

T H E R E Y K J A V Í K

GRAPEVINE

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ISSUE6 FRI22AUG-THU4SEP 2003

COD WARS, WHALING AND THE EU DEBATE **VS** THE WORLD

LANDHELGISGÆSLA
ÍSLANDS

**THE TRUE HISTORY
OF KEIKO
THE LOVABLE
KILLER WHALE**

**KIMONO:
NO R'S, NO S'S,
BUT REVERSE MULLET
ARE OK**

**THE DAY
THE SAGAS
CAME HOME**

**SIGGI PÖNK:
POSSIBLY THE MOST
INSANE MAN IN ICELAND**

**DOES ICELAND
NEED AN ARMY?**

THE REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE - ISSUE6 FRI22AUG - THU4SEP 2003

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Photos: Aldís

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LETTERS

Feel like bitching about the weather or the prices, want to open your heart but even the drunks at your local bar won't listen, just can't stop raving about Grapevine or if there's anything at all we can do for you, you've always got a sympathetic ear here...well, actually, we don't anymore, but you can always check out the website (see below). Please send your mail to grapevine@strik.is, or just stick it in the mailbox addressed to: The Reykjavik Grapevine, Blómvallagata 2, 101 Reykjavik.

Hi there,

Thank you for a fine publication. I was sending a foreign friend Asgeirs article about Icelandic football. I was just wondering whether it might not be a good idea to put your paper on the internet, so that for example Icelanders abroad and foreigners can read the paper. I was primarily thinking about the articles on the churches of Reykjavik, Gay Pride and the like rather than more contemporary articles such as film reviews. Hope the paper lives on.

Regards,
Gunnar.

Thank you. Grapevine will indeed live on, even though this is the last issue of the summer. We'll be back next June, but until then, we will be starting a webpage, www.grapevine.is, which should open up two weeks after the publication of this issue, ie. September 5th. There, you will be able to find all former issues, as well as up to date listings and new articles. So that should keep you posted.

Dear Grapevine,

We were on holiday in Iceland in June and were lucky enough to pick up the first edition of The Grapevine. We enjoyed it immensely and appreciated the opportunity that it gave us, to go behind the scenes of Icelandic social life thus gaining a better understanding of your wonderful country. Needless to say, we brought our copy home to Australia, for others to read too. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay in Iceland, and were so impressed by the scenery, the people (who, to our everlasting gratitude, spoke such excellent English!) and the very special wildlife. Apart from the wonderful displays of breeding birds, we also, took part in a whale watching tour, during which we were entertained to some amazing acrobatic displays by friendly minke whales. We've since read in our Australian papers that the Icelandic Government has decided to resume hunting of these delightful creatures, even though this threatens the growing whale watching industry in Iceland - apparently the largest of its kind in Europe. I'm sure that their decision may signal the end for the tour operators, who are so well-informed about the local whales, and clearly so empathic with the subjects of their cruises. The minke whales would be a very easy target for the whale hunters, as they are so used to swimming close to boats for the entertainment of humans. I'm sure that most tourists would boycott any tours that made these creatures an even easier target for their killers. We had planned to return to Iceland in 2005, in order to see the blue whales that apparently are regular visitors to the harbour of Olafsvik, but we won't be making that trip if the Icelandic government adheres to this very foolish



A little whale and a lot of sea.

Photo: Aldis

idea. Thank you again for producing The Grapevine, and therefore, a forum for our concerns as visitors to your country.

Yours faithfully,
Gillian Rayner and Tony Bates

Grapevine is indeed here to be your guide behind the scenes of Icelandic social life. Your Australian papers are right, 38 whales are to be shot. The debate will continue on the Grapevine webpage as well as on the streets. What can I say, governments have a habit of adhering to very foolish ideas.

Hi ho. How's it going? All fine and dandy I trust.

Excellent articles in the 8th issue. That so many of my Icelandic friends read the paper sort of surprised me at first. Do you have a sec to tell me a few things?
1) Is issue 9 going to be the last issue of The Grapevine. You said something like that in your refreshing Verslunarmannahelgi article.
2) Are you a musician? What's with the recordings you mention??? My Viking Partner is in that dreadful field hence I ask. Well Happy Monday and all that jazz! Hear from you soon?!

All fine and dandy, as I'll finally have some time off. You are probably referring to the 5th and 6th issues, respectively. The 6th issue is the last of the season, but check out the web...haven't I said this before? Yes, your editor is fact in that dreadful field known as the music industry, and am currently a vocalist of sorts for punk band Rikið, where I get to vent the spleen in ways inappropriate for a respectable publication such as this. We played our first gig at Boomkikker Thursday the 14th, along with bands Dys, Total Fucking Destruction and The Motherfucking Clash (perhaps we should change our name to Goddamn Rikið). Look out for an album in the autumn, as well as a performance at the final Grapevine party at Vidalin on Friday the

29th. Oh, and there's no such thing as a happy Monday, apart, perhaps, from Shaun Ryder on drugs.

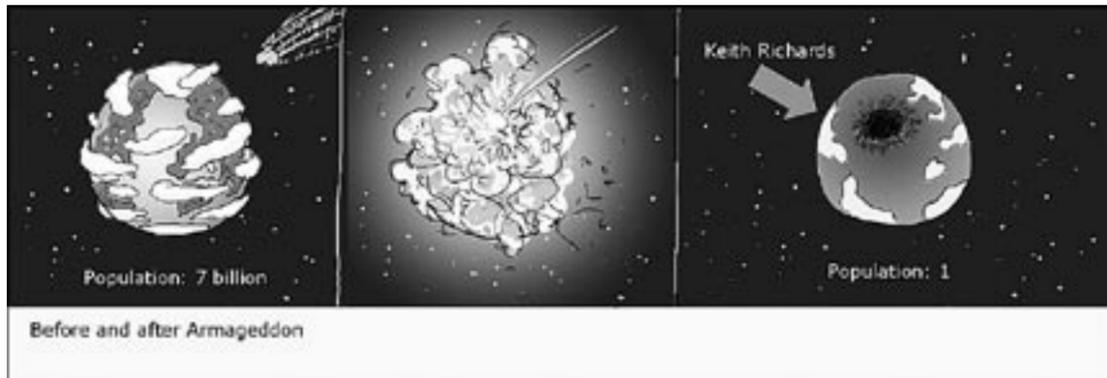
I'm a big supporter of the Icelandic football team and on September 6th there is a massive game coming up; Iceland vs. Germany. The Germans lead the group but Iceland is in second place and if we win we may be on top in the group, depending on a good result in the Faeroe Isles on August 20th. One would think that because this game could turn out to be the most important one we have played yet that the Icelandic Football Association would encourage people to attend (and therefore a massive boost of support to our players) instead of increasing prices to abnormal proportions.

Also, if one wants to get a little something to eat in half time, the accommodation is very poor. One has to wait at least 10-20 minutes in very overcrowded queues to get a slice of a very overpriced pizza, and that's if you get lucky because very often the beverages are sold out by the time you've squeezed through the queue. By that time the second half of the game has already started.

The cost of a ticket to this particular game is 4000 Icelandic kr. per adult for most seats and 4500 for the ones near the middle, 2000 for children 16 years and younger and 2000 if you sit behind the goal where you really can't see well anyway. No matter how you look at it, this is very expensive. I understand why big supporters would rather stay at home and watch the game, although they would love to be at the field.

Oddur Björn Tryggvason
I am very disturbed to hear this, especially about the overpriced pizza. However, there's little I can do but offer my condolences and suggest you read the excellent article on Icelandic football in issue 5 to see what you're missing.

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FROM THE EDITOR

BIRTH OF A NOTION



Things have changed. Mostly for the worse, but occasionally for the better. An instance of the latter could be seen on Saturday the 9th of August, as gays marched down Reykjavik's main street, preceded by a police escort more worried about traffic jams than angry crowds as people brought their families and celebrated. Among those in the parade was troubadour Hörður Torfa, who had to flee Iceland in the 70's and move to Sweden after he came out of the closet. Now he marched with hundreds, cheered by thousands. It was a day for gays, but it was also a day to be celebrated by everyone who has ever felt himself shut out of society for being what he is. In some ways, we all need to come out of our closets and strive for acceptance. Let the brave lead the way.

The only damper was the rain, and it also rained on Culture Night. One wonders if there is some sort of meteorological phenomenon at work by which large crowds of people attract rain. The highlight of the celebrations was the multitudes staring into the air watching a fireworks display. There's some highly ironic metaphor at work there. I spent part of the night talking to hardcore band Total Fucking Destruction. One of them told me he had been offended by the Erro exhibition in the Reykjavik Art museum, particularly the picture portraying Israeli militarism.

If even young American radicals can't see the difference between criticism of Israeli expansionism and anti-semitism, then the Palestinians are well and duly screwed.

At midnight four young people protested outside the US embassy against the use of napalm in Iraq, lighting candles in coke bottles full of urine. Police reinforcements arrived on the scene to put out the insurrection, but no one was arrested.

And with the end of Culture Night the summer seems to be inevitable drawing to a close. The schools are opening again in order to make productive citizens of the young, vacationers are returning home, tourists and migrating birds are somewhat more sensibly heading south. Grapevine too is bidding farewell, for now that is, but promises to return next summer when the climate becomes more hospitable and sponsors more generous. It has all been passing so quickly, but then the summers get shorter with each passing year, or so at least it seems in my advanced age. In a few days I'll be 27. If I were a rock star, I would stay in bed the whole year. Perhaps I will, just to make sure.

It was only last April, as I was stuffing myself at Nonni as is my want, that I noticed an ad asking for contributors to a new paper in English. I went and investigated, and found three men in a

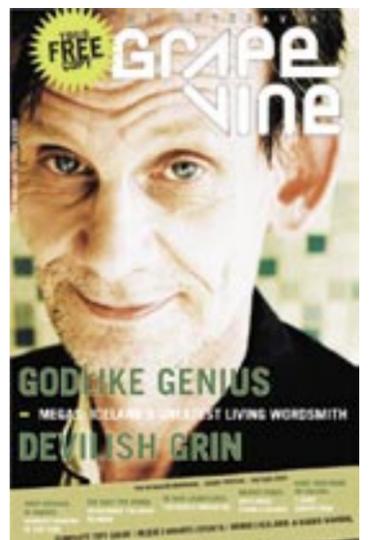
basement. On the walls were pictures of Che Guevara and John Lennon, and I knew I was in good company. Having spoken to them I returned to my then home in Belfast, giving little more thought to the men in the basement, who by then were hard at work nurturing Grapevine to manhood. Grapevine was apparently born, as are many good and not so good ideas, in a bar. This particular bar happened to be in the Czech Republic, and the two men sitting there might never have found their way there had it not been for The Prague Pill, an English language newspaper indispensable for this quest and most others. The beer in Prague being somewhat cheaper than the two strangers were used to, the ideas flowed freely. Before the night was through, the twosome, who happened to be called Hilmar and Jóni, had decided to print an English language paper of their own, and, unlike most ideas conceived in bars, they set about bringing this to fruition after actually leaving the bar.

Once back on more familiar ground, among the bars of Reykjavik, a third man, Oddur, joined the team, a computer whiz retained at what has since become the standard Grapevine wage of a hug and a smile. They rented a basement, and set about making their debut in publishing. All they now needed was someone who could actually write. Failing this,

they gave me a call and offered me a job seeing to it that pen would meet paper. I arrived home on the first day of June, for what was to be a series of sleepless nights in said basement, aided by the able help of photographer Aldís, graphic designer Höddi, proof reader and writer John Boyce, art critic Beata Röðlingnova, writers Alli, Raggi Robert Jackson and Caroline Ryan, among many others, whom we hereby send great big hug and a smile.

Since then I have invaded the American base in Keflavik, risked offending the old Gods by being drunk and obnoxious around their followers, seen and eaten many a whale in the interest of research, learnt about the ultimate futility of existence through a three hour discussion with Megas, and, of course, gone horseback riding with a group of Swedes. My life has almost become what some people might call interesting. Apart, of course, from the continued futility of existence. As autumn approaches, everyone returns to their prospective careers. Oddur goes back to study electrical and computer engineering, Hilmar begins his studies in business, Jóni starts on his road to a doubtlessly less lucrative career in the history department, and as for me, well, I guess I'll have a bite at Nonni. Something's bound to turn up.

GRAPEVINE.IS



ANALYSIS

SOUND OFF LIKE YOU'VE GOT A PAIR

IS AN ARMY NECESSARY IN ICELAND, OR ANYWHERE ELSE?

article **BY**

PAUL
FONTAINE-NIKOLOV

Iceland has recently been designated as one of the countries in the world least likely to be attacked. Yet, our leaders beg the US Army to stay on every time they suggest packing up and moving to someplace where they're more likely to have something to shoot at. Is this really necessary?

Ask anyone who's seen the movie "Full Metal Jacket", and they will agree: The first half, in "boot camp", is by far better than the second half. I, for one, definitely agree. Not so much because of the oft-quoted abuse which spews from the drill sergeant, or the wooden acting that takes place in the Vietnam sequence, but because of "Private Pyle". Poor, puffy Pyle. He comes into the Marine Corps an out-of-shape, sniveling little mass of jellydonut-smuggling whimpers and, through physical and psychological abuse, he is torn down to his most primitive impulses and is transformed into a lean, mean, fighting machine. Then he shoots his drill sergeant and blows his own brains out. God bless America!

Of all the things that Iceland could or should have, an army, foreign or domestic, is absolutely not one of them. Iceland deserves better, and is in the unique position of setting a new global standard in foreign affairs. Private Pyle to my mind is not only the characteristic embodiment of the U.S. military, but of all armies. Up until the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, U.S. military strategy was based first and foremost on making "soldiers". These were people who were trained to understand not only how to aim and shoot, but also theories of strategy, how to think flexibly in a tight spot, how to outwit, outsmart, and outlast the enemy. A soldier was a warrior, and his leaders were learned strategists.

Today, a soldier is a button-pusher who sits in front of a screen, firing weapons of mass destruction with neither knowledge of nor regard for the targets they are erasing. There is no longer such a thing as accountability for going too far, or for not being

careful enough. The "shock and awe" method of combat cannot even rightly be called a "strategy". It is cowardice, plain and simple; bomb the hell out of everything standing then send in the clean-up crew. Soldiers are dying in Iraq and Afghanistan everyday because they're a lower priority than the toys that the Pentagon designs and builds for billions of dollars. Why spend on training when you can just hand out instruction manuals? "Step one: Point at building. Step two: Push red button. Step three: It's Miller time!"

As this new approach to combat continues, soldiers become trained less and less and weapons become more and more powerful. All too soon, we are left with the barely-trained in charge of both safeguarding and operating weapons capable of destroying the whole world. Wait a second . . . we're already there! The atomic bomb ripped open that door for everyone to walk through, and nothing will ever be the same. The warrior is dead. Meanwhile, the army is stripped of all humanity, becomes more efficient at killing, and in the end destroys the people who made them, and themselves as well. Private Pyle goes national.

The sick part is, the U.S. is not alone in this. Every country in the world that can afford it is heading in this direction, and the ones who can't are trying desperately to catch up. Private Pyle goes global.

That brings me to Iceland . . .

The military history of Iceland would fill a very, very slim book. No sooner did settlers establish chieftains and councils than they started killing each other. All this in-fighting (among other things) made it very easy for foreign

powers to step in and take over. Several centuries later, the U.S. asked a newly independent Iceland if U.S. forces could please use a former British base in Keflavik for stopping and re-fueling planes. Iceland agreed, and the U.S. (typical of their ability to comply with the wishes of foreign governments) promptly built an entire military base there.

Was it invasion or collusion? Did the U.S. bully Iceland or did Iceland's men in power make a deal? Who did what and who asked for it or not is now a part of the past, and has nothing to do with the present state of affairs. Only two questions remain now: Should the U.S. military stay or go, and if it should go, should Iceland create its own military?

Regarding the first question, opinion is mixed. Many feel the U.S. is protecting Iceland, and that the base creates jobs in these times of high unemployment. Well, the fact of the matter is there were no nuclear missiles pointed at Iceland until the U.S. decided to house a few of their own in Keflavik. If anyone were to attack Iceland, the only target would be the military base, which makes it a damn good thing someone put it in the middle of nowhere. Can you see the circular logic here? The military base is the cause of, and solution to, the same danger.

In terms of employment, I propose that those Icelanders who are currently working on the base could all have jobs taking it apart. When they're done taking it apart, they could all have jobs building whatever it is they're going to replace it with. When they're done building whatever it is they're going to replace it with, they could all have jobs working there. That's steady, full-time employment for at least the next ten years! Some suggestions for re-building that I can come up with off the top of my head are:

- 1) Vikingland, a Disney-style theme park.
- 2) A "military heritage" museum.
- 3) Yet another paintball shooting range.

Seriously though, there would be a lot of work to do if the military ever left Keflavik, and there are enough imaginative people in Iceland to think of something practical and profitable to replace the base with (but if anyone wants to see my blueprints for Vikingland, give me a call and maybe we can work something out).

Still, others feel that the U.S. military presence is out-dated,

and costly. The Bush administration would be inclined to agree. This made the normally flat-line placid Minister of Foreign Affairs Halldór Ásgrímsson very nervous, as well as Prime Minister Davíð Oddsson. In a foreign affairs move that was about as graceful as a loud belch at Perlan, David Oddsson made some vague threat to the Bush administration that Iceland would swing more towards Europe (translation: no more war support!) should the U.S. pull their military out of Iceland.

Does it matter that most of the country either wants the U.S. to leave or feels they are useless? Guess not. But sooner or later that day may come, and if it does, then what? Should Iceland establish its own army?

Ideas such as installing a sophisticated air surveillance system, housing anti-aircraft guns, or being on first-alert with neighboring countries have been tossed around. These are all plausible and fine ideas in and of themselves, but how about this:

Iceland could just try diplomacy. Remember that? Sitting down and actually talking with other people, instead of killing them? The United Nations, believe it or not, was created for the purpose of ending wars. Sadly, the US took control and used it as a means of waging war on a larger scale. I know, I know; the Security Council's other permanent members are supposed to keep the U.S. in check. True in theory, but in practice, they all think that they are dependent on US dollars, and so they follow the US's lead.

Where Iceland and the average person could come in is hitting America where it really hurts; in the wallet. Simply put, don't buy American goods or services. Instead of going to McDonalds, try Aktu-Taktu. Instead of ordering Domino's, try Pizza 67 (it's the best in the country anyway). Instead of buying a Coke, buy Sinalco or Jolly cola. When you're shopping, read the label. If it says "USA", put it back. Icelanders could take the lead in this campaign, just to get the ball rolling. Boycotts do make a difference. They helped free Mandela, after all, and it makes better sense



economically to buy things made in your own country.

In terms of foreign policy decisions, Iceland could look westward and say, "We don't need you anymore. We'll get by without you." There have already been suggestions among many European countries of shutting out trade with the US. What if Iceland was not only the first country to actually do it, but also to initiate an agreement between other European countries to shift their trade from the U.S. towards each other? Such a union, while certainly rocky at first, could stabilize if it were allowed to expand to other regions of the world. With the U.S. shut out, what would they do, wage war on the whole world? Not likely. It would be too costly, too bloody, and in the end, the losses would outweigh the gains. The U.S. would have no choice but to accept the fact that they live with us, not above us, and then maybe some normalization could begin. No more superpowers. And all thanks to Iceland.

You know, in a factory full of bitter, mistreated workers, all it ever takes is one person, often completely unarmed, to turn off their machine and fold their arms in order to give everyone else enough courage to follow suit, no matter how terrifying the boss. It happens everyday, and it works. And that instigator is always the last one you'd ever suspect.

NEWS IN BRIEF



The first minke whale has been shot off the coast of Iceland after it was decreed that hunting for scientific purposes be resumed. The boat that caught the whale, Njörður, had been prevented from shooting by two whale watching boats full of foreign journalists, but resumed hunting once these turned back. Two secretaries at the embassy in Washington are currently fully employed answering emails protesting the hunting. The Washington Post claims that Icelandic authorities have tried to prevent media coverage on the subject. Greenpeace has said it will send its flagship, Rainbow Warrior, to Iceland at the end of August. A journalist attempted to board Njörður as it lay docked in Ólafsfjörður, but turned back when police arrived on the scene.

6 Icelandic cooks are present in an international group of cooks raising money against poverty in South Africa. The opening of the fundraising week was held in the Johannesburg zoo, and was attended by 2000 children, most of whom had never been in a zoo before. Cooks still at home have started their own fundraising, and it is intended that each of them will contribute 10 dollars and a cooks jacket, along with other items to be auctioned off.

Farmers report that they have never known there to be as much hay as now, due to warm weather this summer. Some are now haying for the third time, and it seems the market will be flooded by cheap hay.



Kristinn Magnússon from the swimming association of Hafnarfjörður intends to swim from the Westman Islands to Iceland on Saturday the 23rd. He expects the escapade will take four hours. Members of rescue services will follow him in boats, as well as trained divers.



It seems llama's are to be imported to serve as pack animals for tourists hiking in areas inaccessible by car.

Icelandair reports losses of 903 million krónur in the first 6 months of the year, as opposed to a profit of 50 million at the same time last year. Icelandair blames the reduction on the war in Iraq and on the pneumonia epidemic in the Far East.

A considerable number of tourists, particularly Germans, have been coming

to Iceland recently to cool off from the intense heat on the continent.

President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson is currently on a state visit to Alaska, no doubt to cool off from the intense Icelandic summer heat. He gave a speech on the necessity of increasing cooperation in the north.

Workers are needed in a shrimp factory in Bolungarvík.

Exterminators say that they have been contacted twice as often as last year to get rid of beehives.

An Air Canada plane made an emergency landing at Keflavik airport due to smoke in the passenger area. F-15 fighter jets were put on alert at the US naval base.

Police were called by a person claiming to be disturbed by his doorbell ringing in the middle of the night. When they arrived on the scene they found a drunken man who had rung on the wrong doorbell. Police claim they were helping the man home when he kicked an officer in the face, and was presently placed under arrest.

A lamb stopped traffic in Jökuldalur by

wandering onto the road.

Foreign Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson held a speech at a festival in Hólar where he asked media to show restraint in coverage of controversial issues. He claimed media were far too pessimistic, giving more coverage to tragedy than success, and acting as if it were more important to be opposed to issues rather than in agreement with them.

