Whie Chicks

Still running:

Notebook, Garfield, Hellboy, I Robot, Dirty Dancing 2, Spider-Man 2



Laugarás
Phone: 553-2075
www.laugarasbio.is

PREMIERS:

3. sept. Dís
10. sept. Girl Next Door
17. sept. Anchorman
24. sept. Collateral

Still running:

Bourne Supremacy, The Stepford Wives, Fahrenheit 9/11, Garfield/Grettir (dubbed), Madditt 2 (dubbed)



Álfabakka 8
Phone: 587-8900
www.sambio.is

PREMIERS:

3. sept. Dís
10. sept. Girl Next Door
17. sept. Man on Fire
24. sept. White Chicks

Still running:

Notebook, Garfield, Hellboy, I Robot, Dirty Dancing 2, Spider-Man 2



Smáralind
Phone: 564-0000
www.smarabio.is

PREMIERS:

3. sept. Harold and Kumar go to White Castle.
10. sept. Anchorman. The Terminal.
17. sept. Wicker Park
24. sept. The Princess Diaries 2.

Collateral

Still running:

The Bourne Supremacy, Thunderbirds, Catwomen, The Village, New York Minute, King Arthur, Shrek 2



Kringlan 4-6
Phone: 588-0800
www.sambio.is

PREMIERS:

3. sept. Harold and Kumar go to White Castle.
10. sept. Anchorman. The Terminal.
17. sept. Wicker Park
24. sept. The Princess Diaries 2.
Collateral

Still running:

The Prince and Me, Thunderbirds, The Village



Hagatorg
Phone: 530-1919
www.haskolabio.is

PREMIERS:

10. sept. The Terminal
17. sept. Midsommer
24. sept. Collateral

Still running:

American Indi festival: Before Sunset, Shape of Things, My First Mister, Saved!, Capt. the Friedmans, Spellbound, Coffee & Cigarettes, Ken Park, Super Size Me. The Bourne Supr., Thunderbirds, The Village, Good bye, Lenin!

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YE OLDE ICELAND IS BACK IN ACTION

by Marcie Hume

The first time I met an Icelandic boy, I Googled him. Typing in his nationality, what Google gave me was a webpage that displayed men in strange make-up and costumes, portraying characters called Meat Hook and Door Slammer. I was terrified and entranced and bamboozled. It was Icelandic culture brought to life.

The photos were courtesy of the magic of the National Museum, who had at one time created a nice visual to accompany the history of the Christmas Lads. This is their forte: bringing ye olde Iceland to you. And so this tradition continues as the museum opens anew on the 1st of September. It has been closed for 6 years, undergoing extensive renovations, and will now boast a walk-through exhibit that extensively covers Iceland's 1200 years of civilised history, along with the thousands of historical objects in the museum's collection.

It is unclear whether or not the museum was missed by the general public. Were people wandering around with no sense of cultural history, wondering "Where can I get my next hit of Wiking trivia?" Regardless, the last 6 years are in the past and Icelandic history is, once again, back for the people.

Among the many areas covered are the recent research on DNA taken from bones from the first centuries of settlements, "restored heathen graves" (which has a sort of Disneyland-Haunted-House vibe), and findings from a community that was buried in mount Hekla's eruption in 1104. You can also see the 1703 census which documented the

country's population, the living conditions of each family, and, thankfully, a full count of livestock too.

The exhibition covers 2,000 square metres of space, and will be a permanent component of the museum, along with two spaces for varying exhibitions, a lecture hall, shop and café. Initially there were rumours of an enormous sword standing permanently outside the museum, but those plans are on hold for now.

The new permanent exhibition is described by the museum as "an exciting journey through time," which is in the same ballpark as "an exciting afternoon at the farm". I happen to love Icelandic farms, and find them terribly exciting places to visit. So, if traipsing through Icelandic history sounds like fun to you, then the National Museum is, as any good tourist rag would say, a must-see.

The admission is a brutish 600Kr, but there are half-off discounts for seniors, students, and the disabled. Visitors under 18 are given free admission.

(And if you're just dying to see what my very first taste of Icelandic culture was, see the following: <http://jol.ismennt.is/english/christmas-lads-museum.htm>.)



People at their worst by Elin Petersdóttir

The room is large and the lighting has been dimmed. On each wall there is a rectangular square whereupon two video installations are being shown, side by side, so that at first I think it is one picture.

Looking, breathing, thinking, the effect is physical. As the essay musings suggest, there is a tangible element of time. Moving and/or standing still, but undeniably present. This is Finnur Arnar's Installation on the bottom floor of Hafnarhúsið.

I head on up to look at Los Caprichos by Francisco de Goya. Los Caprichos is a series of 80 engravings. A collection remarkable not only for its sheer volume, or the amazing display of luminosity and darkness always found in Goya's work, but also for its audacity. It is daring, it is overwhelming and unapologetic. The depictions are people - and fairy tale creatures - at their worst. Even for those, such as myself, who are unaware of what the Spanish political climate was in 1797 the

satire is obvious and recognizable in 2004. It easily stands the test of more than two hundred years.

I head for the last exhibit, Katrín Sigurðardóttir's installation. Her delicate yet striking work demands attention and cautious consideration. Made of partly gigantic, partly minute square pieces it forms a labyrinth, flowing from one room to another, in many ways creating a spatial continuum of Finnur Arnar's time travel. Other visitors rush past me, seeming to think that it leads to something, only to find that there is no conclusion.

Finnur Arnar Arnarson
Francisco de Goya
Katrín Sigurðardóttir
At Listasafn Reykjavíkur, Hafnarhús Aug. 21 to Oct.3rd.

PICKS ARTS and CULTURE

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum

"A SLICE OF THE MOON"



Isle Hessner is considered a pioneer of contemporary Greenlandic art. Her sculptures explore the search for a permanent image in an ever-changing present, which is impossible, but no one's going to argue with a Greenlander. The aim of the exhibition is to encourage personal connections and mutual understanding between the countries it visits, and strengthen the self-image of Greenlanders and ties between Nordic countries. The exhibition begins 11th September.

101 Gallery

"FRÉTTATILKYNNING"



Steingrímur Eyfjörð explores folklore via examination of feral children... that is, children fostered by beasts. In Icelandic folk tales, these children are especially connected to animals, which were said to be spellbound humans, such as polar bears and seals. There are also stories of children who are replaced by fairies and or made into giants by ogresses in the Icelandic wilderness.

Reykjavík Art Museum, Hafnarhúsið

VARIOUS ARTISTS



Down by the water, you can find new works by Francisco de Goya, Katrín Sigurðardóttir and Finnur Arnar Arnarson. The building is one of the most interesting in the city, so if you don't like the art, you can always explore the outstanding bathrooms.

GALLERY SÆVAR KARL



In the basement of the shop you can find a constant rotation of artists (currently the works of Preben Boye and Haukur Dór), as well as works displayed all over the shop. If you missed Sævar Karl himself giving out hand-decorated hats on Culture Night, you can get an idea of his cultural and artistic prowess (just ignore the clothes) at saevarkarl.is.

Gallery i8

THE ICELANDIC LOVE CORPORATION



The name of the exhibition is "Cardiac Circus", which sounds great and reminds me of that time I tried to go jogging down by the water on a windy day. These nutty girls will be showing from 9 September.

Nordic House, September 6th-9th

MAN + FISH + WOMAN

Discussion and lectures which will focus on two different subjects, gender difference and the fishing industry in Japan and Iceland. Speakers are scholars and professors, both Icelandic and Japanese. Eight university students from Tokyo are coming specially to Iceland to attend the conference.

The visitor's KEY to ICELAND

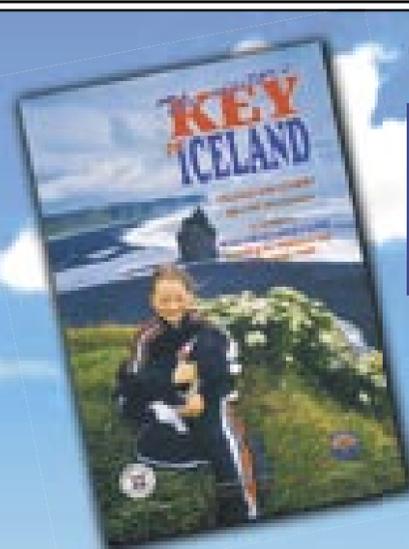
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The camera *Katrín Elvarsdóttir* worked with for her current show is named *Holga*. It's a plastic camera made in China, one of several that she uses, all with female names. You can't choose *Holga's* shutter speed, and there is a common problem of light leaking in. In fact, looking at the finished product, it's almost impossible to believe that this series came from what is: through and through, a toy camera.

by Marcie Hume

The exhibition is comprised of long prints made of images that seem sewn together. Each print features one subject, but is made of various shots from slightly differing viewpoints. The photographs are both instinctively striking and unsettling because there is no frame of reference; it is unnatural to see something as though you are in several places at once.

But each one, in its total effect, is like seeing a memory. There is a forest, but it is a forest as you might remember seeing it as a child, through various glimpses of the infinite limbs reaching down, looming and endless, with a strange shade of sky stretched out like heavy

Your Memories Look Like This

fabric behind them. The general effect is entrancing and eerie, turning a common sight into something both bizarre and stunning.

"I thought about my own experiences, or other people's experiences and how they think about them afterwards," *Katrín* says about the creation of this series, "...how you remember things in your head, or how you remember a certain day."

These pieces also bring attention to the act of perceiving; they are, in essence, an elongated moment. They show seeing as it is, with several

quick glances blurred over one another. There is no objective view of the scene, but a kind of movement with several splintered views.

At a time when everyone is Photoshop-happy, it is easy to assume that these pieces were created with some kind of digital experimentation. But it all happens within the plastic walls of *Holga*. "I took out the little box behind the shutter that usually dictates the shape of the photograph," *Katrín* explains. The result is that there is

no edge to the photograph, and no distinct shape where the light ends and border begins. "I only advance the film maybe one-quarter of the way after each picture, so the sides of each frame overlap as the film is exposed."

"I definitely know what I'm looking for," she explains, "and I kind of see how it will look in my mind as I shoot it, but there's also a definite element of chance." The side of each frame is permanently blended into the next as she shoots, so the finished product is chosen out of the entire strip of film. There is no touching up or rearranging.

The photographs also serve to give each moment its full attention, focusing on both the intricate details

of an object or place, and the overall fragmented result of observation. Each instant of perception has made its own mark in comparison with the last, as the movement of time shows itself in the progression of the images.

Observing the nuances of an object, or noticing it in several ways at once, reminds us what a profound effect perspective has on the perception of our surroundings. This exhibition, for its unusual beauty and its absolute fluency, is not to be missed.

Katrín Elvarsdóttir's exhibit "Memory" will be at Hafnarborg Institute of Culture and Fine Art until 20th September.

ARTS and CULTURE LISTINGS : september 3 - september 30

Want to be seen in the listings? Send us a mail to listings@grapevine.is and your event will be announced in the next issue, and the best thing is that being in the listings is free!

ONGOING

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Two exhibition: Ragna Róbertsdóttir - Retrospective. The artist's first retrospective in Iceland. Róbertsdóttir has worked extensively with the qualities of Icelandic stone, lava, pumice and earth. And Works from the Kjarval Collection also at Kjarvalsstaðir.

