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SUMMERTIME LOVE

Is Iceland ready for gay marriage?

DO INFLIGHT MEALS INDICATE
approaching terrorism?

PADDY ENTERS
the kitchen

THE ANNUAL SIRKÚS
mustache competition

ROCK IN THE FAROES
and oxen in Greenland



the REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE

ISSUE FIVE : JULY 23 - AUGUST 5, 2004

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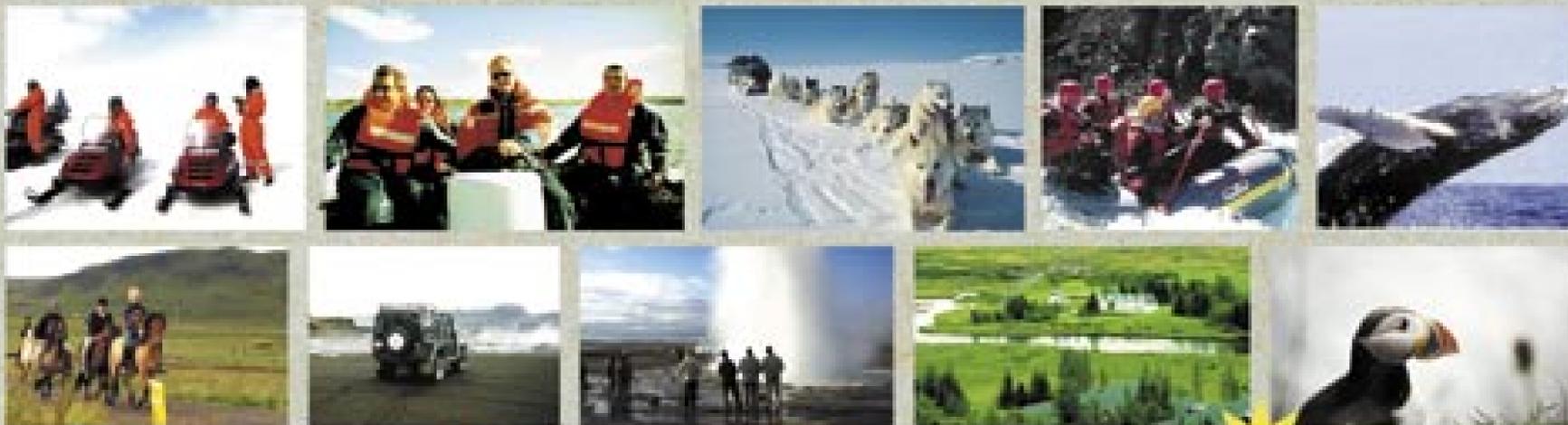
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LETTERS

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

Hi Valur! i really enjoyed all yr articles in latest Grapevine :) I can assure you that we always destroyed our own instruments so the bit about me attacking Danny or his guitars is bullshit.

I witnessed Pete Townshend & Jimi Hendrix destroy their instruments when I was a teenager & me & my friends had fun doing the same & i did it on stage with Utangarðsmenn at Kopavogs Bio at one of our 1st concerts It was not premeditated but it was quite a ORGASM :) I have a new single coming out within days with THE VIKINGHILLBILLY APOCALYPSE REVUE called 3 SHOTS :) I will get you a copy soon as i get some :) Poor Bart Cameron....he couldn't get me to shut up & he couldn't get Siguros to say anything.....ah the life as a reporter :)

INFINITE ROCKIN BLESSINGS , Michael Pollock

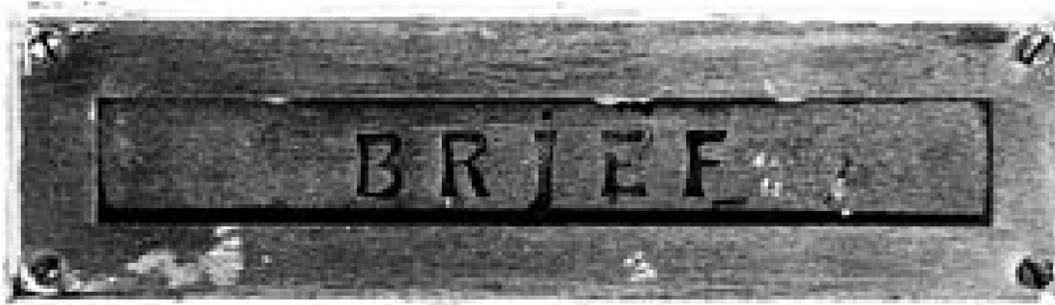
Of course, I wasn't there at the time, but I have heard more than a few times stories of Utangarðsmenn fighting on stage. One of the reasons given is that Danny was a guitar collector and you were into smashing guitars, which caused some friction. I don't know if this is true, but as the legend grows, it's hard to tell truth from fiction. We'll keep on trying, even if printing the fiction may be tempting from time to time.

and so on. Why should I care if someone with pink glasses on the world view doesn't want to come here? The letter is very polite in a brainwashing way, most likely written by someone with physical education. But who gave them permission to find my name and address in the first place and put me on a mailing list? No thank you, I don't want anything to do with Greenpeace. I think this an invasion on my home and privacy. I am not grateful at all.
Halldóra Jónsdóttir

Anyone else?

I was downtown protesting today. It was quite an experience since - as you probably know - protesting is not one of the strong sides of the Icelanders. Not this kind of protesting at least. There was ambience, there was feeling, there was anger... you name it...it was very rare.

Being a tourist guide in Iceland is the most rewarding and appreciative occupation I have ever had. I am of the opinion that people who chose to visit Iceland are very special and decidedly interesting. The others go somewhere else. And I am eternally indebted to those people for allowing me to look at my environment, which I always thought was quite ordinary, through their amazed



Dear Grapevine.

I want to applaud Grapevine. It is the only paper published in Iceland that I read with interest, you have fresh voices and great humour. You also seem to have stirred up a wasp nest of Nazi's and racists all over Scandinavia, well done! Probably better to have them out in the open than hiding in the shadows, at least you have exposed the myth that all Icelanders are fair, open minded and without prejudice. I think in general we tend to believe this myth.

H.H.

Grapevine, here to stir up wasp nests of Nazis.

Robert Jackson is a despicable liar (sic). I did meet him at the American embassy, and I did tease him about the left leanings of Grapevine. At the same time I told him that I enjoyed reading it very much, because of your beautifully written tongue-in-cheek approach to life. My teasing him was also tongue-in-cheek. I NEVER said that you were communists because you put a black woman in the national costume. Actually I think it was a rather cute idea, and such a statement is utterly alien to everything I believe in. I still think Grapevine is a rather cute paper. I regret, however, that you should have in your ranks a man, whose journalistic integrity is clearly from the gutter. Best wishes. Óli Tynes

Thank you Óli. We think you're cute too.

Dear editors of Grapevine,

Since no-one seems to be answering your enquiry about letters from Greenpeace I want to tell you of my thoughts on the matter. I received one of these multi-copied letters as well as my daughter, telling me how some person would like to come to Iceland, but can't because of our whaling, blah blah whaling is a bad thing

eyes and listen to Iceland's history with their interested ears. What a revelation it has been!

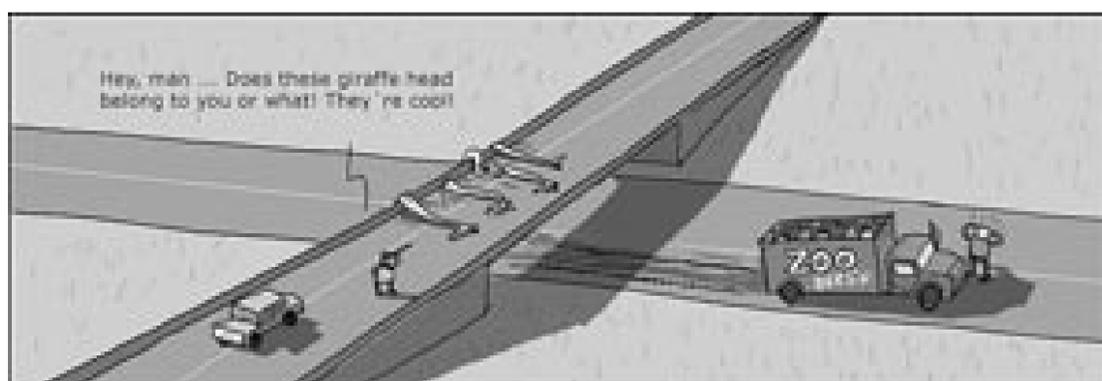
However, my proud and fierce heart skips a beat when someone starts asking about what's going on in Icelandic politics today. I quickly put on my noncommittal, neutral mask and try to hang on to it for dear life. A simple account of the latest events including the president's refusal to validate the Media Bill, the upcoming referendum - the first in Iceland's 60 years history as a Republic - and the new Media Bill which prevents the referendum... all this leaves our foreign guests absolutely stunned. They thought they were visiting a democratic republic, not - as one of them remarked - "...a third world dictatorship". Further probing into the actions of the Icelandic government are now inevitable, my neutral mask still in place and simple facts quoted. The dam at Kárahnjúkar laying waste to a large part of the unspoiled nature my guests so admire. The arbitrary decision to support the invasion of Iraq against the will of 80% of the nation... etc. etc. "Doesn't the public protest?" Yes. "Don't your ministers resign from office when the majority of the voters object to their actions?" No. "Why not?" Now that's a good question!

At this point the love and pride for my country is badly damaged and I desperately try to change the subject. But it takes quite a while to repair the atmosphere and make people recover from the shock of realising they are visiting a dictatorial country, not a democratic one.

Lára Hanna Einarsdóttir

For pointers on how to throw a protest, see the article Apathy is a Myth by Paul in issue 3.

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101 REYKJAVÍK: THE CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSE, OF COURSE

by Valur Gunnarsson

Faroese master poet William Heinesen called Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroes, the "absolute centre of the universe," to which the Icelandic poet Hannes Pétursson added that it was far from him to quarrel with Heinesen, but the centre of the universe is where you were brought up and could never be anywhere else. To him, then, the centre of the universe would be Saudárkrókur. To me, it can never be anything but 101 Reykjavík.

The centre of my world began at Sjafnargata, and slowly expanded to the shop on the next corner, the Einar Jónsson Museum, Hallgrímskirkja and one day all the way down to BSÍ bus stop. The expansion went on to incorporate Britain, Norway and would one day reach the far shores of China.

These days, a cramped seat, a meal in a plastic tray and a magazine is the distance between Reykjavík and London or Copenhagen. It can almost seem as if Iceland is just a stone's throw from the actual bright centre of the universe. It's only when exploring the more immediate surroundings, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, that you really get to appreciate the ridiculousness of living on this piece of stilted lava in the North Atlantic. And that to most people, 101 Reykjavík seems quite a long way off from the centre of the universe. Or anything at all.

In the past few weeks, I've been to both Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and met people to whom Kangerlusuuq, Gata and yes, Heinesen's Tórshavn, seemed in their early childhood to be all there was. It's a shame how few Icelanders ever visit our neighbours, most opting to go to the big

cities from where they can come back and impress their friends and relatives with fashions and opinions learnt from big city folk.

One of the most annoying traits of Icelanders is their hunger for earthly goods, for keeping up with the Joneses, of the constant need to impress others. Perhaps this is something we have learnt on our trips to big cities. Or perhaps this is just in the nature of a farming society recently made rich.

"Progress," said a wise man, "is getting it right." So in order to progress down the right path, we need to learn the right things from the outside world and let the wrong things be. Sadly, Icelanders have a habit of doing it the other way around.

One good example of progress, however, has been the attitude towards gays in this country. Thirty years ago, when the first high profile gay came out of the closet, his life was made so intolerable he had to leave the country. Today, Gay Pride is becoming one of the biggest family events in the country. Some attitudes still need to change, but a lot has been achieved, and on the 7th of August we will have the opportunity to celebrate it. Icelanders can deal with prejudice effectively. If only they would always do so.



This edition of Grapevine sees it growing to 40 pages. The new and enlarged edition will however be missed out on by our noble protectors on the base. Authorities there have stopped distribution of the paper to its troops. Is this because of criticism of the Bush regime? Of American foreign policy?

No, its because of an ad for a photo exhibition showing a Finnish man's penis. Apparently our valiant heroes don't like Finnish dongs dangled in front of their troops.

They also didn't like a very old picture of Bubbi giving the finger next to the editorial. He's been trying to get them out of there for years. This may be seen as an escalation.

Our paper has recently secured distribution in the Westman Islands and won't stop its expansion there, but is moving on to the Faroes. It has also been decided to continue publication on a monthly basis throughout the winter. I've said it before, but we're always looking for material. If you have none to spare, at least you can do the ad department a favour and take part in the readers survey, to be found on our newly rehashed webpage on www.grapevine.is

Playing chess and doing good

If you've never moved a pawn or been check-mated, now may be the time. Iceland's champion chess club has started up some projects which go beyond the checkerboard and far beyond Iceland.