According to a survey, the price of illegal drugs remains stable, apart from a seasonal increase just before verslunarmannahelgin. There has, however, been a price drop in e-pills.



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HISTORY

LITTLE ORCAN ANNIE

THE WEIRDISH WORLD OF KEIKO. POP ICON

article BY

VANCE
POLLOCK

Divorce your thinking from Free Willy. Keiko is the official name for the artist formerly known as Kago, formerly known as Sigg. When the little guy was first rounded up off the south coast of Iceland circa 1979 (there is some dispute as to the actual year) he was about two years old and was given the good Icelandic boy's name Sigg.

By the time of his first public appearance at Marineland, Ontario, Canada in 1982, he was billed as Kago. Why Sigg wasn't good enough is open to conjecture.

Young Kago was shy and picked on by the female killer whales in Ontario. His mounting psychological scars soon showed themselves through a stress-related skin rash. The breaks just kept coming and he was sold and shipped

when, where and how of getting Keiko out of Mexico. The why, briefly, was most legitimately for health reasons. His accommodation wasn't fitting for such a majestic creature, especially a box-office hit.

In October of 1993 Michael Jackson offered to adopt the whale and build a tank for him at his Neverland Ranch in California. There Keiko would be retired

phone boom that has now completely possessed Iceland.

On 7 January 1996, having been donated to a foundation set up to reintroduce him to the wild, Keiko is flown from Mexico City to Oregon. As he leaves his home of eleven years by truck for the airport, 100,000 local well-wishers turn out. In America, Keiko becomes the first Mexican immigrant to be met with a warm welcome.

Keiko is studied and pampered in Oregon. He returns to a healthy weight and his lingering skin ailment clears up. Recording his calls and comparing them to those of North Atlantic orcas, some researchers decide that he speaks Icelandic killer whale.

Keiko's trainers introduce him to television. His favourite film? Monty Python's Holy Grail.

In June 1998 Prime Minister David Oddsson accuses the U.S. of abducting a citizen of Iceland. If he is not returned to Iceland by September, David says, the island will take civil action against the US Government. A terrified America immediately begins plans to use its Air

Force to fly Keiko back to Iceland. his own private lagoon. He takes a lot of "ocean walks" followed closely by boat. The team manages to break him from so much hand feeding and he hunts live herring, though the question whether he feeds well enough to sustain himself remains. Keiko meets up with an occasional pod (that's like a herd) of wild orcas but seems a bit weird to them. That his cousins find him odd when they first meet him might have something to do with the Monty Python jokes. Have you ever tried explaining the Holy Grail to someone who's never watched those guys? It might take a while.

At the end of July 2002, a bit more than a year ago, Keiko swims away from the Westmans on his own. He is tracked using satellite and radio tags and makes reasonable daily progress heading east. He shows up along the coast of Norway on the first of September, apparently tired out after the big swim over from Iceland and doesn't feel like doing much. His project team comes to give him a physical and get him moving again. Norway likes him and the government makes rules to keep people from getting too close and treating him like a pet again. A little girl who knows but one song on her harmonica, Michael Jackson's theme to Free Willy, arrives to play the tune for Keiko. He responds with what some call his complete attention. It is more likely that the tune reminds him that he was almost taken away by that freak and the "Lucky One" has merely paused in thankful reflection.



The world's second most famous Icelander shows his moves,

It's the very thing people find most annoying about Keiko that kids love; the same sappy sweetness associated with Barney the Purple Dinosaur, Jar Jar Binks and the Teletubbies / Stubbarnir, heaven forbid. These examples are complete fabrications of man and worthy of our hate. Keiko, on the other hand, is an amazing animal that most of us can respect on that level. What really brings a tear to my eye though, is the vision of all those little Mexican kids, lined up on the walking bridge over the highway, waving goodbye to their old friend Shit. With the same sentiment, I salute the Icelandic kids who will continue to cut pictures of Keiko out of the newspaper and take them to school for current events day.

What's the difference between Pinocchio and Keiko? Pinocchio was made into an ass, gobbled up by a whale and turned into a child. Keiko is a whale made into an ass and gobbled up by the kids.

Thank you, Howard Garrett of Orca Network for your painstaking and informative Keiko timeline. www.orcanetwork.org/captivity/keikostory.html

Kago the killer whale was renamed Keiko when they found out Kago was Spanish for shit.

off to Mexico City in 1985. He probably didn't join in the laughter when it was revealed that Kago is Spanish slang for Shit. So, to soften the humiliation just a bit, he was renamed Keiko, another Japanese girl name meaning "Lucky One..." and how!

He would spend eight years in the barrio entertaining Mexican audiences before his big film break in Free Willy. From this celebrity exposure grew an often bizarre crusade and industry for which a whale can't be blamed.

It was decided by everyone but the Mexican kids that Keiko must go. There is a historical soap opera surrounding the

and not perform for the public, but maybe occasionally for the personal amusement of MJ and Bubbles the Chimp. Fortunately, the bad luck whale avoided becoming the Macaulay Culkin of the animal kingdom.

Keiko, poster child for orphaned sea mammals the world over, was adopted by his public and a particularly rich philanthropist. Keiko's Daddy Warbucks was a cell-phone billionaire who read about our hero's predicament in the Wall Street Journal. This means a good many of the millions spent on Keiko that the public likes to cry over were made possible by the great mobile

Force to fly Keiko back to Iceland.

On 9 September 1998 Keiko is flown direct from Oregon to Vestmannaeyjar (Westman Islands), Iceland with two mid-air refuelings in the US Air Force C-17 Globemaster III. The Globemaster earns the slogan, "The only plane in the world that can deliver a whale to such a little runway." Indeed, something to be proud of. The Air Force reportedly authorized the mission as a gesture of good will, because any country that helps an international celebrity like Keiko can't be all bad.

The next nearly four years are spent in the Westman Islands where he has

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

During the seven years I lived in Los Angeles, several things became clear about its greatly divided population: 1) The poor are angry, and 2) The wealthy are also angry.

In a less bizarre, myth-driven part of the world, this would present a conundrum. Of course millions of poor and underemployed Californians living with a lack of education, decent housing and health care would be angry. But why would the white collar wealthy, the owners of the shiny black SUVs taking

and state employment, but more revenue is needed. Governor Davis has called for an increase in state income tax for those who earn over \$100,000 a year.

Thus the anger of the wealthy, and of wealthy businessman and Republican representative Darrell Issa, who spurred and funded the recall effort, a legal option in California, with guidance from President Bush. Replacing Davis with a Republican governor is the answer, Republicans tell us, but the real mandate goes beyond California.

the richest man in town always seems to cast a weightier vote than the rest of us.

Interestingly, many Republicans are not wealthy. They are conservative working people frightened of social change and government programs, which they see as socialistic and taxed. Unlike the Democrats, their party prefers a quiet and uninvolved electorate and generally gets one. Not so passive is the corporate titan with government officials among family and friends. That voter takes taxation and public spending as matters for active involvement in government, sometimes through lobbying, often through initiatives created by private funding.

The private interest sector is well-seated. Never mind the war in Iraq, where the first Iraqi office secured by US forces was the Ministry of Oil. It is well known that the energy policies of the present administration were drawn up in private meetings between Vice President Dick Cheney and top energy corporation executives, all friends and former co-directors of his. Government watchdog organisations have also noted that Cheney's former company Halliburton was given an exclusive contract to run the Iraqi oil fields, with no bidding allowed by other companies.

Democracy in the US as anywhere works only when the people work it, keeping an eye on government through the media and the state of their own communities. But somewhere around 1978 political involvement went out of vogue in America except in times of great crisis.

And there is a crisis. Private meetings, networks and fundraising events to back

private wars and campaigns created it decades ago, notably during the Reagan/Bush Sr. years. The Iraq War has proved at least one instance of intelligence reports manipulated to create public support for a war with anyone who challenges "US interests".

In 2000 when Texas oilman George W. Bush was appointed president by the US Supreme Court, the majority of whom are conservative Republicans, Harvard professor John Kenneth Galbraith commented sagely that this was a case of "the Board of Directors of the corporation voting on behalf of us, the stockholders." Democracy? Hell, we can change that, if it gets in the way.

The garden path now leads us to the large and smiling face of self-made millionaire Arnold Schwarzenegger, who with porn publisher Larry Flynt, porn star Mary Carey and a few actual politicians, claims he can solve California's budget problems.

Schwarzenegger has hired Warren Buffet, the world's second richest man and son of a Republican congressman, to help him assemble a panel of economic advisors. In true Republican tradition, Schwarzenegger wouldn't need the brains or the know-how to solve the state's problems—he can hire someone to do that, as one of his governor predecessors Ronald Reagan did, constantly leaving the real work to his advisors when he came to work at



Having seen Conan the Barbarian, some people already suggested this man should run for office.

Public policy and private interest blur easily in a country won by violence and designed by bankers

over the freeways, also be enraged?

This makes some sense, as to the other 49 states, California has been out of its mind for at least fifty years, and never more so than now that a motley assortment of 155 incumbents will vvy for the office of governor in October.

California's \$1.3 trillion economy is the fifth largest in the world. It is dangerous news for the rest of the US that that empire now faces a record-breaking \$38 billion state budget deficit. Republicans have decided that it is Democratic governor Gray Davis's own failure to balance the budget, though they consistently vote against any new budget that includes tax increases. The rise of the deficit has coincided with the drop in Davis's popularity, though it is beyond his control that the crisis sprang from the crash of the Silicon Valley dot.com industry. Cuts in state spending have slashed social programs

Since the 1980s there has been a wider Republican agenda at work to lay permanent hold not only of Congress and the White House but of the governorships of the larger and wealthier states. In the mid 1990s Rudolph Giuliani was elected mayor of New York City in what many believe was part of this offensive, replacing Democrat David Dinkins amid a storm similar to what is happening in California. One working strategy is to wait till a state or city falls into fiscal trouble, let the Dems announce the need to increase taxes, then jump in to assure the worker they needn't fear tax increase or deficits if they vote Republican.

The lines between public policy and private interest blur easily in a new country won by violence, built up by poor immigrants and designed by a handful of wealthy bankers and industrialists. Though everyone gets a vote, there is the unmissable fact that

all.

Can a democracy survive where the people, in order to form a more stable economy, passively allow billionaires to unseat officials whose policies threaten their empires? Where private money and power so often outweigh public votes, and public policy is formed outside of citizen awareness?

The state of California is the state of early 21st century America, though if it continues on its present course, we will soon have to call US democracy by another name.

Caroline Ryan



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*Bill and Carol
Connecticut, USA*



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FEATURE

ICELAND VS. THE WORLD

COD WARS, WHALING AND THE EU DEBATE

article BY

VALUR
GUNNARSSON

For more than a thousand years, not a single sensible person moved to these shores. The only man who attempted to immigrate was a deranged Danishman who ruled the country for 100 days before being deposed. These days, we can no longer ignore the outside world. It is most definitely there. So what should we do about it?

EU or not EU. That is the question. Or, at least, it should be. For some reason, it is barely debated among politicians, even though poll after poll shows that roughly half the nation, sometimes more, sometimes less, depending on the time of the month, would support membership. Of the political parties, the ones farthest to the left and to the right are most opposed. Ironically, the supposed extremes seem to be leading back to the same point. The closest Prime minister and leader of the Independence Party Davíð Oddsson has come to debating the issue is when he had his ministry prepare a poll asking

Yanks. If it hadn't been for that all-divisive issue, perhaps they would have become natural coalition partners.

The parties in between are more favourably disposed towards the EU, but none of them have yet dared come out of the closet as head-on pro Europe parties. The social-democratic Alliance Party, in its mad dash for the centre has, like most such parties, sworn off anything that might sound like an issue.

After the last election, the ball seemed to be lying with Foreign Minister Halldór Ásgrímsson as to whether the question of membership might finally make the agenda. His party, sharing

History, of course, is what they want you to know.

very loaded questions, since much ridiculed, attempting to prove that the nation was opposed to membership. The poll concluded that the nation was in fact opposed, if this would lead to the virtual collapse of the economy, which so far has not been the case with membership.

Steingrímur J. Sigfússon, leader of the Left-Green party is also opposed, reaching the same conclusion for what we should hope are very different reasons. The Independence Party and the precursor of the Left-Greens last served together in government from 1944-46, and apparently got along like a house on fire until they fell out over the

power with the Independence Party for the past 8 years, seemed in danger of disappearing from the public mind as an independent entity altogether. Perhaps this was the reason he, for a while at least, seemed to be flirting with the idea of becoming pro-EU, or perhaps his eye was on the generous agricultural subsidies the Union is known for, something that might appeal to his largely rural electorate. Politically, his party is somewhere between the Independence Party and the Alliance Party, the two towers as they have come to be known as we slide further towards a two party system, so essentially it is up to him to chose whom he wants to work



Half the Icelandic navy on maneuvers

Photo: Jón Kr. Friðgeirsson



with. For a while it seemed he might distance himself from the Independence Party and opt for the Alliance, perhaps securing the premiership in what would have been a much more EU disposed government. In the event, he opted for the secure bosom of Davíð yet again, securing a promise from his senior partner that he would finally be allowed to take over the position of top dog as Davíð has promised to retire two years hence after 14 years at the helm.

So should Iceland join the EU? As always, it comes down to fish. The problem with EU membership is that according to EU regulations, a nation's exclusive fishing rights only extends to 12 nautical miles, whereas the area from 12 to 200 miles is common EU ground. For Icelanders, this is not just a question of economics, but of pride.

The Cod Wars

At the turn of the 20th century, Denmark made an agreement with Great Britain stipulating that Icelandic and Faeroese fishing rights only extend to 3 nautical miles, this at the time, and not quite coincidentally, being the range of Royal Navy cannon. In 1950, Iceland unilaterally extended this to 4 miles on the northern coast. Before then, British trawlers using gillnets, trawls and other mass fishing equipment had vacuumed up the oceans, giving fish stocks no opportunity to replenish themselves. After the extension of the fishing rights area, trawling was banned within 4 miles.

In 1952, the territorial waters were extended to 4 miles around the whole country. Great Britain, which was the country that fished the most off Iceland's shores, responded by banning the landing of Icelandic fish in Britain, then the biggest market. Iceland responded by freezing its fish and transporting it to the USA and the USSR. The ban was lifted in 1956, but two years later, Iceland again extended its territorial waters, this time to 12 miles. Britain responded by sending naval vessels to accompany its trawlers, and for three years the Royal Navy protected the trawlers from Icelandic coast guards, until an agreement was reached that

stipulated that Britain be granted limited fishing rights for three years.

For the next ten years the North Atlantic was peaceful, but off in the distance clouds were gathering. In 1972 Iceland yet again extended its boundaries, this time to 50 miles, and again the Royal Navy was sent on the scene. This time the Icelanders had a secret weapon, wire cutters, so they could cut the nets off British trawlers even when these were protected by the Navy. This final battle in the Cod Wars was to prove the longest and harshest. In 1975, territorial waters were again extended, this time to 200 miles. Diplomatic relations were broken off between Iceland and Britain, and several times Icelandic coast guard vessels and British frigates collided or ran into one another, leading to several frigates being dry docked, but no lives were lost. As far away as China the government seized upon the struggle for propaganda purposes, teaching in schools about the brave struggle of the oppressed against imperialism. A deal was eventually brokered by the Norwegian government,

The farmers were afraid the Danes would start modernising the country.

and in 1976 British trawlers left Icelandic territorial waters (as defined by Iceland) for the last time.

The Fine Art of Breaking Treaties

History is, of course, what they want you to know. The Cod Wars are the story of a small, newly independent country's struggle against a declining Empire, the story of a country with no army at all (forget about the Americans for a while) fighting against a country which had long prided itself on ruling the waves. And to some extent the struggle was necessary, at least initially, to protect the fish stocks. But it is also the story of a country that broke every agreement it ever made regarding territory of a consistency that would have made Hitler proud. It is also the story of the mass unemployment that resulted in the former fishing towns of Grimsby and Hull, when their livelihood was cut off,

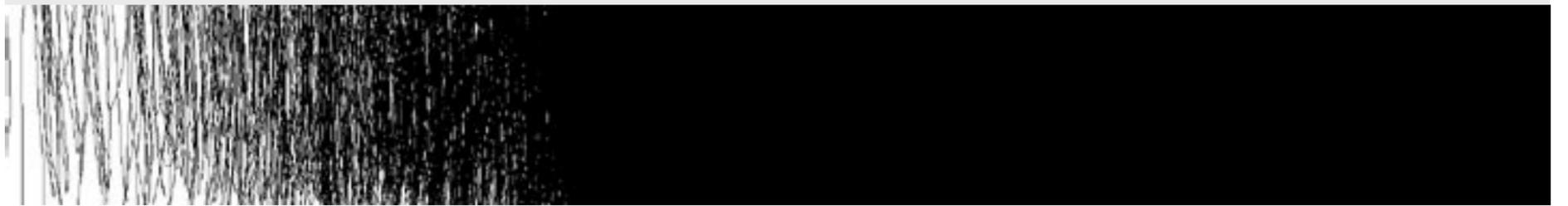
towns where many people to this day still curse the "scrobs," as Icelanders are known.

But every nation needs a national struggle, and an external enemy. For a country with little in the way of military victories, and not a single heroic fatality in the struggle for independence, we need our mythology of triumphs against foreign foes. After all, who are "we" if there are no "they"?

Nationalism, as has been pointed out, is neither rational nor irrational; it is nonrational. To put it another way, it follows its own rules. Those striving for independence might have the well being of the nation at heart, but this is rarely based on economic rationale alone. It might perhaps have made economic sense for Iceland to remain a part of Denmark which certainly was a more viable economic entity in the mid-19th century than the 50,000 souls living in Iceland when the struggle for independence started. This was especially true after 1855 when the Danes exclusive rights to trade were lifted, and hence the issue was no longer

a question of economic independence. And yet no one seems to have ever even considered this.

This also means that, since nationalism is nonrational, it can be used to further many ends. Those who originally sought independence were intellectuals, students from the University of Copenhagen caught up in the romantic nationalism of the day, most of whom were convinced liberals. This was then picked up on by the landowners, the major farmers who were afraid the Danes would start meddling and modernising the country after the end of absolutism in 1849. They seemed to have had a premonition that the influx of modernity would lead to people leaving the farms for fishing villages and bigger towns, hence bringing about an end to their predominance.



The Hijacking of Nationalism

As happened seemingly everywhere else, nationalism became hijacked by the conservatives. It first emerged as a potent political weapon in the French revolutionary wars. Those not willing to die for the revolution often turned out to be willing enough to die for France. When the king had been beheaded and could no longer serve as the unifying symbol of the regime, the idea of the nation took over this function. As the armies of Napoleon stormed into one capital after another, the rulers of Europe (and their recruiting sergeants) who could no longer rule by divine right took note of this powerful new ideology. Nationalism became the new

to a large extent still taught in schools, a history forged as a weapon against the Danes in the struggle for independence. In actuality, one of the main reasons the Norwegian king was asked to take over was constant bickering between the ruling families, resulting in a state of virtual civil war and persistent blood feuds. Icelanders at the time were simply incapable of governing themselves. It is true that after the end of independence, living conditions became worse. But this had less to do with foreign kings than with worsening climate, and in fact the kings had little say over what happened in Iceland anyway. They did not have a standing army here, and when Icelanders finally rose up with

might even help to bring peace to the Middle East, bringing a new, powerful actor to the stage, which might lead, as the US once did, by example rather than arms.

For an increasingly global world, where most vital problems, be they drugs, prostitution, pollution or international terrorism, in a world where corporations are rapidly outgrowing governments, it is a necessity. Just as the city states in ancient Greece proved inadequate to deal with problems after the advent of the Romans onto the stage, so today the nation state is rapidly proving unable to deal with the problems posed to its citizens, the Roman Empire in this case being played, not so much by any government, not even the one in Washington DC, as by the various multinationals who actually run things.

So, the EU is a necessity. But must Iceland necessarily join? As far as the EU is concerned, it doesn't really matter. It'll do just fine without us. But how about for us? Is it in our own interest to join? The question is often posed as one of fishing rights. If we join the EU, popular conception tends to be, the greedy foreigners will gobble up all our fish. It is true that foreigners will be allowed to fish within the 200 mile limit, the one our forefathers fought for. But will this mean Icelanders will become destitute?

Does Iceland Have a Future?

Independence at the time, even if sought in order to preserve the traditional farmer's society, was a necessity. It is seldom good for people to be dependent upon another, and Icelanders who go to the Faeroes often fare well, being more energetic than the locals used to seek support from overseas, in much the same way the people around the US base have become over reliant on employment there, and hence have neglected developing other industries. But an association of nations, entered into out of free will, is something else all together. As history has progressed, people have learnt to think of themselves in ever larger groups, progressing from clans to city states to nations. The nation state came into existence less than 200 years ago. It may have been a necessary stop on the way, but it is important not to miss the train as it continues on. But what, then, about the fish?

The future of fishing is not solely a matter of whether Iceland joins the EU or not. The Chinese have started to



An Icelander prepares to face the outside world.

Photo: Aldis

Nationalism became the new opium of the masses when religion failed.

opium of the masses when religion failed. By the end of the century, the idea of unifying people into states was being used to further expansionist policies under headings such as pan-Germanism or pan-Slavism (although it aroused considerably less enthusiasm in Vienna, as the Habsburg Emperor had more difficulty in embodying the national spirit of a multicultural empire). The monarchs were eventually toppled in the First World War, but new people and parties arose to embody the nation. Here it became the *raison d'etre* for the aptly named Independence Party, formed by the ruling elite in 1929 out of the Conservative Party.

It is interesting to note, however, that in countries such as Scotland, still under the British crown, nationalism remains a part of leftist ideology, intermingling freely with otherwise supranational ideologies such as socialism.

The Myth of the Evil Foreigner

Back in Viking days, everything was great. Every man was a chieftain, had his stable of (mostly Irish) slaves, drank heartily, fought bravely and held lavish parties. Then the Norwegians took over, superceded by the Danes, and darkness descended upon these shores. It was not until the latter 19th century that the country tore itself from out of this darkness, and lived happily ever after.