Gallery Skuggi

Thu-Sun 13:00-17:00
Exhibition 'Imaginary Realities' by Astrid Kruse Jensen Danish artist working with video and Photography

Gallery of the Icelandic printmakers association

Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
Exhibition by Sofía Sæmundsdóttir, ends 19 sept. Also exhibition by Benítik Lafleur starts 25 sept.

National Gallery of Iceland

11:00-17:00 every day
Glass art, show of works given by Sweden. 63 glass works by many of Swedens best known artists. Also works by Guðmunda Andrésdóttir. Guðmunda was one of Iceland's foremost abstract artist. Starts September 25.

Gallery 18

Wed-Fri 11:00-17:00, 13:00-17:00 Sat.
Exhibition by The Icelandic Love Corporation "Car-diac Circus", details in picks.

Gerðuberg Cultural Center

Mon-Fri 11:00-19:00, Sat-Sun 13:00-17:00.
Folk artist Sigurður Einarsson: Sigurður exhibits oil on Masonite. Other exhibition, Landscape architect Reynir Vilhjálmsson - Seminar and retrospective: The seminar is in Icelandic. The retrospective exhibition contains drawings and photographs.

Gallery Sævar Karl
Mon-Fri 10:00-17:00
Exhibition by Preben Boye and Haukur Dór.

Safn

Wed-Fri 14:00-18:00. Sat&Sun 14:00-17:00
Exhibition by The German painter Katharina Grosse ends 25 sept. Two exhibition opens 11 september, by Pieter Holstein (1934) "Holland" and other by Ivar Valgarðsson (1954) "Island". Also artists' most current works at the time of the museums purchase. The artists in Safn include: Donald Judd, On Kawara, Karin Sander, Lawrence Weiner, Dan Flavin, and Dieter Roth.

Gallery Ófeigur

Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat 10:00-16:00
Photoexhibition "Reykjavík with eyes of Gunnar Hannesson" b. 1915 d. 1976 ends September 8

Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery

Tue-Sun 11:00-17:00.
Upstairs two world famous danish designers, Børge Mogensen and Hans Wegner. Downstairs many icelandic designers. Ends Sept. 19.

Nýlistasafn, The Living Art Museum

ALDREI - NIE - NEVER is an exhibition at three different locations featuring the works of 18 artists. ends September 13

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Four Exhibition:

Finnur Arnar Arnarson a private exhibition: The artist's new vision of the past, the future, the present. *Katrín Sigurdardóttir*: Private exhibition of the Icelandic artist *Katrín Sigurdardóttir*. Francisco Goya - Los Caprichos: The exhibition consist of 80 original prints from the plates in Madrid. The Erró Collection - Aesthetics and Politics: Theme exhibition from the Erró Collection which aims to introduce different emphasis and aspects in the artist's creation.

ASÍ museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00

Exhibition by Hildur Bjarnadóttir and Hafdís Hei-gadóttir ends September 12

The National Museum of Iceland

New permanent exhibitions, giving a comprehensive picture of Iceland's cultural history through the ages to the present day. The exhibitions will cover 2000 m2 and be an exciting journey through time.

Hafnarborg Art Gallery

Wed-Sun 11:00-17:00
Photoexhibition by *Katrín Elvarsdóttir*. And also the exhibition Modern Women by five jewelrydesigners from Denmark. ends September 20

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum

10:00-17:00 every day
Two exhibition: Ragna Róbertsdóttir - Retrospective. The artist's first retrospective in Iceland. Róbertsdóttir has worked extensively with the qualities of Icelandic stone, lava, pumice and earth. And Works from the Kjarval Collection also at Kjarvalsstaðir.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00
September 3rd - 5th: Sigurjón Ólafsson's works in public space. Sept 6th - 10th: Closed. Open from September 11th at 14:00 A Slice of the Moon: Travelling exhibition with sculptures and reliefs by the Greenlandic artist Isle Hessner.

101 Gallery

Exhibition by Halldór Björn Rúnólfsson, see details in picks.

Culture House

11:00-17:00 every day
Exhibition entitled The Poetic Edda. The exhibition is intended to provide visitors with some insights into these ancient poems. Many of Iceland's national treasures are on display in the Culture House's featured exhibition Medieval Manuscripts - Eddas and Sagas. Exhibition Home Rule 1904.

Hafnarfjörður Museum

13:00-17:00 every day
In the main exhibitions you can see the constant exhibition "Thus it was..." where the history of Hafnarfjörður and its neighbourhood from vikings to our time.

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Winter: Guided tours scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 13:00. Guided tours for groups by arrangement.

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum is Reykjavík City's folk museum and the largest open air museum in Iceland. Outside the summer season, guided tours of the museum are scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 13:00. Guided tours for groups by arrangement. ends September 3

Handverk og Hönnun

Mon-Fri 09.00-16:00
Summer Exhibition of contemporary and traditional

Icelandic art and crafts. Ends September 5.

Gallery smíðar og skart
Sun-Fri 10:00-18:00, Sat: 10:00-16:00
Selection of fine art, both functional and sculptural. Ceramics, paintings and graphics.

Volcano show: Red rock cinema

11:00-22:00 every day
If you don't want to wait for the next volcanic eruption, then just go watch a video of the last, it's less dangerous and much more reliable than nature. Admission 750ISK.

Gallery Kolbrún S. Kjarval

Uniquely designed, hand-made ceramics.

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum

13:00-16:00 every day
The Man and Material. A retrospective exhibition of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Telecommunications Museum

Tue,Thu,Sat 11:00-17:00
Pictures and items related to the history of telecommunications.

Reykjavík Zoo and Family Park

10:00-18:00 every day
Icelandic horse and sheep, along with local varieties other animals in the zoo. Right beside it is the park, which has activities for the whole family.

Reykjavík Botanical Garden

10:00-22:00 every day
All kinds of plants and flowers on display.

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum

Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00
Works of Einar Jónsson, Iceland's first sculptor. Changes in opening hours around 16 sept. Open only Sat-Sun 14:00-17:00.

Museum of Medical History

Sun,Tue,Thu,Sat 13:00-17:00
Artifacts, tools, instruments and pictures on the subject.

Numismatic Collection of the Central Bank

Mon-Fri 9:00-17:00, Closed 12:00-13:00.
Icelandic coins and banknotes. ends September 30

Icelandic Institute of Natural History

Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun 13:00-17:00
Geological, botanical and zoological exhibits, displaying the nature of Iceland.

Saga Museum

10:00-16:00 every day.
The Saga museum intimately recreates key moments in Icelandic history and gives a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived and thought for more than a millennium.

Reykjavík City Library

Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00
Books and periodicals in Icelandic as well as English, Scandinavian and other languages. Also has a

childrens and a comic book section.

Gallery Fold

Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00 Sat 11:00-17:00 Sun 14:00-17:00
One of the largest Galleries in Iceland, works by many know artists.

Gallery Meistari Jakob

Mon-Fri 11:00-18:00, Sat 11:00-14:00
The gallery is run by eleven artists who work in ceramics, textiles, printmaking and paintings and you will always find one of them at the gallery.

Gallery Tukt

Mon-Thu 13:00-18:00, Fri 13:00 - 17:00
Various artists.

Teddi - Workshop

10:00-18:00 every day
Open workshop of tree sculptures of Teddi.

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 4

Gallery Skuggi

Opening exhibition 'Imaginary Realities' by Astrid Kruse Jensen Danish artist working with video and Photography.

Austurbær

The musical Hair: Is known world over for its catchy music and hippie ambience.

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 5

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum

Gallery Talk: Ragna Róbertsdóttir and Sabine Russ lead a tour of the exhibition. Sabine Russ is an American critic and curator and the author of an essay on Róbertsdóttir's art. In English.

Austurbær

The musical Hair: Is known world over for its catchy music and hippie ambience.

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 9

Háskólabíó

Opening Gala concert - Icelandic symphony orchestra.

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 10

Culture House

The wintertime theme exhibit The Poet of the Month resumes with an exhibition about the author Gunnar Gunnarsson. At the opening ceremony the singer Sigrún Hjálmtýsdóttir (Diddú) sings a newly composed sonnet to lyrics by Gunnar.

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 11

National Gallery of Iceland

New exhibition starts by Guðmunda Andrésdóttir.

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 19

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Lecture: Writer Guðbergur Bergsson gives a talk on Goya's Los Caprichos. In Icelandic.

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Nordisk Panorama Out Of Category Films.

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Nordisk Panorama Out Of Category Films.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum

Greenlandic Drum Dance, performed by Jessie Kleemann. A part of the exhibition A Slice of the Moon with sculptures by, also Greenlandic artist, Isle Hessner

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 26

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Nordisk Panorama Out Of Category Films.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum

Greenlandic Drum Dance, performed by Jessie Kleemann. A part of the exhibition A Slice of the Moon with sculptures by, also Greenlandic artist, Isle Hessner

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Lecture: Art historian Eva Heisler gives a talk on the art of *Katrín Sigurdardóttir*. In English.

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 27

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Nordisk Panorama Out Of Category Films.

TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 28

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum

Nordisk Panorama Out Of Category Films.

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Klappastígur 38



REVENGE OF THE DRUM NERDS

by Paul Fontaine-Nikolov

I remember the first time I heard about the Sugarcubes. I was watching MTV, and some correspondent was in a club, yammering away about a band from Iceland touring the US. Behind him, said band was playing. Einar Örn was blasting a trumpet, Björk was dancing alongside him, and the rest of the band were acting comparatively normal. The music made a pretty good impression on me, and I still think they're one of the better bands to come out of Iceland. Which is why, some fifteen years later and in a band of my own, I was kind of surprised to hear that I was going to be recording with the Sugarcubes drummer, Sigtryggur Baldursson.

I'm well aware of the fact that in Iceland, famous people are not treated with the same degree of fawning and adulation that they might get in other countries. I've gotten used to seeing nationally and even internationally acclaimed Icelandic celebrities standing behind me in supermarket lines, counting their krónur and flipping through gossip magazines. But when you, an amateur musician, are told that in a couple of days you're to record with a veteran musician of medium-level international fame, it puts pressure on you. Still, I kept in mind that we're all professionals here and, acclaim or not, what counts is their ability; not their reputation.

Time's up

It turned out that Sigtryggur was only able to record between ten and twelve in the morning. He had been given a copy of our demo, sans drums. I sat in the studio with our producer, a rehearsing bassist, and Valur - who has formed this group out of the ashes of his previous band, Ríkið - going over the songs. At precisely ten o'clock, Sigtryggur showed up. He walked straight to the drum kit, made a few minor adjustments and asked what the first song was. So far, so good, I thought. This guy's a professional. No chatter, no bullshit, just shut up and play. But then I was told I was to give this guy directions - where the verses and choruses were, when the song was about to end and so forth. A little concerned, I began playing the first song anyway and Sigtryggur began to play along - at a markedly slower rhythm.

At precisely twelve o'clock, Sigtryggur put down his sticks and said, "Time's up." He chatted briefly with us as he packed up, thanked us for the session and left, only to come back a few seconds later to borrow gas money.