Hrókurinn's central pursuit is the promotion of chess to children in Iceland and many of their members are distinguished masters. Last year, one of the more prominent members, Bosnian Ivan Sokolov, mentioned the lack of a chess school in Sarajevo, a city which produced a team of European Champions despite there being no formal school there.

"I was interested in the city of Sarajevo from my time as a journalist, and in helping things develop there," Hrókurinn's President Hrafn Jökulsson said. They were given financial backing from the Foreign Ministry in Iceland, and now 300 kids are active in the Sarajevo chess school over the course of a school year.

After that successful venture, the next project was instinctive: to initi-



ate a similar scheme in Moldova, the home country of Hrókurinn's colleague Victor Bologan. Bologan is one of the top chess players in the world and he has dreamed of opening ten chess schools in Moldova. He'd been looking for assistance and, with financial backing secured in Moldova, Hrókurinn joined forces to begin the organisation of the project.

The country became part of the Soviet Union after World War II, but since 1991 has been an independent republic. Russian forces have remained in Moldova, however, to defend Ukrainians and Russians who have proclaimed a "Transnistria" republic in the northern part of the country. The economy faces numerous hurdles, including exposure to

poor agricultural weather, higher fuel prices and reluctance from foreign investors.

Jökulsson emphasized that Moldova is the poorest country in Europe, and that the children's lack of shoes and clothing often keeps them from going outside, especially in wintertime. "It's easy to do something that really matters there," Jökulsson said of their efforts in Moldova. They are now beginning to collect donations of children's shoes, and aim to deliver the items near the end of August.

So we get the easy part. Hrókurinn has set it all up; all we have to do is to bring the shoes. You may like to try your chess skills as well. "Everyone is welcome," Jökulsson says, "we are always there."

You can bring donations to the Hrókurinn headquarters at Skólátún 4. The hours of the headquarters are 9:30 - 17:00 Monday through Friday and 13:00 - 16:00 on Saturdays.

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HOW THE WAR ON TERROR IS AFFECTING YOUR INFLIGHT MEAL

by Kristinn Hrafnsson

By the end of the month, the U.S. authorities will be notified by Icelandair if you order a special Muslim diet on your flight to the Land of the Free. What the U.S. Customs and Border Authorities will do with this particular piece of information is anybody's guess, but it doesn't take much imagination to envisage a less than pleasant time at J.F.K. Airport upon your arrival.

The data on special fly-meal wishes from Icelandair passengers is among the bits and pieces of info the airline has agreed to hand over to the authorities in the U.S. This is part of the ongoing war on terrorism after 9/11. According to a news release from Icelandair, the company has been in consultation with the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Icelandic Data Protection regarding the handling of the U.S. demand to gain access to passenger booking information. It also says in the company's statement that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Reykjavik will do its best to ensure the same protection regarding the use of this personal data as negotiated with the European Union on a similar request. Yes, Brussels wants to know too if you order a Muslim diet.

You'd better go for the special

Not that other special dietary wishes won't raise concern in the Home Security departments on both sides of the Atlantic. Icelandair offers a variety of special choices, accord-

ing to their web-site. There it says: "Some special meal options include kosher, vegetarian, low fat, low cholesterol, low sodium, low calorie, Hindu, Muslim, Asian vegetarian, and many others." Could it possibly be an indication of a terrorist threat if somebody asks for a vegetarian dish? This could mean that a deranged environmentalist was on board. Or what about low fat/low cholesterol? It almost has an anti-American sound to it. Will a kosher order sound an "all-clear" signal? Whatever the authorities in the States will do with the information, one thing is clear: there will be a lot of it. According to a revealing report in Morgunblaðið recently, an Icelandair spokesman worriedly told the paper that between 10-20% of the passengers wanted something other than the "today's special" offered from the Icelandair kitchen. Some might maliciously wonder whether this might not be an expression of distrust towards the chefs rather than a political statement.



Name, rank, serial number and preferred meal choice

The meal info is not all, because what will also be reported are: your name, data of birth, address, telephone number and method of payment. So it will not only be known what usually is on your dinner table, it will be known where your dinner table is located and what astrological sign you're in. (I wonder if vegetarian Virgo's will cause a greater concern than, for example, a low-cholesterol Taurus.). Then of course the valuable pieces of information: "method of payment." Will it simply say "cash" or "credit/debit-card", or will relevant bank information

be submitted as well? And then, if "cash" is selected, will the one who paid with gold-insured paper money and order Muslim diet be more suspicious than the one who hands out a plastic card, made of oil? For people who oddly think that the above information should be private, they still have no way of avoiding it if they want to travel to the U.S. It is mandatory for all airlines that fly to the country to submit this information, according to U.S. laws. Which will no doubt make our world a safer place.

A revolution on Laugarvegur

by Hassan Harazi

So I've now had my own column in a newspaper! This must mean that by Reykjavík 101 standards, I'm now entitled to refer to myself as a writer. And what with posing for the photograph, I'm now also a model. Now I just need to trade in my PC laptop for a Mac, and I can become a designer. I sewed a button on my trousers the other day, so that makes me a fashion designer, my son has some finger paints, but I guess he'll let me borrow them, and then I'll be an artist. So that's it. I'm now a regular 101 artistic "Jack of all Trades... (and master of none)".

After battling first against Kringlan and then Smáralind shopping malls, Laugavegur seemed to be on a downward trend, but there now appears to be a mini renaissance occurring. There is the wide array of cafés and bars offering free wireless Internet connection emerging. A few months ago the only place in town with this service was Kaffibarinn, and of course it's not possible to mention this place without reminding people

yet again that Blur's Damon Albarn owns a share of it. This is also the only remaining outpost of Western Europe that still thinks he's cool. If all the seats are taken by Reykjavík's filmmaker glitterati busily editing their latest magnum opus ready for its premiere in, err, Kaffibarinn, then my personal favourite is Hressingarskálinn. Here you can while away hours listening to Air's La Femme d'Argent played over and over and over again. But be warned, sitting on

the sofa with the mirror behind your head does ensure that everyone can see you're looking at porn.

Another welcome addition to the area is two new shops peddling tourist trinkets and curios. One splendid souvenir appears to be three



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chunks of lava stuck on a wooden plinth with a candle placed in the centre. This exquisite piece retails for 1495kr. If this seems a trifle expensive, remember that you only need to buy three to qualify for a tax refund. Alternatively, you could do as I did and make my own from three chunks of lava I picked up from the ground and stuck them together with chewing gum. It now takes pride of place upon my refrigerator and complements my Limited Edition Berlin Wall fridge magnet wonderfully.

An additional development is the emergence of t-shirt shops. Two of these are to be found within a beer bottle's throwing distance of each other. Both these fine shops sell t-shirts printed with pictures and slo-

News in brief

Search Continues for Missing Woman



Reykjavík police, in cooperation with rescue teams and a specially trained search squad, have expanded their search for Sri Rahmawati to a 45 kilometre radius. A man who used to live with her is currently being held in police custody, as blood was found in his apartment and his jeep, which was spotted at her apartment shortly before she disappeared. Rahmawati has been missing for three weeks at the time of this printing.

Jagúar Chosen to Open for James Brown



Godfather of Soul James Brown, who will be coming to Iceland on 28 August, has chosen jazz-funk outfit Jagúar as his opening band. The conditions for them being able to perform include "not sounding anything like James Brown" and "not swearing on stage". Despite this, Jagúar has said to be "incredibly honoured" to open for him, and are very appreciative.

gans designed by some of Reykjavík's leading contemporary designers working at the very vanguard of cutting edge avant-garde design. But along the road, Bónus, Laugavegur's 'pile it high, sell it cheap(ish)' supermarket, is trying to muscle in on this now lucrative market by selling Ché Guevara t-shirts at the rock bottom price of just 990kr.

¡Viva la revolución!

And finally...

How enlightening to read that Krummi, lead singer of Mínus, Iceland's bad boys of rock, is an avid reader and an intellectual. Surely then, when he describes himself as once being "young, dumb and full of cum", he realises that this expression is used in the porn industry to describe young actors and actresses in hardcore porn movies that are the centre of attention in a gangbang and subsequently end up "full of cum".

Hassan's views do not necessarily reflect those of the editor.

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REVERSING HISTORY

by Paul Fontaine-Nikolov

Among the many cycles of violence in the world, few approach the level of immediacy which the Israeli/Palestinian conflict has reached. The need for third-party intervention to end extremism on both sides of the spectrum has been long overdue, and with the recent ruling of the United Nations International Court of Justice calling for cessation of the construction of the wall being built by Israel – as well as the payment of reparations to the Palestinian people who suffered economically as a result of this wall – it seems as though Europe at least is taking steps towards just such an intervention.

In Iceland, efforts towards intervention began years ago, culminating in the creation of the Icelandic-Palestinian Association in 1987. In a country where even the mass media has a bias against Israel, the potential for blanket generalisations of all Israelis, if not all Jews, is ripe. Fortunately for us we have Salmann Tamimi as chairman of the Icelandic Muslim Association, a man who, while steadfastly devoted to the Palestinian cause, continues to gently remind us that in times when emotions run high, the best thing we can do is use our heads.

Born in Jerusalem in 1955, Tamimi experienced his country go from bad to worse when the 1967 war broke out. The Palestinian university system wiped out, he decided to go to the United States to study. In 1971, he stopped in Iceland on his way over and promptly stayed here. After working as a sailor and in construction, he finished his studies in computer science at Háskóli Íslands and now works for Landspítali hospital, which is where I met him to get his take on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and Iceland's role in it.

Israel and South Africa

In a recent opinion piece you wrote for Fréttablaðið, you called for Iceland to cut off all diplomatic and economic ties with Israel. Do you think this a realistic demand?

“Yes, I do. You can compare it to the sanctions which were imposed on South Africa in the late 80s, where an oppressive government was forced to step down due to international pressure. Israel should be treated no differently. This idea that Israel is a tiny country trying to defend itself from all sides is a myth. It's the most powerful nation in the region militarily. Their policies against the Palestinian people are in many ways

worse than those which South Africa imposed upon the majority of its own people. I made this statement to get people thinking about this issue, to think more deeply about Iceland's relationship with Israel.”

Many people argue that Palestine is not ready to be an independent nation, that a transitional period is required.

“The United States was less prepared for independence after their Revolutionary War than Palestine is today. Iceland was less than 200,000 people when they achieved independence. My point is, we are better situated for independence than many other countries when they achieved their independence, or even those who are independent today. We want to join in the United Nations, to be a part of the world.”

Do you think that international pressure will create peace in the region?

“Not in the near future, but one thing to keep in mind is that 70% of Israel's trade is with Europe. The recent UN resolution is very encouraging and if pressure starts now, within the next few years it will be too much for Israel to bear. The wall isn't the only thing, either. There are also the settlements to consider, which also break international law. If they want to build a wall, fine. We have no problem with that. We just want them to build this wall on the 1967 borders between Israel and Palestine. I don't think that's too much to ask. But even with all the demands met, we still need the help of the rest of the world.”

So you're not opposed to even a UN military intervention in the region?

“Not at all. We need to control extremists on both sides. Even with all the demands met, there will still be people who won't be happy. We

A Palestinian Icelander Calls for Peace



“If they want to build a wall, fine. We have no problem with that. We just want them to build this wall on the 1967 borders between Israel and Palestine.”

would like Palestine to be completely demilitarized; to have no army, like Iceland. To this end, we've asked for help from Europe, from the US, and from the United Nations. I don't think peace will come quickly, but with such an intervention – coupled with educating our own children to turn away from hate – I think peace is possible.”

Zionists and refuseniks

Many people don't make a distinction between Jews, Israelis, and Zionists. What distinction do you make?

“I have many Jewish friends who get very frustrated over this lack of distinction. A Zionist goes by the biblical definition of a Jewish homeland, the belief that they are 'God's chosen people' who have the right to set up a religious state. How can Israel call themselves 'the only democracy in the Middle East' when they want to set up a religious state? I personally wouldn't want to live in any religious state, be it Jewish, Christian or Muslim. What frustrates many Jews is how the Zionists try to make them feel guilty for criticising Israel's actions towards the Palestinians, to make them feel like traitors. Among the frustrated is Uri Avnery, head of the Israeli peace movement Gush-Shalom, whom I've invited to visit

Iceland this winter. But there are also the 'refuseniks', people who have refused to serve in the Israeli army and go to prison for it. Also, while Israel says that all Jews are welcome in their country, they've turned away countless Jewish peace activists from even visiting Israel.”

The image that many westerners have of Muslims is that they are intolerant of other religions in general, and Jews in particular.