Such, in short, is the history we are

the introduction of Protestantism, every Dane in the country was tracked down and killed, so ill defended were they. The Danish king, however, quietly reimposed his authority, and no one seemed to mind very much, so a nationalist uprising it was not. If Icelanders were oppressed in the period 1262-1918, the oppression was carried out by local chieftains rather than foreign kings. For example, in 1861, the same year that the serfs were finally freed in Russia, the Danish government insisted that Icelandic laws, forbidding people to leave farms, where they were virtually owned by the farmer, to seek work elsewhere, be changed. The members of the Icelandic parliament all protested, and instead insisted that the shackles around farm labourer's feet be tightened yet further. A compromise so was eventually reached. People could buy their freedom, but at a price that ensured few could afford to do so.

But in retrospect, it is more convenient the enemy be foreign. After all, we need our leaders to protect us from the foreigners. Now, foreigners are ganging up on poor little Iceland once more, this time attempting to forbid us from hunting whales. It is not a question of economics, of course, the resumption of whaling will almost certainly have no impact one way or the other. But it is a great way to distract attention from more boring issues like the economy (see: The Bush Administration), it is a question of rooting for your own side, a matter of us and them. It follows a logic of its own.

Is the EU necessary?

The EU, whether you like it or not, is a necessity. For a continent that twice tore itself apart in the first half of the last century, preventing this from ever happening again it is a necessity. For Eastern Europe, wrecked with poverty and war, it is a necessity. Had Europe spoken with a single voice in 1991, the Balkan wars could probably have been avoided, or at least brought to an end earlier. For those countries entering the European Union, it promises at least the hope of stability and prosperity for those previously stuck in limbo between a collapsing east and a prosperous west. It

THE COAST GUARD

"Half our fatherland is the ocean," is the motto of the Coast Guard, and thanks to their efforts this is literally true today, as they were in the forefront of the struggles that ensued by the extension of the territorial waters.

The history of the Icelandic Coast Guard goes back to 1920, when it patrolled with rented boats, but the first ship built for Iceland for that purpose especially came to these shores in 1926.

The first conflict between Icelanders and Brits in modern times took place in 1899, when an Icelandic sheriff ordered that a British trawler be apprehended, resulting in three Icelanders drowning.

In 1913 a law was set stipulating that all fines collected for poaching in Icelandic waters go to the coast guard. This law is still in effect.

During World War Two the service had its hands full with rescue operations, the neutralising of mines and transport because of a dearth of vessels. During the war, foreign ships were unable to fish in the waters surrounding Iceland, and fish stocks replenished themselves somewhat. After the war, modern trawlers started

export fish that is much more cheaply produced, and can seriously underbid Icelandic product. Iceland simply cannot continue to be as dependant on fisheries in the future as it was in the last century.

The head of EU fisheries, Franz Fischler, was here on a visit in the first half of August. He stressed that those wanting to join the club must abide by its rules. Yet, he said, he was sure some agreement could be reached wherein Icelanders would preserve their fishing, as has already been done in Ireland. He was upset that Icelanders had decided to fish more than has been recommended by international

regulators, but maintained Iceland and Norway could do far more to influence policy within than without, and that common policy was important for fish preservation. Icelandic fisheries minister Arni Mathiesen, however, was not as optimistic, and said that there were still fundamental differences, and that the fish in the sea belongs to the people. In effect, however, this means a quota system wherein a few major quota owners own most of the fishing rights. But at least those quota owners are Icelandic. Nationalism, in the end, is not about economics. It follows a logic of its own.



The Coast Guards often go bungee jumping in their spare time.

Photo: Jón Páll Ásgeirsson

fishing in these in increased numbers, and fish quantity decreased again.

In 1958 the territorial waters were extended to 12 miles and the Coast Guard confronted the Royal Navy for the first time, its frigates threatening to sink the Icelandic boats. This has been called its baptism of fire, but it remained a war of nerves and no actual collisions took place.

In 1972, with the extension to 50 miles the struggle grew more vicious. Great Britain and West Germany took the matter to the International Court in Haag, who reached a verdict in their favour, and Icelandic ships were forbidden to land fish in the European Economic Community.

The Royal Navy appeared yet again accompanying trawlers, but this time the Coast Guard could do more than write reports. With a secret weapon, the wire cutters, actually designed by the head of the Coast Guard in the previous Cod War but not used until now, they could cut the nets of the trawlers and thus enforce the new territorial waters. Some 82 nets were cut in 72-73.

In October 1975, territorial waters

were expanded to 200 miles. This time British frigates tried to plow into Icelandic Guard vessels, but often these managed to turn their rear towards the frigates, hence causing damage to the oncoming ship. One coast guard remembers a frigate cracking up and the mess hall below deck becoming visible, cutlery and other dining room items falling into the sea. He says they managed to save a picture of Prince Philip, but the Queen plunged into the sea. At least 54 such collisions occurred. The dispute was brought to an end in 1976, with the British giving up on fishing within 200 miles of Iceland.

The Coast Guard fleet at the time numbered 5 ships, and in addition rented some trawlers to turn into makeshift guard ships. In peacetime, its fleet has been reduced considerably, and now numbers only two ships. It also has at its disposal a Fokker airplane, and two helicopters, one of them a Super Puma which has a longer range than any at the US Naval base in Keflavik.

CARS AND POEMS

ROUND, CIRCULAR OR SQUARE

If you have an inkling to drive an automobile while in Iceland there is one thing I would like to point out. In my experience Icelandic drivers haven't quite figured out what the indicator is for. I often nag 'my Viking' that he is supposed to use the indicator to INDICATE where he is going. But he rarely sees the need. Not many other drivers on the roads of Reykjavik do either.

I've been held hostage at many a cross road on numerous occasions. Waiting for the safe moment to pull out only to be snubbed by a car that suddenly turns off before reaching me without any indication whatsoever. Now if that person had only indicated I could have neatly gone on my way. But nooooo... no such luck and do you know what the worst thing is ... well I'll tell you. It's the fact that the offending drivers have no idea that they are blatantly crushing road etiquette into extinction.

This leads us to round-a-bouts. Now manoeuvring around a round-a-bout with rules that I am not familiar with is an experience in itself. I have a friend who goes out of her way to avoid round-a-bouts and since I live near two of these circular cyclones of fear she ends up driving at least 5 kilometres extra to get me safely to my door. Living where I do, I am forced to use these confusing crossings and I now tackle them with an iron jaw and a determined attitude, you see I do believe other drivers can 'smell' fear, and if they do, they will cut you up in one swift move.. honest!

In England it's understood that a round-a-bout is a flowing sea of cars, one is never supposed to stop on a round-a-bout. When approaching the round-a-bout you get into the correct lane, according to your exit. Outside lane for the next two turn offs and inside lane for those after. When exiting the round-a-bout you indicate then inch your way over in time to slip off without even stroking the brake pedal. The drivers on the outside of you slow

down and give way. It's like a delicate waltz. Everyone knows the steps ... away they all twirl... round and round they go!

Singaporeans know the very same rules and the mass of cars that circulates these islands manages to do so in one smooth motion. You risk having horns honked and fists shaken if you break one of the rules that keep the commuters commuting.

Here in Iceland it's a precarious 'keep your foot near the brake pedal and pray' deal, but perhaps that's just me. I'm sure the average Icelander is quite confident on the round-a-bout. You get on when you can, from wherever.. inside lane, outside lane, then you get off, again from wherever.. outside lane, inside lane, which, of course can result, should the driver be on the inside lane, in all the cars on the outside lane stopping. It's amazing, they all seem to be dancing to a different tune.

Funnily enough a round-a-bout is called a hringtorg in Icelandic. Hring = round or circle and torg = square or market place. Uhhmm yesssss... A roundsquare... what more can I say! (Torg can actually also mean marketplace, as can square -ed)

Having recently had a near miss... which of course I believe, was not my fault at all, I thought I better go check what was the correct way to enter and exit a round-a-bout as opposed to the wrong way.

Friends were a bit dodgy. It ranged from: Not knowing round-a-bout rules even existed, to: "You just have to indicate left if you are staying on and right if you are getting off" (but as I mentioned earlier... indicator use is infrequent). One thing that everyone agreed on was that one could come to a complete stop while on the round-a-bout to let the folk in their automobiles on the inside lane off!



So I went further and called "Umferðaráðið" (the Traffic Council) and spoke to Sigurður Helgason. He charmingly told me on the phone that (listen up now, cause this is it.. the official explanation) the general rule is to give way to those on your left while on a round-a-bout and give way to those on your right while on the road. Coming to a complete stop on the round-a-bout is quite acceptable and in most cases necessary to avoid bumper car results. (of course he didn't say the bit about the bumper cars... but you get my drift right?!) Yesss so thank you Sigurður for clearing that up for me... and others... or is it just me?... the little WOMAN driver living up to the expected reputation of women drivers?! Ohhhhhh what a dangerous thing for me to say in this land of women libbers! My fellow feminists must be fuming at me, gulp! I better just belt up!

Driving Facts in Iceland. It is mandatory to use seatbelts for all passengers. One has to drive with the headlights on at all times... even in the 24 hour daylight of the summer. If you kill a sheep while driving on the country roads you have to report it to the farmer and pay the price of the sheep (usually covered by the insurance company). Unfortunately the dead sheep is not yours (or the insurance company's) to keep. Be careful out there!

Michelle Mitchell

POEMS

Persephone

The snares lurking candidly
Among memory's adobe halls
Bite off the tongues turned to stone:
A dull music enchants the pillars
Samson couldn't topple.

Played by the day-workers of the angry soul,
It reverberates sonorously through the temple
As the ensemble of my generation,
Drunk with the rhetoric of the fiscal year,
File into an oblivion of spikes and chains
And bloodthirsty manifestos.

I walk nonchalantly away, gagged
And raped, cursing the criminal thigh
From which I was rent, the darkening sky
Swooping over the horizon like the shadow
Of a scalpel over the hemisphere
Of some patient's waiting cerebrum.

The snares sprung from my thigh
And imagination died.

The applause of thunder to the keening air
Of migrating swans kills my heart
As the adobe grows whiter by the hour
And more tourists stream to our small Italian
Village by the coast to hear our uncouth music...
Roar.

Neal O' Donoghue

A Fool for Believing

I heard that they finally nailed him
That they laughed when they impaled him
But the heavens remained silent
With no sign of grieving

Does that mean that all will be good
That things will be as they should
Or am I just a fool
For believing
Vladur

Dark Night

It was an Edward Hopper evening
in our hotel room downtown.
Light dredged in through the curtains.
It tangled in our clothes,
It set our garments glowing
in the dark and polished woods.
We disguised ourselves in twilight
for our naked nerveless dance.
We hid our flesh in marble,
that was veined with alcohol.
Ice cracked in the water glass
to set your body free
from the closet of my images
where I put you down on page.
I was your blind pornographer,
my senses all inflamed
with shifting mass and surfaces
raked by sharpened nails.
Then in the wash of morning light,
in the glistening porcelain,
we practiced on our solitude
in the mirror above the sink.

Christopher Shillock

For Susanna

Poem in English? Won't work!
I may be a cowboy, but that's an Icelandic cowboy
(call me a Viking and I'll start speaking French!)
Love poem in English? Won't work.
We say ástarljóð. I'd love to spend the war with you.
Let's be serious and laugh.
We say ástarljóð or mansöngur.
Ást means love, approximately.
Ljóð means poem, exactly.
Man - that's you - a beautiful and rare word for a woman.
Söngur - that's my soul, it ceases not.
Poem? Won't work.
You should have your own pop song.
It would go:
Haukur Már Helgason



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SAVE THE TRUCKS

column BY

H. GUNN

Some people are disturbed about the pollution and environmental damage that large, gas guzzling trucks can cause to the countryside. Other are worried that there simply aren't enough of them let loose on nature. Such a man is H. Gunn.

If a traveller in Iceland has any interest in cars he will likely notice the vast amount of custom built jeeps on Icelandic roads. Customising ranges from mild changes like aluminium wheels and a different set of tires, to wild tear 'em down, build them up again operations of rebuilding your average SUV into a go-everywhere mountain truck which curiously is still drivable on the street. What kind of mania is this and why has it gone to such extremes? The romantic explanation would be to paint Icelanders as worshippers of freedom and individualism and that this is really just another part of our fight for independence that actually ended some time around 1944.

Another explanation would be that we're all damn hillbillies and the tax on cars depending on engine size and the strict gun regulations are the only things that prevent us from running amok,

driving through the countryside in pickup trucks with screaming engines and shooting at everything including road signs, mannequins and old ladies with scarves. A third is that expensive SUVs riding on large tires have become a status symbol in Iceland and a corporate executive without an expensive truck with very large tires is rare. The sad thing is that most of these trucks, built by expert mechanics with stars in their eyes thinking of how beautiful this truck will look on a glacier at 110 km/h, hardly ever leave the asphalt. Four-wheeling should be about the ability to go wherever you want, whenever you want, preferably in a vehicle you have poured a bit of your soul into. The vehicle you drive should have scarred your knuckles, not your checkbook.

Don't get me wrong, all four-wheeling is expensive, but there is a difference between buying a relatively cheap

vehicle and spending money on repairs and gas and buying a new vehicle, adding all available options and then taking it to a customising shop adding another million isk. or more to the cost of an already expensive vehicle. Four wheeling is about adventure and the modern day (10 million isk.) trucks don't offer the right feeling, I think. I mean, for crying out loud, they've got their high-lift jacks colour matched to the body and dvd screens in the headrests, it's simply revolting. It seems to me the mountains are filling up with whitecollar drivers. "Men in suits driving on glaciers". Is this the image we want to promote to unsuspecting travellers? I think not. It's not how the majority of jeepers do things and it is not how it is supposed to be done. This decadence is hurting the four wheeling community, something that used to be a model of Icelandic mechanical ingenuity is now a model of Icelandic extravagance and fanaticism. I'm not saying that I'd prefer the mountains full of greasemonkeys and gearheads with missing teeth wearing plaid shirts and hauling tool chests the size of an Austin Mini but...wait a minute, actually I would. At least they're not afraid of getting their hands dirty and to help you out, not to mention that they actually "can" help you out if something goes wrong.

I've spoken to a few people in the business and they agreed with me that the charm of Icelandic four-wheeling is diminishing. When you have a global positioning system with an extremely accurate map of Iceland in your laptop, a brand spanking new vehicle recently

converted to have 44 inch tires and travel in large packs of other similar trucks, the sense of adventure is somewhat muffled. Gas gulping homebuilt monsters are being replaced by sapless Japanese SUVs. You can't even smell the crisp mountain air in these vehicles, what you smell is leather and money (as opposed to gasoline and exhaust of course). This is offered to travellers on organized tours. Vehicles so expensive that the only people able to buy them are the working professionals driving them (travel agencies) and well off people who almost never use their jeeps as they were meant to be used. So I ask again: Are we producing the wrong image for the people looking for an adventure in an Icelandic customised truck? When the trucks they will be riding in are owned by a handful of wealthy businessmen and a few travel companies? Isn't it time someone offered jeep tours in old beat up gas gulping monsters that don't have leather seats and laptop computers? That's real adventure, something actually might happen and then you'd have to have a real driver that



can fix minor problems. The emergence of the superjeep as a status symbol has cast an ugly shadow on Icelandic four-wheeling but I think we may be getting past this. The arrival of luxury SUVs, like the Mercedes M-Class, BMW X-5, Porsche Cayenne and so on, to Icelandic markets may strangely enough be the cure for the limping image of four-wheeling in this country. Lately I've noticed an incredible amount of such Porches on the road hopefully on the account of the superjeeps.

Hopefully it has become more trendy to own a Cayenne than a Nissan Patrol on 44 inch tires. Because frankly I'm tired of rich people playing in my sandbox. They can have their golf and high living but the mountains are mine, mine, MINE.



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FILM

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: THE CURSE OF THE BLACK PEARL



The words "Jerry" and "Bruckheimer" on the screen seldom bode well. Nor does a film based on a ride in Disneyland add promise to the premise. Surprisingly then, the film turns out to be quite enjoyable. Johnny Depp plays Keith Richards, a man who likes to drink, dress as a pirate and when exposed to moonlight, turns out to be nought but a skeleton with an earring. His arch foe is Captain Barbossa, played by Geoffrey Rush, a pirate who once led a mutiny against him. Somewhere in between is the rather dull love affair between Orlando Bloom, and a blonde, and among other characters are her father (the ever dependable Jonathan Pryce),

and husband to be.

But it is the two loveable scoundrels who carry the film. Johnny Depp's character makes a wonderful entrance, and is in the traditional role of the hero's sidekick mercenary with a heart of gold, a sort of Han Solo to Orlando's rather dull Luke. There's even the makings of a Star Warsian love triangle, without the incest. It doesn't take long before our pirate is swinging from masts chased by Her Majesties troops, in the best swashbuckling style. Add some cursed Aztec gold to the mix, and you have the makings of an exciting historical adventure.

The pirates are all suitably cartoonish, which as just as well, for there are enough holes in the plot to sink the sturdiest pirate ship. How did Depp become cursed? Why do they need Bloom's blood? Why do the crew of the Interceptor leave after having rescued Bloom's girlfriend instead of going for the treasure? And, perhaps most annoyingly, the youthful Depp doesn't seem like he could possibly have hung out with Bloom's old man, since both of them seem more or less the same age. In the event, none of this seems to matter very much. What we get instead is some pretty cool pirate speak ("Do we have an accord?"), some



impressive CGI, which for once adds to the film instead of the film being based around it, and the irresistible allure of a good old fashioned adventure film. Even the slightly overlong ending is a nice relief, where, instead of the other suitor falling into a pit of acid or something, he actually sees the error of his ways, refreshing in an era where the bad guys are always portrayed as irredeemably bad and are inevitably punished tenfold, where revenge is usually the highest purpose.

It would be wonderful if the cinemas would show some more challenging stuff every now and then, but as far as harmless, lighthearted fun goes, this is more or less all you can ask for. Finally, a question all prospective Icelandic filmmakers are no doubt asking themselves this very moment; which one of the rides down by the harbour at this moment would make the best screenplay.

VG



IGBY GOES DOWN

Sixteen is the not the simplest age to change your entire life. But drastic times can create great ingenuity.

Igby lives above the moment, and it's killing him. "I have this great, great pressure coming down on me," he tells the mirror while in a crisis. They were his father's words just before he went mad. He faces his ill-fitting life with quick wit and honesty, but while they help him cope they will not help him get out of prison.

Igby Slocum, played with intelligence, wit and grace by Kieran Culkin, is a sixteen year old prep school student, the son of a sensitive and broken man (Bill Pullman) and a wealthy Washington DC socialite, played to neurotic perfection by Susan Sarandon. Expelled from one expensive private academy after another, Igby opts out, running away from the next school before he even gets there and hiding out in a loft in New York's SoHo, living off an older friend/lover, then meeting another (Claire Danes). He spends his time alternately getting high,



getting judged, hating his brother, and occasionally getting beaten up by one exposed hypocrite or another.

Igby cannot conform to the rules of his dull, narrow-minded and moneyed tribe and therefore faces permanent exclusion from it, something which would come as a great relief to him.

"You are a furious boy," Sookie (Claire Danes) tells him. A boy who will flunk life unless he snaps to and follows the rules of prep school, university and Mother in order to be safely ensconced in his pre-determined world of impressive career, the right friends and contacts, an opulent home and well-heeled offspring.

Except for occasional help, Igby is

alone. His only brother Ollie (Ryan Phillippe) is a perfect Ivy League Columbia University man with an expensive haircut, upper class drawl and cold intolerance for all things Igby. His mentor is Igby's godfather D.H. (Jeff Goldblum), a famous architect with no soul and a condescending support of Igby shown out of deference to the boy's mother. No arrangement here is without complication, and Igby, being honest, falls afoul of most arrangements.

Igby's refusal to cooperate is rooted in the moment where as a young boy he witnessed his beloved father's breakdown and permanent hospitalisation.

"My father followed all the rules, and look where it got him," he tells Sookie. The romance of the film is that we agree with him, though he has no plan and no income and barely manages a high school equivalency. We the audience are his only real friend, the only ones who won't judge him. He is alone but for the nagging suspicion that his life also counts, and anyway, who are these people?

'Igby Goes Down' goes successfully where others have failed, a story in a long line of American films that aim to live up to the impossibly high precedent set by 'The Graduate' in the late 1960s, a film that illustrated better than any before or since the inane and empty nature of American middle and upper class life when it is played correctly. As with that film, our hero's consciousness and confusion is sung with perfect truth by Coldplay and other bands who capture what rock and roll was born for: "I'm stuck in the suburbs and I've got to get out, before I die." In an homage to the party scene in 'The Graduate', Igby is greeted at a party by countless well to do assholes who stick their heads close in front of him or hug him tightly, and whose weirdness he literally runs from.

Like Dustin Hoffman's character in 'The Graduate', Igby is approached by



the wrong older woman (Amanda Peet), his godfather's mistress, as well as by a younger woman (Claire Danes) whom he genuinely cares for but who abandons him. Igby goes round and round in a spiralling intrigue of grown up life, losing his funding and his housing more than once before he finally breaks out of his own seventh circle of hell.

As a coming of age film 'Igby' travels old territory-upbeat and fun to watch as he rejects his narrow upbringing, loses his virginity, and strikes out on his own away from the bizarre and unenviable puppets who populate his universe. But this particular film is novel-based, not other-movie-based, with the symbolism, parallels and intelligent dialogue of any good novel.

Igby's final flight is the last we see of him—the end of the story where the real story begins, but then an Igby sequel would not work. We catch him here at the perfect moment, before his quick wit and refusal to listen dissolve into clichés and he turns into Hugh Grant, or at the other end of the spectrum, barfly Charles Bukowski. Like JD Salinger's classic American novel "The Catcher In the Rye" the visceral beauty of the lead character stems from his vulnerability within his tribe. That unsuitability becomes void when he exits, and the dramatic tension of the story goes with it. We are left wanting more, if only to keep hearing Igby's amazing wit and calm refusal to play, and to tell ourselves that if we had to be, we could be that brave again.