Sigtryggur has paired up with Iceland's only tabla player, Steingrímur Guðmundsson, to bring forth a music project never seen before. Steingrímur, as the project is called, could be lumped into the "world music" category by the careless, although such a generalization wouldn't do this project justice. True, it makes use of rhythms and voices

from around the world, but it also includes "found material" - answering machine messages will sometimes act as vocals. The overall effect of listening to their CD, Dialog, is that one is hearing a collage.

I met up with the pair to talk about the origins of this project, and the process it entails.

How did the two of you get together?

"Steingrímur owned a drum shop that I used to visit back in 1989 and '90," says Sigtryggur, "and we were, and still are, big fans of world music. Steingrímur had been studying the tabla for years at that point. When the Sugarcubes folded, we put together a band called the Millionaires (with Páll Óskar) and later on, we created a concept band which was a 14-piece orchestra where none of the musicians were playing the instrument they had been trained on. These things were fun, but the more we got to talking about music, the more we wanted to come up with something like what Steingrímur is now.

"In the spring of 2002 we started recording, here in Iceland. Then I moved to Holland and Steingrímur would fly out to record with me. There was a refugee camp near where I lived, and I would record singers there who were from Africa and the Middle East. It was actually a Dutch teacher who introduced me to the first singer we recorded at that camp, which was called Crailo. We dedicated a song to that camp."

So what is Steingrímur?

"Every song begins with the groove - drums and percussion," Steingrímur says, "I wanted to take Indian rhythms and morph them into something different, something different than the way tablas are normally played. There's one song that actually started out as punk on tablas - 'I Don't Get It!'"

"The vocals for that song are from a series of recordings of the comedian Jonathan Winters, who would leave bizarre messages on his manager's answering machine," adds Sigtryggur, "That's how the process was: we'd find vocals which matched that groove."

Finding things which match the groove covers a lot of ground, apparently. Included in the recordings are Inuit breath singing, Pygmy songs, oud and sithar playing, a Polish "rapper/singer" and old Icelandic "rímur", as well as the singers recorded at the Crailo refugee camp. All this recorded material was made to fit the pre-recorded grooves and was, in Sigtryggur's words, "edited to hell and back. But still, there's a red thread running through all of the songs, a common tone which unites them all."

Would you consider this world music? Would it be of interest to non-drummers?

"Yes I do think this'll be of interest to non-drummers," says Sigtryggur, "The music is so varied and engaging. And I myself, even though I'm a drummer and I can appreciate listening to some good rhythms from time to time, I'm still sick of drum nerds, making drum circles on the beach. It drives me crazy."

"What is world music?" asks Steingrímur, "It's just music. People get scared when they hear the term 'world music' - they think it's not for them"

"I think world music is a record store phenomenon," jokes Sigtryggur, "I mean, you need someplace to put all that music, and it all gets lumped together under one category."

"American pop music comes from so-called world music," adds Steingrímur, "from African rhythms and European folk songs."

"You know, you'll often see some guy onstage with his laptop, tweaking buttons," says Sigtryggur. Maybe he has a guitar with him too. But I think this is the first time there's ever been two drummers onstage with a mixer. It'd be great if we could have completely live shows, but the logistics of getting all these different people from around the world - or from beyond the grave - to play onstage together makes it impossible. All the same, I don't think anything like this has ever been done before."

You can check out more about Steingrímur at www.smekkleysa.net/steingrimgur



PICKS MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE

Bar 11, September 23rd, 22:00

GUDKRIST

Twice, sometimes three times a year, the greatest guitarist Iceland has produced, God Christ, decides to play in public. Now in his late forties, he has been mostly absent from the music scene for the past 18 years, except for contributing guitar tracks on albums by master Megas. Instead of playing guitar he has concentrated his energies on cosmic and subnuclear harmonies. His best known works are with band KUKL whose vocalist was Björk and earlier with band ÞEYR, one of the first Icelandic bands to receive any attention abroad. His least known work is perhaps an 11 track unreleased album he recorded with Björk back in 1986. He will be performing songs by most of his previous bands, along with some new compositions and arrangements of the old masters, among them Bach and Wagner. No Admission.

Grand Rokk, September 18th, 22:00

WORM IS GREEN & AMPOP

"It's a music of genuine, graceful wonder, like múm engineered by pole while Björk nods her seal of approval in the background". This was a reaction in one of the bigger music magazines in the UK after the release of Ampops 7. Well, if Grapevine was a band, we would like such a review. Worm is Green are no amateurs themselves and have amongst many good things, released a memorably good cover of "Love will tear us apart". Good stuff!

Austurbæjarbíó, September 19th, 20:00

BLONDE REDHEAD

Blonde Redhead comes to Iceland in support of their newest release, Misery Is a Butterfly. Japanese front woman, Kazu Makino, bedazzles with loopy vocals. Joined by Italian twins Simone and Amedeo Pace, the trio creates a stripped-down, dramatic sound but inevitably a very infectious groove. Tickets are available at 12 Tónar for kr. 3500.

Gaukur á Stöng, September 4th, 23:30

BREAKBEAT. IS

Dom & Roland is here, for the third time and though the name might mislead he is just one guy. Dom & Roland is one of the bigger names in drum & bass and has been at it for around ten years having released three albums on Moving Shadow label alone. His latest work Chronology has received raving reviews. Opening for Dom & Roland are the Breakbeat.is DJ's Kalli, Lelli, and Gunni Ewok. The fun starts at midnight.

Grand Rokk, September 10th, 22:00

DREP 6 SAKTMÓÐIGUR

Band Drep is new, in Iceland. It was founded in Denmark a few years back, but recently all of its members moved to Iceland. Among them is guitarist/bassist Flosi of HAM fame. Band Saktmóðigur were founded in a little town called Laugarvatn in south Iceland about 10 years ago. The Janitor of the very building Saktmóðigur started rehearsing remembers their first year of rehearsals; "it was the most terrible noise I'd ever heard and for the first couple of times I heard them I thought something had crashed into the building". Since then Saktmóðigur have only become better and nowadays they are a terrific live experience.



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Ego: the fine art of resurfacing

by H.A.Jónsson

Arguably, one of the highlights of Reykjavík's recent so-called Culture Night was the reunion of Egó – one of the biggest Icelandic rock acts of the early to mid-'80s. Then and now, led by Bubbi Morthens – the Icelandic Springsteen, if one must draw up any kind of in-the-ballpark comparison – Egó recorded three uneven albums between 1982 and '84. Their strongest effort, without a doubt, is their second, "Ímynd" (a wordplay, of sorts, the title could be translated both as "Image" as well as "In Focus"), which contains one of their best-loved anthems "Fjöllin Hafa Vakað" ("The Mountains Have Stayed Awake"), which still receives frequent radio airplay today. But Egó isn't Bubbi's first band to be resurrected two decades after it disbanded. A few years back, Utangarðsmenn (or the Outsiders, as they were poorly introduced to the, uh, outside world), Bubbi's first proper band, toured the country to mixed reviews and not-so-muted accusations of selling out. Originally having led the Icelandic punk/new wave explosion of the late '70s/early '80s, which, lest we forget, also bore and bred our beloved Björk

in the new millenium middle-aged Utangarðsmenn mostly seemed to frighten pensioners and small children alike with their dated (this was prior to 9/11) cold war choruses a la "Þið munuð öll, þið munuð öll, þið munuð öll...deyja!" ("You're all going to, you're all going to, you're all going to...die!"). Clearly, their timing wasn't right.

Egó, however, was always a much more sophisticated affair than Utangarðsmenn. They also had better tunes and many of the lyrics were barking mad, a fact not entirely lost on Bubbi today who blames the heavy substance abuse which also tore the band apart in the end. But Bubbi & Co. claim this reunion, which debuted during the banking holiday weekend celebrations in the Westman Islands earlier this summer, is no one night stand; they're here to stay this time around and have even threatened a new album sometime in the not-too-distant future.

But the Culture Night concert was Egó's first concert appearance in the nation's capital for roughly twenty years. The all-too-short set opened with a fine cover of the Clash's fantastic faux reggae "The

Guns of Brixton". So far so good. Thereafter the classics followed fast and furiously: "Stórir Strákar Fá Raflost"; "Móðir"; a legitimate cover of Utangarðsmenn's anti-nuclear anthem "Hiroshima" (frightened children included) and, of course, "Fjöllin Hafa Vakað". A good time was had by everyone, which was concluded with a countdown to the fabulous fireworks display. As with nearly all reunions from the Eagles to the Sex Pistols, there's always something a little sad about middle-aged ex-rebels trying to recapture lost youth – and, in the process, balance their bank accounts – although, needless to add, there wouldn't be a platform for such things unless the public didn't demand their fix of nostalgia as well. There's also the embarrassing matter of revisiting old themes in the tradition of "I hope I die before I get old", "I can't get no satisfaction" and "Rebel Rebel", which can prove to be a tad difficult to get through gracefully. Few have succeeded shamelessly.

Several days after the successful affair, Bubbi himself claimed that warm August night by the harbour to be Egó's finest moment in the

live arena. It most certainly was their biggest – an estimated crowd of 80.000 attended. As for them being able to top their classic "Ímynd" LP – the verdict is still out.



Nonetheless, their afterlife has just been prolonged.

MUSIC and NIGHTLIFE LISTINGS : september 3 - september 30

Music and nightlife events usually start around 21:00, unless otherwise stated. Pubs close at 01:00 on weekdays and much, much later on weekends. For those just wanting to party, the pubs and clubs don't get crowded until after midnight on weekends, although Thursday is a semi-official night out.

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 3

Dubliners: Band Spilafiklarnir plays covers
Gaukur á Stöng: Bands: Spilabandið Runólfur & Oxford. DJ Master.
Amsterdam: Coverband "Sex Volt" plays
Sirkus: DJ Andri
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Pravda Club: DJ Áki Pain
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Hverfisbar: DJ Doktorinn
Prikió: DJ Gísli Galdur
Kaffibarinn: DJ KGB
Kapital: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot
Café 22: DJ Matti
Kaffi List: DJ Palli Maus
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
Vegamót: DJ's Erna & Ellen
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Mojito Club: Lounch music
Café Culture: Nix/Noite band plays
Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour. Downst.: Live coverband

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 4

Kapital: Back to school: DJ Gummi Gonzalez
Gaukur á Stöng: Breakbeat.is night; DJ Dom & Roland & DJ Ewok
Amsterdam: Coverband "Sex Volt" plays
Pravda Club: DJ Áki Pain
Pravda Barinn: DJ Brynjar Már
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Hverfisbar: DJ Doktorinn
Kaffi List: DJ Heidi
Nasa: DJ Ísi
Café Culture: DJ Kristín
Sirkus: DJ Maggi Legó
Kaffibarinn: DJ Natalie
Café 22: DJ Palli Maus
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
Prikió: DJ's Daði & Jói
Vegamót: DJ's KGB & Jóri
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Mojito Club: Lounch music
Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour. Downst.: Live coverband

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 5

Grand Rokk: Band Indigo and solo artist Siggí Ármann's play. Siggí Ármann is Sigmundur's favorite and last year the whole band showed up and played with him.
Café Rósenberg: Band; Misery Loves Company plays stuff of their own along with a few Tom Waits numbers.
Nasa: DJ Ísi
Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs
Nelly's: Troubadour Night

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 6

Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirs
Nelly's: Troubadour Night

TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 7

Café Rósenberg: Charitygíg: KK, Ellen Kristjáns and band Santiago
Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Dubliners: Troubadour Th Fitzgerald