“What these people don't realise is that when the west was wiping out Jews, such as during the Inquisition, the safest haven for Jews was in Islamic countries. There were of course crazies who would do terrible things from time to time, but Islam teaches tolerance. Our term for Christians and Jews – dimma – literally means 'under the protection of God'. No true Muslim would act in the way Osama bin Laden is acting. It's the sad fact that while I do think that one day Muslims and Jews could live together peacefully in the region, for now we need two countries, until we get to know each other again.”

Do you think that Iceland is tolerant towards Muslims?

“To an extent. They don't have a policy against us, but the church

News in brief

Icelanders working at NATO base file suit

Icelandic employees of the NATO base in Keflavík have filed grievances with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating that they have been underpaid and that the base has refused to honour their collective bargaining agreement for the past two years. No statement has yet been made on behalf of the NATO base, but Kristján Gunnarsson, chairman of their union, has said that the workers are “furious”. A response from the Minister of Foreign Affairs is expected soon.

Hrísey Temporarily Secedes from Iceland



Hrísey, a small island in Eyjafjörður, declared itself an independent republic for the duration of a festival which was held from 16 - 18 July. Passport control was in effect, and Icelandic immigrants took part in a karaoke contest and other events. The festival, in its eighth year, has no reported deportations and the prospect of a permanent secession has not been broached.

enjoys government sponsorship whereas our temple does not. Everything we do we pay out of our own pocket. There are close to 700 Muslims living in Iceland now and I think that if Iceland wants to show the non-Christians living here that this is a multi-cultural nation, then all religions should be given the same level of treatment. After all, a beautiful garden has many different colours of flowers growing in it. If you have a garden with just one colour of flower, it's boring to look at.”

In space, no one can hear you clean

by Eyvindur Karlsson

Is there life on other planets? According to Dr. Eric Eidos, one of the many speakers at the Astrobiology 2004 convention held in Reykjavík recently, research done at Grímsvatn lakes, which lie under hundreds of meters of ice in Vatnajökull, supports theories that microbionic life may exist on other planets in our galaxy.

Research at Grímsvatn revealed that, despite extreme conditions, the lakes are inhabited by single cell organisms. Whereas most known living organisms convert sunlight to energy, these organisms are believed to thrive off chemicals, much like single cell organisms found in hot springs. Much has been theorized about life under ice and with the Grímsvatn expedition, much of it was proven

to be true. The ultimate testing stone of these theories, however, would be an investigation of lake Volstok, which lies underneath kilometers of ice in the Antarctic. This is, however, very difficult to research, since even the slightest disturbance could disrupt the entire eco-system of the lake. This is not the case with Grímsvatn, since Vatnajökull is much more mobile and less stable, so disruptions are very frequent there.

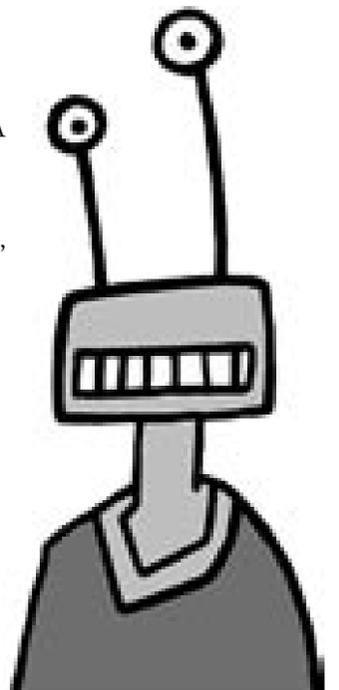
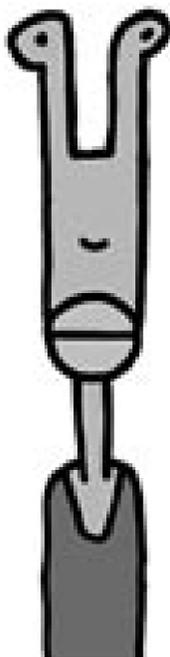
The findings of the expedition give rise to theories that organisms may live under similar circumstances elsewhere in the galaxy, and poses the question of whether Mars may be host to such creatures. We do know that there are polar caps of ice on the red planet, and there just might be water underneath. It is therefore entirely possible that organisms similar to those found in Grímsvatn might inhabit Mars.

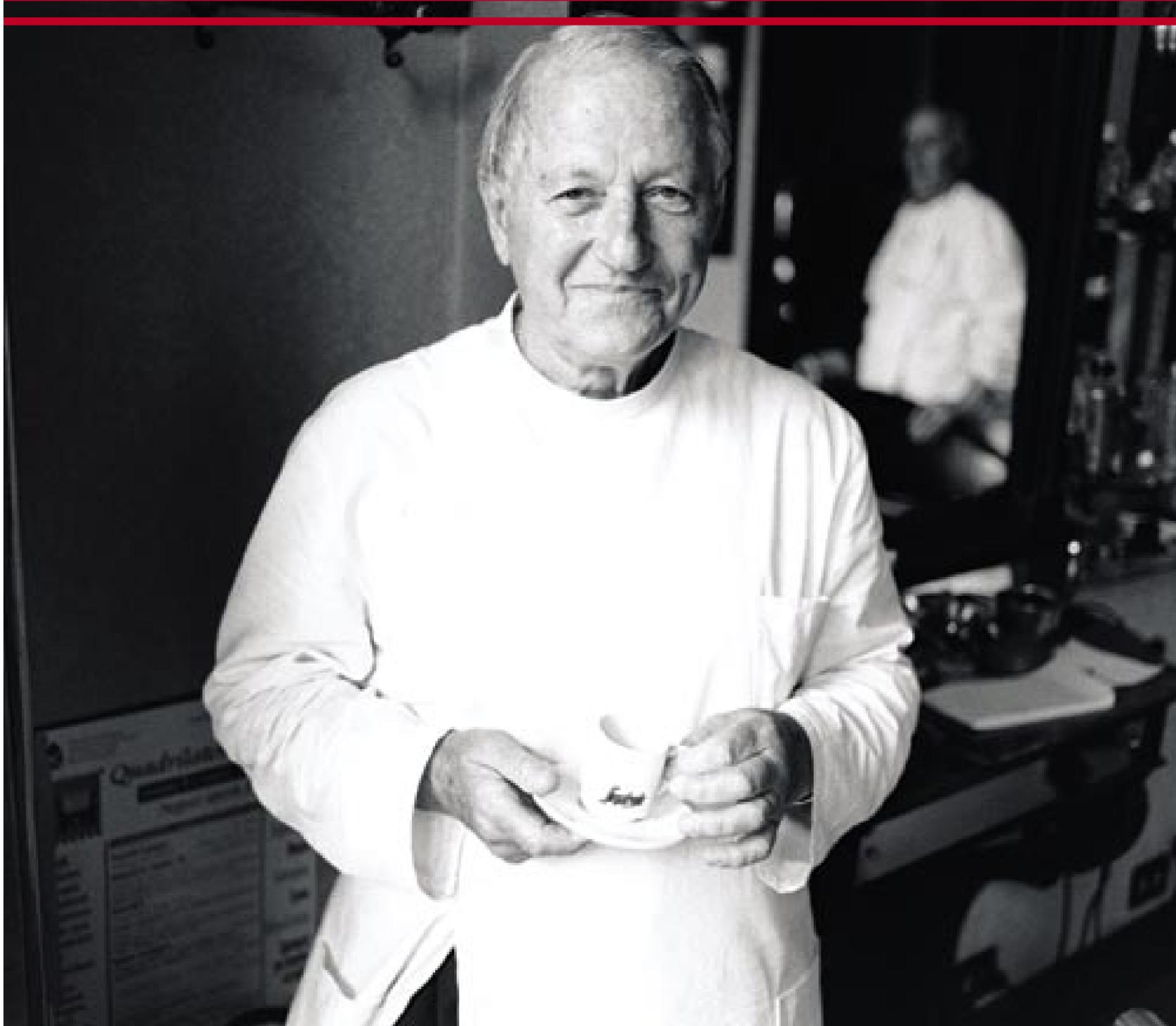
A more distant, but just as interesting candidate, is Jupiter's satellite Europa. Far less is known about the surface and conditions of Europa, but what we do know is that its entire surface is ice. It is believed that underneath the ice there is a

thick layer of water that could easily host these organisms.

But while this is all well and good, one must ask (and in fact, this question was posed at the Q&A after Dr. Eidos' lecture): Do we really need this kind of research? Is this the most necessary knowledge? We know about tiny little things underneath our glaciers that might exist in space, too. So what? Well, Dr. Eidos couldn't provide concrete answers. There is of course the obvious and endless quest for knowledge, but that was not the answer that I was looking for. What practical use do we have for these organisms? Well, the only answer for that was that there is a slight possibility that they could be used for making laundry detergent.

So while these newfound living things under Vatnajökull might not put Iceland on the pages of astrobiological history, it certainly might do something for the future. Maybe we'll all look back thirty years from now and bless the day when Grímsvatn gave us the little creatures that make our sheets clean.





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CREATIVE FORCES ON THE LOOSE

by Eydís Björnsdóttir

Reykjavík City and Hitt Húsið have nurtured 18 different creative groups this summer, enabling them to perform cultural and creative work throughout the city. In order to gain the attention of this Mother Goose, each group has provided a detailed application which includes a work schedule and budgets for assessment. The groups were then selected covering a broad spectrum of modern culture. Without this innovative sponsorship, it is unlikely that the participants would have been able to create their works and the streets of Reykjavík would have been a good deal quieter on summer days.

There are five groups consisting of musicians, which included the Wind Quartet, who performed classical music and the Chamber Quartet Krummi, who play dulcet hymns while clad in black. Their collaboration will end once the summer has passed. But another group to focus on classical music was Listalín, with not only a soprano but also a mezzosoprano in their midst, who hope to continue their work subject to continued funding. Then there was the band Friends of Keli, who oozed a laid back atmosphere with jazz tunes and blues. They will keep at it, playing at pubs on weekends, as will the Demon Musicians (whose name, Glymskrattarnir, happens to be the Icelandic translation of a jukebox) with their upbeat, swinging melodies.

Hljóðgata is a solo project aimed at enriching the theatre experience with added sounds and video art who collaborated with The Street Theatre, another youth program summer group consisting of fifteen amateur street actors prancing around the

streets in drunken pantomimes. The Street Theatre will continue and accept projects offered to them.

The picked/lost strawberries are a somewhat similar group that performs art, painting and music in the form of little happenings. They plan on holding a mutual art exhibit in the fall and foresee continuing their co-operation in some form or another.

Sons-in-Law of Jódís is a more theatrically based group of four actors with the goal to do three plays in six weeks. They'll have no director and no set, just the actors and three playwrights. They might possibly do other projects as a group in the future, for they are all friends, two of which are attending the school of drama.

Landsleikur take a more traditional approach and put up a production of the play *Dýrðlegt fjölda sjálfsmorð* by Arto Pasillinna. Two designers are responsible for *Dropped Stitch*... oopps...and display their design of



clothing in a more theatrical manner than usual fashion shows do. They will definitely continue work of their label, which has apparently been doing well in the Icelandic world of fashion.

Always at the centre of attention has been *The Belly Dancing Fairies*, who have offered a clash of cultures by performing unconventional belly dances throughout the city. Equally interesting have been the three women of *Artistic hearts*, who have created happenings such as the making of enormous fruits and vegetables to garland from trees.

The painter is a solo project, where the artist displays her artwork at odd places in Reykjavík, e.g. in an empty shop window or a dark alleyway. The group *Samsferða* is a project of warding off prejudice by using the

process of making a cartoon. They aim to keep the group together and hope to go on to other similar projects. *Malbik* is a poetry group determined to use unconventional ways to distribute poetry to people. Among their stratagems was the writing of an impromptu poem with chalk on the pave walk and later offering shoppers of Hagkaup to "taste" a poetry book they had on sale. *Bestikk* is a group of four writers who are in the process of writing a novel collaboratively. They have nothing planned for the future other than finishing their novel.

And last but not least is *The Reykjavík Grapevine*, who have received essential funding to establish our relaunch this summer, but I'll take the liberty to assume that anyone reading this already knows what that is all about.

News in brief

One Farmer Stands Against Kárahnjúkar



Landsvirkjun, the national power company, has offered to pay five farmers to vacate their land to make way for a high tension power line from Kárahnjúkar dam, which is still under construction in the north east of Iceland. All but one, Guðmundur Ármannson, has accepted. Mr. Ármannson refuses to leave his land, stating that Landsvirkjun hasn't discussed the matter with the farmers but has instead just written checks and assumed that they would leave. He also believes that the dam will damage the environment in the east and that Landsvirkjun is in violation of the farmer's constitutional rights. The plot thickens . . .

Media law (again)



After the president refused to sign the media bill, the government braced themselves for a referendum.

They then submitted a new media law. Now, they have withdrawn the idea of a media bill altogether. Instead, they suggest forming a committee on the constitution which will look into abolishing the presidential power.