Caroline Ryan



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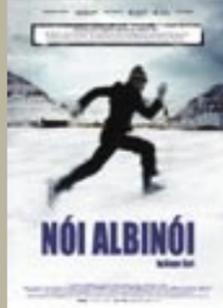
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CINEMA LISTINGS

THE FOLLOWING CINEMA LISTING IS FOR DATE OF PUBLICATION (JULY 25). EXPECT SOME CHANGES IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

NÓI ALBINÓI



The Icelandic film industry has been experiencing a bit of a boom of late, film folk around the globe acknowledging that there is talent to be found here on our godforsaken island. I for one wouldn't have associated my old university councillor with award winning movies, but as it turns out, her son, probably still in school when I did my degree, has quite recently directed a film which takes place in a small fishing village in the West fjords of Iceland, in the dead of mid-winter, about a bunch of no-hopers to whom nothing much happens. And it's bloody brilliant. Nói albinói (Albino Noah) of the title is a student of uncertain age, possibly around 16. His father is among the

sorrier excuses for a human being I have seen, makes a very poor living as a taxi driver but frequently drinks himself into a stupor and has his teenage son take care of things. Nói himself is such an abominably bad and inattentive student that his teacher is having a breakdown and faces the headmaster with ultimatums, either he goes or... you get my drift. Anyway, in addition to this we have a shotgun wielding grandmother, a dark-haired girl who mans the pumps at the local petrol station and a fantastic bank robbery gone pear-shaped. The endless, claustrophobic whiteness of the winter snow contrasts splendidly with the indoor tackiness of the 60's décor everywhere, massive flowered wallpaper and carpets and equally suffocating lace and china on every horizontal surface. Even in the father's makeshift cardboard home, brownish flowers on walls, embroidered



cushions, rugs and carpet form a fantastic background to his drinking sessions, swigging vodka and smoking fags before he dons his leather jacket, greases back his hair and goes out looking for customers. Did I mention he is a huge Elvis fan who sings karaoke at the local country ballroom while his son is being beaten up in the snow outside? The shooting, editing, directing and acting are on a par with anything I've seen in any film, and the setting and script make it unique and exotic. Tómas Lemarquis has a fantastic debut as Nói, Þróstur Leó Gunnarsson delivers as his father and might I mention Hjalti Rögnvaldsson as the sloppy vest-wearing bookshop owner whose daughter Nói falls in love with. It's quirky, funny and moving and a must see for all who want to get to know how the Icelandic heart beats. A great film.

Ingunn Snædal

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CITY GUIDE

GRAPEVINE IN YOUR POCKET

THIS PULLOUT HAS ALL THE INFORMATION ONE MIGHT NEED, SO FOR A SAFER JOURNEY, PULL IT OUT AND PUT IT IN YOUR POCKET

LEAVING THE CITY

If you're not going to hitchhike your way out of town and you haven't got a bike, there are three ways to do it.

Rent a car

A comfortable way to if you can afford it, renting a car for 24 hours can cost anywhere from 6.900kr (89\$/83EU) with insurance and unlimited mileage. You can rent anything from a four wheeled aluminum tin can (usually a VW Polo) to a huge Motor home/VR, jeeps are also available. Car rentals are situated in most of Iceland's larger towns, e.g. Reykjavik, Akureyri, Ísafjörður, Selfoss and Egilsstaðir. You must be at least 20 years old, and you must have been licensed to drive for at least one year at the time of the rental. The rental company usually require payment by credit card..

Taking the Bus

Reykjavik's main bus terminal is BSI (www.bsi.is). It opens at 7:30 (9:00 on weekends) and closes at 19:00. BSI's bus routes go all around Iceland, at a rather reasonable price.

The buses are accurate and usually on time, a big advantage, but the time between trips from one place can sometimes vary from a few hours to a couple of days, a disadvantage for the less patient.

You can also check out BSI's guided tours either at their website (www.dice.is), or simply contact the bus terminal.

Get airborne

There are two airlines that handle Iceland's domestic flights, Flugfélag Íslands (Air Iceland) and the smaller islandflug. We recommend you visit their websites for more info on their fares and so on. Both airlines are situated on Reykjavik airport in the center of Reykjavik. Flying to Akureyri, usually costs around 7.500kr (100\$/90EU) and flights to all destinations are frequent, often up to three times a day, but if you think you're going to be enjoying the view on your way, you will be disappointed.

www.flugfelag.is
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and of course you can always walk.

SPOT THIS

Café Mokka
Skólavörðustígur 3a
101 Reykjavik

As mentioned in the reviews on this page, Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavik and though ownership of the small café has changed over the years, it still uses its original name. The café opened in 1958 and is thus in its late forties by now and will seemingly and hopefully reach pension age, at the very least. Before it opened only a few Icelanders had tasted coffee made with an espresso machine so it can be said that this café brought civilised coffee mass consumption to the weather beaten rock. The only complaint you can level against their traditional waffles is that it is physically (and often financially) impossible to eat quite as many of them as you would like.

Mokka is known for its regulars who have actually been regulars for a regularly long time and also for frequent art exhibitions.

Between September 1st and October 12th paintings by Bjarni Bernharður will be on display. Bjarni, who's a little older than the café, has been painting since his twenties and has held two exhibitions at Café Mokka in the past, both of them critically acclaimed, and sipping a coffee and examining these is a good way to recover when suffering from an overdose of waffles.

café

1. Te og Kaffi

Laugavegur 27
Because of its small entrance, it's easy to miss while walking by. Being not only a café, but also a gift shop, it is well worth the visit. It's Reykjavik's answer to Starbucks, with a large selection of coffees, teas and everything you need to consume your coffee at home. The café itself may not be the best place to sit down in, but does great takeaway.

2. Ráðhúskaffi

City Hall
With view over the city pond, Ráðhúskaffi is situated inside Reykjavik's City Hall. Coffee and great cakes as you enjoy the view. Free internet access for costumers and around the corner inside the City Hall, you'll find a big 80m2 model of Iceland.

3. Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a
Grái Kötturinn is across the street from Iceland's National Theater and very small and very popular in the early hours of the day. A good place to start a day the British way, with eggs and bacon and other traditional breakfasts on the menu. The lunch menu is also inviting.

4. Kaffitár

Bankastræti 8
The colors of the Rainbow meet you when you enter this café on Bankastræti, with a different color on every wall. It's small but has good coffee and tasty side dishes. It's one of these places that make you want to sit down and watch daily life go by on one of downtown's busiest streets, or simply just to read the newspaper.

5. Súfistinn

Laugavegur 18
The only no smoking café in the centre and always crowded. Being inside Mál og Menning bookstore on Laugavegurinn is its biggest advantage. You are allowed to pick up books, magazines and newspapers from the bookstore, and read them there over a cup of coffee and/or a snack.

6. Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a
An Icelandic tradition since 1958, Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavik and the first one to make coffee with an espresso machine. Mokka celebrated its 45th birthday on May 24. The walls are covered with art for sale and seats usually filled by loyal customers.

7. Kaffivagninn

Grandagarður 10
By the harbor where fishermen and sailors along with bus drivers and old badasses gather for lunch and a cup of coffee. If you want to try out traditional Icelandic food, pancakes or bread covered with smoked lamb this is the right place although you might feel slightly apprehensive about the tough old guys, don't worry! They're not going to be the last thing you see in this life.

8. Café Paris

Austurstræti 14
Situated in the heart of the city with view over Austurvöllur, its spacious, popular and usually full. Offers you light meals and the opportunity to sit outside when the weather is nice. Middle aged Icelanders on every other table, and tourists in between, the usual crowd, Café Paris is international like the city it's named after.

9. Tjú Dropar

Laugavegur 27
With the exception of Mokka café, Tjú Dropar is the oldest café in downtown Reykjavik. The place has a very special feel to it, the decor, the tables and the chairs, along with the service makes you feel very much at home, it's almost like your sitting down for a cup of coffee in your grandma's kitchen. The menu is limited, but has the advantage of constant changes, with new items every day.

bar and bistro

(most are cafés too)

10. 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.

11. Hverfisbar

Hverfisgata 20
Very long queues to get in, and once there, you wonder what the fuss was about, or whether the queue was the best part. When it's four o'clock on a Sunday morning and you're still going strong, this might be the place you'll wind up, by which time you probably won't care that the same song seems to come on every half hour.

12. Grand Rokk

Smiðjustígur 6
A place true to Rock 'n' Roll, leather, long hair and bands that don't do covers. Well known and less known Icelandic bands play for free (free drinks for band members, need I say more?) usually no less than three bands a night, four nights a week. Grab a beer and rock on! During the day this is a hangout for chess players, challenging each other and anyone that might wander in here for a game. Some of them seem to have finally decided to abandon participation in the outside world in favour of the afternoon drinking and chess.

13. Sólon

Bankastræti 7a
One size fits all is what this place is going for, and it's usually a very crowded pick up place. Somewhat expensive, and whether it's because of this, an attempt at masculinity or just general despair, people have been known to jump from the second floor balcony. This is not recommended, as a broken leg is most often the result, and the girls remain duly unimpressed.

14. Kráin

Laugavegi 73
An atmospheric place, which has its regulars and is sadly one of few places that has Kronenburg on tap. A rather quiet place to chat on the weekdays, and troubadour plays there every weekend. It also has occasional jazz piano concerts.

15. Cafe 22

Laugavegur 22
Originally a gay hang out now it's a place where you can pass through all the stages without leaving the building, from chatting on the first floor, dancing on the second, to passing out on the third, where the atmosphere is more of an intimate late night one. Still maintains the feeling of being a place for people who don't necessarily fit in anywhere else, which makes it a great place to hang out.

16. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðarstræti 1
Kaffibarinn is cool Reykjavik, or at least tries to be. Reykjavik prides itself on having more artists per capita than any other capital in the world, and the crowd here seem to be trying to prove the point, with musicians, actors and writers, and a whole lot of wannabes. You can't say you've partied in Reykjavik unless you've partied here, although civilians might have a hard time getting in. Blur's Damon Albarn owns a piece of this one wisely figuring it was cheaper than paying for drinks.

17. Sirkus

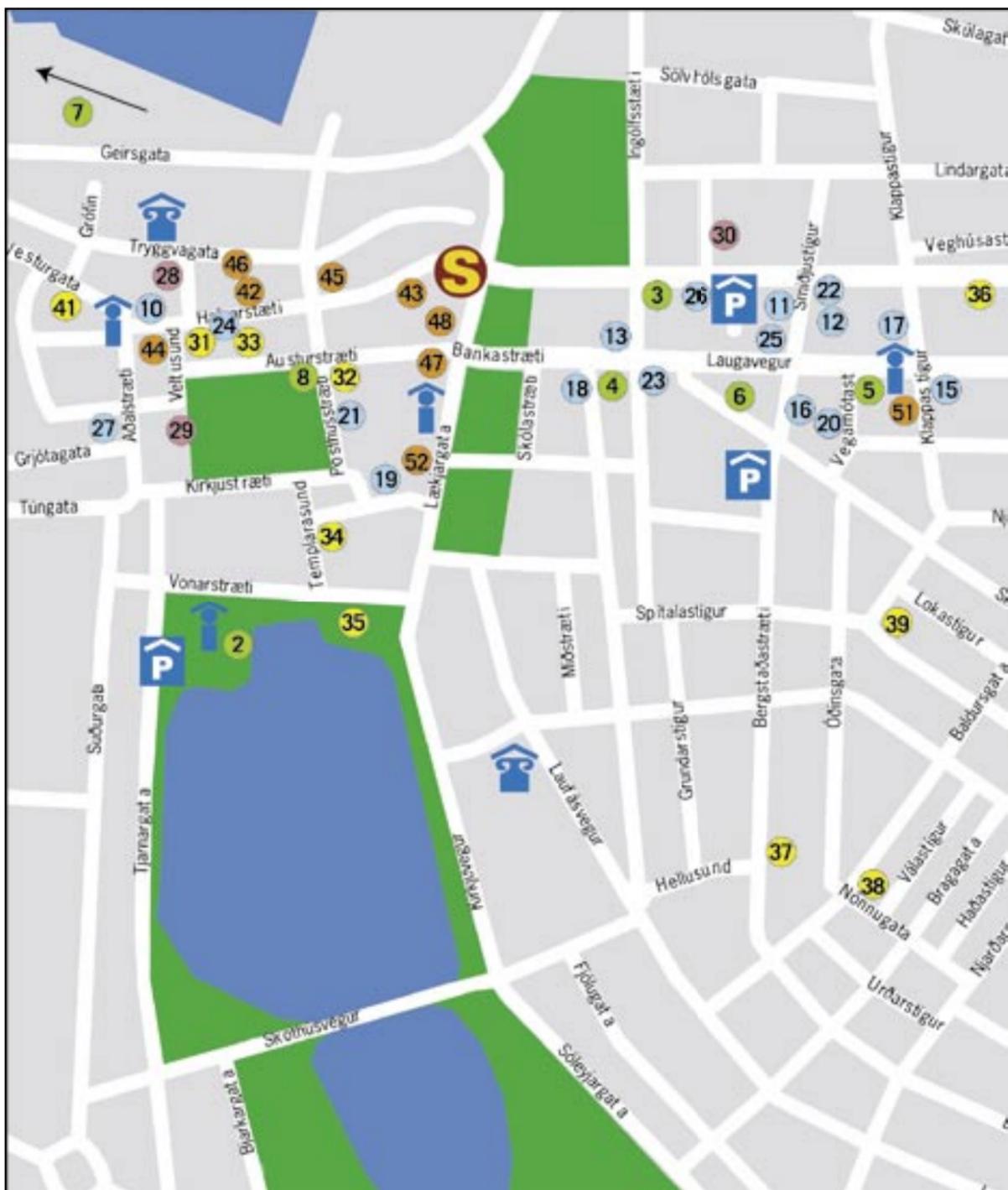
Klappartígur 30
Weird inside out and the tropical forest painted on the outside gives you a hint of what's to come. It's Reykjavik's underground wildlife in a small cage, it's kinda like someone threw a party at home, and things got a bit out of hand... months ago. It's as tiny as an apartment for two and the second floor looks just like someone's living room. Cramped, but the bathroom queue is a good place to meet people.

18. Nelly's

Pinghóltsstræti 2
Has just changed management, so what will happen now is anyone's guess. All we can do is hope they maintain their policy of being the cheapest bar in Reykjavik.

19. Little Central

Pósthússtræti 17
Little Central is both small, central and cosy. It's situated in a cellar near Austurvöllur, just behind the church. The quiet



20. Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4
Wants to be the in-spot to be seen, and is just that. Dress up, flaunt it and enjoy the view as others do the same. It's a jungle in there, and the fittest, or at least the fittest looking, come out on top.

21. Kaffibrenslan

Pósthússtræti 9
On the sober side of town, but ironically with the largest selection of beers in Reykjavik, good coffee and even better service, (and imagine, we're not getting paid for saying this). One of these cafes/bars that should fit all, the editors admit they drink coffee here more often than they should.

22. 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 and middle aged philosophers asking themselves questions about life during the day, over a pint of beer or a cup of coffee.

23. Prikið

Bankastræti 12
Always a classic, no matter if it's early on a Monday morning or very late on a Saturday night, Prikið makes your day (or night if that's your thing). Nice coffee, better music and remember to dance, if you can manage to take advantage of the very limited space

24. Dubliners

Hafnarstræti 4
The city's main Irish pub, which, as in many cities, means that it's a hangout for all sorts of foreigners. At the weekends there's also a large influx of locals, often of the slightly older variety. If you like the darker stuff on tap, this is probably the

atmosphere is lifted up in weekends with live jazz music, a rare sight in downtown Reykjavik. Recommended for those who want to have a chilled night out and take it easy.

Best place to go.

25. Coffee Shop 11
Laugavegur 11
Owned by the same people as 22, and sort of its little brother. Usually has decent rock music and a pretty good jukebox if you're still not happy. Football on the upper floor, and if you ask Guðni the bartender nicely, he might perform the house trick for you, which is putting a match into his mouth and pulling it out of his nose, and if you meet him on a good day, he might even put a pen into one nostril and take it out the other as an encore. Watch out for slam poetry nights first Thursday of every month.

26. Kaffi Kúltur
Hverfisgötu 18
For those who grow tired of seeing nothing but palefaces about town, Kaffi Kúltur might be a pleasant diversion. During the day it's something of a hangout for the actors from the National Theatre, just across the street, but in the evening it is populated by both new and older Icelanders. They have multi-ethnic food and frequent concerts. Wednesday night is tango night. Anyone can join in, but this is not a place to learn.

27. Vidalin
Aðalstræti 10
It may sound strange or even uncivilized, but Reykjavik's oldest building is not a museum, but a pub. But travellers who stayed for a short time, drank much and missed all the tourist sights can at least claim they visited a historically remarkable building while in Reykjavik and get away with it. Vidalin offers all kinds of music, from live blues and jazz bands to wild techno and therefore attracts a different crowd for each theme.

28. Gaukur á Stöng
Tryggvagata 22
Iceland's oldest club is turning 20 this fall. During the day it's a pool pub and on weekday evenings there are often live rock

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clubs



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service and functional
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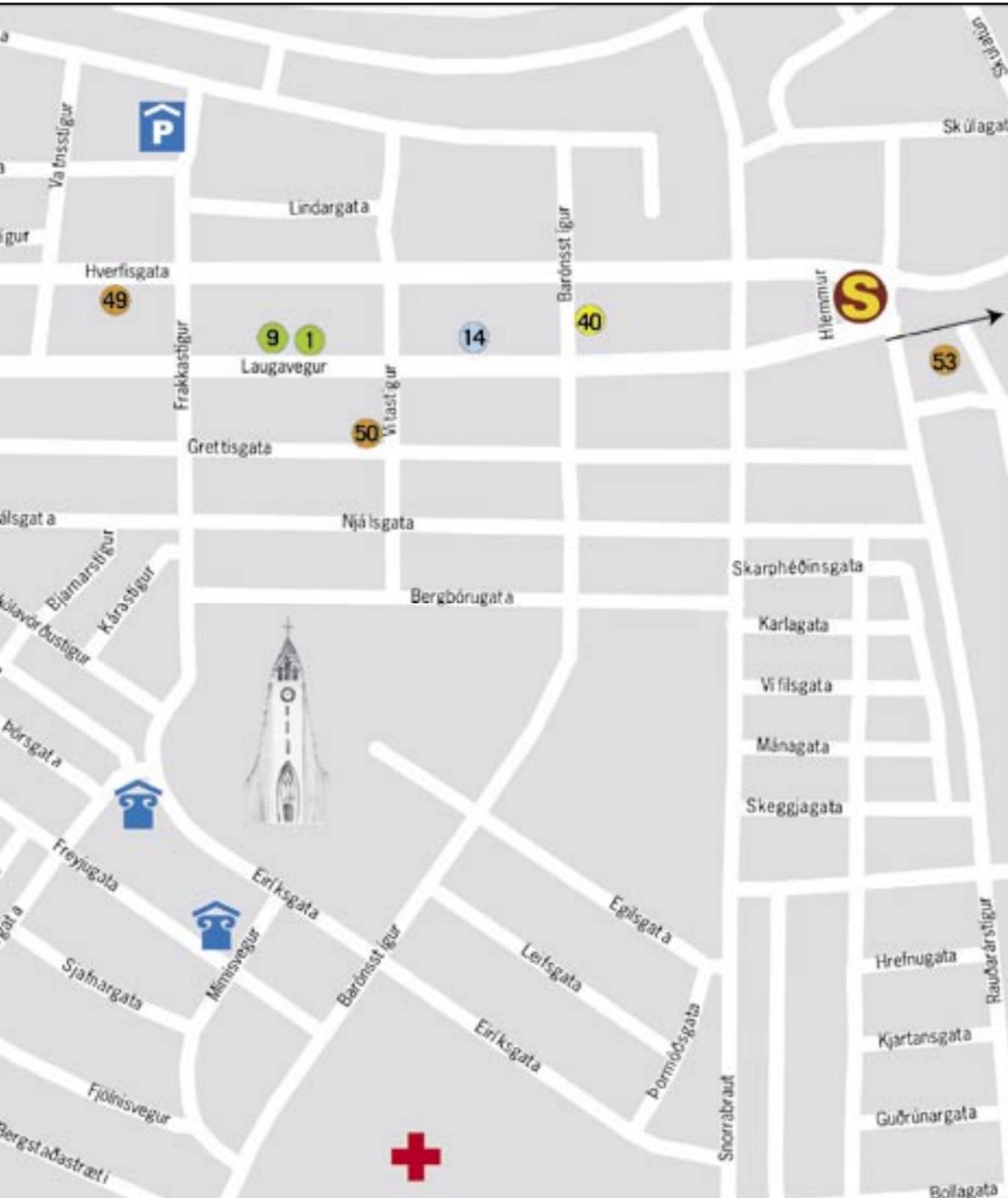
Reykjavik has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty much anywhere in Reykjavik's suburb areas. It's a slow system and you might have to change buses a couple of times to get where you want to though usually things run smoothly, and on time. The price of a single fare is 220kr, for an adult, (60kr for children under 12). If you are in town for more than a few days then 9 ticket package for 1500kr would be a better bet. 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 accurate amount, unless you want to

pay more for your ride. The driver can not change your money. For those of you used to the honesty system, this system is as honest, because if you don't pay, you don't ride. You can ask the driver for a free time limited exchange ticket, if you need two buses to complete your journey. The bus system is closed during the 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 Reykjavik are Hlemmur and Lækjartorg (see map), there you'll be able to get all the information you need.



HOW TO USE PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Tunks over of the fabulous DC Coast in Washington DC. Ask anyone who is somebody in the culinary world, and they will tell you about Soggi Hall, Iceland's famous chef and television personality. Soggi Hall has presented Icelandic gourmet food all over the world. His television show is very popular and so are his cookbooks. The Soggi Hall restaurant at Hotel Odinsve is one of the 100 best new restaurants in the world according to Condé Nast Travel Magazine. Need we say more.

40. Argentina
Barnsstígur 11a
"A dark cavernous, off-beat restaurant called Argentina...""A steak house where the lamb has killed the beef." and "a gastronomic delight." are just few of the impressive compliments paid to this restaurant
David Rosengarten wrote in his American Newsletter not too long ago: "Lots of chefs in Reykjavik riff on local lamb, but if you want to see it in its most pristine form, you can dine at Argentina." There are few places in Reykjavik where you can simply sense the deep passion for simply prepared seasonal foods.

41. Tapas
Vesturgata 3b
For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening can hardly be better spent than at Tapas, where you can vilt away the evening having course after course of wonderful miniature dishes served. Particularly recommended is the garlic fried lobster and duck in apricot sauce. If afterwards, you don't feel like getting up right away, there's also a rather large lounge to lounge in, and the paintings are worth a look.

fast food

42. Nonni
Hafnarstræti 11
The owner is a miser, so always count your change. Having said that, this is almost certainly the best junk food in the Greater Reykjavik area, and quite possibly farther a field. 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 burger and sandwiches, and have good lunch time offers.