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 8

Café Rósenberg: A five piece danish Jazz.
Kaffibarinn: DJ Benni
Kapital: DJ Mezziah
Sirkus: DJ Rósa
Prikió: Live music
Dubliners: Troubadour BT
Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Pravda Barinn: University night, beer for 350ISK

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 9

Café Victor: 1664 Night
Café Culture: Band BB Trío
Kaffi List: Band Spilabandið Runólfur plays
Grand Rokk: Bands LÍkn & Nr.O
Café Rósenberg: Bluesman John Mitchell plays
Prikió: DJ Biggi from band Maus
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Sirkus: DJ Einar Sonic
Café Sólón: Green room session; DJ's Tommi White & Andrés
Jón Forseti: Karaoke night
Dubliners: Troubadour BT
Hverfisbar: Troubadour duet Bítlarnir
Kapital: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Nelly's: Troubadour Night

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 10

Prikió: 21:00 Búðarbandið. 23:00 DJ KGB
Café Rósenberg: Band Hraun, see picks
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Kaffibarinn: DJ Árni E
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Hverfisbar: DJ Doktorinn
Kapital: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot
Felix: DJ Le Shef
Amsterdam: DJ Steini
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
Pravda Club: DJ Valdi
Grand Rokk: Bands Drep and Sagtmóðigur play, see picks for details.
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Nelly's: Icelandic popmusic night & beer drinking competition
Gaukur á Stöng: Jack Live: Live rock bands.
Café Culture: Jazz gíg
Mojito Club: Lounch music
Ari í Ögri: Troubadour duet Acoustics
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour. Downst.: Live coverband
Dubliners: Vocalist Ruth Reginalds makes her debut after recent plastic surgery

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 11

Amsterdam: Band Buff plays covers
Café Rósenberg: Band Hraun play fun stuff
Gaukur á Stöng: Coverband "Á Móti Sóli" plays
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Felix: DJ Doktorinn
Kapital: DJ Gummi Gonzalez
Kaffibarinn: DJ Kári
Sirkus: DJ KGB
Hverfisbar: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot
Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
Pravda Club: DJ Valdi
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Nasa: Icelands premium popband NyDönsk plays tonight, unlike many Icelandic popbands, they are actually good.
Grand Rokk: Nix Nolte band plays tonight
Ari í Ögri: Troubadour duet Acoustics
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour. Downst.: Live coverband
Dubliners: Vocalist Ruth Reginalds makes her debut after recent plastic surgery

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 12

Prikió: DJ Biggi from band Maus
Dubliners: Troubadour Andy Garcia

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 13

Dubliners: Troubadour Andy Garcia

TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 14

Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Dubliners: Troubadour Th Fitzgerald

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 15

Prikió: Live Music
Dubliners: Troubadour BT
Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Pravda Barinn: University night, beer for 350ISK

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 16

Café Victor: 1664 Night
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Prikió: DJ Rósa
Café Sólón: Green room session; DJ's Tommi White & Andrés
Jón Forseti: Karaoke night
Dubliners: Troubadour BT
Nelly's: Troubadour Night

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 17

Nelly's: Band "Box of Rocks" plays tonight
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Pravda Club: DJ Áki Pain
Kaffibarinn: DJ Árni E
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Prikió: DJ Daði
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Felix: DJ Doktorinn
Kapital: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot
Sirkus: DJ Maggi Legó
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Amsterdam: Rockband 101 plays covers
Gaukur á Stöng: The FM Hnakkí gathering; DJ Paul Oscar, Love Guru and Nylon
Dubliners: The Romanoff band
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour
Downst.: Live coverband

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 18

Café Culture: Band Nix/Noite plays
Grand Rokk: Bands Worm is Green and Ampop play tonight, see picks for details
Nelly's: Beer drinking competition, finals
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Pravda Club: DJ Áki Pain
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Felix: DJ Doktorinn
Kapital: DJ Gummi Gonzalez
Prikió: DJ Jói
Sirkus: DJ Kári
Kaffibarinn: DJ KGB
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Nasa: Irish folk song band Paper play
Amsterdam: Rockband 101 plays covers
Dubliners: The Romanoff band
Ari í Ögri: Troubadours Halli & Kalli
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour. Downst.: Live coverband

SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 19

Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar V
Nelly's: Troubadour Night

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 20

Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar V
Nelly's: Troubadour Night

TUESDAY

SEPTEMBER 21

Café Rósenberg: Musician Rúnar Þór plays Cohen songs
Dubliners: Troubadour Th Fitzgerald

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 22

Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur
Prikió: Live Music
Dubliners: Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva
Nelly's: Troubadour Night
Pravda Barinn: University night, beer for 350ISK

THURSDAY

SEPTEMBER 23

Café Victor: 1664 Night
Bar 11: 22:00 Guitar genius Godkríst from bands KUKL and PEYR plays, see picks for details
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Kaffibarinn: DJ Frosti
Sirkus: DJ Kári
Jón Forseti: Karaoke night
Dubliners: Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva
Café Rósenberg: Vocalist Andrea Gylfa and guitarist Gummi P play and sing tonight

FRIDAY

SEPTEMBER 24

Klink og bank artist workplace: Bands; Skak-kamanage and Nix/Noite play
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Pravda Club: DJ Áki Pain
Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi Disco
Café Victor: DJ DeeJay
Felix: DJ Doktorinn
Prikió: DJ Kári
Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur
Sirkus: DJ KGB
Kapital: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot
Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900
Amsterdam: DJ Steini
Café Sólón: DJ Svalli
De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's
Café Rósenberg: Mike and Danny Pollock and he Smokey Bay blues band play.
Dubliners: The Little Drummerboys band
Celtic Cross: Upst.: Troubadour
Downst.: Live coverband

SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 25

Gaukur á Stöng: Band Buff plays covers.
Amsterdam: Band Oxford plays covers
Pravda Barinn: DJ Atli Skemmtanalögga
Pravda Club: DJ Áki Pain



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A WELL-LAID MAN IS A HAPPY MAN

by Beerman

illustration: Þorsteinn Davíðsson



Do girls' breasts grow bigger in the summer? Are they made out of some sort of material that expands by volume when heated, like water does when it freezes? Goddamn this heatwave. How are you supposed to think about anything else when it's a pair of perky ones this way, a pair of bouncy ones that, a pair of pretty ones all over.

You go over to Bæjarins bestu with hot dog on your mind and by the time it's your turn you're no longer responding to commands from your belly region. Even cold beer in the hot sun doesn't make you any more contented. Your beer gets hot as your heart turns cold just thinking about all the rejection waiting out there if you let it anywhere near you. One false move, and there it is, noses turned up, lips quickly moving away, pupils suddenly turning merciless and small. I hope it's not true that your life flashes before your eyes when you die. That's all I'd see when I watch the playback. An endless succession of rejections. I wanted to be a writer once. A poet. An artiste of some sort. When you spend all your time hanging around

bars, you feel more productive if you can convince yourself you're searching for inspiration. But I couldn't take it anymore. The pressure got to me. I'd spend all day being rejected by publishers and all evening being rejected by women. I had to quit either one or the other. So I abandoned my artistic career. It all comes down to the pursuit of happiness. And the pursuit of happiness is the pursuit of sex. A well-laid man is a happy man, an unlaid man is unhappy, no matter what else is going on. Money, power, poetry, art. They're all just shortcuts to sex. Of course, if you have good looks, you don't need all that. Which is why the beautiful never amount to much. But at least they're happy. Will this goddamn summer never

end? At least in the winter you can take some joy in the fact that everyone else is miserable too. Except the beautiful, of course. But at least they don't flaunt their happiness quite as openly. Fuck 'em. Ah, but if only you could... Goddamn waitresses make you lose your appetite every stinkin' time. Come over all jolly and bouncy, there to take your order, but if you asked for what you really wanted their smile quickly fades away. That's why no one ever says anything they really mean. And sunglasses make everyone look cool, cause you can't tell what they're thinking. The window to the soul obscured, everyone's a mysterious stranger in the sun. Will this goddamn summer never end?

albums

SEPTEMBER

The independent music store 12 Tónar will be releasing **Mugison's Niceland soundtrack** in early September. They will also release **Þórir's debut album, I Believe in This**, which is said to be in the style of Bonnie Prince Billy, Eliot Smith, Nick Drake and others.

Sónet will be releasing four albums. They start off with singer-songwriter **KK's album Upphafid (The Beginning)**, comprised of previously unreleased recordings he made in Sweden before his debut album Lucky One. The album includes Professor Washboard on percussion and Derrick Big Walker on harmonica. Punk band **Fræbblarnir** will celebrate their 25th anniversary by releasing an album of new material. An album featuring the songs of playwright and lyricist Ólafur Haukur Símonarson will also come out at the same time. The irrepressible Heiða will be among the performers as well as the aforementioned KK. Sónet's month finishes up with **Gunnar Kvaran and Elisabet Waage** releasing an album of classical works by **Schubert, Bach and others**.

Skífan will be releasing two compilations, **Meira sitt að aftan, sequel to Sitt að aftan**, a sorely needed double compilation of 80's hits, none of them Icelandic. Later in the month we will also get to see a compilation of children's songs, called **Besta barnaplatan í öllum heiminum**. Their Christmas season will kick off somewhere around the beginning of October with the debut album by **Pop Idol Kalli Bjarni**. All the songs are new, a few of them penned by the man himself, and the summer hit Gleðitimar is said to be indicative of the overall mood. Bad Taste could not be reached, but rumour has it that **Jan Mayen's** long awaited debut album, to be titled **Jan Mayen: Home of the Indeed**, will finally surface.

the album

BJÖRK

MEDULLA



Entering uncharted territory

In a recent interview, Björk said that now rock has turned 50, it has in a way become classical music itself. Where, then, does it go from here? Medulla may offer a clue. In an age where music is increasingly preprogrammed with the aid of computers and market research, and autotuners can make any starlet with a pretty face stay in tune, the only logical course of action may be to go back to the purity of the human voice. So Medulla, an album using only voices, is as cutting edge as it gets.

Perhaps in order to go forward, music must first go back. Past do-wop, past barbershop quartets, past medieval hymns and Viking rímur, past even Homer singing his epics a cappella. Medulla seems like the sound of a lost civilisation. If they had pop music in Atlantis, this would be it. This is not easy listening. Who Is It and Triumph of the Heart are the only songs that even vaguely sound like they could ever be heard on the radio. It is not an album to listen to alone at night. It sounds like it could at any moment bring something out of the dark. But it is fresh and it is exciting and it sounds unlike anything you have ever heard before. Which is just what music should be, but very rarely is.

The creative independence Björk won with her brilliant pop album Debut seems to have finally reached full fruition. Whereas most would try to follow up success by trying to repeat it, Björk enters uncharted territory. Where we see centuries, she blinks her eyes. With a palmful of stars she throws them like dice on the table.

If our civilisation were to disappear overnight, and this were all that remained, it might not give an accurate picture of it. It would sound so much more exciting.

Valur Gunnarsson

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Harvesting the Fertile Imagination: Múm Comes Home

by Jónas Moody

We are on the brink of catastrophe in the backyard of 12 Tónar music shop. The crowd is growing anxious as Múm's singer, Kristín, has yet to arrive, the sky is threatening a downpour of biblical proportions and the band's million and one wires and gizmos strewn all over the grass make the rather romantic notion of singing in the rain a fiery death-wish. Like a superhero in a vintage dress, Kristín comes swooping in with her accordion in tow and out of the chaos rises the subduing strains of Green Grass of Tunnel. Múm have grown in size.