Siamese twins separated

The blood circulatory system of the twin sisters María and Sara were separated in the womb by laser in a Belgian hospital. This is the first operation of its kind conducted on Icelandic twins. The mother had to spend 15 weeks in the hospital after the operation, but the twins were finally born and are in good condition.



Head of Landsvirkjun decides to continue with construction



The Nature Watch, a group which campaigns for the preservation of nature and a more active democracy, drew four flags to half mast outside the headquarters of Landsvirkjun, the company responsible for destroying the highlands. The head of Landsvirkjun came out and listened to their qualms but decided to continue with the construction anyway.



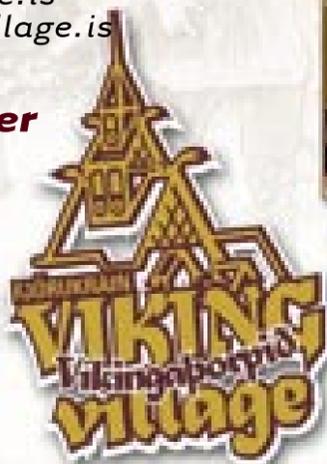
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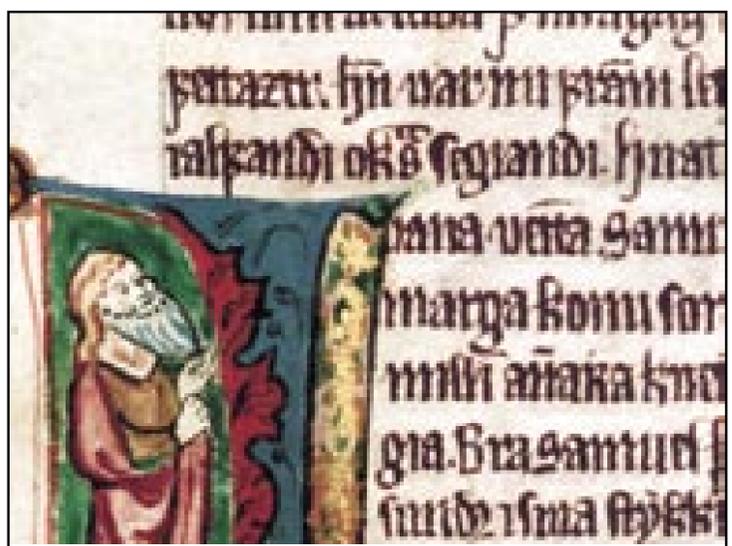
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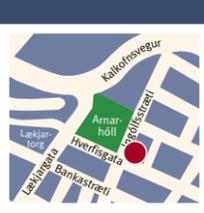


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COLUMN

ENTER DA KITCHEN



by Pdraig Mara

As school began I needed to find work that suited a student's schedule. My girlfriend suggested I might try restaurant work seeing as I had some talent and seemed to enjoy working with food. I saw it as a soft option - you go in, make some dishes, and go home. No heavy lifting, no flying sparks. I quickly found myself paying my dues as a chef's assistant.

I worked first at a dinner theatre that during any given week would serve up to 2,000 customers. The kitchen staff consisted on weekends of myself, two sleep deprived, overworked cooks, and 30 to 40 teenagers, chatting on cell phones and snapping each other with rubber gloves. Managing this circus was the executive chef Oli, a lecherous forgetful cat in his late 50s.

ME (middle of the dinner rush, covered in food) - Oli, where is the rest of the duck?

OLI (staring blankly into space) - Ha? Duck? (His eye is caught as a very pretty girl of obviously high-school age walks past.) Too young...too young...

Later I labored valiantly in the tiny, sweltering kitchen of a fast food joint with gourmet pretensions.

ME- So, this tortilla con carne, that's like a taco right?

PRETENTIOUS HEAD CHEF- No, no. This is a crispy, hand-milled corn tortilla filled with spiced beef, cheese and vegetables.

ME- Yeah... So it's a taco right?

Finally, I had assembled sandwiches for the elderly in a retirement home.

ME (addressing a roomful of golden oldies quietly gumming their open-faced sandwiches) - So how are they?

Utter silence but for the sound of chewing. One old gent begins to fall out of his chair in impossibly slow motion...

ME- Pretty damn good, eh?

These jobs were fine, but badly paid. I had come to the conclusion that I had proven myself a more than capable cook's assistant. In fact, I had begun to view myself as a rising star in the culinary field, worthy of my own kitchen, despite my lack of education, experience, know-how etc. I saw an ad asking for a head chef in a newly opened bistro downtown. I answered it.

The restaurant's aim was to be a sort of international café. A place where natives and transplants could get together, drink coffee, eat babaganoush, listen to Manu Chao and appreciate the fuck out of each other. Sounded okey dokey to me. I sat down with the owner of the establishment and the other chef. I was charming and confident. I played down my inexperience and talked up my foreignness. I said I could offer the restaurant a taste of my homeland. A taste of New Jersey. They bought it and I was hired.

The next day the other cook ran down the menu with me, everything according to the latest trends in faux-ethnic cooking: hummus, coconut milk soups, lots of sun dried tomatoes, artichoke hearts and vinegar glazes. Yup, I said, I could rock with all this, no problem at all. I was given a shiny white chef's jacket and left to my own devices in what was now my kitchen. I checked my reflection in the mirror and turned up the kitchen stereo.

The rest of that day went perfectly, not very many customers, just enough to keep me busy and moving. I doted over each plate. They were works of art. I began to think seriously of having my own cooking show on Stöð 2. I'd call it "Eat This". I'd soon be wealthy and famous but nowhere near as annoying as that Jamie Oliver bastard.

The next day I popped the Dead Boys in the stereo, donned my whites and lit a cigarette. I sat down on the steps behind my kitchen and thought about my bright future as a celebrity chef. On the stereo Stiv was singing "I'll be a pharaoh soon, rule from some golden tomb" - that sounded about right. The order machine just then clicked to life. Table of four, each with two dishes, each different. Well, fuck it, I thought. I can handle that. I turned the stereo up and got to work. As I worked the grill I heard the machine print out another order, a table of 8. "Then I'll be ten feet tall and you'll be nothing at all", I sang along as I ran to the walk-in fridge for more hummus. Empty. Fuck. More tickets printed out. Waiters came in to politely inquire about their tables. I smiled and said it wouldn't be a moment. They

looked at me with doubt as I resorted to crushing chick peas with my fist for falafel. More tickets printed. I had all burners lit on the stove, the deep fryer bubbling and the grill smoking like a locomotive. Damn it, if I was going to be a celebrity chef I had to make it through this evening's dinner rush. Just as I was about to send off five fish-of-the-day plates, the gas ran out. I sprinted to the back of the building wielding a wrench to switch tanks as the stereo screamed, "Dead boys, too sick to wanna cry". I ran back to find the deep-fryer oil over flowing onto the floor. I skated around the serving table like it was the Icecapades. The head waiter appeared, silently as always, and asked me in a slick waiter-like fashion if I had ever impersonated a chef before or was this something I was just trying out. I told him in a very un-waiterlike fashion to get the fuck out of my kitchen. More tickets printed out of the machine. I threw plates around in a blur. I was burned and I was bleeding, I could see my cooking show receding in the distance. "Dead boys, dead boys..." I was sweating and close to incoherent as I rushed to send the last of the orders. I dropped a vindaloo onto a waitress' shoes; I scalded myself with a pot of egg-drop soup. I prayed to God for deliverance or a quick death as I fixed plates of gnocchi and cream sauce. I felt heat on my back. I looked over my shoulder to find two pans of lamb kebab throwing fire three feet in the air. Something snapped in my head. I took off my apron and walked toward the door. Stiv sang "Down in flames, down in flaaaames." I took off my chef's jacket as in a dream, ignoring the ticket machine, the shouts of waiters. I opened the heavy door leading to the parking lot... the air was cool and still, I could still hear the stereo... "Down in flames, down in flames". I slammed the door with a thud.

Hours later I had a chat with the owner. Obviously the kitchen and me were not to be. But how did I feel about tending bar? I rubbed my scorched and scarred hands. I said good. I feel very good about tending bar.

...Next edition, Worst Bartender in Reykjavik.

Build It, And They Will Come

by Paul Fontaine-Nikolov

The architecture and city planning of Reykjavík can be brilliant, bewildering, daring, and sometimes downright hilarious. I spoke with Gestur Ólafsson, the editor of architecture and planning magazine AVS, who studied radical architectural ideas in the 60s, to find out about some of the architectural projects which never were and why they were never born, as well as some ideas that should see the light of day.

“The reality is,” he explained, “that there are four parties acting in the development of any city planning project: architects, planners, city councilmen, and the public. Architecture involves designing, which is different than planning. Things go awry when architects take over planning.” A pretty bold statement coming from a man who is himself an architect.

Underground parking lots and giant swords

Some examples he cited for this were the proposed building of an underground parking garage underneath the lake Tjörnin, the giant sword that was to be sticking out of the ground at Melatorg and, worst of all in his mind, the re-direction and joining of Miklabraut and Hringbraut.

“This just doesn’t make sense,” he said, “Miklabraut and Hringbraut are both four-lane roads. But what they’re planning to do is bow them away from Landspítali, connect them, and expand this bow into six

lanes. The hospital does need room for an exit, but a much simpler way to do this would be to have the connection remain at four lanes, and have it dip under the ground through a short tunnel. What I think is sorely missing from the entire process is the involvement of the public - they should be made a crucial part of the decision-making.”

Gestur pointed out that city councilmen seem to follow the mistaken belief that “all development is good” - build it, and they will come. Here we see an example of councilmen not listening to city planners, who try to convince the council that research regarding environmental impact, property values, and competing businesses need to be taken into account before building anything.

Leaving the airport to the swamp

On the bright side, there are a few projects on the table which could benefit Reykjavík tremendously, or at least make it more interesting.



Architecture in Reykjavík

Despite many approaches from property developers, the Reykjavík Council has indicated that the city airport will not be phased out until at least 2016. Then the big question will be, what to do with all that land? One award-winning idea has been to leave Vatnsmýri swamp free from development, leave the runways where they are, and simply allow the swamp to gradually take over the runways as a testament to nature conquering development. In the meantime, the runways could be used by joggers, rollerbladers, or anyone else who’d love to make use of an enormous stretch of asphalt.

Urban sprawl (if one can use such a term for a city of less than 300,000) has typically extended towards the end of the peninsulas in Reykjavík, Kópavogur, and Hafnarfjörður. As the connecting road between the three towns stretches along the

mainland, one can see the kind of traffic problems this causes and they won’t be getting any better. One of the more innovative ideas has been to build a connection between Reykjavík and Hafnarfjörður, using a system of bridges and roads which would pass over Álftanes. This idea could reduce traffic congestion tremendously in the capital area but as of yet, the idea hasn’t been taken off.

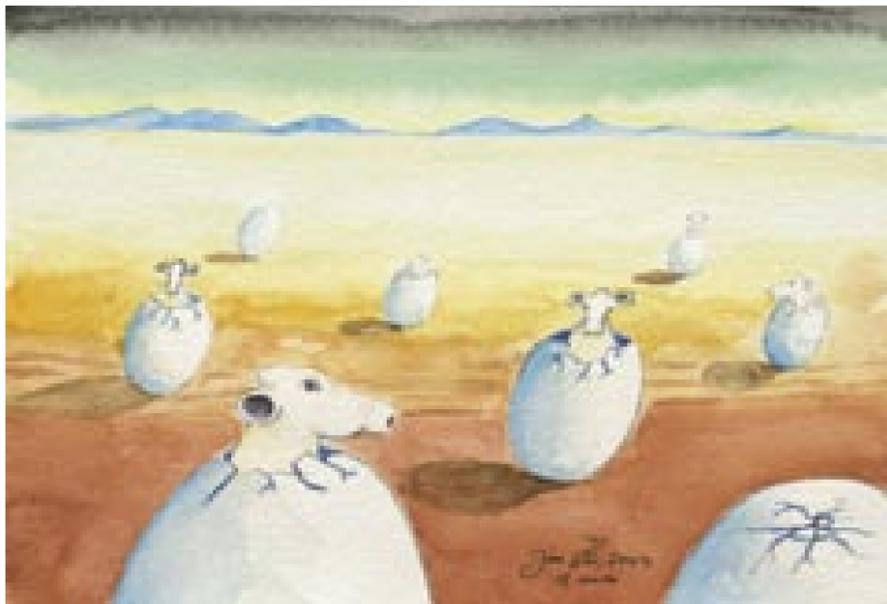
Will cars become obsolete in the capital?