43. Serrano
Hafnarstræti 20
A new place right next door to the above. A Mexican themed eatery, but light on the chili. Slightly cheaper and lighter on the cholesterol, but somehow not quite as fulfilling. Still, you can get a large burrito and Pepsi for 599, which is one of the cheaper ways to fill your belly in this too expensive town.

44. Hiðili
At Ingólfstorg
Where Nonni used to work before he went solo. The original, but not necessarily the best. They have a somewhat larger selection of subs, and of different sizes, but somehow manage to be slightly on the soggy side, and miss the heavenly Nonni sauce.

45. Bæjarins 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 standardized Icelandic hotdog, only better.

46. 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, as well as nation wide here in Iceland. The have a Summer of Love type 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.

47. Kebab
Lækjargata 2
The only kebab place in downtown Reykjavik, surprisingly. Does not really stand comparison to more established kebab places on the continent, but its presence gives Reykjavik a more international, rather than just Americanised, feel.

48. Waffle Wagon
At Lækjartorg
Sort of comes and goes like an apparition. One minute its there to serve you its delicious, chocolate soaked Belgian waffles, the next it's just the empty pavement. Close your eyes and pray, and it might appear before you.

49. Austurindiahraðlestin
Hverfisgata 56
The name means the Orient Express, as it is a sort of fast food version of the more up market Austurindiafélagið (East India Company). It is, however, slightly more expensive than regular fast food places, but this is reflected in the quality. The Tandoori chicken is particularly recommended, probably the best in town.

50. Vitabar
Bergþórsgata 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.

51. First Vegetarian (Á næstu grösun)
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.

52. Little 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.

53. American Style
Skipholt 70
An all-Icelandic chain, as you may have guessed, with a selection of burgers, chicken and steak. Pictures of rock stars on the wall complete the theme. Mostly on the right side of the purple note and you can refill your glass with soda as often as you like. Still, you find yourself wondering, is all that cheese and bacon on the chicken breast strictly necessary?

USEFUL NUMBERS

Car rentals	
ALP	562-6060
Avis	591-4000
Berg car rental	577-6050
Budget	567-8300
Europcar	591-4050
SBK Car Rental	420-6000

Internet Cafés	
BSI, Vatnsmyrarvegur 10 101 Rvk.	
Ground Zero, Ingólfstorg, 101 Rvk.	
k-LANIð, Laugavegi 103, 101 Reykjavik	
Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall 101 Rvk.	
This is Iceland, Laugavegur20, 101 Rvk.	
Tourist information center, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk.	

Post offices	
Central Post office, Pósthússtræti 5, 101 Rvk.	
Post Office, Kringlan Mall, 103 Rvk.	

Laundry Services	
Embla Laundry, Barónsstígur 3, 101 Rvk.	

Taxi services	
BSR	561-0000
Hreyfill	588-5522

Useful for emergencies	
Emergency phone	112
Information	118
Dentist	575-0505
Doctor	1770
Pharmacies (find your closest)	call 118

Rent a bike	
Borgarhjól, Hverfisgata 50, 101 Rvk	
BSI, Vatnsmyrarvegur, 101 Rvk	
Tourist information center, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk.	

Useful Websites	
www.visitreykjavik.is	
www.this.is/iceland	
www.icelandtourist.is	
www.exploreiceland.net	

REVIEWS BY

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Sonny Greco	
Bars, clubs, bistros, cafés and fast food	
The Editors	
Map	
Bjarki Þór Kjartansson	

concerts. 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+

29. Nasa
by Austurvöllur
Used to be a theater, but is now a club. New in Reykjavik's nightlife and it seems that there was need for it. Great sound system and occasional live bands. Most come to dance and space out. Because of little competition it is perhaps the only super-club downtown. Admission 1000 krónur.

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+

restaurant

31. Einar Ben
Veitúsund 1
Full of 19th century charm the restaurant Einar Ben is named after one of Iceland's finest poets, Einar Benediktsson. It is situated in the older section of Reykjavik's mid-town, close to the harbor. A fine menu features a contemporary version of the Icelandic international kitchen. The Menu is composed by Chef Bardur Brandsson, whose magic is outstanding. The food and the old Einar Ben. Atmosphere is something you can't miss. A visiting journalist has likened it to a Hollywood photo from Gloria Swanson's personal family album. Seriously!!

32. Apotek
Austurstræti 16
Formerly the central drugstore of Reykjavik, established in

the late 18 hundreds, the Apotek is now a modern restaurant with 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.

33. La Primavera
Austurstræti 9
Everybody laughed when we discovered a contemporary restaurant that has its most notable influences from Northern Italian cooking but using local Icelandic produce. The unique menu that results from this combination features homemade pastas, risotto, gnocchi, polenta and a wide variety of the freshest vegetables, fish, poultry, meat and game. The menu, the atmosphere and a comprehensive, exclusively Italian wine list has made La Primavera a favorite among the locals. They laugh no more!!

34. Við Tjörnina
Templarásund 3
The most novel fish restaurant in Iceland. The owner, Chef Runar Marvinnson, is known for innovative fish dishes made from a variety of rare fish and shellfish and related raw materials. Mr. Marvinnson is also a respected food and cooking personality and the author of several cookbooks. His respect for his raw materials is a tribute to fish and shellfish, showing off their natural goodness without artificiality. Chef Marvinnson is really a natural wonder and a particular favourite with Icelanders!

35. Tjarnarbakkinn
Yonarstræti 3
Above the lónó theatre, so it's a good place to go before shows, or during if you prefer a more quiet atmosphere. If you sit by the window you get a nice view of the pond. It's not a bad place to try one of Iceland's culinary specialties, the lamb steak, one of those rare traditional treats that does not come as a shock to the uninitiated.

36. Sommelier
Hverfisgata 46
The Sommelier not only has an excellent menu - Icelandic cooking with delicate French Touch - but the Sommelier wine list is admired for its variety of specially selected wines. The service is impeccable and the waiters take time to discuss the qualities of each and every wine listed, if you wish. The wine list has two hundred entries! This is where you may just happen to meet stars of stage and television, if you're lucky!

37. Hótel Holt
Bergstaðarstræti 37
An exclusive hotel housing Iceland's Most Renowned Restaurant, the Gallery.
An evening at The Gallery Restaurant remains an unforgettable experience, if your passion is good wine and food. The superb cuisine is inspired by French culinary tradition and includes a variety of Icelandic seafoods and organic lamb. The impressive selection of vintage wines is unique for lovers of the grape. This is where you will see original Icelandic art, without having to go to a gallery. The Holt has the largest privately owned art collection in Iceland.

38. 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 Ulfr Eysteinnson, the owner, may be present regaling the clientele with wild whaling tales.
Don't forget to ask Chef Ulfr for dark Icelandic pumpernickel bread with pure Icelandic butter.
Don't forget to make a reservation!

39. Soggi Hall at Öðinsvé
Þórsgata 1
Ask Chef Della, the only Italian who is "Commandeur de la Commanderie de Cordons Bleu de France". Ask Chef Burmistrov at the Corithia Nevskij Palace in St. Petersburg. Ask Chef Jeff

VENUE FINDER

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Kringlubíó, Kringlan 4-12, p: 588-0800
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2m² of Iceland Gallery Álfur Until August 31st



The recipe is simple: bring a few artists and their cameras to Iceland, then give them two square meters each to squeeze their impressions into. Most of the nine artists, Icelandic as well as foreign, have resorted to landscape photography, others traced a different kind of footprint and are, for example, presenting black-and-white portraits of gloves that had been lost and never found at various places of Iceland. The gloves become a landscape of their own and their wear and tear says as much about Iceland as a landscape view would, bearing a tacit witness to a rough day at sea or a demanding tourist trip. Open daily 14-18, Fri 14-22

Icelandic Love Corporation & Pétur Örn Friðriksson. The Living Art Museum Until September 7th



Fear is the drive - at least at the Living Art Museum at the moment. Icelandic Love Corporation, a trio of female artists who repeatedly provide the viewers of their happenings with all kinds of weird and bizarre experiences as they march into our everyday reality as 19th century southern belles with the heart and soul of extra-terrestrial scientists to uncover our phobias and hidden fears. The installation makes us enter a darkened labyrinth of spiders, spiky fingers and Venetian masks, then presents a spooky video of an ordinary block-of-flats hallway haunted by the loud whispers of three female poltergeists from centuries back. The atmosphere is no more relaxed one floor up where you'll find another labyrinth, at the end of which Heimir Björgúlfsson presents one of his medieval alchemist-type brewing set-ups. The giant glass vessel pretends to contain potatoes, yet their usually friendly earthly odour seems to have turned somehow ominous. Glasses toppled over and scattered on the table suggest some previous guests did not resist the temptation to try the brownish liquid, but their position speaks of poisoned goblets being dropped from hands paralysed by a deathly grip. In the other part of the room Pétur Örn Friðriksson might be presenting an innocent documentary of a fishing expedition but by this time the viewer tends to see his works as sophisticated torture machinery. Let alone the giant pulley that is hanging from the ceiling: is it not just another exhibit? Shake hands with your inner fear. Open Wed-Sun 14-18. Admission free.

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

Friday, August 22

Both Day and Night
Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.
Day
Reðursafnið, Phallological Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.
Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.
Gallery Fold, Andy Warhol
Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Behind the ice : Heimir Björgúlfsson - Pétur Örn Friðriksson - The Icelandic Love Corporation
National Gallery of Iceland, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.
National and University Library, Exhibition of the founder of the city's documentation, also, childrens literature, texts and drawings.
Gallery Hlemmur.is, Gudrun Benonysdottir
Reykjavik Museum of Photography, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.
Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson.
Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor.
Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum, -10 to 17 -Lobster or Fame Two Decades of Bad Taste Ltd. Also Erró's War paintings and Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland. Admission 500 ISK. Free on Mondays.
Saga Museum, -10 to 18 -History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.
Gallery i8, -11 to 18 -Works of the contemporary artists Roni Horn
Handverk og Hönnun, -13 to 17 -Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.
Teddi - Workshop, -13 to 18 -Teddi - Workshop
Skólavörðustígur 14, -14 - 22 -Nordic Architecture as Resource. Examples from all the Nordic Countries.
Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, -14 to 17 -Portraits and Abstractions
Safn, -14 to 18 -Collection includes both international and Icelandic contemporary art. Admission 200 krónur
ASÍ Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970
Light Nights Summer Theatre, -starts at 20:30 - Real authentic Icelandic show performed in English, including the most thrilling ghost story ever told; The Deacon of Myrká
Night
Grand Rokk, Band Worm is Green
Celtic Cross, Cover band 3some downstairs and troubadour Ómar Hlynns upstairs
Gaukur á Stöng, Cover band Kung Fu
Amsterdam, Cover band Underwater
Café Metz, DJ Alfons X
Hverfisbar, DJ Atli Partycop
Felix, DJ Atli partycop
Kaffibarinn, DJ Arni Sveins
Café 22, DJ Bobby K
Mojito Club, DJ Daddi diskó
Prikió, DJ Gisli Galdur
Torvaldsen bar, DJ Hlynur
Nelly's, DJ Jón Gestur
Café Culture, DJ Lupin
Vidalin, DJ Motive with a party (Allan Haywood)
Vegamót, DJ Sóley
Café Sólón, DJ Svali
Glaumbar, DJ Þór Bæring
Coffee shop 11, Ice Rave: The Rockers twist to the oldies
Little Central, Jazz Duet "Augnablik" or "blink of an eye"
Leikhúskjallarinn, The ultimate party all night with one of Iceland's top disco party DJ's "Johnny Dee," or so they say
Dubliners, Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva
De Boomkikker, Troubadour Danni
Kráin 73, Troubadour Garðar
Ari i Ögri, Troubadour Óskar Einarsson
Café Victor, Various DJ's, 80's 'n 90's music

Saturday, August 23

Both Day and Night
Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.
Day
Reðursafnið, Phallological Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.
Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.
Gallery Fold, Andy Warhol
Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Behind the ice : Heimir Björgúlfsson - Pétur Örn Friðriksson - The Icelandic Love Corporation
National Gallery of Iceland, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.
National and University Library, Exhibition of the founder of the city's documentation, also, childrens literature, texts and drawings.
Gallery Hlemmur.is, Gudrun Benonysdottir
Reykjavik Museum of Photography, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.
Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson.
Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor.
Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum, -10 to 17 -Lobster or Fame Two Decades of Bad Taste Ltd. Also Erró's War paintings and Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland. Admission 500 ISK. Free on Mondays.
Saga Museum, -10 to 18 -History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.
Gallery i8, -11 to 18 -Works of the contemporary

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Tapas RESTAURANT/BAR

INTERVIEW

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artists Roni Horn
Handverk og Hönnun, -13 to 17 -Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.
Teddi - Workshop, -13 to 18 -Teddi - Workshop **Skólavörðustígur 14**, -14 -22 -Nordic Architecture as Resource. Examples from all the Nordic Countries.
Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, -14 to 17 -Portraits and Abstractions
Safn, -14 to 18 -Collection includes both international and Icelandic contemporary art. Admission 200 krónur
ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970
Hallgrímskirkja Church, -Starts 12:00 -Concerts: Mark Anderson
Night
Vidalin, Breakbeat night "Electric massive 1" DJ's: Sunboj UK, Richard, Xoz, LBHkrew anonymous, Bjarki Sveins, FuzzBuzz (Ministry of Sound)
Celtic Cross, Cover band 3some downstairs and troubadour Ómar Hlynns upstairs
Gaukur á Stöng, Cover band Kung Fu
Amsterdam, Cover band Underwater
Café Metz, DJ Andrés
Mojito Club, DJ Daddi diskó
Coffee shop 11, DJ Guðni Klink and hardcore band Minus' release party
Thorvaldsen bar, DJ Hlynur
Nelly's, DJ Jón Gestur
Prikió, DJ Kári
Kaffbarinn, DJ KGB
Café Sólón, DJ Svali
Felix, DJ Valdi
Sirkus, DJ Yamaha
Glaubar, DJ Þór Bæring
Café 22, DJ Þórhallur
Café Culture, DJ Özkan Murat from Turkey
Leikhúskjallarrinn, DJ's Gullfoss and Geysir
Hverfisbar, DJ's Villi and Isi
Ari i Ögri, Duet Mice
Little Central, Jazz Duet "Augnablik" or "blink of an eye"
Grand Rokk, Megas the Master himself along with duet Súkkat and Outsider's veteran Mike Pollock
Vegamót, Party zone: DJ's Tommy white, Margeir, Blake, Sammi JR.
Dubliners, Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva
De Boomkikker, Troubadour Danni
Kráin 73, Troubadour Garðar
Café Victor, Various DJ's, 80's 'n 90's music

Sunday, August 24

Both Day and Night
Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.
Day
Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.
Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.
Gallery Fold, Andy Warhol
Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Behind the ice : Heimir Björgulfsón - Pétur Örn Friðriksson - The Icelandic Love Corporation
National Gallery of Iceland, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.
National and University Library, Exhibition of the founder of the city's documentation, also, childrens literature, texts and drawings.
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ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970
Light Nights Summer Theatre, -starts at 20:30 -Real authentic Icelandic show performed in English, including the most thrilling ghost story ever told; The Deacon of Myrká
Night
De Boomkikker, Troubadour Óskar Einarsson
Dubliners, Troubadour Steebone
Hallgrímskirkja Church, -Starts 20:00 -Concerts: Mark Anderson from United States and Margrét Böasdóttir from Iceland

Monday, August 25
Both Day and Night
Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.
Day
Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.
Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.
Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Behind

Puffin Cinema Intercultural Centre Saturday August 23rd



Also in the Nordic House, September 10th. Among discerning cinema goers there has lately been despondency with the lack of non-Hollywood films on offer at the cinemas. The good news is that there is now an alternative. Lundabíó (Puffin Cinema) will be holding screenings of thought-provoking independent and alternative short and feature length films at Norræna húsið. They recently held a show entitled "20 Short Films of Quality and Distinction", and are now having regular shows starting on September 10th and then approximately every two weeks. You can also see a selection of short films from their collection at Alþjóðahús (Intercultural Centre) on August 23rd as their contribution to Mögnuð miðborg. You can also check out their website at www.lundabio.com. We look forward to seeing you there.

Megas and Súkkat Grandrokk Saturday August 23rd



In a league of his own as undoubtedly the finest lyricist of the rock era in this country, Megas made his first album in 1972, and right away started delighting and shocking his countrymen with his bizarre (or perhaps just truthful) take on famous personalities in Icelandic history. He made a string of great albums in the 70's before retiring in 1979 to become a dockworker and then art school student. Made a comeback in 1986 with the brilliant album Í góðri trú (In Good Faith), perhaps surpassed the year after with Loftmynd (Airview), celebrating Reykjavíks 201st anniversary, and featuring a certain Björk on backing vocals. Has since then made consistently credible albums, and was, at the turn of the century, voted as the second greatest wordsmith in Icelandic history, surpassed only by Halldór Laxness (Nobel Prize Winner, just had to get that in somehow). His stories often portray the darker side of Reykjavik and are sometimes shocking, sometimes tender, but never less than interesting. Regularly gives solo performances of old and new classics, sometimes supported by acoustic duet Súkkat, and also playing is old Outsider veteran Mike Pollock.

KIMONO NO R'S, NO S'S, BUT REVERSE MULLETS ARE OK.

Grapevine met up with half the band Kimono, Gylfi and Alex at Tjarnarbió theatre, where they were busy gathering their stuff and cleaning the place after a concert held there the night before. The concert was arranged by the two and among other bands were Maus, Worm is Green, Æla and others. As the bands performed, video art was shown on a screen behind them, a blend that made quite a show and was the first concert in a series called Tími or Time, a co-op between musicians and visual artists.



Kimono could never quite agree on which film to go see.

Photo: Aldis

But Grapevine wasn't there to question the two about the concerts but to ask them about the release of album "Mineur Aggressif", Kimono's first LP release. Grapevine had managed to get a copy of this, then unreleased, album and after listening to it over and over became more and more impressed. The decision was then made to do some research on the band and interview band members.

Band Kimono was founded in 2001, when the band Kaktus dissolved, and the members split up into the bands Hudson Wayne and Kimono. Kimono's members are; Alex McNeil (guitar/vocals), Gylfi Blöndal (guitar), Kjartan Bragi Bjarnason (drums) and Halldór Örn Ragnarsson (bass).

The bands name is Japanese for a robe or a type of clothing made to fit all, where size or sex doesn't matter, and when questioned on the matter Alex and Gylfi replied that it was more like;

homepage. The band is now on the Bad Taste label, which is of course the label formed by former members of the Sugarcubes, a band that became semi-world famous and had Björk onboard before she went solo (editors note: It's about time her name was mentioned). **Grapevine wanted to know more about the songwriting on the album and asked who wrote the music:**

"Most of the album's music is co-written by the band, where one of us brings ideas or riffs and then the band adopts it and makes a song out of it. It is actually

me, they're not political or anything in that direction, more about experiences, like the song "Japanese Policemen" is actually about my experience as a foreigner in Scandinavia, but is basically about being a foreigner wherever".

Who are your major musical influences?

"Well I'd like to put together a dream band to answer that, my dream band would consist of John Bonham on drums, Mary Timony playing guitar and with Cliff Burton taking care of the bass lines," was Alex's reply.

The bands bassist banned certain letters in choosing the band name as these cause bad karma.

"one size fits most" leaving out the "all" statement. The bands bassist was also very picky on letters used when deciding upon the bands name, banning letters like R and S as these cause bad karma (Grapevine wishes it had heard of this when naming itself, but what the hey, if it works for dried out alcoholics...)

Mineur Aggressif is the bands first major release, but both an EP titled "Kimono Demon", and a single, "Japanese Policemen", along with live radio recordings exist and some of them are even downloadable at the bands

quite a difficult task sometimes for the bassist and the drummer since it is very hard to find beats, breaks and lines for some of the stuff we contribute but as an estimation it takes around three band practises to make one song, from the simple riff to the complete song."

What about the lyrics, do they have deep complex messages hidden in them?

"Well the lyrics are written by me", says Alex "And of course they have a meaning to me, although listeners might understand them differently from

Gylfi names the Sparks, the Byrds and Elvis Costello as his main influences, and curses himself for not stalking Elvis Costello when the legend visited Iceland a couple of weeks ago. "I knew where he was dining!"

Now that the album is out, what's next?

Well, we might tour Germany this fall if everything goes as planned and also we're playing at the Icelandic Airwaves in October. Then there's a video by Ragnar Hansson to the song Japanese Policemen that is to be ready this fall too and then hopefully we'll start recording a new album before the end of the year. The songwriting process has already started, we're planning to have around 15 songs on the album and are already finished with at least a third of that".

Grapevine has so far tried to focus on the music, but can restrain itself no longer and blurts out; "Alex! What's with the hair?"

"I was actually going to cut it off last night...but I didn't obviously. I'd say it was a reversed mullet if that answers your question".

Grapevine recommends readers to look for Kimono's album in Reykjavik's record stores, and check out their homepage: www.mineur-aggressif.com

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Sun 5 pm-10 pm

EVENT

KJARVALS OTHER PLACE

Jóhannes Kjarval is one of those names in Icelandic art that made it even to the briefest of brief tourist brochures, and not only because he, just like his literary Nobel-prize-winning counterpart, uses a surname that is easier to remember than the usual patronymic.

At the beginning of 20th century and along with Þórarinn B. Þorláksson and Ásgrímur Jónsson, Kjarval was one of the first Icelanders to devote themselves fully to painting. He followed the usual route of Icelandic artists of that time: studied in Copenhagen, travelled to Italy and Germany but returned regularly to Iceland and eventually settled down in Reykjavík for good in 1922. In his work, however, Kjarval ignored the mainstream twists and turns of his times and developed his very own characteristic style. The texture of his paintings evokes the texture of tight-growing moss tuft or loose locks of wool, and the freedom he takes in handling the paintbrush brings to mind the swirling outlines of El-Greco's figurative painting four centuries ago. A milky mist of pale cobalt blue seems to veil the colours in most of Kjarval's oil paintings, in particular those that take their inspiration in the realm of the supernatural. Visions of the supernatural side of the Icelandic landscape and the

The paintings evoke light growing moss tuft or loose locks of wool.

semi-visible beings that inhabit it play an important role in Kjarval's work, in addition to realistic landscape paintings and portraits.