With the addition of a percussionist, brass player and string player they have become a veritable orchestra. But orchestrated they are not. The stage is rife with movement, players moving to different instruments; Örvar drops his mouth piano and acrobats to the metallophone negotiating wires, tentatively balanced guitars, and other musicians knelt down on the ground. It's not so much bedlam as kids playing around in the sandbox. Kristín moves to the back corner, smashes herself against the wall, and coos into a telephone-cum-microphone. It would be pretentious in any other context, but the balmy sounds emitted from this seeming turmoil are nothing but earnest.

"I think sometimes people are disappointed because we are not putting on a show. We are not characters," says Gunni, one of the founding members of the band. "Our music is of the nature so that people will imagine stuff...we don't want to restrict the mood, just give people space to create their own environments." To this end, Bæjarbíó was the ideal venue for Múm's final performance on their world tour. The band stood

in front of a blank movie screen creating a soundtrack for an unseen film. The stage was cluttered with instruments as before, but this time there were other objects like a poodle lamp, tea candles, an old, peddle-driven sewing machine, and two lovely, serpentine Victrolas placed on a pedestal in the back, which have become the band's ad hoc mascots. What really cluttered up granny's attic was not the curios, but the sheer number of people who now comprise Múm. Despite the number of musicians, the band manages to maintain a very simple sound. "With a lot of people, we can concentrate and do small things. It makes a better soundscape."

The soundscape does become rather spartan at times, but never truly disengages the listener. "Sometimes the best way to make music like ours is to leave something out for others to fill in," Gunni explains. Múm's music is certainly varied, especially with their latest album, Summer make good. Songs are part lullaby, part dirge, part sea shanty, but what marks them all is how emotive they are. In the dark of the theater or the

intimacy of headphones, their music becomes a very personal experience capable of stirring a lot of emotion. And when the oddball in the audience hoots and claps at the beginning of a song or shouts out a request, he breaks a real connection established between the musicians and the listeners--and he gets the stinky eye from Kristín. The future of the group seems rather uncertain. There is a lot of interest in scoring a film, and Örvar and Kristín will go to Prague for film school next year. Gunni will stay in Iceland to pursue his own projects. "I'm happy to be [in Iceland] now. This is a strange place because it's so small, but that's really the beauty of it. At certain point you have to leave and see what's outside. Then when you come back you just know there is something really special about home." But there seems to be no doubt that the group will at some point come together again and record. "We are changing but it's not a linear change. I can't predict what we will make next; I just know we are getting better at imagining something and then making it happen."



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FISH AND PRIDE

FRY AND THE FAMILY STONE

by Ölvir Gíslason and Kjartan Guðmundsson

Studies have shown that a surprisingly large number of men fantasise about having beautiful women dress them in an apron and chef's hat. We can almost guarantee that the only place in Reykjavík where you can make that dream come true is Café Ópera in Lækjargata.

Grapevine's correspondents arrived early in the evening so we were practically the only guests there, but that would change soon. The first things that greeted us when we came up the stairs boded well for the evening ahead: A life-size statue of an Afro-American clown and a vintage jukebox. We were seated by the window in the pleasant dining room, so we could enjoy the spectacular view which included two of Reykjavík's major landmarks: The hot-dog stand on the Lækjartorg square and "Núllið", Reykjavík's only proper public convenience (urinating is complementary but you have to pay a small fee for more extensive operations).

One of us lit a cigarette while we leafed through the appetizing menus and then came the first shock of the evening: smoking is completely forbidden in the restaurant. The smokers in the

group were relieved, though, when they were informed that they were allowed to smoke in the lounge upstairs. While there, we chatted with the Swedish engineer Inge Gunnar Jonsson, who complained bitterly about being relegated to the attic to satisfy his addiction. When Swedes complain of over-regulation you know that something is wrong. The homely wood-panelled lounge itself was extremely cosy, though, and in fact reminded us of the editor's home, the only difference being the lack of hairballs, empty beer cans and stacks of John Cougar Mellencamp CDs (Bruce Springsteen, goddammit. How often do I have to say this?-Ed).

When we returned downstairs, it was time to order the starters. One of us went for the cream of wild goose – delicious, although a little to salty (strange, since the soup had nothing to



hide, taste-wise), another tried the "foie gras," French duck liver (or "Freedom duck liver", as he insisted on calling it), which was stunningly delicious and melted in the mouth like butter. Much to our surprise, our editor, who was celebrating his birthday, ordered the only vegetable starter on the menu: eggplant and parmesan tart, served with smoked cheese, arugula and tomato "confit." We suspected that perhaps he was on a mission to iron out the wrinkles in his birthday suit. As the evening wore on, it became increasingly clear that these suspicions were completely groundless.

Café Ópera's speciality is their "Hot Rock Fantasy": The diners fry their meal themselves on piping hot granite rocks. There are two options: Meat Fantasy (cuts of beef, lamb and pork) and Fish Fantasy. At first we thought that the latter had something to do with Fish, former lead singer of Marillion. Guðrún and Tanja, our astoundingly gorgeous waitresses, were quick to correct us: The Fish Fantasy consists of various fresh seafood: Salmon, tuna, scallop, lobsters and shrimp. We ordered a combination of the two fantasies, Guðrún and Tanja dressed us in aprons and chefs' hats,

and soon we were frying away. The fish and meat was fresh and tasty and was served with a baked potato filled with cream cheese, garlic butter for frying and two different sauces: Barbecue and soya. The barbecue sauce wasn't in quite the same class as the rest of the meal; a good French mustard would have been more appropriate. Dazed after this feast, we retired to the upstairs lounge for dessert and coffee. Grapevine's correspondents shared a tasting of sorbets and custards. Two obese thumbs up.

"My dream was always to become a slave to an arabic king"



by Tero Mustonen

Rainy Thursday night washes Akureyri clean. My friend and I are thinking of finding a new place to dine. Word of mouth tells of a new interesting place up in Öxnadalur, 20 minutes away from Akureyri on the main road.

We jump into car and drive to Háls, the last house on the right, in the valley among the dramatic mountains of Öxnadalur. Close by, the Home of the Winds glacier huffs and puffs, perhaps watching us. Stimulated by the dramatic scenery we start to talk of Icelandic ghosts and the hidden people...

"It is business doing pleasure with

you" says the sign on the left as we turn from the main road and enter the restaurant yard. Rain intensifies. Inside the host Guðveig Eyglóardóttir, a native of Borganes, welcomes us warmly. Born to a family of seven children, she has had extensive training in cooking in Snæfellsnes before renting this house in Öxnadalur as a restaurant that was opened 26th June 2004.

a slave to an Arabic King," says the colourful character that operates this bizarre but interesting little restaurant. The house is filled with Arabic rugs, Persian music playing softly in the background, and bizarre items referring to the Arab world around the dining hall. One half expects late great qawwali singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan from Pakistan or one of his relatives to show up and do an improvised gig here in the embrace of the mountains of Öxnadalur.

Guðveig lives in nature and from nature. As a fisherwoman, she gets local trout from the streams, berries from the mountains and seafood by supporting the local fishermen. In the little house in the mountains, the best thing is the hostess herself. A colourful and straightforward personality, Guðveig takes care of you like no other on the ring road. You can reach Halastjarna at halastjarna@simnet.is or by phone at 4617997.

We are treated to a four-course dinner, including a soup with shrimp, squid, scallops, crowberry & ice cream and coffee. Throw in some wasabi and you start to get a good sense of the evening's offerings. The menu rotates; actually there is no menu. The dishes change daily, depending on the seasonal cycle of the year and the moods of Guðveig. Meat dishes such as a whale course are available later in the year "as the nights get longer and darker." The evening is crowned with home-brewed "Fíflavin", a secret local wine product made out of dandelion. The wine is on the sweet side, as is the hostess. All this for 3900 ISK, depending again on her mood.

"My dream was always to become

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A Farewell to Arms

This is the cliff ...
On this cliff
the empire built a military base.
Land was settled with helicopters,
radar telescopes, buildings and weapons,
everything that befits
a military base on the rim of the world.
Yet it soon become clear to all
that the task was hopeless,
that the cliff could not be threaded
on to the chain of the age
that now enclosed the world.
But there was no stopping:
the base's construction had to be finished.
And it would be operated
with the main aim
of abandoning it again.

Einar Már Guðmundsson

Death whistles on the wind

Death whistles on the wind
while bums scrounge
in the alley.

Hallgríms church sits
on the hill
like a cherry.

Esja gazes upon the harbor
with sad blue lazy eyes.

Hysterical telephones
jump scream twitch buzz
through the city.

Old lady pulls pop cans
out of trash.

It's raining on Lækjartorg.

Michael Dean Odin Pollock

The Game

Many desire me as I desire you,

Mirages just out of reach.

Everchanging and transparent walls

Nevertheless very real.

Infiltrated only by seeming indifference;

Filling the air with careless laughter,

Relishing in being alive.

Effortlessly cast a spell on others.

With you will the same be true?

For the obsessed there is but one thing to do:

Send a spark of interest, look away...

Secretly wait for you.

Gréta Ósk Óskarsdóttir

down

(drum-solo) a key turned in a lock and the door
squeeks when she enters and
puts down her purse (drum-solo) closes
says hello and looks into the living room at the sofa
(drum-solo) the dry eyes and it has
faded (drum-solo) and she strokes its
cheeks mumbles something in agreement
(drum-solo) decisively pulls into the bathroom chops
it up and it is swiftly (drum-solo) flushed down
with all the sensitivity of a goldfish (drum-solo)

Steinar Bragi

...and the word was Clint

Much to everyone's surprise
the haiku stormed the fields
as mad as a hatter,
wielding a sharp blade
and started slashing metre
left and right.

A myriad of free-verse poetry
suffered defeat
epistles slain against the walls
bled caesurae out of their gullets.

A couplet for love
sopped its cheeks with tears
lonesome on a dirty cot,
soiled with last nights stint,
it reeked of lies and
yet it died with ease.

Parallels, opposites,
recurrences,
palaver and foot,
overstatements
and understatements
groaned in beat
to the roar of demise
when a maddening
Japanese metre
rode through the fields
cross-legged
with one word over the other
in a mood of nearly insolent
Calm.

Finally, the haiku itself dropped to its knees
roared out a cry of war,
raised the sword high above its head
and drove the blade through its own abdomen.

Eiríkur Norðdal

Night

Night, keep quiet, night,
and don't let your children expect too much of you.

Admittedly you have wrapped yourself in mysterious drapes
And seduced many a maid and lad.
Admittedly you have comforted, put to sleep and calmed.

But day will come, and expects so much of its children.
It will also strip off those mysterious drapes
That you have wrapped yourself in, night, tonight.