If Gestur Ólafsson represents one of the radical architectural students of the 60s, Sólver Hafsteinn Hafsteinnsson represents one of the new generation. A recent prize winner of Landsbanki Íslands’ Idea Competition for city planning, his proposal is to build elevated pedestrian walkways through the empty alleyways behind downtown Reykjavík’s buildings for a stretch of nine city blocks

(see illustrations). These walkways would also feature open spaces where shops could open up, trees could be planted, or where people could just sit and read the paper. And this is one of his more quotidian ideas; he also has begun designing an Icelandic subway system.

His idea is to have a subway system which not only connects Keflavík and Reykjavík, but to have a ring-shaped line surrounding Reykjavík, passing through the surrounding suburbs.

Sólver’s ideas, like those of anyone wishing to change the face of Reykjavík, will undoubtedly go through numerous permutations as it passes through the hands of city planners, councilmen, and other interested parties. Perhaps the public should become more involved in deciding which ones will make the final cut.



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Iceland Express >>

“What we need is more men and women to enter marriage,” say the priests and fundamentalists who worry about the collapse of a worthy institution. “We need men and women who will stand before God, take their vows and keep them.” But what they fail to make clear until recently is, “Gays and lesbians need not apply.” This is one of those rare and delightful occasions when America, and most other Western societies for that matter, can learn something from Iceland. This country has lately been acquiring a very good record on its treatment of gays and lesbians to such an extent that it is almost no longer an issue for debate. The people have accepted, voted, and moved on, and while the Lutheran Church has failed to go the final yard of actually marrying same sex couples, they do bless unions, and same sex couples can get married in churches such as Fríkirkjan.

So, what's all the fuss about?

Change takes time and centuries of prejudice don't disappear through an act of parliament, but when the people are willing, a new generation can be relied on to finish the job. For this to happen, the environment for change needs to be created and nourished and hence the importance of the Gay Pride movement.

Reykjavík is now preparing for their annual Gay Pride festival which, if last year is anything to go by, will be attended by more heterosexuals than gays, many bringing their families with them. Supported by the City of Reykjavík, who give 1.6 million ISK each year in sponsorship, it is one of 120 such events organised around the world involving over 20 million people. The streets will be full, the entertainment will be packed and, when it comes to a close, another important step will have been made in ensuring that future generations accept gays and lesbians as part of the fabric of society.

Not everyone will be happy, though. Christian fundamentalists will seethe, simmer and preach their doctrine of 're-education for homosexuals'. Happily, their voice will be ignored by most. These fundamentalists take their lead from their brothers in America who use slogans which vary from the seemingly light hearted 'Adam and Eve - not Adam and Steve' to the hysterical and sinister 'The homosexual activist movement has set forth to destroy the family...' In America their words cannot be ignored so easily; they have a

growing following and a key supporter in George Bush. The man who sees everything in terms of good and evil has thrown his weight behind a draft amendment to the constitution which would define marriage as only between a man and a woman. There are similar moves throughout Europe, many with links to the far right.

The movement to ban gay marriages whips up the same hatred and prejudice that was hurled against the civil rights movement in the 1960s, and it all seems so unnecessary. A man is capable of loving another man as much as he is a woman: so it is with women. The fact that same sex couples wish their union to be blessed and made permanent through marriage is something that should be encouraged, not vilified. Other countries should learn from Iceland, which demonstrates to the world that gays and lesbians need not be treated as a minority nor marginalised.

There will be gay marriages in the future and there will be, to the great delight of lawyers, gay divorces, too. Same sex marriages are just like any other form of marriage, and should be treated as such.

summer time

love

photos : HÖRÐUR SVEINSSON

Iceland: Fragments of Lesbian and Gay History

THORVALDUR KRISTINSSON

Until the 1970s, lesbians and gay men were practically invisible in Icelandic society, which surrounded them with contempt and massive silence. Their reaction was either to hide their sexual identity completely, finding an occasional escape from the oppression while touring abroad, or to move to the metropolitan cities of continental Europe and Northern America. Many of those people never turned back, being later properly termed as sexual political refugees. The silence was first broken in 1975 when the first gay man revealed his sexual identity publicly in the media, influenced by the international liberation movement, and in 1978 Samtökin '78, The Lesbian and Gay Organisation of Iceland, was founded by some twenty people. It is now, twenty five years later, the most powerful force in the gay liberation movement of Iceland with a little less than 400 members, working with financial support from the Icelandic state and the city of Reykjavík.

To describe the prejudice and hostility which met the little group on its way to visibility in these years, one recalls a discotheque in Reykjavík which in 1983 sought its popularity by advertising in newspapers: "Everyone is welcome - except gays and lesbians." Another example from the same year took place in the Nursing School of Iceland which forbade its students to call for a meeting with the educational group of Samtökin '78, a visit which the students themselves had organised after a gay student found himself forced to leave the school due to group mobbing.

Nevertheless, the few who had the courage to stand up and speak for their cause saw a remarkable progress in the eighties. They rejected, for instance, the oppression of the Icelandic language, that stern ruler of thoughts and emotions, by protesting people's use of the common word "kynvilla" (sexual aberration) for homosexuality, a term analogous to the older word "trúvilla" (religious aberration) for heresy. They fought for a decade with the Icelandic State Radio against being labelled in such a derogatory manner, and suggested their own popular words, "lesbía" and "hommi" for themselves, and "samkynhneigð", a compound of same, sex and orientation, for homosexuality. And finally they won.

Since then, educational and legislative work has characterised the gay activ-

ism in Iceland with positive results, and recently several other gay associations have appeared, such as FSS, the Association of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual University Students, founded in 1999. In 1983, a new political party, The Social Democratic Alliance, was the first one of its kind to place gay human rights on its agenda. In 1985, a resolution was presented in the parliament, Althingi, by four political parties demanding action to abolish discrimination against lesbians and gay men. It was never passed, and it was not until 1992 that a similar resolution was reworked by five political parties and passed by the Althingi.

As a result of the research work ordered by this resolution, a law on registered partnership for same-sex couples was passed by the Althingi in 1996, though denying same-sex couples any right to adopt children and seek insemination in an official clinic. However, by this law, Iceland became the first country in the world to legalise joint custody of children brought into same-sex partnerships. Furthermore, the Protestant Lutheran state church did not formally approve of a blessing ceremony, as the gay movement demanded, causing friction and open fighting with the church, which still is unresolved. In 2000, the Althing revised the law on registered partnership, giving same-sex couples the right to adopt stepchildren brought into such partnerships. Furthermore, in 1996 the Althingi passed an anti-discrimination law. It is worth noting that the parliamentary opposition in the debate preceding these legislative improvements has been minimal compared to the parliamentary opposition in other Nordic countries, and to give a clear example of an organised opposition, one has to go as far as to Christian fundamentalist congregations, functioning outside the state church of Iceland.

Opinion polls show a surprising change of values in society and express, in fact, more respect and tolerance towards gay men and lesbians than in most other western societies. The change is generally affirmed by what lesbians and gay men experience in their everyday life. In a surprisingly short period of time, the Icelandic society has left its homophobic attitude of the past and opened up for new visions and ideas, as the annual Gay Pride events clearly reflect in Reykjavík.

Love is love

MARCIE HUME

"I think there's a positive aspect to having only two gay bars in Reykjavík," Björgvin Gunnarsson tells me over the fuzzy music blaring throughout Prikid. I laugh, thinking he's being sarcastic. "Because you have all types of people together," he continues. "If you had more bars, everything would be segregated... a drag bar, a lesbian bar..." Björgvin is in town to visit his mother for a while, but lives in Norway. He's keen to talk about the gay scene in Reykjavík.

"In reality, that kind of mixture isn't really happening," his friend responds. He is Kristof Magnússon, a German/Icelander who was raised in Germany but has spent the past couple of years in Reykjavík. "A lot of gay people just go to the straight places."

I drag them over to Jón Forseti. When we arrive, the bar isn't packed with people but it's still an energetic environment with a more cozy, welcoming vibe than most places downtown. The idea of having only two bars (or two-and-a-half bars, some say) as the only place to meet people is a daunting idea. I thought there might be some other options, perhaps someplace other than a bar. "I think there is a mentality that if Reykjavík is a cosmopolitan metropolis, we need a cruising area," Kristof says. "But I don't know if there really is one." A few people at the table begin to discuss what they've heard, but it seems unfeasible, as though if you actually drove around those spots, you might possibly pass by someone once an hour. "I don't think anyone really goes there," Kristof concludes.

FAR BETTER THAN OTHER CITIES IN EUROPE

But Reykjavík is "far better than other cities in Europe," Björgvin tells me, and everyone I speak to agrees that a recent Gallup poll, which cited that 87% of Icelanders support gay marriage, is accurate.

Kristof cites Gay Pride as a perfect example. "When I went with my dad six or seven years ago, parents were holding up their kids to see the drag queens. I realized then that Iceland had completely accepted homosexuality as just a part of life."

Of course Iceland's gay community, like in any other nation, has its problems. There have been some incidents of discrimination in recent years, including a somewhat publicized case of a man who was asked about his homosexuality during the job interview, not hired because of it, and then won a lawsuit against the employer.

The size of the community can be a social impediment and a cause of grievance. In Jón Forseti, a young man who grew up in Reykjavík tells me, "You try really hard to have a good time here, but it's just pretty boring." People sit in small groups and although everyone is certainly gracious, it does seem that it would be difficult to meet many new people here.

Jean Francois Tessier has lived in Reykjavík for several years and finds the gay scene here a better alternative to the one in his native Montreal. "In a big city you never get to know anyone. You can meet someone one night and then never see them again. It's wrong in a way... you have to get to know people, isn't that what we're here for?"

For many, the benefits of being in a small community obviously outweigh the drawbacks. "You do see the same people over and over again," Jean Francois says, "but there are always people who come over from abroad, or someone

from the countryside will suddenly arrive. People always complain, but then they go home and miss what they had in Reykjavík. They can live here in a way they can't live at home because they would get shot or stabbed."

MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

Later in my evening at Jón Forseti, I see a man sitting alone at a small table. He appears so calm and comfortable to be sitting alone that I almost don't want to disturb him. His name is Flosi Magnússon and he answers my questions straightforwardly and without restraint.

"This is the first time I've come here," he tells me. "This is obviously a place for a younger crowd. But I don't mind just being here, just watching. I'm a quiet person."

When he speaks he looks me in the eye and seems much more relaxed in conversation than most. This makes a bit of sense when I find out that he was a pastor and a dean of the church, although he left that position four years ago. But he didn't leave because he's gay.

"My sexuality is of no issue. It is not an issue for my family, for my daughters. That's why I can't complain."

But what about the church? Are there two irreconcilable, two opposing outlooks that cannot co-exist?

"I go to church on Sundays. I take part in the Holy Communion and I am new every week. But I don't believe that two men should marry in the church. That is my faith."

My eyes widen at this statement, but Flosi shows in his expression that there is no need for me to be shocked at the discrepancy. It is natural for someone to hold onto the beliefs they have developed in their lifetime, just as it is natural for things to grow and progress in future generations. His reluctance to accept gay marriage as part of the church is simply a component of his faith, inextricable from him.

"But my daughters will believe that it's okay for gay people to marry in the church. Things will change, adoption will become possible for gay couples..."

I am astounded at his belief, his ability to exist securely within the world of Christianity and his acceptance of his own homosexuality. But he says it surely, just as a fact of life, and I sense that his poise is complete and uncomplicated. "The next generation will put forward new laws and regulations for the church. I have faith in that," he says softly. A moment later he finds the perfect words for what he wants to express and leans over to make sure I hear over the rough music and crowd noise: "The next generation will find a new theological perspective."

During his time as a pastor, some came to him as they were coming to grips with their own homosexuality. "I just prayed that my knowledge and experience would do something positive for them," Flosi says, "and I told them that they are sexual creatures with sexual feelings. I myself am the judge of my own love, to know if the love I feel is a real love or not. I am made in the image of God, and so my love is made in the image of God, no matter what the gender. Love is love."

Iceland: Homosexuality and the Law

1869

The first comprehensive penal code came into effect in Iceland, based on a Danish model. Among its provisions was the criminalisation of sexual intercourse between two individuals of the same sex, irrespective of age or consent. Clause §178, which covered sexual relations between two individuals of the same sex as well as intercourse with animals, was worded as follows: "Unnatural forms of sexual intercourse are punishable by a term in prison."

1924

Following the adoption of the 1869 penal code, prison sentences were handed out almost every year for indecent conduct, though after 1900 the number of convictions fell. Published sources do not record the nature of these crimes against public decency. However, it is recorded that in 1924 Guðmundur Sigurjónsson Hofdal was sentenced by the Reykjavík District Court to eight months in prison for breach of clause §178 of the penal code. Hofdal, a renowned sportsman and wrestling champion, who had taken part in the 1908 Olympics, freely admitted in court to having had "carnal relations with other men" over the previous 15-18 years.