Kjarval donated a large collection of his works to the city of Reykjavík and part of this collection now makes up the permanent exhibition at Kjarvalsstaðir, an art gallery built in 1973 primarily as a place to house the donated paintings. Acquisitions through donations and purchases followed and the collection now proudly states the incredible number of 5000 works. Kjarval's works can also be found in private collections, they decorate a number of churches and are owned by companies and institutions. Landsbankinn, for example, presented their collection of 40 paintings at the Culture Night festival on August 16, and had considerable difficulties keeping the crowds of art-hungry visitors at bay, which only proves what popularity the



Jóhannes Kjarval, Skagaströnd (1935)



An art museum described as a top secret military installation.

Photo: Aldis

artist still enjoys among the general public.

A double en-suite with some Cubism, please

An opportunity to see works owned by an individual is at the moment offered by the art gallery of the city of Kópavogur, a suburban area of Reykjavík. The works come from the private collection of Þorvaldur Guðmundsson and his wife Ingibjörg. Þorvaldur was a successful businessman who conveniently consolidated the profitable business of food processing and an individual's love

1400 works, donated to the gallery two years later, gave the impetus to the rise of the gallery building. Gerður Helgadóttir chose to work with form and material that was rather unusual for a female artist to adopt: instead of filling the ceramics oven with carefully glazed miniatures, she worked with metal, stained glass and concrete, and instead of producing cute mantle-piece statuettes, she was the pioneer of abstract art sculpture in Iceland. Like many Icelandic artists, Helgadóttir played an active role in the continental art scene: She studied in Italy, lived in France and cooperated with workshops in Germany. Her metal sculptures are strictly geometrical, often reminiscent of clear-cut mineral formations. The influence of a trip to Egypt in 1966 showed itself in a more robust form and the adoption of concrete and clay as material, both of which takes inspiration in the monumental art of ancient Egypt.

Gerður's sculptures can be found



in many public places in Iceland. Her stained glass windows decorate, among other buildings, the Kópavogur church and the church of Skálholt, and a large wall mosaic decorates the Customs House at the Reykjavík harbour, a building that is probably better known for housing the largest flea-market in Iceland. Despite the fact that her works are so easily accessible and so openly on display, or perhaps because of it, Gerður Helgadóttir is an artist whose name not too many are familiar with. Gerðarsafn is the ideal place to give the lack of knowledge a considerable patch, and a well-worth reward for the fifteen-minute strætó ride to Kópavogur.

Beata Rödingova

A woman's touch: Steel and stone

Kópavogur art gallery is also known under the name of Gerðarsafn, literally Gerður's collection. The name refers to Kópavogur's collection of the works by Gerður Helgadóttir, an Icelandic sculptor who died in 1975 at the age of 47, and whose

LISTINGS

Hvíta tjaldið (The White Tent) in Hljómskálagarður by the pond Every day in August



For those who have had their fill of watching what market analysts in Hollywood think we want to watch, the White Tent is the perfect anecdote. Every day you can have 10 hours worth of education of a kind you didn't get in school about the state of the world. This is in the form of documentaries, most of whom have something to do with American foreign policy. Grapevine watched a highly informative 3 hour feature about Noam Chomsky, which made it feel somewhat less alone in the world. Speaking of which, the White tent is a wonderful place to meet likeminded souls, anarchists, pacifists, radicals, and other sorts of socially conscious individuals who aren't taken in by it all. You can pick up a few brochures, have some coffee (payment is optional), have a seat and let yourself be debrainwashed by some of the best minds of several generations, at least those who remain uninstitutionalized. Open from 12-22.

Flea Market Sirkus, Klapparstígur 30 Open all Weekends



In Reykjavík it has been common knowledge for a while that the city's main flea market, Kolaportið, has long ago lost its purpose as a second hand clothes market and now aims more at selling band t-shirts and fish along with offering Christian ceremonies on Sundays.

Nevertheless very many Icelanders have a keen interest in used clothes and though some stores sell them at a reasonable prize, the flea market feel was missing, until now. In the garden behind Bar Sirkus is now an Amsterdam style mini-version of a street flea market open weekends only where whoever can sell their stuff, clothes, CD's, LP's or whatever, and of course buy some themselves. Grapevine has found the prizes to be very reasonable and as a bonus, you can haggle all you like until you either get shouted at (depends on stubbornness) or you get what you want for as much or little as you want. Anyway, my new old jacket feels like a toilet, warm and friendly and it makes you wonder who has been in it before.

the ice : Heimir Björgúlfsson - Pétur Örn Friðriksson

- The Icelandic Love Corporation
National Gallery of Iceland, Exhibition of selected works by Icelandic artists from the National Gallery's collection.

National and University Library, Exhibition of the founder of the city's documentation, also, childrens literature, texts and drawings.

Gallery Hlemmur.is, Gudrun Benonysdóttir
Reykjavik Museum of Photography, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor.

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavik Art Museum, -10 to 17 -Lobster or Fame Two Decades of Bad Taste Ltd. Also Erró's War paintings and Insight into international contemporary art in Iceland. Admission 500 ISK. Free on Mondays.

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Teddi - Workshop, -13 to 18 -Teddi - Workshop
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ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970

Light Nights Summer Theatre, -starts at 20:30 - Real authentic Icelandic show performed in English, including the most thrilling ghost story ever told; The Deacon of Myrká

Night

Dubliners, Troubadour Ingi Valur

Tuesday, August 26

Both Day and Night

Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

Day

Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.

Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Behind the ice : Heimir Björgúlfsson - Pétur Örn Friðriksson - The Icelandic Love Corporation

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Night

Prikið, Guest DJ

Nasa, Miller night

Dubliners, Troubadour Ingi Valur

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, -Starts 20:30 -Concerts: Hallveig Rúnarsdóttir soprano and Árni Heimir Ingólfsson piano.

Nordic late summer. Songs by Hjálmar H. Ragnarsson, arrangements of Icelandic folk songs by Hildigunnur Rúnarsdóttir, the song cycle Haugtussa by Edvard Grieg and songs by Jean Sibelius.

Wednesday, August 27

Both Day and Night

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Day

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Reykjavik Museum of Photography, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, The

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SAFETY ALL THE WAY !

LISTINGS

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Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor.
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ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970
Night
Nelly's, Band Hraun (lava), funniest cover band in Iceland
Prikiö, DJ Jón Myrdal
Sirkus, Jazz DJ's
Kaffibarinn, Red wine night, surprise DJ
Gaukur á Stöng, Swedish star Asa Garden, starts 21:00. Admission 1000 isk.
Dubliners, Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva

Thursday, August 28

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Hallgrímskirkja Church, -Starts 12:00 -Concerts: Björk Jónsdóttir and Lenka Matěová
Night
Grand Rokk, Band Esja, a project by street artist and musician Varði (who did Europe)
Vidalin, Band: The Flavours
Hverfisbar, Cover band Bítlarnir
Café Sólun, DJ Tommi White
Prikiö, DJ's Snake 'n Tiger
Kráin 73, Live music
Nelly's, Live music with Gunnar Óla and Einar Agust
De Boomkikker, The Gig. Live bands
Dubliners, Troubadour Bjarni Tryggva

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Foo Fighters Laugardalshöllin concert hall Tuesday August 26th



To begin with let's make one thing clear; if you do not have a ticket when you read this you are not going to get your hands on one, they're sold out and have been within 4 hours of going on sale.
 For some reason world famous bands take their time to visit this little island in the middle of the Atlantic to remind its inhabitants of what's going on musically in the outside world. Never the less, the inhabitants see no reason to offer the bands anything but the same old concert hall year after year, housing only 5500 people and making it rather a small scene for the biggest in the business. The Foo Fighters will be taking the same stage Led Zeppelin did 32 years ago, curious since Foo Fighters' Dave Grohl has offered to replace Zeppelins John Bonham if they were to perform again, ever.
 Anyway, if you find Iceland's black market (we haven't) and purchase a ticket for zillions of krónur, then enjoy the concert and watch Nirvana's former drummer play guitar, if not, there are plenty of other things to do in Iceland.

Las Vegas – made by man. Gallerí Kling og Bang Until August 31st



Photographs by Peter Funch
 All the world's a stage, yet some of us seek a more obvious stage to enter. Peter Funch's photographs question the very notion of reality, perhaps even suggest there may be realities within realities. The exhibition presents a man-made reality, a world of Elvis Presley wigs and Romanesque vaults built for Dallas oil money and illuminated by pink neon lights. The photographs document people who are blissfully unaware of, or happy to live in, an artificial world of a snow globe held by the hand of the artist. He is now holding the snowball to our eyes for us to peek in. And who is holding the snow globe we live in? Open Thurs-Sun 14-18.



The Restaurant Formerly Known as One Woman Restaurant

Photos: Aldis

The average person living in Reykjavik is really a very special breed. Not the pure, patriotic Icelander whose values are nearly always measured by ancient customs and tales that could easily be a part of the Old Testament or even the Talmud. Oh no, the Reykjavik people are not like that. They believe they are metropolitan in their habits, even a bit cosmopolitan.
 Therefore, it is surprising that vegetarians in Reykjavik were until recently called "grasætur" (grass-eaters) and treated as a dangerous minority group along with consumers of horsemeat and political liberals. The so-called vegetarian restaurants were

not exactly what you could call inviting. These were not hard to find. (They were two I believe). Instead of asking for directions you could almost have your nose lead the way.
 A combination of red curry, peppers, garlic and various oriental spices filled the air with an aroma that made your eyes water (instead of your mouth) when you happened to be in the neighbourhood. If you were brave enough to enter the premises of a vegetarian restaurant for a few minutes or more, your sweater made you become a walking advertisement for Indian curry. The only way for quick relief was taking your clothes immediately to the nearest

Nevertheless, today it is a fine restaurant offering good vegetarian food. The menu of the day is never printed. You can find it chalked on a blackboard above the serving table where you select your dishes and then bring them yourself to the nearest table.
 The atmosphere is easy and friendly. The second floor venue may remind you of a big Eastern European dining room where the family has had to leave in a hurry. I am sure you remember such scenes from old classical European (art) films shown at the Thalia, if you are a New Yorker, that is. Know what I mean? (If you are not, forget about it).
 "Á Næstu Grösum" is a popular



Vegetarians were treated as a dangerous minority group along with liberals,

cleaners. A regular washing machine did not do the job.
 Well, "things ain't what they used to be!" Now there are at least three decent vegetarian restaurants in town, and also a few places that have vegetarian dishes on the menu; - places that do not confuse Indian culinary arts and spices with vegetarian delights, although sometimes there is a thin line that divides the two, but only occasionally.
 On the corner of Laugavegur and Klapparstígur you will find a restaurant called "Á Næstu Grösum." This is an established vegetarian restaurant that has been around for quite a few years. Thus it has had its periods – from Indian to Soya to Chinese noodles.

restaurant. It is frequented by tourists and locals alike. The staff is multilingual and extremely helpful. It is a good place to visit for lunch. The service does not take forever (self service saves time), and the simple menu does not leave you much choice! If you are not hooked on vegetarian dishes, don't start your vegetarian experience there. However, if you are a vegetarian or you enjoy vegetarian food and eat it frequently, this is the place for you. Enjoy!
 Á næstu grösum
 Laugavegur 20b
 101 Reykjavik

Sonny Greco

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MUSIC

STAYING ALIVE

THE YEAR OF THE NEW FEVER

I'm getting close to my thirtieth year and as such I should not be interested in music that screams and pounds on the eardrums. I should by now be interested in the classics and maybe progressive jazz music. But I'm not. That means that every time I get asked about my taste in music I have to apologise as if I had said that I liked playing with Fisher Prize toys.

The whole thing started during my early teens, in the early nineties, when there was a scene here because death metal had hit our shores and every teen, including myself, let his hair grow long and started a band. Then every talent contest and teen show was full of these bands but in a year or two everyone, to every parents' great relief had cut their hair and sold their CD's in exchange for less brutal material to listen to. There were few that kept on listening to this music and even fewer who kept on grinding their instruments for the express purpose of producing brutality and mayhem.

For a long time the band Forgarður Helvítis (Front Porch of Hell) was the only one actively playing a death metal related genre (actually theirs would categorise as grindcore, which is similar to death metal, only faster and crazier) but at the end of the nineties there was something of a revival when kids started contacting this band and asking for demos. Siggí, the lead singer, was happy to give it to them and then the scene grew bigger with more kids coming in. The activity is enormous because there are people releasing their material on their own and importing their favourite bands.

Although the huge success of this genre pleases me immensely it also puzzles me because to me, this should have been the case back when I myself had long hair, playing death metal singing about "hell and locust swarming the once holy grounds" (a fragment of a lyric from my teen band Dysentery). I decided to talk to Siggí Pönk (Siggí the Punk) about this. I had previously read



Siggí Pönk and his fellow band members in Dys calmly explain the state of the world.

Photos: Aldis

an article of his, about how hardrocking music scenes have surfaced every ten years since the early eighties, this one being the third, and I wanted to get his point of view on this latest scene.

"When the new wave punk scene of the eighties was going on I was too young and living too far away to actively participate in the scene, but about ten years later during the early nineties my band was starting and I was a participant in the scene as a member of one of the bands (Forgarður Helvítis). Back then it

Back then, it was all about being cool through brutality and blood and gore.

was all about being cool through the brutality and the blood and the gore. Kids were forming their bands copying their death heroes but it wasn't much more than a fashion statement or a trend that soon fell away and out of style," says Siggí.

So death-metal... uh, died on account of lack of originality. Siggí says that the reason why he and his friends started a grindcore band instead of death metal was to be a bit more original and maybe

this is the reason why they kept on playing. "This time it is different for many reasons. For one the hardcore music style has many different subgenres so even though the kids aren't listening to the same kind of music they can still feel at home in a hardcore music scene. Therefore there is a constant reproduction of fans coming to replace those dropping out."

Believe it or not within the scene is a certain philosophy going on that has probably helped keep it alive. The "Do

It Yourself" or DIY is an anarchistic idea that enables bands to record their own material and release it on their own, outside the mass production system of the huge record companies. But it is not only that. Pamphlets and underground zines are being printed and there is even a website (www.dordingull.com) that every scene member logs onto and participates in an active exchange of ideas.

So to my and many others pleasure the scene is still going strong according to Siggí. There is even a new venue coming up. De Boomkikker is a place on Hafnarstræti that has a project called "The Gig" allowing bands to play for free. There is no admission fee and it will happen every week. The first show went on last week where Dys, Siggí's other band, played. "The venue is great" says Siggí when asked about it. "It is really small, so we just removed all the tables and the place was soon packed with hardcore fans and others that I've never seen before... which is great because with every new venue comes a group of new faces that helps keep the scene alive."

So it doesn't really matter which subgenre of the hardcore is going on at the moment; if it is emo, noise, old-school, new school, grindcore or death-metal... it is all staying alive.

Aðalsteinn Jörundsson



Total Fucking Destruction pictured just before living up their name.

LISTINGS

Singapore Sling Grandrokk

Saturday August 30th



Formed in the last year of the millennium, Singapore Sling is a reminder of what rock n' roll is and should be, attitude and overdrive mixed with good old Jack Daniels, no complications, just the raw basics; drums, guitars, bass and vocals.

The band just came back from the States where they were touring their latest album release and this is their second gig in Iceland since returning. They're new album, "The Curse of Singapore Sling" (a lot of bad luck during recordings explains the name) was released in the States by Stinky Records on the 17th of June, Iceland's national day. Singapore Sling has got good reviews and they're cover of "Dirty Water" by The Standells is said to be something one should hear them perform.

Expect a good show from this dirty Icelandic Rock 'n Roll band.

Traditional Icelandic Dancing

Look for their frequent shows



Unlike some traditions and forms of art that can be written down and that way preserved for the ages, traditional dancing is something that has to be passed on by practising it regularly. Traditional Icelandic dances seemed likely to become an extinct tradition when eight years ago, a group of dancers decided to form "Sporið".

"Sporið" (the Step) is a group of 10 couples that dress and dance in traditional style and perform for natives and tourists alike, as well as dancing abroad, having chosen countries like the US, China, Canada and Austria as their dance floor, although it's most frequent venues are in Borgarfjörður and Reykjavík. The accompanying instrument is most often the accordion, just as it was in days of yore. The dances are introduced and their story told in different languages, including English, German and Danish. The most popular dance is the weaver, supposed to portray how clothes are made. The members are all enthusiasts, but none of them professional dancers. Their aim is to present the dances in their original form.

The subject can also be reached through the Grapevine Research Department

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Night

Ari i Ögri, Acoustic duet

Gaukur á Stöng, Band Buff make you laugh with cheerful and meaningful lyrics about...lubricants

Grand Rokk, Bands Innvortis and Sane

Celtic Cross, Cover band Spilafíklar downstairs and troubadour Garðar Garðars upstairs

Café Metz, DJ Andrés

Hverfisbar, DJ Atli partycop

Thorvaldsen bar, DJ Daddi Disco

Amsterdam, DJ Fúsi, 80's weekend

Prikið, DJ Gísli Galdur

Mojito Club, DJ Hlynur

Nelly's, DJ Jón Gestur

Sirkus, DJ KGB

Café Culture, DJ Lupin

Leikhúskjallarinn, DJ Magic from the band Quarashi

Kaffbarinn, DJ Raggi from the band Botnleđa

Felix, DJ Valdi

Glaumbar, DJ Þór Bæring

Café Sólun, DJ Þröstur

Vidalín, Grapevine party starts 21:00 (Alex from band Kimono and band Ríkió play some music, free beer for those who show up early enough)

Dubliners, Live music with Rut and BB

Kráin 73, Troubadour Danni Tjökkó

De Boomkikker, Troubadour Óskar Einarsson

Café Victor, Various DJ's, 80's 'n 90's music

Saturday, August 30

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Night

Ari i Ögri, Acoustic duet

Gaukur á Stöng, Band I Svörtum fötum

Celtic Cross, Cover band Spilafíklar downstairs and troubadour Garðar Garðars upstairs

Café Metz, DJ Alfon X

Kaffbarinn, DJ Andri

Felix, DJ Atli partycop

Hverfisbar, DJ Benni

Thorvaldsen bar, DJ Daddi Disco

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OPERA

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LISTINGS

Amsterdam, DJ Fúsi, 80's weekend
Mojito Club, DJ Hlynur
Nelly's, DJ Jón Gestur
Café Culture, DJ Sammi from the funk band Jagúar
Glaumbar, DJ Þór Bæring
Café Sólón, DJ Þróstur
Þríkió, DJ's Davíð and Kári
Leikhúskjallarinn, DJ's Gullfoss and Geysir
Vidalín, Guest DJ
Dubliners, Live music with Rut and BB
Kráin 73, Troubadour Danni Tjokkó
De Boomkikker, Troubadour Óskar Einars
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Sunday, August 31

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Gallery Hlemmur.is, Gudrun Benonsdóttir Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, Masters of the Third Dimension.

Sculptures by some of the most prominent European artists from the late 19th and twentieth century and their Icelandic contemporaries.

Reykjavik Museum of Photography, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

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Night

De Boomkikker, Troubadour Óskar Einars Hallgrímskirkja Church, -Starts 20:00 -Concerts: Hörður Áskellson

Monday, September 1

Both Day and Night

Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

Day

Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.

Nýlistasafnið, The Living Art Museum, Behind the ice : Heimir Björgúlfsson - Pétur Örn Friðriksson - The Icelandic Love Corporation

National and University Library, Exhibition of the founder of the city's documentation, also, childrens literature, texts and drawings.

Mokka, Paintings by Bjarni Bernharður will be on display

Reykjavik Museum of Photography, The Five Elements. Photographs and etchings from French-Vietnamese artist Claire Xuan.

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor.

Saga Museum, -10 to 18 -History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.

Teddi - Workshop, -13 to 18 -Teddi - Workshop ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970

Night

Dubliners, Troubadour Steebone

Tuesday, September 2

Both Day and Night

Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

Day

Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.

Drag Queen Competition, Club NASA

September 13th



The seventh annual "DRAG QUEEN OF ICELAND" competition will be held on Saturday, September 13th at Nasa in Austurvöllur. Featured stars include Paul Oscar, who will host the event, and Skjöldur Eyfjörð, Drag Queen of Iceland 2002. Each year the competition has had a different theme, and this year it's the Oscars. Or possibly, the Paul Oscars (ha ha). Each of the contestants will have to show considerable acting talent, as filmed segments featuring the drag queens will be screened during the competition. Each will also have to deliver that famous staple of the Oscars, the thank-you speech. Plus, of course, a musical number. Entry is 2000 IKR, and the festivities begin at 22:30. Don't miss it!

Valgarður Gunnarsson, paintings Gallerí Skuggi

Until August 23rd

Painting: Is its main task to convey a message or is it to please the eye? Aesthetical pleasure and enjoyment are definitely the key words at the current exhibition at Gallerí Skuggi. It presents works by Valgarður Gunnarsson, oil paintings on the verge between abstraction and a different, perhaps more playful, kind of reality, with forms that are two-dimensional and simplified the way illustrations in a children's book may be. The colours are subdued and unobtrusive, yet never boring, the colours of something small that had been left in the sun for too long: Pale sand yellow, bottle green and rain-sky blue.

And do not worry; the message is there, too. Night at Kárahjúka is at first sight a pleasant semi-abstract painting, on closer inspection it is the ghost-like, half-vanished outlines of a woman that has packed up her carton boxes and is wheeling them away on an old-fashioned wheelbarrow: History giving way to modern power plants, perhaps? Open Tues-Sun 13-17, admission free.

Guðrún Benónýsdóttir Gallerí Hlemmur

Until August 31st

Iceland is experiencing one hot summer these days – and do not hope for a cooler atmosphere than at Gallerí Hlemmur. Guðrún Benónýsdóttir studied and lived in Norway and is now presenting her first solo exhibition in Iceland. Suitably referred to as Heat-waves, her installation is a world of bodies glistening with sweat, freckles on sun-drained skin, light melting and heat dripping off. Sensuality on the verge of repulsion, and no chance for air-conditioning to save you. Open Thurs-Sun 14-18, admission free.