Björg Elín Finnsdóttir

Lit. Theory 101

When every prayer reeks of pretension
And every thought seems to be stillborn
When reading books won't bring you redemption
And burning them won't keep you warm
When every play is within a play
And every critic seems to be right
When the stars are just a mile away
But even the darkness won't make them bright
When every picture is perfectly painted
And you can no longer tell it from the wall
When every window is clear and untainted
But you cannot tell what's in or out at all

Valur Gunnarsson

The Stairway 2004 elections

by Hassan Harazi



It was the Gothenburg Post that famously remarked on Iceland's "democracy deficit". I can say that this all completely unfounded. I have finally been granted the right to vote in an Icelandic election, not the Alþingi, City Council or Presidential ones, but one of far greater significance, What Colour to Paint the Stairway 2004. The two candidates already fielded are: 94534/6530/wt Cream and 85746/8465/ew Beige. I have attempted to field two of my own candidates, 87079/5632/fg Red and 57832/9341/hw Green, who if elected would form an alliance on the 'Brightening Things Up' and 'It'll Make a Nice Change' platform. These two candidates have already been disqualified on the grounds of 'rocking the boat' and 'you're just being stupid'. In the end I was

unable to cast my ballot due to a sudden case of voter apathy, but in the end Cream was declared the winner. Disbelief was voiced at the failure of Beige to be elected, and in a hastily convened late night crisis meeting the Beige candidate was duly announced the new winner. The contract for the actual painting was awarded to a company, who, although submitting a bid almost double that of all the other tenders, did have the benefit of being owned by the brother of one of the residents. I am now planning to field another one of my candidates in the forthcoming Christmas Decorations - Blinking or Non-blinking Lights Election 2004 and the Do We Need a Bigger Flagpole 2005.



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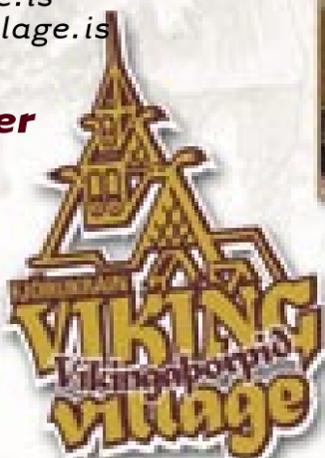
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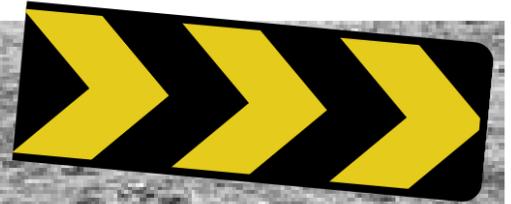
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IF YOU LOVE SOMEONE SET THEM FREE

by Robert Jackson

Large shoals of Atlantic salmon have filled the rivers that are to be found around the country's coastline. The reason they are here is to complete a life cycle that for many starts and finishes in the river. They come from the sea for one reason, and one reason alone: to breed. When they return to fresh water, the salmon stop eating and their body undergoes a change that sees it transform from a feeding machine to a breeding machine, its sole purpose to swim upstream, find a mate and a gravel bed where they can lay and fertilise their eggs. Once they reach the river their only real impediment is man. And herein lies a growing dilemma.

Is it noble to kill?

Healthy, unpolluted Icelandic rivers have provided years of sport for fishermen here and overseas. It's been good for the economy, as its created income for the significant percentage of farmers who own rivers and it's been good for the salmon, who have found themselves protected by the government from the netsmen and polluters. They have been the perfect renewable resource and while America, France, Spain, Scotland, England and several other countries have seen a wholesale decline in their salmon stocks, Iceland can be proud of its achievement in bucking a global trend. One global trend that the country should address as seriously is the matter of Catch and Release. While salmon runs have remained strong, the average catch has reduced from 40,000 fish per annum ten years ago to nearer 30,000 recently. More significantly the bigger fish, the mighty Stórlax which weigh over 20lbs, are far fewer and there are growing concerns that too many fish, particularly the Stórlax, are being killed. Warning bells are starting to ring.

Old guard vs. new

Now, Catch and Release, or Live Release as it is also known, gets fishermen around the world arguing long into the night. On one side is the old guard who will tell you that fishing is part of the hunter-gatherer's gene: that to kill is not only noble, but an essential part of the chase. They will also tell you that there are more than enough fish around and that to catch a fish and then release it is to reduce a noble sport to a humanely unacceptable one of tormenting a fish with a hook and line before releasing it. Then there is the new guard who say that to kill a fish that is on its way to spawn is unacceptable when numbers are in decline and that catching the fish and releasing it back to the wild is essential if salmon stocks are going to survive. The Rest of the World has gone Catch and Release, particularly Russia, America; where it is compulsory, and in most other countries where target release figures of at least 50% are being set by fisheries associations. Here the old guard have been hard to move, and while the Reykjavik Angling Club, one of the most successful and organised of its kind in the world, has recently encouraged catch and

release through awards and youth programmes, the country's anglers have been slow to pick it up. Last year less than 3% of fish caught were released.

Wanton destruction?

Most of the rivers are now closing after a 90 day season. The salmon have now changed colour from the bright silver of the spring and are now slack-bellied and heavy with eggs and milt (sperm), and their flesh has become virtually inedible unless smoked. The females carry over 3,000 eggs each. If they are caught they don't have the strength to put up a good fight, so they are easily reeled in. At this stage the angler has to ask himself a question: Is it better for me to return this fish to the water so that it can breed for future generations, or do I take her and her 3,000 eggs out of the water so that I may have some smoked salmon and possibly a trophy on my wall? The fact that the fisherman chooses at this stage in the season to kill what is the river's future is beyond belief. Whatever the science or statistics, to kill a river's brood stock is to be part of the species demise, wantonly destructive and jaw droppingly futile.

Clapton does it

Future salmon runs cannot be guaranteed, global warming and its effect on the salmon's food supplies while at sea cannot be reliably predicted. Releasing fish plays an increasingly important part in this process. Experience in other countries has shown that once fish stocks start to decline their demise quickly spirals out of control. The Minister of the Environment, despite widespread opposition, was courageous enough last year to put a three year ban on ptarmigan shooting. Next year perhaps similar intervention to see the release of all fish as the spawning date approaches would make good sense, particularly if fisherman aren't acting voluntarily. Most visiting fisherman from the Prince of Wales to Eric Clapton are comfortable with catch and release, and now that many Icelandic children are seeing the light, isn't about time their parents followed suit?

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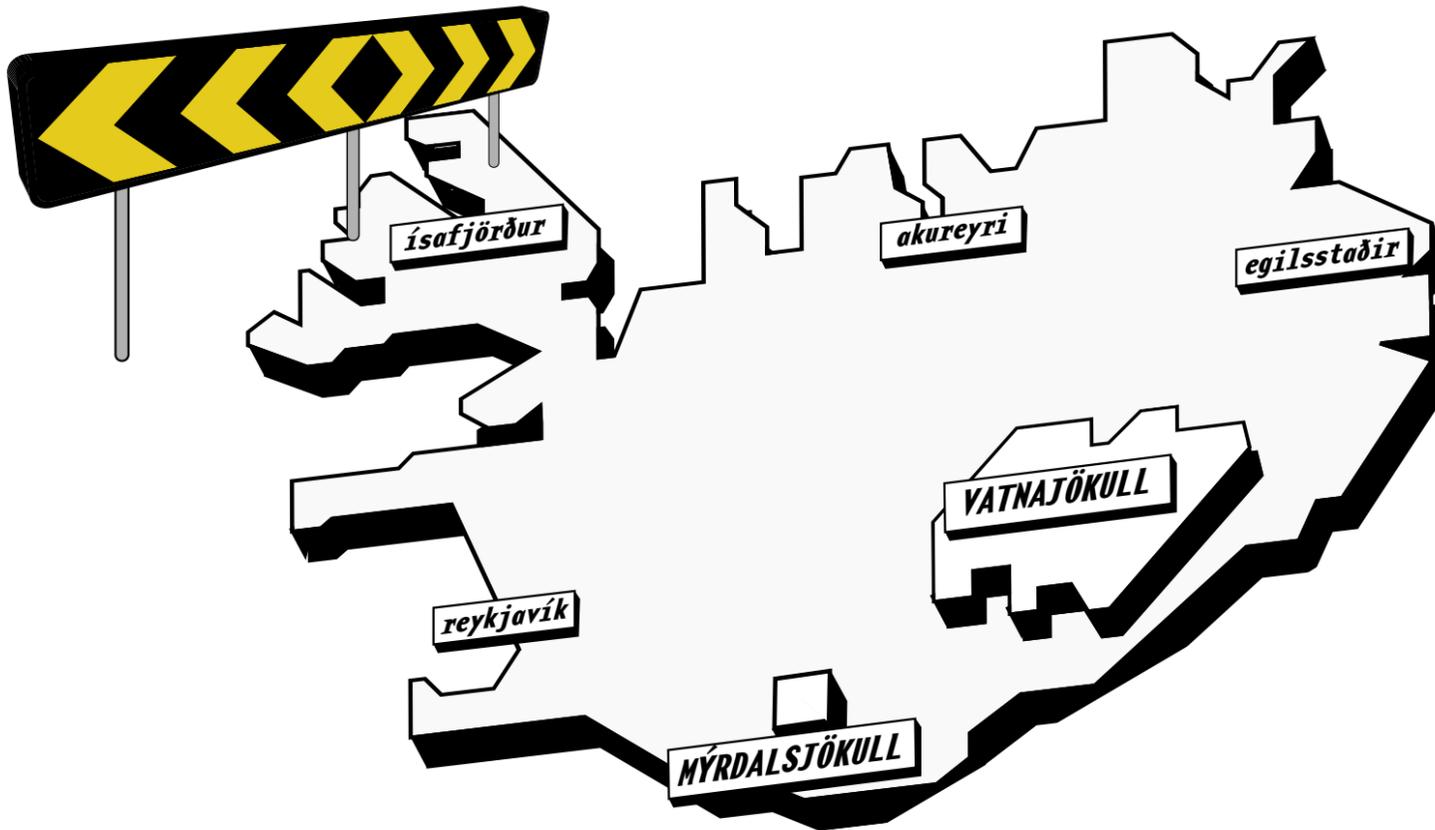
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Island Life

Þorlákshöfn: Pacific Tuna finds its way to Arctic waters

A two ton sun fish usually found in Pacific waters was hauled ashore in Þorlákshöfn. Scientists were mystified as to why it should have been swimming in a harbour close to the harbour. "It was already half dead when we found it" said a fisherman.

Þórsmörk

Rescue workers from Hella have had their hands full assisting travellers as the water has been rising rapidly. Even the rescuers heavy trucks have taken to drift in the river, but no serious difficulty has as yet resulted.

Dispatches From the Cold Seas - Maps and Dreams of a Changing Arctic

by Tero Mustonen

On a hunting trip somewhere in Kaldoaivi Wilderness area, the late great Saami hunter Aslak Uula Aikio recognized an otter that had decided to give itself to him on this occasion. Having skiiied for hours, Aikio just knew the place and time where he was to be. The right otter would be there, waiting for him. The use of dreams, spiritual and cultural sensitivity towards nature building on generations of experience of living in a place is quite common among the diverse Arctic societies.

Further south, around lake Näsijärvi, the Nuotta Seine net fishermen have carried on oral traditions, knowledge and sacred relationship with fish in Finland. Their knowledge of place-names such as the island of Pikku Otava carried information about the spawning times and proper harvest of vendace, pike perch, bram and other species that my culture has depended on for millennia.