1940

The Althing abolished the provision in the law which ruled that sexual intercourse between two individuals of the same sex, irrespective of age or consent, was a criminal offence. The clause stipulating that "Unnatural forms of sexual intercourse are punishable by a term in prison" now became a thing of the past. Iceland was only the second Nordic country to decriminalise same-sex intercourse, irrespective of age or consent.

1940

The Althing passed a new law (no. 19/1940) which specified age of consent in the section on Public Decency. Extra-marital sexual intercourse between a man and a woman was now legal if both parties were aged 16 or above. If the man was older and the woman younger, it was judged a criminal act on the man's part. The same law stipulated a legal age of 18 for same-sex individuals, recommending up to three years' imprisonment for whichever individual was older.

1985

A proposed parliamentary resolution on the abolition of discrimination against homosexuals was placed before the Althing. The resolution proposed that a committee should be set up to investigate the status of lesbians and gay men in Iceland and make recommendations for reform of the law. The proposal was referred to general committee after the first debate but never got any further.

1992

A proposal identical to that of 1985 was passed by the Althing in the spring of 1992. On the basis of parliament's approval, the prime minister appointed a committee in the spring of 1993 to investigate the status of homosexuals in Iceland. The committee completed its task in the autumn of 1994 by producing an in-depth report which provided the basis for subsequent legislation relating to homosexuals.

1992

The Althing passed a radical amendment (no. 40/1992) to the clauses in the section on public decency in the penal code of 1940, now renamed Sexual Offences. The age of consent was now set at 14 - sexual intercourse between individuals of 14 and above was, in other words, legal as long as both parties consented. No distinction was now made between parties according to sex and all discrimination against homosexuals relating to the age of consent was therefore eliminated.

1996

The Althing passed a law recognising the registered partnership between individuals of the same sex (no. 87/1996). In the eyes of the law, registered partnership now had equal status with heterosexual marriage, with the exception that neither adoption nor in vitro fertilisation was permitted. Moreover, partnerships between same-sex couples could only be registered by a civil registrar, not by a minister of the Lutheran State Church of Iceland.

1996

The Althing passed amendments to clauses of the general penal code, relating to discrimination on grounds of nationality, colour, race, religion or sex, adding the words "on grounds of sexual orientation". This made it illegal to refuse people goods or services on account of their sexual orientation, or to attack a person or group of people publicly with mockery, defamation, abuse or threats because of their sexual orientation.

2000

The Althing passed an amendment permitting step-adoptions with the proviso that the partners have previously had joint custody of the children. However, the legal provision denying women in registered partnerships the right to in-vitro fertilisation is still in force; so too is the provision denying a couple in a registered partnership the right to adopt a child which is not related to either of them. In addition, the partnership between same-sex couples can only be registered in a civil ceremony, not in church.

2003

A resolution proposed that a committee should be set up to investigate and compare the legal status of gay and straight couples and make recommendations for reform of the law. Furthermore, proposed amendments to the law on registered partnership, regarding adoption and in vitro fertilisation were added. The Althing passed the resolution in March 2003.



SPIDER-MAN: FROM GROOVY TO POSTMODERN

When the city library reopened at Tryggvagata 15, they added a comics books section, a great relief to those of us who prefer their books with lots of pictures. Among them are quite a few Spider-Man comics.

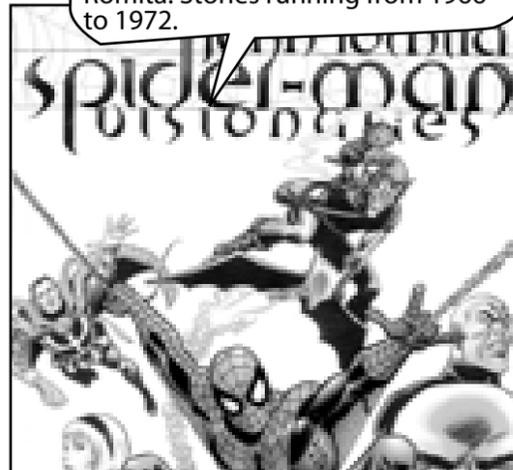
Here are some spanning different periods:

70s: The Death of Gwen Stacy. The final confrontation between Spider-Man and the Green Goblin, originally published from 1971-73.



Peter Parker shows up on campus sporting a Buffalo Bill jacket and chains around his neck, to which Mary Jane says: "I dig those chains." She's currently dating Harry Osbourne, who's struggling with LSD addiction (!). This was considered so risqué that the series was not approved by the Comics Code. In the climatic finale, the Goblin kills Spidey's girlfriend (she of the title), which leads our hero to pursue the villain for revenge, leading to his death in the manner seen in the first Spidey film. His enemy's death, however, does not give satisfaction, instead it leaves Spider-Man feeling "empty, washed out and maybe just a little bit more alone." Killing off a major character was groundbreaking in the 70s, before death entered comics in a big way.

60s: Spider-Man Visionaries: John Romita. Stories running from 1966 to 1972.



Spider-Man battles the Green Goblin as well as JJJ's son, the astronaut John Jameson. This also includes the storyline where Spidey quits and throws his costume in the garbage, only for it to wind up in JJJ's office. The most interesting stories, though, are at the end of the book. A campus riot, instigated by the Black Panthers, breaks out at Parkers' campus. Spider-Man sympathises with their cause but not their methods, and the protest is used by the Kingpin to cover up a break in. In the final story, Flash Thompson goes to Vietnam. There his platoon bombards a harmless temple, and he is followed home by angry Vietnamese looking for revenge.

80s: Kravens Last Hunt. Originally from 1987.



After Frank Miller made superheroes respectable adult reading with his Batman: The Dark Knight Returns series, comics took a turn for the bloody. Previously a minor villain, Kraven is here reworked as a psychopath, and the whole story is seen through his mind. Serial killer and cannibal Vermin also emerges from the sewers. Kraven eats spiders and the Vermin eats rats, and it all ends with Kraven's suicide. Six years before Kurt Cobain, Kraven shooting himself in the head with a rifle was criticised as giving bad ideas to the nation's youth, although it's doubtful he inspired many copycats. The book concludes with an essay on responsibility and mature themes in comic books.

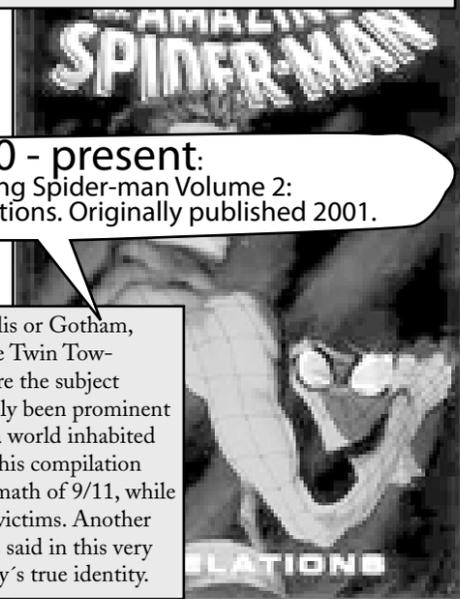
90s: Revenge of the Sinister Six. Originally from 1992.



Moving in the 90s, the Spider-Man comics are full of sound and fury but perhaps signifying nothing. Even before Tarantino, references to pop culture are everywhere. Newlyweds Peter and Mary Jane, who likes to parade around the apartment in very tight training suits, argue about music - she likes Guns n' Roses, he doesn't - and he tries to dissuade her from appearing naked in the new Arnold Schwarzenheimer film. There is a never-ending succession of villains and guest stars, including Doc Ock., Hobgoblin, Ghost Rider, The Hulk and the Fantastic Four. The foreword explains the story's moral, which consists of beating up bullies to get revenge. This is referred to as the "deep thinking" behind Spider-man. And oh so 90s.

Unlike the DC heroes, who live in imaginary cities like Metropolis or Gotham, most of the Marvel superheroes live in New York City. When the Twin Towers were attacked, the authors faced a dilemma. Would they ignore the subject altogether, even though the landmarks of New York had previously been prominent in the comics, or would they somehow deal with the subject? In a world inhabited by superheroes, how come they all failed to prevent the attack? This compilation shows the less than heroic heroes clearing the rubble in the aftermath of 9/11, while saluting the real heroes; the firemen who died trying to help the victims. Another story in the book shows Aunt May, of whom Master Megas once said in this very publication that he'd like to punch her face in, discovering Spidey's true identity.

2000 - present: Amazing Spider-man Volume 2: Revelations. Originally published 2001.



GRAPEVINE **IN** your pocket



by Bart Cameron

Singapore Sling is preparing to go on a brief North American tour to prepare audiences for their second album, "Life is Killing My Rock n' Roll." Henrik Björnsson, tall and slight with an I-got-beat-up-in-school-and-may-be-toting-a-gun-in-my-collector's-lunchbox vibe, waits patiently for the rest of the band in his practice studio at Klink og Bank...

...continued on pg. 22



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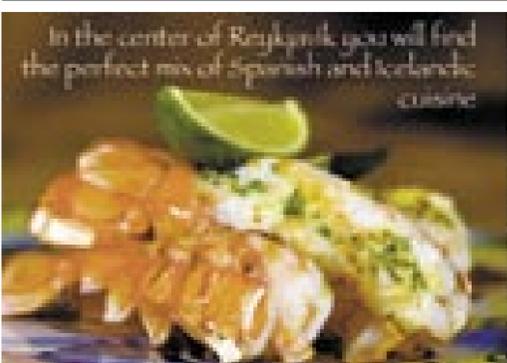
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GUIDE TO THE CITY CENTER

This pullout has all the information one might need, so for a safer journey, pull it out and put it in your pocket.

CAFE'S

1. Segafredo

By Lækjartorg
McDonalds has departed from the centre of Reykjavík and instead Italian chain Segafredo has arrived, which isn't a bad trade-off. You can smoke indoors, which gives you a nice continental feel, the staff is Italian and the prices are in Euros as well as krónur. Although Segafredo isn't one of the more expensive places, you wonder whether knowing how much things cost might ruin your vacation.

2. Ráðhúskaffi

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

3. Grái Kötturinn

Hverfisgata 16a
Grái Kötturinn is across the street from the National Theater and is 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, but somewhat pricey.

4. Café Roma

Laugavegur 118
Is the closest thing you'll find to a New York deli in town. A lively cross-section of artists, students and office workers enjoy home baked pannini and great coffee all at low prices.

5. Mokka

Skólavörðustígur 3a
An Icelandic tradition since 1958, Mokka is the oldest café in Reykjavík and the first one to make coffee with an espresso machine. The walls are covered with art for sale and, though seats are usually filled by loyal customers, every now and then you'll catch a glimpse of the owners, a really nice and friendly couple in their seventies who have owned the café since its inception.

6. Kaffivagninn

Grandagarður 10
By the harbor where fishermen and sailors along with bus drivers and aging tough guys gather for lunch and a cup of coffee. If you want to try out traditional Icelandic food, pancakes, or bread with smoked lamb, this is the right place to see another side of Reykjavík.

7. Café Paris

Austurstræti 14
Situated in the heart of the city with a view over Austurvöllur, spacious, popular and usually full in the afternoon, Café Paris is international like

the city it's named after. In the mornings it is more quiet and a hangout for philosophers and artists. Offers you light meals and the opportunity to sit outside when the weather is nice.

8. Tíu Dropar

Laugavegur 27
With the exception of Mokka, Tíu Dropar is the oldest café in downtown Reykjavík. 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.

9. Café Árnes

By the harbour
Once a ferry, Café Árnes has recently been turned into a coffeshop by day and seafood restaurant by night. The cardeck in the basement now functions as a bar. Situated by the harbour (obviously), have a traditional waffle with lots of jam and cream and watch the whale watchers come in.

10. Bleika Dúfan

Laugavegi 21
The name means the Pink Pigeon. A bookstore that specialises in books in English, so there are a lot of foreigners there as well as people who work in the surrounding area. A mostly veggie menu (apart from the ham and cheese sandwich) and internet.

BARS & BISTRO

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 in fact 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. Café 22

Laugavegur 22
Has recently undergone a major facelift. The top floor is now dedicated to artist Jón Sæmundur, aka Dead, whose Dead label can be seen on quite a few people these days. Downstairs is a decent bistro (try the Gringo), whereas the middle floor houses a dancefloor. Open until the wee small hours, and a great place for a late night drink for those who want drink along with a less trendy (and perhaps more cool) crowd. Be warned, though, they do charge 500 krónur entrance after midnight.

13. Kaffibarinn

Bergstaðastræti 1
Kaffibarinn is Cool Reykjavík, or at least tries to be. Reykjavík 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 ranging from the hopefuls to the world famous. Blur's Damon Albarn owns a share of the bar, probably figuring

it was cheaper than buying drinks. Director of the film 101 Reykjavík is the film.