Hindus maintain that you should dedicate yourself to your spouse, and then when grey hair starts setting in, you should go up on a mountain and meditate on spiritual matters. For Christians, it has usually been a case of either one or the other, you have to choose between the spirit and the flesh. The Romans opted for the latter, which may have been what brought about their downfall. Perhaps this was what was on Monteverdi's mind when he wrote The Coronation of Poppea. Or perhaps it was that power corrupts, be it the power that comes with high office, as in the case of Nero, or the power that comes with beauty, as in the case with Poppea.

When first produced 400 years ago, the play was condemned as immoral, and even in these amoral times, the ending comes as something of a shock. Seneca, carrying a large book that says simply "Morale" on the cover is sent to his grave for his constant preaching, and everyone else who stands in the way of the two corrupt lovers is banished or beheaded, leaving them to live happily ever after. Perhaps the morality is that evil always prevails, precisely because of its application of force (see Megas, issue 4), and all the Senecas of the world can't change that, a moral kept from us in most modern entertainment. For such a moral is dangerous. If we acknowledge that evil can actually triumph, despite all fairytales to the contrary, we might begin to wonder how our leaders actually got to where they are, and start doubting them.

Settings may change, fashions become more revealing and weapons more destructive, but human nature has a habit of remaining the same. Hence, stories first told centuries ago can still be scarily relevant to our time. And it is hard to imagine it being told any better than here, as staged by the Summer Opera. This is its second year, and it seems almost a pity that a production like this only gets 6 performances. One press release says that their aim is to bring the opera to a modern audience without changing the setting. In this they disappoint, if nothing else, as the baroque play set in Roman times features pistols, sneakers and cigars. The timelessness card has been played a bit too often by now to be effective, but



Virtue could never help having a peek at those who didn't live up to her name.

Photos: Aldis

here it is pulled off with enough style to almost make you forget this.

But bringing the play to the audience they most certainly succeed in. The opera is performed in Italian, but the audience jolts in their seats as the first line in Icelandic is bellowed out, and this is done often enough so that even those unfamiliar with the story as well as Italian should be able to keep pace, if they can understand Icelandic that is. Still, the harsh, familiar sound of the Viking tongue makes you understand why they opted for the original Italian language, as Björk or no Björk, it probably just sounds better when sung. The humour might be a bit too physical, a bit too Italian for the somewhat more cynical residents

did you become involved with the Summer Opera?"

"A friend of mine saw an ad and so I auditioned for last year's summer opera, and got the part of Belinda in Dido and Eneas, who was sweet and clownish and not much like Poppea at all. I got on very well with the people, so for this year's opera I became even more involved, playing a bigger part as well as doing quite a bit of administrative work."

"Your roles have included Maria in West Side Story, who is an innocent, Janet in Rocky Horror Picture Show who starts out innocent, and Poppea who is devilish the whole way through. There seems to be a certain progression. Whom of them do you most resemble?"

In choosing between the spirit and the flesh, the Romans opted for the latter.

of the far north, but it is the drama that gets through. That, the efforts of the musicians and the wonderful performances of the actors. Not only are they all superb singers, but everyone looks born for their part, whether this is a result of thoroughbred performers or magic in the make up department. The clowns are suitably clownish, the impish, Seneca serene, Nero imperious enough if not yet exploded into full corpulence, and Poppea stunning enough to sacrifice an empire for, or a mentor at the very least. Not being able to restrain myself any longer, I rush to the stage, fling the cruel Nero away from her, and ask her a few questions.

"Maria, I would hope, although they all share a sense of passion, as do I."

"Why did you choose to do The Coronation of Poppea?"

"It was Hrólfur Sæmundsson (Nero), the head of the opera who made the choice, but I enjoy doing baroque singing. It is technically difficult, yet very expressive."

"What is the relevance of the piece for today's audience?"

"It's all about greed. Greed for money, greed for power, greed for love. I think that's very relevant."

"And so what," I ask in time honoured tradition, "is next?"

"Next I'm playing the part of Barbarina in "The Wedding of Figaro," and then I'm doing a Cabaret style show. We haven't decided upon the music yet, but it'll probably be a 20's or 30's theme."

Any leading roles coming up?

"If they can find something devilish enough," chuckles the charming Poppea, whose actual name is Valgerður Guðnádóttir, soprano, single mother and siren.

H o w

Valur



...and he always thought she was holding her breath in anticipation.

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LITERATURE

HOW COLD THE SCRIPTORIUM IS TODAY

-the human side of Codex Regius

If other nations were as considerate as the Danes are, the exhibition halls at the British Museum or Louvre would be gapingly empty and the citizens of Egypt and Greece would be crowding at their respective harbours, cheering the arrival of several neatly packed forty-foot containers.

Cheering and flag-waving is precisely what is presented by the documentary Icelandic State Television recorded on 21 April 1971, with the difference that it was not several containers that arrived at the Reykjavik harbour that day but a military ship with three nicely wrapped-up bundles on board: Codex Regius and the two volumes of the book of Flatey. The books then got a limo-style ride through the centre of their home country capital, sat through a few speeches at the University Cinema and ended up being deposited at the Árni Magnússon Institute. I admit the documentary is a favourite film of the freak in me and I go to see it regularly. Depending on the mood I am in, I either sit down and absorb the ceremony in quiet awe and admiration or wriggle around on my seat with childlike amusement, watching men of wisdom and prominence march around in white gloves, bow in all directions and like workers at a conveyor belt hand to one another two books the size of one Yellow Pages and one hardcover Charles

"The leather pen keeps breaking" is medieval for "Windows crashed again."

Dickens.

The three manuscripts opened up a flow of repatriation that did not end until 1997 - and we must remember this is but a fragment of what was written down in Iceland in the Middle Ages. The Icelandic scholar Sigurður Nordal once suggested that the impressive amount of literature produced in Iceland between 1100 and 1400 was basically due to the numerous flocks of sheep and the harsh weather conditions. In other words, every better-off Icelandic farmer would sooner or later find himself sitting idle inside his house while the snowstorm outside made any field work impossible, facing a heap of lamb skins he did not have a clue what to do with. Exaggeration? Blasphemy? Judge for yourself. The fact is that, be they a mere by-product of husbandry or the result of a conscious effort of an unusually culture-aware nation, Icelandic medieval manuscripts are an amazing achievement and an essential part of the country's cultural heritage.

The drawback of being a part of anybody's cultural heritage is the fact that you get immediately shelved into a glass showcase, the light around you is dampened, humidity-regulating machinery set up in all four corners of the room and a chubby Group 4 Security guy hired to keep an eye on your well-being. This is, of course, meant to protect the sensitive material from some unpleasant aspects of the modern world,



Before TV, people would use this to entertain themselves at night.



Back in the old days, crowds used to gather together to watch books.

such as acidulous UV rays or souvenir-hungry tourists' soiled fingertips, but it also brings an unfortunate barrier between the object and the spectator. Visitors then return home and report to their friends and families that "there was this weird dim light and you know what - they had to take the book out of a vault safe with three locks this big!" but they do not really remember what the book was about.

Well, forget the locks and the do-not-

touch signs and see the manuscripts for what they are - the product of blood, sweat and tears of a human like you and me, except for the fact that your or my hand-writing will never attract any scholars apart from our psychoanalysts. The scribes were plagued with backaches, finger cramps and fireplaces that had long ago given up on the vast monastery rooms. I do not think colouring elaborated initials is any healthier for your sight than staring at computer screen eight hours a day, and I doubt scriptoriums were equipped with anatomy-friendly adjustable chairs, in fact they were not equipped with any chairs at all. The contents of the manuscripts are of course of an indisputable value, but it is the margin comments such as "my eyes are sore and tired", "how cold the scriptorium is today" and "the light is bad and the feather pen keeps breaking", a Middle Ages equivalent of "Windows crashed again / my computer froze and the data is all gone / I wish it was five o'clock", that give us an insight to the human aspect of medieval literature.

Other comments show that there actually were certain advantages to a scribe's work, and that some of the monks were beginning to realize that. It was the unique state servant status the copyists held or, in other words, the emerging gap between those who cater for their comrades' earthly needs and

those who create spiritual value - a gap so familiar in certain countries where some work in fisheries to pay taxes while others receive government grants to carry out their artistic urges. These observant monks looked up from their writing, then jotted down "what a violent storm is raging outside - thank God I do not have to be at sea!" on the margin.

Considering all the pros and cons of manuscript production, one thing becomes apparent; those who cared to copy, produce and pay for books in the Middle Ages must have held the written word in very high esteem and considered the contents of the books to be of a value worth the toil. One day the copier was out of order at the library's reading room and I had to write down in hand whatever I wanted to keep for future reference - and voilà, much of the information, especially the more verbose parts of it, suddenly turned out not to be that relevant after all. Nowadays, the medieval scribes' zeal can be compared to the enthusiasm and devotion of anarchists, underground opposition groups and anybody else that produces and distributes illegal press. I am no underground fighter nor a living history but I remember the carbon copies of George Orwell that were passed from one person to another in my Wild East country (communist Czechoslovakia), and I have to laugh when I recall what bad-quality copies they were, and yet how coveted and valuable.

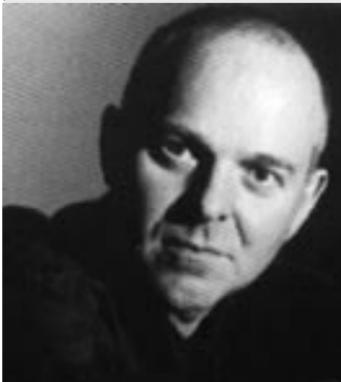
A book was a valuable item in the Middle Ages. It enjoyed respect which has been fading away ever since people noticed the greasy stone tiles in Gutenberg's kitchen were water repellent and which by 20th century ended up being only vaguely echoed in my father's "wash your hands before you touch a book" and "do not read at meals." It is our recognition of this respect that sends medieval manuscripts under glass covers - a tribute to people from centuries ago, who chose to invest their money into the making of a book, although they could have easily bought a house for the same price.

Third millennium technology made goose feather and pricey vellum as the means of transporting information obsolete and turned book production into a matter every Tom, Dick and Harlequin can afford. The technology will, however, never deprive the book of its potential to become an object of art, which is what medieval manuscripts are usually admired for - their artistic and craftsmanship qualities. But keep in mind, next time you are looking at a manuscript, that the book did not appear out of nowhere and pay a silent tribute to the scribe's arthrosis and the book-binder's blisters. These men were no supermen, they had bad breath, flat feet and poor digestion, yet they were able to produce something that has come to require white gloves and security supervision.

Beata Rödingova

LISTINGS

Ásgeir Óskarsson album release concert Gaukur á Stöng Thursday September 4th



Ásgeir Óskarsson is probably Iceland's most renowned drummer and has played on almost 300 records in his time, performed live with at least every other band in Iceland since 1970 including Stuðmenn who recently played live for an estimated 100.000 people in downtown Reykjavik along with many progressive rock, metal and folk bands, notably the infamous Bursaflokkur.

Ásgeir has released one solo album before titled "Veröld smá og stór", but has now just finished his second solo venture and is celebrating with a concert tonight. The material is claimed to be very progressive.

Masters of the Third Dimension, Ólafsson Museum

Until September 28th



The earliest sculptors in this exhibition - for example Edgar Degas, Auguste Renoir and Aristide Maillol - show how sculpture first started to turn from realism to a more conceptual attitude. All three concentrated mainly on the female body but in their work one detects a new approach: Increasingly, everyday subjects replaced the classical ones; a washerwoman replaces a goddess, the saint gives way to a ballet dancer.

With sculptors such as Käthe Kollwitz, expressionism found its representatives in the field and abstraction followed on its heels, as it did everywhere in Western arts. The exhibition includes works by Henry Moore who combined in original ways the realistic expression of the body and the concepts of constructivist abstraction that emerged in the 1910s and 1920s. Open Tue-Sun 14-17. The exhibition is a cooperative work of Akureyri Art Museum, National Gallery in Berlin and Ólafsson Museum.

Nýlistasafó, The Living Art Museum, Behind the ice : Heimir Björgúlfsson - Pétur Örn Friðriksson
- The Icelandic Love Corporation
National and University Library, Exhibition of the founder of the city's documentation, also, childrens literature, texts and drawings.
Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum, Masters of the Third Dimension.
Sculptures by some of the most prominent European artists from the late 19th and twentieth century and their Icelandic contemporaries.
Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, The Modern Man, works of popular sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson.
Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum, The works of Iceland's first modern sculptor.
Saga Museum, -10 to 18 -History face to face, historical figures and major events in Icelandic history presented in a unique way. Admission 800 krónur.
Teddi - Workshop, -13 to 18 -Teddi - Workshop
ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970

Night

Prikió, Guest DJ
Dubliners, Troubadour Steebone

Wednesd., September 3

Pastahouse, Poetry reading
Kaffibarinn, Red wine night, surprise DJ
Austurvöllur out door exhibition, Earth from Above. Aerial Photographs by Yann Arthus-Bertrand.

Day

Reðursafnið, Phallogical Museum, A fine penis and penis related selection from various mammals.
Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum, An exhibition shows life and work in the years 1950-60.
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ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970

Night

Prikió, DJ Jón Myrdal
Dubliners, Troubadour Bob Dooley

Thursday, September 4

Both Day and Night
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Day

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Teddi - Workshop, -13 to 18 -Teddi - Workshop
ASÍ. Art Museum, -14 to 18 -Icelandic art from 1950-1970

Night

Gaukur á Stöng, Album release concert, Ásgeir Óskarsson the drummer of many of the country's most important bands
Víðalín, Breakbeat techno night
Hverfisbar, Cover band Bítlaarnir
Café Sólón, DJ Andrés
Glaumbar, DJ Atli partycop
Grand Rokk, Einar Örn Benidiktsson of Curver
Kráin 73, Live music
Coffee shop 11, Slam poetry open mike
Prikió, Surprise DJ
Dubliners, Troubadour Bjarni dóni



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THE ENVIRONMENT

PLAYING THE GREEN CARD

article BY

JOHN
BOYCE

Last spring, there were frequent protests over two issues, the war in Iraq and the Icelandic government's support of this, and the construction of an aluminium plant in the highlands. The war seems to be still ongoing in Iraq, and the aluminium plant is being built, and yet the protests are over. Did everyone change their mind? Not John Boyce, at least.

Both the product and the puppet of seismic activity, Iceland's resulting terrain is as unique as it is spectacular. For centuries ecological and economic evolution progressed along parallel lines at a snails pace, a comfortable independent co-existence. Until WWII Icelandic society was rural, unindustrialised and quite poor. Though environmentalism as a coherent force that would confront ecological threats from big business and industry had yet to emerge, Iceland's pristine ecology was in no immediate danger and required little in the way of protective measures.

In the last forty years profound changes have taken place. Environmentalism has grown from an elitist science into a mass popular

now into its fourth consecutive term. Rapidly increasing tourism and growing industrialisation has inevitably prompted fears about the sanctity of Iceland's environment. In this context it was only a matter of time before the opposing forces of ecology and industry would collide in spectacular fashion.

Aluminium versus the environmentalists; this most modern of Icelandic sagas has been running now for several years and centres on a proposal to build an aluminium plant in Reyðarfjörður in the east of the country. Iceland is no stranger to this versatile metallic substance and there are other similar plants dotted around the countryside. Just a stones' throw from the capital, international aluminium giant Alcan established a kilometre long



An aluminium plant. Highlands not pictured.

Photos: Aldis

A couple of years back, activists scored what seemed like a significant victory. The triumph was short lived.

movement and indeed a formidable political force with many European countries having strong and growing green parties. Simultaneously Iceland's socio-economic situation has been transformed. At the end of the war Marshall aid and Iceland's entry into NATO along with increased foreign investment prompted rapid, some might even say rapacious, development. Free market economics have, particularly of late, been wholeheartedly embraced by the dominant Independence Party.

factory using geothermal energy from the surrounding geothermal fields. This state of affairs begs the obvious question; what's so special about the latest project? The simple answer is water.

This new development is, in effect, a three-stage process. First is the building of a huge dam to provide water for the hydro-electrical power station that will in turn power the aluminium plant. It is not so much the power plant or even the aluminium factory that has given way

to controversy but the building of the initial dam. Achieving this requires the flooding of a vast valley floor, an area that is the largest unspoiled natural habitat in Western Europe, containing all manner of unique and fascinating flora and fauna. Environmental experts and their supporters claim that this unique part of Iceland's natural heritage should not be sacrificed for yet another metal factory. On the opposing side of the argument are many locals who hope that the added employment will help to stem the tide of depopulation and allow more young people to remain in the area. These citizens have also had the considerable weight of the Icelandic government behind them. Enthusiastic supporters of the project from the outset, the Department of Industry lined up a Norwegian corporation as a private partner to construct and run the aluminium factory. The government, anxious not to be seen to be imposing a solution, made all the usual noises about consultation and independent impact assessment. But, as any student of "real politick" knows, government usually initiates a "consultation process" only after it has already privately made up its mind on how to proceed. Add to this the track record of the current administration and the result has been less a balanced investigation of the facts than an expensive PR exercise on behalf

of the state.

With such formidable forces ranged against it, environmental campaigners resorted to a multi-pronged approach to their opposition efforts. Along with such traditional methods as petitions, public demonstrations and political lobbying, Icelandic eco-warriors have tried to nullify popular arguments in favour of the plant. They pointed out that while local Icelanders will certainly pick up work at the site, the vast majority of employees would be drafted in from Reykjavik and abroad, thus producing little benefit for locals. Opponents of the scheme also argue that any increased employment will be short lived, falling off dramatically when the initial construction period comes to an end, thus creating a whole set of readjustment problems for the local workforce. Destroying this area is also needless, argue activists, as there are other viable locations from which to choose.

The third prong of activists' strategy

reassuring proof of their efficiency and ability to get the job done in the face of such annoying distractions as adherence to basic standards of employment rights.

The signing of an official contract between the government and Alcoa in February lent a distinct air of inevitability to the whole project, reflected in the decreasing level of vocal protest against the development. This has been followed more recently by the beginning of the construction of an infrastructure to support the actual building of the dam later this year.

After years of controversy, protests and setbacks, and just when the government had hoped the issue had been finally laid to rest, a fresh furore is now blowing up over the wisdom of the government's choice of company to complete the initial work. The Italian construction company Impreglio won the initial contract to build infrastructure and housing in readiness for the machinery

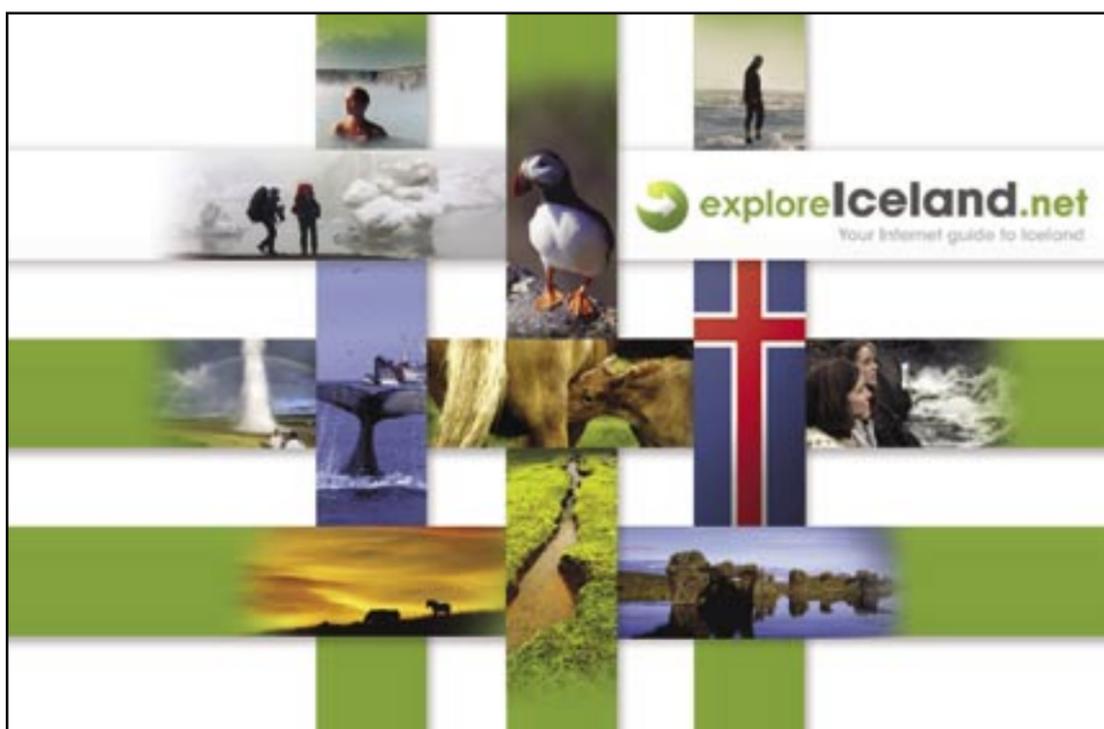
Just when the government hoped the issue had been finally laid to rest, a fresh furore blew up.

was to generate sufficient controversy to pressure the Norwegians into pulling out of the deal. A couple of years back, activists scored what at the time seemed a significant victory when this very objective was achieved. After months of indecision and to the intense chagrin of the Icelandic government, the Norwegians backed out of the project citing bad publicity and worries about the suitability of this sparsely populated region to this kind of industry. This left the Independence Party-Progressive Party government, aggressive backers of the project, in the embarrassing position of having to look desperately around for a new private partner to shore up the development. Environmentalists' delight was to be short lived, however. Any doubts entertained by even the most cynical observers about the lengths to which the government would go to save face and the project were dispelled with the announcement of the governments new strategic partner; step forward those models of industrial and environmental probity, US multinational corporation Alcoa.

To the average first world citizen the name Alcoa means, if anything at all, that most versatile and pliable of twentieth century metals, aluminium. To our long-suffering third world brethren, however, the company acronym implies other things; wholesale environmental degradation, breathtaking violations of international environmental law, wage slavery, and denial of trade union rights to mention but a few. Happily for our democratically elected betters here in Iceland such an unsavoury reputation is

and workforce needed to construct the dam. Serious allegations, ranging from incompetence to wholesale violation of agreed work contracts have surfaced in the media in recent weeks. The foreign contingent within the workforce claim to have been completely deceived about working conditions and pay, with some workers receiving about 3 euro an hour while others claim never to have even seen an official pay-slip. Impreglio's strategy has been to avoid awarding work contracts of more than six months thus allowing the company to pay only the absolute minimum in salaries. According to staff representatives, temporary camps set up to house this first wave of workers are so cramped and unsanitary as to constitute a health hazard. In the long term many are also sceptical about the ability of these cheap and hastily constructed prefabrications to survive the rigours of a harsh Icelandic winter. Trade union organisations and the sanitation board are said to be monitoring the situation with interest but as yet no concrete action has taken place because of these allegations.