On the coasts of the Baltic our seal hunters Martti Välimaa, Evald Geust and others would have an itching to go sealing as the rays of the spring sun indicated that it was time for a seal harvest. Older hunters would dream of the place where the seals would be found.

In sub-Arctic Canada, anthropologists like Hugh Brody documented similar local knowledge among the indigenous Dene Tha hunters of North Eastern British Columbia in the 1970s. He wrote of his experiences in a book "Maps and Dreams," explaining how the local hunters would use dreams for locating prey and paths.

Cultures based on exploitation and colonisation of the Northern parts of the planet had a quite different perception of these areas. They thought of "empty lands", of the Ultima Thule. Misconceptions have led to centuries of lack of communication across cultural divides. An example is the arrival of British explorer Captain Cook



to the western shores of Vancouver Island on Coast of Canada in 1778. He arrived in a bay and met some local people in their canoes. Locals would yell to Cook and his crew: "Nootka, Nootka!" - a warning sign of difficult conditions. After that for almost 200 years, they were known as the "Nootka Indians." It was not until the 1970s that the survivors of the cultural genocide of British Columbia, the descendants of the people that met Captain Cook, were able to convince the world that they are actually called "Nuu-Chah-Nulth", people of the sea and mountains.

Today we live in the Arctic in which a similar dynamic can be found. Renewed interest in oil and gas exploration, militarization and environmental protection without paying heed to local conditions is affecting our fishing families, the Saami reindeer herders, the Inuits, Evenkis of Siberia, Yukagir subsistence hunters, Icelandic sealers, Faroe whalers and other local communities.

In September 2003 Aikio told me: "Do not think that human beings can live without nature. Nature and

her resources are limited and if you do not understand this, then you do not understand anything." His words in my mind I wonder at the marvel of the sunset on Eyja fjord and the dispatches from the cold seas of an Arctic under change.

Tero Mustonen is a Finnish poet and a fisherman who manages Snowchange, a project to collect local observations of change across the Arctic. He is living in Akureyri, teaching at the Social and Economic Department of University of Akureyri.



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Mountain Taxicab Confessions:

by Jónas Moody

My Tires are Bigger than Yours

It's not the size of the tires; it's the motion of the ocean, right? Wrong. If you want to venture off the coast and penetrate deep into Iceland's virgin interior, you'll need big tires. Unfortunately, most Icelandic jalopies can hardly make it up Öskjublíðin, let alone a glacier, but there are a number of local outfitters who are ready and willing to take you farther than you've ever gone before. Grapevine took a trip with one of the more popular outfitters, Mountain Taxi, to see if the grass really is greener on the other side of glacier.

We are picked up at nine 9:00am in a monster truck by a rather Nordic looking fellow named Steini. It sounds like there is an entire nitroglycerin factory at work behind the dashboard and we are only idling in downtown Reykjavík. Steini is a pro at the helm of our land-berge, but he keeps a constant flow of information coming to us while we barrel out of the city. Once inside the vehicle he installs himself into an internal PA system to broadcast a steady stream of information varying from erosion to beer, from shipwrecks to acts of God, from the farming crisis to anecdotes from the Sagas, and even cheesy jokes about Icelandic forests.

Water: Falling, Gurgling, Stinking, Drinking

We make a few stops on the drive into Hvalfjörður: a ruined NATO

base, some berry-picking, a coffee shop with a makeshift museum of whaling in Iceland. This is all interesting, but I am most taken by the stairs that automatically descend when the doors to our monster truck are opened, à la Flight of the Navigator. I find it comforting the way Steini casually throws around these grandiose spans of time. "We used to have two glaciers in the Northwest, but one melted," as if talking about his pet guinea pigs. He continues with his geology lesson as we come into Reykholtisdalur, dotted with its geothermally heated greenhouses. Nearby is Barnafoss (Children's Falls), a waterfall buried among treacherous cliffs and rock-

faces, named after two children who fell to their death from the rock arch that used to stand over the falls. Afterwards we lunch at Húsafell. I recommend brown-bagging because the food is only fair, but the prices are exorbitant.

Our Landing Pad is Ice

We drive next to Stefánshellir, a hidden lava tube in the middle of a lava field. Once inside the temperature drops drastically and the welcoming scent of moldy bread pervades every chamber of the caves. We see stalactites galore and in the deepest and dankest chamber Steini tells us this is where a children's

choir festival was held not too long ago, and I am reminded of how weird a place this country is. The next stop and piece de resistance is Langjökull glacier. The road ends, but we carry on. This is the moment you wait for as the monster truck crawls over piles of rocks and sashes through pools of glacial runoff. Once on top of the glacier we amble around like cosmonauts, looking into bottomless holes and at the odd deposits of jet black silt. Steini seems quietly pleased with our wonderment. It's otherworldly on the ice and the rest of the trip is lost to its grandeur. On the way home we make stops at a large, stone cairn and also Þingvellir National Park.

We arrive home at 6:00, climb down from the monster truck, and give one last, grateful salute to Scoutmaster Steini. More than just his heroic bone structure, Steini's zealotry to show us his country, and the earnestness with which he does just that, are the reasons this trip is so very enjoyable. As Steini says, "No matter how many times I drive through here, I always see something new."

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So, we've finally managed to piece together 8 top 8's in each category, 24 in all. What do our panel of experts consider to be the greatest Icelandic albums, books and movies of all time? We decided to award 8 points for the first album on each list, seven for number two and so on down the list. So here, then, are the results of our very unscientific query.

TOP
8

TSP



Compared to albums and books, there have been comparatively few Icelandic films made. Hence, the overlap is greater here than in the other categories. To the best of Grapevine's knowledge, no comprehensive research has been made into what is the best Icelandic film ever made. However, in 2000 DV published a list of the most popular films of all time. The best film of all time, according to our research, did not fare all that well at the box office at the time, but has since attained the status of cult favourite. "Með allt á hreinu" was, however, a smash, and about 90% of ages 16 to 40 saw the film at the time. It remains the most popular Icelandic film. Fans may or may not be thrilled to know that a sequel is currently being made. Nói Albínói had not been released at the time of the DV chart. It remains a mystery to Icelanders and Swedes alike how it is impossible to go through the Swedish school system without seeing "When the Raven Flies" at least once, but it seems 70,000 Icelanders also enjoyed the privilege here in 1984, making it the 10th most popular film of all time. Friðrik Þór Friðriksson, the most eminent of Icelandic directors has two films on our list, but surprisingly neither one of these are his bigger films Devils Island (no.7 in the box office) and Angels of the Universe (no 4). Robert Douglas made one of most stunning movie debuts this country has seen with The Icelandic Dream, and Benjamin Dove is a first rate children's film.



In some of the first research conducted into what was the greatest Icelandic album of all time, Poppbókin from 1983, it emerged that "Á bleikum náttkjólum" by Megas and Spilaverk Þjóðanna was the best album ever released upon these shores. The real winner on that list, however, was Bubbi Morthens, who had made four out of 10 albums. In the book "Eru ekki allir í stuði" by eminent rock researcher Dr. Gunni, the nation gets to vote on nominations by experts and picked the then newly released "Ágætis byrjun" by Sigurrós. "Á bleikum náttkjólum" came in third after Björk's Debut. Our experts come to much the same conclusion as previous findings, Sigurrós narrowly beating Megas by a point. However, in third place we have "Halldór Laxness" by Mínus, which had not yet been released at the time of Gunni's book. Purrkur Pillnikk's "Googooplex" only made it to 21 on the 1983 list and 74 on Gunni's list, but rightly does better here. Dr. Gunni's own band SH Draumur is in 5th, 31 on his list. "Debut" fails to chart here, but both Homogenic and Post do. It would be interesting to see how "Medulla" would fare. Peyr's "Mjötviður Mær" was in 10th place in Poppbókin and 25th in Gunni. It has yet to be released in its entirety on CD.



Considering the enormous amount of books published here it is not surprising that opinions vary. In 1999 over 3,000 people participated in a query by the Book association of Iceland. "Independent People" by Halldór Laxness was chosen the best book of all time. His closest competitors were himself, who had a total of four books on the list, and football player Þorgrímur Þráinsson, best known for his campaigns against smoking. The outcome was highly contentious, as the voters seem to have been primarily small children and relatives of Þorgrímur. He did not make it onto Grapevine's list. Laxness did, with both "Gerpla" and "Salka Valka," but the brilliant "Independent People" is mysteriously absent. Just as mysteriously, there's not a single Saga on the 1999 top ten (perhaps these are not read by small children or relatives of Þorgrímur), although the classics "Njála" and "Edda" wind up on ours. The other four books are favorites of one or another of our judges, but none of them were voted for by more than one. Hence, the books from 4-8 in fact received an equal amount of points, but have been placed on the list in random order.

TSP FILMS

1. Sódóma, Reykjavík by Óskar Jónasson. Ómar Örn said: "People are obviously having fun there."
2. Með allt á hreinu (On Top) by Ágúst Guðmundsson. Margrét Örnólfsdóttir said: "Almost all the songs went straight to that place in your head where songs that will not be forgotten go to."
3. Nói Albínói (Nói Albínói) by Dagur Kári. The first part of Ari Ergis said: "Here was a genius of my own generation."
4. Hrafninn flýgur (The Raven Flies) by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson.
5. Á köldum klaka (Cold Fever) by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson. Hugleikur said: "Cool as Hell".
6. Rokk í Reykjavík by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson.
7. Íslenski draumurinn (The Icelandic Dream) by Robert Douglas.
8. Benjamín dúfa (Benjamin the Dove) by Gísli Snær. Práinn Bertelsson said: A beautiful and well made children's film that did not get the international attention it deserved.

TSP ALBUMS

1. Sigur Rós: *Ágætis byrjun*. Arnar Eggert said: "Its sheer beauty cannot be argued with."
2. Megas og Spilaverk Þjóðanna: *Á bleikum náttkjólum*. Bogi Reynisson said: "If you buy only one album in your life, make sure it's this one."
3. Mínus: *Halldór Laxness*. Freyr Eyjólfsson said: "If any music captures the zeitgeist in Iceland today it is Mínus."
4. Purrkur Pillnikk: *Googooplex*. Heiða Eiríksdóttir said: "My favourite band in the world!"
5. SH Draumur: *Goð*.
- 6-7. Björk: *Homogenic*. Gímaldin said: "A better Lars Von Trier film than the director's movies themselves."
- 6-7. Peyr: *Mjötviður mær*.
8. Björk: *Post* / Glámur og Skrámur: *Í sjöunda himni* / Hljómar: *Hljómar* / Valgeir Guðjónsson and co.: *Gaia* / Fan Houtens Kókó: *Það brakar í herra K.*

TSP BOOKS

1. Brennu-Njáls Saga, author unknown. Andri Snær said: "It might as well be the only book in the world."
2. Gerpla (Happy Warriors), by Halldór Laxness. Sjón said: "Imitating the style of the sagas, Laxness moves his hapless hero from one hilarious massacre to the next."
3. Edda, by Snorri Sturluson.
4. Salka Valka, by Halldór Laxness. Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir said: "The final sentences still make me cry."
5. Ljúgðu Gosi, Ljúgðu (Lie Pinocchio, Lie), by Steinar Bragi. Eiríkur Norðdal said: "A divine kick in the plebeian groin of society."
6. Sú kvalda ást sem hugarfylginn geyma (Torments in the Chamber of Mind), by Guðbergur Bergsson. Kristján B. Jónasson said: "One of the few Icelandic books about love."
7. Sunnudagskvöld til mánudagsmorguns (From Sunday-Morning till Monday-Evening), by Ásta Sigurðardóttir. Elísabet Jökulsdóttir said: "I swallowed it as if I had been hungry for ages."
8. Ævisaga Jesú (The Life of Jesus), by Ásmundur Guðmundsson. Jón Gnarr said: "Christianity lessons at their best"



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TOP
8

MOVIES

by Þórarinn Þórarinnsson



Þórarinn Þórarinnsson is a journalist at *Fréttablaðið*. He is one of the newspapers film critics and columnists and writes mostly about television and the agony of being a depressed, pessimistic journalist and recovering alcoholic in one of the most booze-driven cities in the world. He also writes about comic books and has for several years been planning to write a final paper in literature theory about alcoholism in the works of Raymond Chandler. Þórarinn runs the web site *Badabing.is* where he collects all his writings and blogs about all the slander he can't print in *Fréttablaðið*. His blogs also frequently touch upon the subject of being a depressed, pessimistic journalist and recovering alcoholic in one of the most booze driven cities in the world.