14. Sirkus

Klapparstígur 30
"Welcome to the Jungle/ We go with tropical palm trees on the welcome to the party that never ending any time soon. Usually or want to be students of the Icelandic musicians and other members floor, for whatever reason, look

15. Nelly's

Dingholtstræti 2
The cheapest beer in Reykjavík, drinkers as well as expats. Trou covers though. In the weekend large dancefloor on the upper floor, for whatever reason, look

16. Vegamót

Vegamótastígur 4
Wants to be the in-spot to be seen up, flaunt it and enjoy the view there, and the fittest, or at least Kitchen open every day until 2 brunch. Try the lobster pizza.

17. Kaffibrennsla

Póstbússtæði 9
One of the largest selection of few bars in Reykjavík where you after midnight on weekends. C they are generous with the refil

18. Rósenberg

Lækjargötu 2
It has a history as both a dance reopened with a Jazz theme and to see up and coming Jazz bands Dixieland Dwarfs as well as m

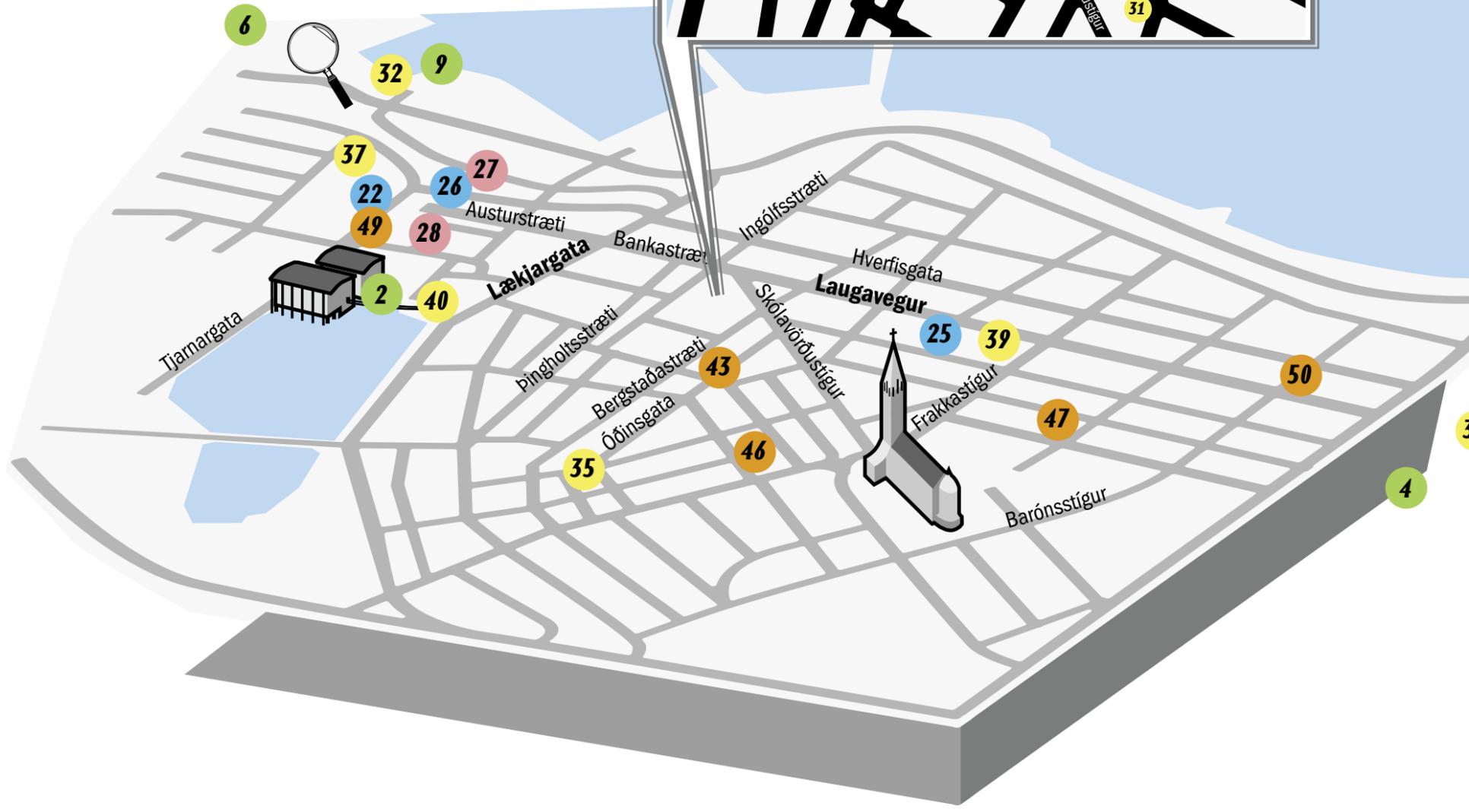
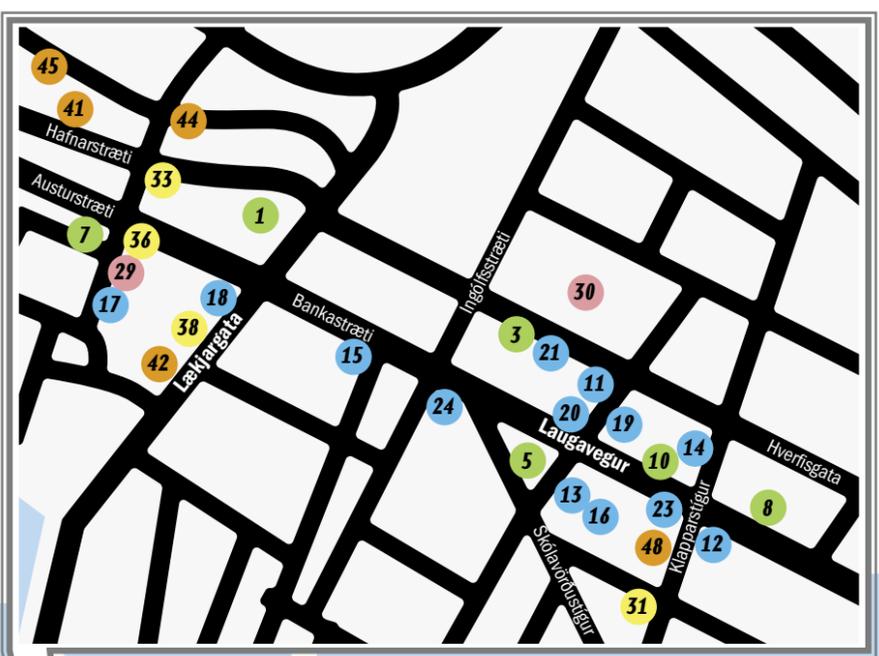
19. Grand Rokk

Smíðustígur 6
A place true to the spirit of Rock Better and lesser known Icelandic three bands a night, four nights or not is up to the bands, but it artists. Grab a beer and rock on chess players, challenging each



SPOT THIS
Saegreifinn
Verbúð 8
By the old harbor

A recently established fish store can now be found in one of the former fishermen's huts next to the old harbour. It's very close to previous Spot This nominee the Hamburger Joint. Good service can be found there along with various types of smoked fish, e.g. salmon, eel and ray-fish. The owner, who's usually also behind the counter, is a 64 year old former fisherman called Kjartan Jón and if he likes you, he just might offer you a shot of whiskey or Grand Mariner, but only after you buy something. Beware though, he doesn't take kindly to tips.




tveir fiskar
DISCOVER ICELANDIC
SEAFOOD
At the Reykjavik harbour



Gissur Gudmundsson
Owner of Tveir Fiskar
President of the Nordic and Icelandic Chefs Association
European Continental Director for World Association of Cooks Societies

"The most original"
New York Times




Einar Geirsson
Tveir Fiskar executive chef
"Chef of the Year 2003" at the Icelandic culinary competition
Team Captain for the Icelandic Culinary Team

tveir fiskar
At the Reykjavik harbour, Geirsgata 9, 101 Reykjavik
Tel. +354 511 3474
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books all the time. Another owner is the...
viki, and the bar figures prominently in

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

20. Bar 11

Laugavegur 11
The rock hangout, be it live music or the riff-heavy jukebox. Many of
Iceland's rock bands are regulars. Bands play and/or poetry is recited
most Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. A good place to come
down on Sundays, with a screening of cult films.

21. 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 its some-
thing 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 Ice-
landers. 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
as the regulars know their way around a dancefloor.

22. Jón Forseti

Aðalstræti 10
The oldest house in Reykjavík is now, you guessed it, a gay club. Named
after founding father and national hero Jón Sigurðsson, who lived there
for a while, it now has various events, including concerts, plays and a
gay cabaret, performed on a small stage that tries its best to look big
with curtains and everything. So how long until they change George
Washington's old place into a gay bar? You heard it here first.

23. Café List

Laugavegur 20a
"List" means "art", the art mostly consisting of jazz bands that play
there frequently. Looks perhaps more like a hotel bar than a seedy jazz
club, but the prices of beer has gone down, so they deserve our support.

24. Prikið

Bankastræti 12
Used to be a traditional coffee house which has been around longer
than any but, after a change of clientele, they now cater to a younger
crowd. A diner during the day and a nightclub on weekends. You can
also borrow games there, such as backgammon or chess.

25. Dillon

Laugavegur 30
A nice place to sit and chat, good folk themed music and no dance floor
to worry about. Has interesting horse themed décor, and the balcony is
open on the weekends. Finds a nice medium somewhere between the hipsters and the drunks.

26. Dubliner

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 best place to go.

CLUBS

27. Gaukur á Stöng

Tryggvagata 22
Iceland's oldest club is turning 20 this fall. During the day it's a pool
pub and on weekday evenings there are live rock concerts by more
mainstream bands. On weekends there is usually a lot of action with
cover bands playing everything from Britney to the Beatles. Without
exception you'll be charged at least 1000kr for entrance in the evenings.
Crowd: 20+

28. Nasa

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

29. Mojito bar

Austurstræti 16
Situating on the 5th floor, and is only accessible by elevator. A place
where you can run into MP's and business tycoons living it up. That
might be some indication of the price range. The candleholders, for
some inexplicable reason, are Turkish hashpipes. It's only open Fridays
and Saturdays between 11 and 3.

30. Leikhúskjallarinn

Hverfisgata 19
Recently opened again and is gaining respect, it's a Restaurant during
the day but a dance place during night (weekends of course). The crowd
here is usually little more mature than in the other clubs. Talented DJs
play with the drunken crowd.
Crowd: 25+

RESTAURANTS

31. Pasta Basta

Klapparstíg 38
An affordable Italian place. The pasta is has generous portions and the
salad with grilled chicken is a good light option. The garden is nice,
with a glass ceiling protecting punters from the wind and the rain. It
has paper covering the tables, and guests are supplied with crayons so
they can decorate their surroundings as they wait for the meal.

32. Tveir Fiskar

Geirsgötu 9
Seafood restaurant, although they also do land-based animals. At
lunchtime you can have a three course meal for 2300, which isn't too
bad, all things considered. The chef has been awarded the Medal of the
Order of the White Rose by the President of Finland.

33. Hornið

Hafnarstræti 15
Means "the corner" and the place lives up to its name. This is actually
the oldest Italian restaurant in town, celebrating its 25th year, which
says something about the scene here before then. Excellent quality
pizza, pasta and salads and yet remaining one of the more affordable
ones. Try the calzone.

34. Vox

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

35. 3 Frakkar

Baldursgata 14
This is a restaurant that cannot be ignored. A very small place with
an atmosphere. Here you may enjoy the house specialties of Icelandic
traditional dishes prepared in the good, old-fashioned manner, includ-
ing catfish, shark, and whale steaks. And of course much more. If you're
lucky, Chef Úlfar Eysteinnsson, the owner, may be present regaling the
clientele with wild whaling tales. Don't forget to ask Chef Úlfar for
dark Icelandic pumpernickel bread with pure Icelandic butter, and don't
forget to make a reservation!

36. Apotek

Austurstræti 16
Formerly the central drugstore of Reykjavík, established in the late
1800s, the Apotek is now a modern restaurant with an Art Deco
interior. You can still see the names of the chief managing pharmacists/
owners on the wall of the bar. Today, this "drugstore" serves a different
type of milkshake. Now look for a sizzling visual kitchen (behind a
glass wall) with a Super Menu! Apotek is an eating experience not to
be missed.

37. Tapas

Vesturgata 3b
For those with a bit of money and time on their hands, the evening is
well spent at Tapas, where you can vile away the evening having course
after course of wonderful miniature dishes served. Recommended is
the garlic fried lobster and lamb in apricot sauce. If you don't feel like
getting up right away afterwards, there's also a lounge to lounge in, and
the paintings there are worth a look.

38. Jómfrúin

Lækjargata 4
In this global age, it can be hard to find good smörrebröd even in
Copenhagen. Never fear: out here in the colonies you can still find first
rate smörrebröd at Jómfrúin. They even import their own eel directly
from Denmark to make one of Scandinavia's delicacies.