Given governments' predilection for impoverishing the already poor to enrich the already wealthy, and indeed themselves, this sleazy Italian outfit must seem like the perfect choice. So to the intense surprise of nobody, both Impreglio, anxious to hold on to its lucrative contract and the Department of Trade and Industry anxious to hold on to its contractor are, as the saying goes, unavailable for comment.



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WANDERINGS

SEAL BASHING, THE FINGER AND UNKNOWN OFFICE WORKERS

SOME OF THE SIGHTS OF REYKJAVÍK EXPLAINED

Hegningarhúsið (The Punishment House) at Skólavörðustígur 9 was originally built in 1873 to supplant the "Black Hole" housed at Austurstræti 22. It also houses the city administration and the Supreme Court. At the time when the French were sending their prisoners to Devil's Island, here they were kept in the centre of town, where they to this day can still hear the partying through the walls on weekends. Talk about cruel and unusual punishment.



Photos: Aldís

Reykjavík's first public park was opened in 1909, but it is somewhat rare to see people there. Perhaps the location with wind blowing straight down from the North Pole has something to do with this. The park is named after the music tower which houses the Reykjavík marching band. Perhaps they have learnt to play electrical guitars lately, for some distinctly unmarchingbandlike sounds have been heard emanating from the tower.



Iceland does not have much in the way of military heroes, hence there are no monuments to soldiers known or unknown. We do, however, have many a brave office worker who tirelessly toil day after day to keep the cogs in the machine running. Finally, in 1994, they got their reward, a monument dedicated to the Unknown Office worker, so those who have friends or relatives locked away in offices can show their condolences by placing flowers at the foot of the statue.

In Hong Kong, when still a part of the British Empire, the Chinese built a skyscraper in the shape of a knife cutting into the heart of the



city, or so it seemed to some of its inhabitants. This, the House of Trade, seems somewhat symbolic as well, as the house resembles nothing so much as four fingers, with one in particular extended. One wonders whether this was intended, or something in the subconscious of the architect.



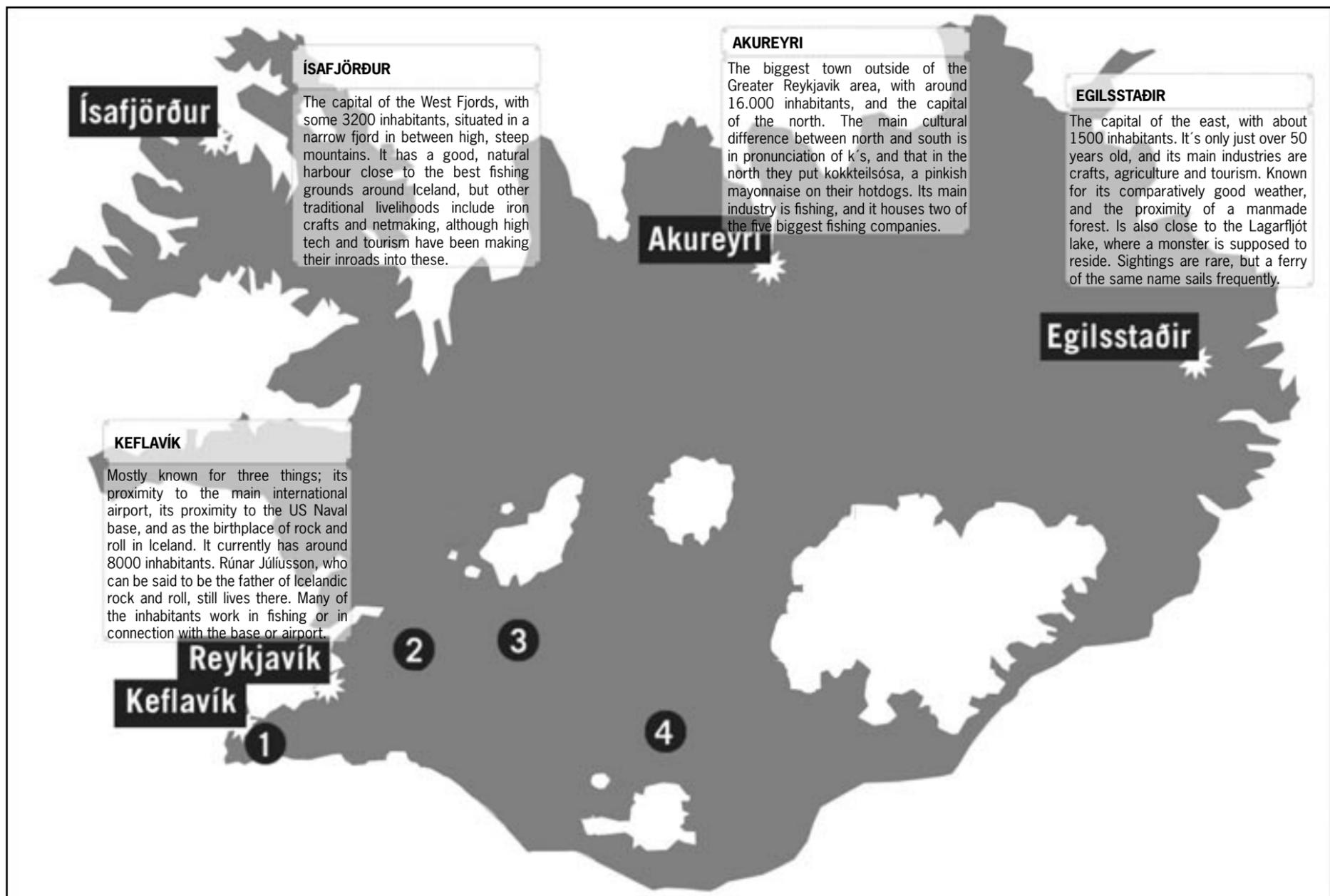
Inside this building is where they make the electricity that powers our Nintendos and our TVs. On the outside, however, it looks more like an Imperial Star Destroyer, or something of the sort. Its residents, however, are not planning anything more sinister than supplying electricity as well as warm water to the city and its surroundings. Or so they would have us believe.



This statue outside the University is actually not in honour of the unknown seal hunter, who bravely defends himself from a vicious animal, but Sæmundur Fróði (the Wise), said to be the most learned Icelander of his day (1056-1133). He was in a sense the first Icelandic exchange student as he studied abroad. It is said he was made to study so hard he actually forgot his own name. He finally escaped by tricking the schoolmaster, and rode the devil, in the form of a seal, back home, hitting him on the head for his labours when done.

OUTSIDE THE CITY

ICELAND: A USERS MANUAL
THE WESTMAN ISLANDS AFTER THE DELUGE



THE MAN WHO MISSED THE BUS

They say of the sixties, or any other good party for that matter, that if you can remember it - you weren't there. Well, I cannot remember this year's 'bjóðhátid Vestmannaeyja' festival, but the reason was neither the continuation of my lifelong destruction of short-term memory cells nor recovery from alcohol poisoning. How someone who writes for the Grapevine could be so badly informed as to turn up a day late for an event is a question that most probably needs answering around the next time there is a pay review at the paper. Until then, I can freely admit to getting it wrong. I missed the whole thing altogether.

I did do some research though. I talked to a number of people about my keenness to expose myself to the Westman experience and, bearing in mind I am a generation older than most other writers on the paper, the response I received was divided between either a wince of incredulity or a misty eyed smile. It seems a right of passage thing and this is a long passage. The pattern with festivals around the world, from Woodstock to Glastonbury, is that more people claim to have been to them than tickets ever sold. In Iceland it is slightly different. Most people have been since the festival's inception, which it seems was just after the first lava flow (actually, the first one was in 1874- ed.) and unlike most traumatic experiences, with the exception of child abuse and wearing of a national costume, they recommend visitors try at least once.

There is a baby boom in the May following each festival worthy of a World War armistice, the event contributes therefore to the strengthening and

broadening of the Icelandic gene pool. Many Icelanders have not only been to the festival but also were actually conceived there. Now that beats an overpriced T-shirt and a week of drug induced paranoia any day.

The reason I wasn't there was because I really didn't want to go to the thing at all. I hate crowds, and as far as I'm concerned, community singing should be added to the other two on the previous list. Yet being near to it, knowing it was all going on, was a bit like driving past an accident - I felt compelled to slow down and have a look at the bloodshed. I decided to 'rubberneck'.

Booking a flight on the August Holiday Monday seemed a safe bet, providing ample opportunity to witness the devastation that only a crowd of 10,000 'well refreshed' Icelanders could create. It also meant that I was able to unsettle the more disapproving of my friends and impress the dewy eyed. 'Win-win' as they say, and I certainly felt that way as I boarded the aircraft.

There is a type of journalist whom I've always envied. His phone rings at the dead of night, a ticket awaits him at the airport, 'it's going to be tough, but we need the story' are the last instructions he receives from his editor. As you can tell, my ability to fantasize has not been diminished by age. It was certainly fully operational as Reykjavik disappeared behind me and I set out for my imagined war zone. There's also a type of journalist I dislike. This is the one who asks a rhetorical question; it is, after all, the writer's role to inform - if not that - at least make a spirited attempt at it. I have to ask, for I am honestly at

a loss, "how can 10,000 people leave so little mess?"

I have learnt that estimates of attendance at events are inevitably unreliable. It is the norm to round upwards, except that is, when ticket sales are being declared to the taxman. A few become dozens, many become hundreds etc., the feeding of the five thousand was most probably a large cocktail party. So, let's say that there were only three thousand at the festival - even so, I'm sure that one of Billy Graham's sermons would leave more debris. Downtown was deserted and the revellers had disappeared like the Mujahedin after a raid. As lights still flashed around the manmade pool and various attractions, a few solitary figures wandered aimlessly as I walked through my would-be battlefield. It had been dry over the weekend so no mud, but the grass seemed fresh, almost manicured. No bottles, no litter, no carnage - just fulmers flapping overhead. A more beautiful and benign setting for a festival I cannot imagine, I was almost disappointed.

In the only restaurant open I sat



The bus. Man just out of view.

eating my pizza watching the tropical fish hang motionless in the fish tank who appeared as innocent as the festival that had just come to a close and made a fair imitation of the waitress whose attention I had been trying to grab for the last few minutes. When she finally came over I ventured "so how did it all go?" hoping for tales of excess.

'The same as usual' she shrugged. Mildly irritated and without a trace of rhetoric I asked "Is that it? Something must have happened?"

There was no reply save the sound of a dishwasher from the kitchen and as I listened to its humming I resolved to go for the full stretch next year.

Robert Jackson

PLACES TO LOOK AT:

1. THE BLUE LAGOON

One of the first stops for any visitor, and situated very close to Keflavik's international airport. The lagoons' mud is believed to have healing powers, especially for people suffering from psoriasis or other skin diseases. The distinctive blue colour is due to the warmth and the high level of silicone in the water. Sadly, there's no evidence that this increases cleavage size.

2. PINGVELLIR

In 930 a.d. the Vikings decided they needed to find a way to settle their disagreements, so they founded a parliament, and called it Alþingi. Today, although relocated, it is the oldest (sometimes) functioning parliament in the world. The Vikings, when not busy hacking limbs of one another, were quite aware of the beauty of nature and picked this breathtaking spot to meet. The American and European continental plates meet precisely here.

3. GULLFOSS & GEYSIR

Usually these two are mentioned together, partly because of geographic proximity, partly because they both start with the letter G. Geysir is the geyser from which all geysers derive their name. Sadly, it rarely erupts these days, the family business having been taken over by heir Strokkur. Gullfoss is generally thought to be Iceland's most beautiful waterfall, hence the name, meaning "Golden Waterfall."

4. LANDMANNALAUGAR

Probably one of the most popular jeep excursions tours is a round trip from Reykjavik to Landmannalaugar. Not surprising since Landmannalaugar is actually a natural swimming pool in the middle of Iceland's highland desert. If you're up to a 12 hour journey, most of the time inside a huge jeep, it is usually worth it. The area can also be accessed privately, the trip from Reykjavik taking around three hours either way.

MISCELLANEOUS

OBSCURED BY CLOUDS

A TRIP TO THE TOP OF A GLACIER

article BY

VALUR
GUNNARSSON

As any Icelander knows, there's nothing at all to on this island but drink and watch TV. Yet tourists come here in droves, leave the city and come back all smiles. What do they get up to out there in the wilderness? Grapevine investigates.

If Iceland is, as it often seems, in the middle of nowhere, then the top of a glacier in Iceland must be somewhere right in the middle of the middle of nowhere. This is where Grapevine happened to find itself one foggy Friday morning. In another tribute to boundless entrepreneurship, you can now go snowscooter riding on top of most of Iceland's glaciers. The glacier in question is Mýrdalsjökull, only a medium sized glacier, apparently not the entrance to the centre of the world, has never been featured in a James Bond film, but a glacier none the less. Grapevine is late as usual, and must drive itself up to the meeting point, somewhere halfway up the mountain. As I look around there's nothing but rock on both sides, and there's not much to distinguish the road from the surroundings. As you get used to the sound of stones ricocheting off the hood, the thrill of driving up a glacier is surpassed only by the relief that the car in question belongs to the publisher.

The meeting place is a modern cabin somewhere on the side of the mountain. There is even more rock, but as yet, no sign of ice. Outside stands a vehicle that can best be described as looking like something out of an Icelandic version of Mad Max, like the connoisseurs

wheels of choice after the end of civilisation. This might be some way off (or perhaps has long since occurred and no one noticed), but the glacier itself might actually explode any minute. Well, perhaps not any minute. They say there'll be a six hour warning. Under the glacier itself is a gigantic crater, and eruptions occur about every 80 years or so. The last one took place in 1918, so we're a bit overdue. The last time this happened, about a quarter of the glacier melted away, resulting in the sea around the Westman Islands temporarily rising by a meter. When asked how this will affect business when it occurs again, our handler says they will have to move to another glacier.

Tourists are herded into the maxmobile, whereas Grapevine gets to sit in a jeep, the king of the Reykjavik road and every aspiring CEO's dream, but here looking pathetically tiny next to the monster, enough to make any aspiring CEO rethink his penis substitute alternatives. We set upon another road which makes the first look like an autobahn by comparison, and would have finally done the publishers car in. Due to the warm weather of the past year, we have to drive further than was recently the case to get to the

place where the ice meets the rock. Once there, we find about a dozen snowscooters waiting. Tourists are mounted, and we set out in single file, not so much to hide our numbers but that if someone falls into a crack in the ice, it will

be a single person, and a company employee rather than a hapless journeyman.

The operation of a snowscooter seems pretty straight forward. If I could master the moodswings of the notoriously stubborn Icelandic horse, then surely a mechanized snowscooter would pose no serious problems. There are two handlebars, pressing one makes you go forward, the other makes you stop. Simple enough. I thought of Scott, who set out for the South Pole using the latest in mechanised technology, but his snowscooters froze and so did he, while Amundsen marched on with the tried and tested technique of dogsleights, winning the game but somehow losing out on the glory.

I pressed the handlebar. The person in front of me sped off into the distance, while behind me I heard the familiar loud cursing of an irate publisher. Looking down at the panel, I saw the letter R blinking relentlessly. With near superhuman speed I made my deductions, and my reaction was quick and studied. "Help!" I shouted to the handler, who strolled over and pressed a button. The R disappeared, I pressed the handlebar, and off I went.

The pace, it must be said, was rather leisurely. The view from the mountain is said to be stunning, but this day, as most days, the view mostly consisted of hail hitting your eyes. Keeping both eyes open was too much of an effort, so I decided upon entrusting the task to my right eye, while saving the left one for better times. As the roughly hour long ride came to an end, it took quite some time before I could get it open and behold the world yet again in all its 20/20 glory. Rock upon rock upon rock.

Off the glacier, and I was already looking forward to lunch, when our handler mentioned a downed US Airforce plane sitting amongst the black dunes down by the sea. This had to be investigated, even at the cost of postponing lunch. The plane had crashed there in '71, the crew survived, but it was impossible to retrieve the plane due to fierce wind. When the US Army finally came to dispose off the wreck, nearby farmers had already made off with the planes' fuel supplies. The soldiers blew up the wings and removed all equipment, as protocol dictates, and left the rest in place. In yet another tribute to inexhaustible native entrepreneurship, the landowning farmer sold off the tailpiece as decoration for someone's summer cottage, but the



A picture of the whole family.

Photos: Aldis

front half remains for curious onlookers. The site is not directly accessible by car, so this time our mode of transport was the 4 wheel drive buggy. These were considerably popular about a decade ago, but a high proportion of accidents, as well as the buggy's habit of destroying whatever land it passes over, led to a reining in of this. The land we were on all belongs to the Arcanum company, so passage was granted. This time our escapade was part of our handler's extracurricular activities, so the pace was somewhat less leisurely. The four of us sped off, handler, publisher, me and photographer, a girl. The handler raced ahead, followed by publisher. Then the girl passed me too. I weighed the benefits of the possibly more enjoyable ride added speed might bring against the disadvantage of lying bleeding on a rocky hill with a broken neck and decided that caution was the better part of valour.

Our first obstacle, we soon found out, was a river. The handler told us to wait and rode across. Then, as I had feared, he motioned us on. I pressed the handlebar, and tried to cross the river in a straight line at what seemed like the narrowest point. The river, however, carried me downstream somewhat, and when I reached dry land it was at a point not quite parallel to where I had entered.

Our next encounter was with a steep hill we had to surmount. One by one the buggies gathered pace and raced up. I, however, had miscalculated the speed needed, and ground to a halt halfway up. The wheels of the vehicle dug themselves farther into the sand

the more I attempted to dislodge myself. Finally the handler came, we pushed the buggy out of the crater I had created, and he drove it up the hill. All attempts at dune buggy cool now finally blown to the considerable wind, I had but two options. To attempt to regain my reputation through daredevilry of hereto unseen proportions, or resign myself irreversibly to my fate as last among dune buggy equals. I looked over my peers, on whose verdict I was dependant; our handler, who was most probably not easily impressed, the publisher, who was never impressed, and the girl, who was dating the publisher and whom it was hence pointless to impress as this would most probably not result in climax anyway. A self-portrait, "Broken-necked and Bleeding on a Hill" entered my mind once more, and I peacefully resigned myself to the back.

We found said plane wreck, described above, right next to the ocean as promised. I watched the tide flow in for a while. Every time the waves crashed in they were somewhat closer than before, and if you weren't careful it could drag out to sea before you knew what hit you. I felt that these, the livelihood and bane of many a sailor, were best observed from afar.

On our way back we encountered many more perils, none of whom, fortunately, resulted in the breaking of necks, and headed back with a greater understanding of this wondrous and often harsh land we live in, as well as why people most often opt to reside in cities.



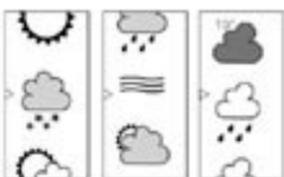
Grapevine on a plane.

T-SHIRT COMPETITION WINNERS!

Ladies, gentlemen and other fine members of the human race, The Reykjavik Grapevine & Icelandic Killer Sheep T-shirt competition jury have come to a conclusion.

All in all twenty-one entries were submitted to the competition, and some very very noteworthy. But as always, only three entries can claim their prizes. If you didn't make the winners platform this time, don't despair, we'll be back with more extravagant T-shirt competitions next summer.

...and the winners are:



Gambling in Iceland

Winner of 1st. prize

Michael Veerman from Holland (www.igiq.com) - "Gambling in Iceland"

2. Prize winner

Daniel Smáráson, Iceland - "Zlaturfelag Zudurlands"



3. Prize winner

Baldur Björnsson, Iceland - "Ariastrakur - Island"

Winners can claim their prizes at Reykjavik Grapevine, Blomvallagata 2, 101 Reykjavik (if you're a winner, don't worry, we will contact you).

The winning T-shirt will be available exclusively at Dixie Co sometime next week. Dixie Co is located just across Mál og Menning bookstore, at Laugavegur 17 - the main shopping street in downtown Reykjavik.

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN

I went to the premiere of Ain't Misbehavin at Loftkastalinn on the eve of Gay Pride, not quite sure what to expect and came away delighted and dancing, such is the entertainment value of this fantastic show. Beforehand I had thought it was more of a traditional musical and that there'd be a storyline, possibly some bad guys, definitely a romance and some dialogue in between song numbers. None of this turned out to be present and in fact Ain't Misbehavin is not a musical at all but more of a music show, around thirty songs intertwined into a non-stop party atmosphere that never lets up. The audience swayed in their seats and tapped their feet to one catchy number after another, and gave a standing ovation to the artists when the show reached its end.

The show is performed by five singers, four American and one Icelandic, who all were excellent, some more so than others. Our very own Andrea Gylfadóttir was good, she's got a powerful and expressive voice and was well able to hold her own on the dance front as well, no small feat for any not-so-limber Icelander when strutting his stuff on

the stage side by side with the more agile and rhythmical African-Americans. The four in question apparently were chosen from an original group of 200 and, in spite of being supremely ignorant of this sort of music and the nuances of what constitutes a good performance, it was not at all difficult for me to believe that these four were the cream of the crop.

The show's director is one Seth Sharp who also stars in it. His rendition of "The Viper Song" was the highlight of the show as far as I was concerned, performed in a suitably decadent and sexy fashion that took you right into a smoky blues-filled backroom somewhere in Harlem in the 30's. I'd be hard pressed, though, to pick any one of the actors over the others. The buxom Kenyatta Herring showed a real flair for comedy and with her expressions as well as her magnificent voice had



The cast have a fag and a chat, not realising the curtain was still up.

Photo: Jennifer Snædis Marret

the audience thrilled but the song and dance talents of the remaining two, Moyo Mbue and Chris Anthony Giles were no less impressive.

It's certainly been a while since I've had such a good time on a night out. I would highly recommend Ain't Misbehavin if it were still running which sadly it isn't so if you haven't gone already, alas!

Ingunn Snædal



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