Foxtrott

This was supposed to be a fast moving action thriller and as such it is a total failure and probably the worst Icelandic film ever made. Meet Kiddi (Valdimar Örn Flygenring) an ex-football star who can't face that he is a has been. He acts cool but is a natural born loser. He gets a break when he gets a job moving a bunch of cash across the country. He gets a cool jeep and a gun! His younger half brother, Tommy (Steinar Ólafsson), tags along and on the way they pick up a pretty girl, Lisa, played by María Ellingsen. Kiddi flips, tries to rape Lisa and leaves her for dead putting the good hearted younger brother in a crisis. Is he going to do the right thing or stand by his deranged brother? For an Icelandic thriller this is unbelievably lame but as soon as you realize that *Foxtrott* is not an action movie but a comedy about a psycho-

1. *Foxtrott* by Jón Tryggvason.
2. *Sódóma Reykjavík* by Óskar Jónsson. Hysterically funny. Icelandic cinema had been pestered with shotguns and pointless nudity until Óskar proved with this film that both were out of date, like most Icelandic film makers at the time.
3. *Kaldaljós* by Hilmar Oddsson. Beautiful, moving, with excellent performances by two teenage actors.
4. *Nói Albínói* by Dagur Kári. The Icelandic film version of the Elvis song *In The Ghetto*. Totally brilliant in it's simplicity.
5. *Lalli Johns* by Þorfinnur Guðnason. A documentary about Iceland's most notorious small time crook. A funny and tragic glimpse into the pathetic underworld of Reykjavík.
6. *Hrafninn flýgur* by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson. Hrafn has made many of the worst movies in the history of Icelandic cinema. Here he rips of Kurosawa and Sergio Leone with style. An Icelandic Viking spaghetti western. Kooky but cool.
7. *Benjamín dúfa* by Gísli Snær Erlingsson. A beautiful tale about friendship, death and coming off age. A *Stand by Me* for Icelanders.
8. *Nýtt líf* by Þráinn Bertelsson. The first film in the only comic trilogy made in Iceland. Eggert Þorleifsson and Karl Ágúst Úlfsson in top form as the idiots Þór and Danni. Lovable guys in a happy-go-lucky film.

path who takes a road trip with his retarded brother it turns into a cinematic masterpiece that can stand repeated viewings. For instance, the brothers drive over a sheep on their way. Killing it, of course. This inspires a deep, emotional, philosophical conversation between the two idiots about the nature of death. And in the films climatic scene Kiddi shoots out a car window, scaring Tommy witless as he screams "Are you crazy?" One of the high points in Icelandic cinema history. *Foxtrott* is one of the funniest movies ever made. You just don't know it yet.

TOP
8

ALBUMS

by Jóhann Jóhannsson



Jónni, as he's always called, grew up in neighbouring *Garðabær* (Foam Town as he calls it) but has lived in Reykjavík for the past eight years. He started his career in the record industry in 1992 in the store *Hljómalind* where his wages always wound up back in the register. He holds a degree in business and has worked for the labels *Japís*, *Edda* and is currently label manager of *12 Tónar*. He has also written about music in *Morgunblaðið*, *Undirtónar* and *Sánd*.

The album that tops my list is a children's album from the late seventies. It tells the story of two strange brothers called *Glámur* and *Skrámur* and their adventures with a talking cow, a blue horse, a piano playing cat, and the people of *Candyland* who have all lost their teeth except for the little princess.

It's obvious that the people who made the album had a lot of fun, and who knows what was going on in the studio considering how strange the album gets at some stages. This is a record that never gets drained, and it grows with you as I have found out sitting in the sofa with good friends, sharing a drink or something better. The moral of this album is to accept strange things, nothing is too out of the ordinary, and don't eat too much candy as it's bad for your teeth. Regarding the brothers, *Glámur* og *Skrámur*, nothing has been heard from them in years (acid casualties??), but maybe and just maybe they are sitting in *Café Austurstræti* having a beer.

Some albums that almost made it on my top 8 list: *Ham - Hold*, *Brain Police - Brain Police*, *Bubbi Morthens - Fingraför*, *Purkur Pillnikk - Ekki enn* and *GooGooPlex, múm - Yesterday was dramatic*, *Today was OK*, *Þeyr - Mjötviður mæz*, and many many more.

1. *Glámur og Skrámur: Í sjöunda himni (1979)*
2. *Sigur Rós: Ágætis byrjun*. What can I say about this album that has not been said before? It stands out for its perfection and beauty. Masterpiece!
3. *S.H. Draumur: Goð*. I have always loved the magnificent pop/punk from Dr. Gunni and company. Every song on this album is great and I hereby challenge Dr. Gunni to make it available again.
4. *Megas og Spilverk þjóðanna: Á bleikum náttkjólum*. Megas has made so many great albums but this one I treasure the most, a classic album about all and nothing, and lot of drugs.
5. *Jóhann Jóhannsson: Englabörn*. On *Englabörn*, Jóhann Jóhannsson offers endless gracefulness and style. I have nothing more to say about this record except that if you don't have a copy, buy one.
6. *Mugison: Lonely Mountain*. This man is a genius! And I believe Mugison is going to be the king of the West Fjords one day
7. *Björk: Homogenic*. Of course there is one album by Björk on my list, I could have picked them all but this one holds a special place in my heart.
8. *Singapore Sling: Life is Killing My Rock 'n' Roll*. Singapore Sling have made rock'n'roll fun again, and I just love this album -it's brilliant.

TOP
8

BOOKS

by Vigdís Grímsdóttir



Vigdís trained and worked as a teacher until 1990, when she devoted herself entirely to literature. Her first book of short stories, *Ten Pictures from Your Life*, came out in 1983, and since then she has published nine novels, among the *Cold Light*, *I am Ísbjörg*, *I am a Leo*, *Z: A Love Story* and *Grandi Road 7*. *Cold Light* has recently been made into a film, and two other novels have been made into plays which have been produced here and in Sweden. Her latest book, *When a Star Falls*, came out last year.

Njál's saga. The author is unknown but many people think that Snorri Sturluson wrote it. In itself it doesn't really matter and maybe *Njála* is the best example of how the author is of little importance.

It is the art that remains and *Njála* survives any storm because it is a monument that makes time laughable and totally irrelevant. The book is also unbelievably well written and the story is a magical event. The characters appear one after another and some are so beautifully created that your nearest of friends and next of kin fade in comparison. This is also a book you can open up at any time and in every chapter you'll find excitement, humour and villainous fate. *Njál's saga* is a book that gives endlessly and therefore it is not only a gem but a total feast.

1. *Njál's saga*.
2. *Gerpla* by Halldór Laxness casts an unusual light on the wars in the world and makes them not only bizarre but also grotesque. It wouldn't come as a surprise that warhappy men became embarrassed when reading *Gerpla* and by no means a crazy idea to make the book an obligatory branch of learning for people and parliaments. *Gerpla* is filled with glorious descriptions, unforgettable characters and is masterfully written.
3. *Lifandi vatnið*, by Jakobína Sigurðardóttir takes you on a powerful voyage through beautiful compositions and pseudonym worlds. A classical piece of art about modern day man.
4. *Fjallkirkjan*, by Gunnar Gunnarsson is a wonderful book, full of ripple and unforgettable descriptions about the past.
5. *Veisla undir grjótvegg*, by Svava Jakobsdóttir is a fantastic book of short stories that changes sterile everyday thoughts and ideas. Tough stuff and nothing less.
6. *Grámosinn glóir*, by Thor Vilhjálmsson is a beautiful painting in words, composition and colours. Living magic.
7. *Meðan nóttin líður*, by Friða Á Sigurðardóttir is an alluring novel that keeps your attention from the beginning to the end. The best of true blues ever.
8. *Hjartað býr enn í helli sínum*, by Guðbergur Bergsson is a total delicacy. A bold, witty, shivering and exciting story.

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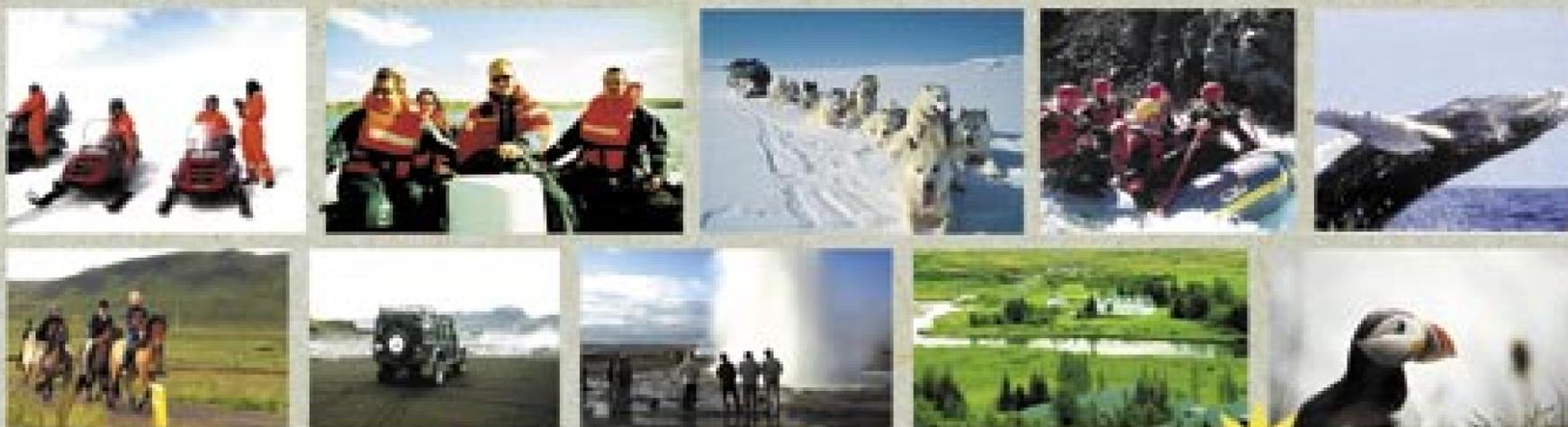
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