39. Rossopomodoro

Laugavegur 40a
This is a new chain of eateries trying to move away from the American
image of pizza joints. Originally a local Napoli venture, now a string of
modestly cool restaurants striving to make it in Northern Europe. Ice-
land is one of the first places for Rossopomodoro outside Italy. A clever
beginning in a country absolutely free from Neopolitan traditions. A
modest wine list with good prices

40. Tjarnarbakkinn

Vonarstræti 3
Above the lðnó theatre, so it's a good place to go before shows, or dur-
ing 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.

FAST FOOD

41. Nonnabíti

Hafnarstræti 11
The owner is a miser who charges additionally for everything, but
this is almost certainly the best junk food in the Greater Reykjavík
area. The subs are great, none of that Subway commitment to healthy
living, and they probably contribute significantly to the ever-increasing
"size" of the nation. They also serve burgers and sandwiches, and have
lunchtime offers.

42. 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.

43. Bernhöftsbakari

Bergstaðastæti 13
A bakery with traditions going back some 150 years, although it has
changed locations. Apart from a supermarket, a bakery is still the best
way to fill your belly. Try the staple of Icelandic childhood and beyond:
a snúður roll with chocolate milk.

44. Baejarins bestu

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

45. Pizza 67

Tryggvagata 26
The local pizza chain that's trying to take on the world, and who
currently operate a place in the Faeroes and China, as well as all over
Iceland. The have a Summer of Love theme, which doesn't really
extend beyond the names of the pizzas, a few slogans and a few posters,
but the pizzas are nice. They also do deliveries. They have a lunchtime
buffet for 990, for those in search of quantity for the króna.

46. Eldsmiðjan

Bragagata 38a
Oven-baked pizzas simply don't get much better than this. It is slightly
more expensive than other pizzerias, but well worth it. A wide selection
of toppings, including that sorely missed pizza delight, snails. You can
also turn the chef loose and let him decide what goes on it - you'll
rarely be disappointed. Take away, order delivery, or eat in at the cosy
restaurant upstairs. The paintings are worth a peek as well.

47. Vitabar

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 and refreshing here.

48. First Vegetarian (Á naestu 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.

49. Pizza Pronto

Vallarstræti 4
Conveniently located by Ingólfrstorg, and serves slices until late at night.
A good place to have a snack in between bars, particularly if you don't
want a whole Hlíðli. They also have a menu (in 9 languages, no less) of
three sizes of pizzas with a good selection of toppings. Nice, but seems
a bit pricey for the surroundings.

50. Reykjavík Bagel Company

Laugavegur 81
Situating a bit from the immediate centre but close to Hlemmur bus-
stop. Bagels, wraps and coffee that might make you feel better in the
morning than the more hardcore fast foods farther down the street.

USEFUL PHONE NUMBERS

Useful for emergencies

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Emergency Ward, City Hospital 24hrs. 525-1000
Doctor: 1770
Dentist: 575-0505
Directory information 118
Pharmacies find your closest or call 118

Internet Café's

Ráðhúskaffi, City Hall, 101 Rvk. 563-2169
BSI, Vatnsmyrarvegur 10, 101 Rvk. 591-1000
Netkaffi, Kringlan mall, 103 Rvk. 533-2424
Reykjavík Travel Service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk. 511-2442
Ground Zero, Vallarstræti 4, 101 Rvk. 562-7776

Useful Websites

www.icetourist.is
www.visitreykjavik.is
www.grapevine.is

Car rentals

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

Other useful numbers

City bus info, 551-2700
BSÍ bus info, 591-1000

Post offices

Central Post office, Pósthússtræti 5, 101 Rvk. 580-1000.
Post offices are easily found around Iceland

Laundry Services

Emla laundry, Barónsstígur 3, 101 Rvk. 552-4799
A Smith laundry, Bergstaðastræti 52, 101 Rvk. 551-7140

Taxi services

Hreyfill-Bæjarleiðir 588-5522
Borgarbílastöðin 552-2440
BSR 561-0000

Rent a bike

Borgarhjól, Hverfisgata 50, 101 Rvk. 551-5653
Reykjavík travel service, Lækjargata 2, 101 Rvk. 511-2442
Reykjavík Youth Hostel, Sundlaugavegur 34, 105. Rvk. 533-8110

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THEY DON'T GIVE CHANGE

Reykjavík has no trams, trains or subways, only buses. These yellow things can take you pretty
much anywhere in Reykjavík'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 the 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 cannot 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 Reykjavík are Hlemmur and
Lækjartorg, where you'll be able to get all the information you need.



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ASÍ. Art Museum, Freyjugata 41, 511-5353
 Árbæjarsafn Folk Museum, Kistuhylur 4, p: 557-1111
 Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum, Sigtún, p: 553-2155
 Culture House, Hverfisgata 15, p: 545-1400
 Einar Jónsson, Sculpture museum, Einarsgata, p: 551-3797
 Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery, Hamraborg 4, p:551-3797
 Hafnarborg Art Gallery, Srandgata 34 Hafnarfj, 555-0080
 Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art museum, Tryggvagata 17, p: 590-1200
 Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Hlemmur 5, p:590-0500
 Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum, Flókagata, p: 517-1290
 Museum of Medical History, Neströð 170, p: 561-1016
 National Gallery of Iceland, Frikirkjuvegur 7, p: 515-9600
 Nordic House, Sturlugata 5, p: 551-7030
 Reykjavík City Library, Tryggvagata 15, p: 563-1750
 Reykjavík Elestrivítvity Museum, Rafstöðvarvegur, p: 567-9009
 Reykjavík Museum of Photography, Tryggvagata 15, p: 563-1790
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 Saga Museum, Perlan Öskjuhlíð, p: 511-1517
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 Gallery Kling og Bang, Laugavegi 23, p: 822-0402
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 Gallery Skuggi, Hverfistaga 39, p: 511-1139
 Gallery Tukt, Pósthússtræti 3-5, p: 520-4600
 Handverk og Hönnun, Aðalstræti 12, p: 551-7595
 Safn, Laugavegur 37, p: 561-8777
 The Icelandic Printmakers Association, Tryggvagata 17, p: 588-7576

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Hallgrímskirkja church, Skólavörðuholti, p: 510-1000
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 3 Frakkar, Baldurgsgata 14, p: 552-3939
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 Hressingarskálinn, Austurstræti 20, p: 561-2240
 Hverfisbar, Hverfisgata 20, p: 511-6700
 Jón Forseti, Aðalstræti 10, p: 551-0962
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 Kaffibrennslan, Pósthússtræti 9, p: 561-3600
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The room is stripped down. On the walls, one poster of a centerfold with an unusually well-groomed pubic region, one poster for Bonnie "Prince" Billie, two for Slowblow, and a picture of a bemused Ringo Star with a pipe in his mouth. Otherwise, the band's practice room contains only amps, all left on, and two drum sets. No glasses or cans or bottles or wrappers. "I read about us in the Grapevine," Henrik tells me. "Yeah, I wrote that. Do you remember talking to me? You almost threw up on me." Henrik raises his hollow-body Epiphone and shows me the pick guard and controls. "You see this. All this blood. That's from that night." It's a surprising amount of blood.

With the broken glass and other drunken antics, I hadn't been paying attention to Henrik's fingers the last time he played. A pounding monotonous drum beat comes through the ceiling. Somebody is doing track recording upstairs. Just drums, all day. "Anything else about the Skunks?" "We have no musical ambition whatsoever in the Skunks... It's just an event. Not that I wanted people throwing beer bottles at my face. But it felt honest."

The band files in. Toggi, or "Tank" as he tells me, the bassist; Helgi, on guitar; Einar, on guitar; Bjarni, or Bjarni Bummer, on drums, and Siggy, who plays maracas and tambourine. When they see me interviewing Henrik, they laugh among themselves. In front of them, I say that I'm confused by the Sling website: it says Henrik writes all the songs. Isn't it more of a collaborative effort?, I ask. Henrik: I write the music, we play the songs. (No objections whatsoever from the band.) (I begin to ask him about the layering on this new album, when an electric guitar starts blaring. There isn't a complicated PA System in the room, so one guitar amp can drown out everything. Henrik and I flee.) Grapevine: You always practice that loud? Henrik: Only Helgi. GV: You've talk about atmosphere with this band. What atmosphere, exactly, are you trying to create with Singapore Sling? Henrik: Dark and dirty. GV: Like wallowing? Henrik: Dark isn't necessarily unhappy. A lot of dark stuff can make you feel... good, about being a piece of shit. And that's what rock n' roll is all about. GV: I wonder about this album. About all the layers. Do you worry you're over-producing? Henrik: Not at all. Layering just makes it more interesting... I mean, when you play live, you can be more raw, but we had to use whatever was necessary to get the experience on tape. I use whatever it takes.

(The conversation turns to an extended discussion of guitars and recording techniques. Pro tools and 4-track come up often. Einar apparently has a very nice guitar. We reenter the practice room, despite the discomfort of Helgi's guitar.) GV: Do you always read a book during practice? Siggi: (Reading a Lawrence Block crime novel.) I read, grab glasses, throw out garbage and shake a bit. GV: Oh, Siggi Shaker. I read about you in the New York Post. Siggi: (Laughing) Yeah, they gave a paragraph to the band, and then a whole paragraph on me. The secret weapon. I'd like to see this woman. (Siggy returns to reading his book. Helgi plays riffs on the guitar.) GV: (To Toggi and Helgi) Is there anything you feel people assume incorrectly about the Sling?

Toggi: That we're actually nice guys. That we're healthy. GV: People assume you're healthy? Toggi: That's an assumption people don't often make. GV: Well my Skunks review wouldn't help. Toggi: No. 'I need my drugs.' Are you sure your translator was reliable?

It all feels like a put on. Six lonely people in a stark practice studio with drums beating overhead. They play a few songs from the new album. Henrik had told me there weren't many surprises in recording, that he got exactly the atmosphere he wanted. But I am surprised at how the new work explores "dark and dirty." What might strike most listeners are the echoes of surf rock in Helgi's guitar work. When combined with the almost 50s style phrasing that Henrik is now employing, the Sling's new music sounds like Brian Wilson played a jam session with Billy Corgan and Chris Isaac. Not a horrible mix. If sad rock n' roll is nothing new, the texture of this band's new work is refreshing in the way it combines music that always should have been combined.

The band takes a break from practice, and I finally get a chance to talk with Bjarni Bummer, the "one guy who nags all the time," according to Henrik. If the rest of the band seems lost in a malaise, maybe he can hit me with something genuinely depressed. "I got that nickname a long time ago," Bjarni tells me. "I guess I may not be laughing all the time." "So what are you sad about?" "I'm not. I've got two beautiful kids and my life is happy," he says, delivering an unrehearsed smile. Then some of the Bummer comes out: "It's really important to be cool," he says, laughing.

Singapore Sling's album "Life is Killing My Rock n Roll" will be released this September. They are currently touring in America. They will play in Iceland in August, then return to the US for a two month tour.

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MOVIES AND THEATRE



The Empire Strikes Back. Superman 2. Aliens. Whereas most sequels are just a reworking of the original idea with more money thrown at it, there are the occasional ones that actually manage to surpass the prototype. The aforementioned three are examples. Spider-Man 2 just manages to make it onto that illustrious list.

Where the first Spider-Man works best is when Peter Parker is discovering his powers. Somehow, it manages to capture the thrill of being an ordinary teenager who can suddenly beat up bullies and swing from skyscrapers better than he has any right to. Where the first film goes wrong is when the plot kicks in. Willem Dafoe can do menacing like few others, but the giggling Green Goblin in full regalia looks like someone you'd rather laugh at as he tries to take over the world. And the action scenes are closer to the spirit of Charlie's Angels than the comic books.

This time, they get the villain right. The usually affable Alfred Molina makes a mean Dr. Octopus, if a somewhat more sympathetic one than his comic book counterpart. Again, insanity is the reason for the evil one's actions. His debates with his mechanical arms verge on the ridiculous, but in the context you go can along with anything and just enjoy it.

The insanity of both Norman Osbourne and Otto Octavius continue a familiar theme in popular culture: beware the eggheads. Anyone who thinks too much is bound to be plotting something sinister and the hero is a muscleman who punches his way into the villain's meticulously constructed lair and saves the day. Superman's brawn vs. Luthor's brains, The Hulk's gamma-enhanced muscles vs. the Leader's (to be played by Geoffrey Rush in the 2nd Hulk

film) gamma-enhanced intellect. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why a lot of people seem to have more faith in a Bush than a Gore. Anyone who knows too much is not to be trusted.

But Spider-Man is no brainless hunk of muscle. He seems more like the top student taking on the professors, which in this film he more or less literally does.

Unlike most fairy tales, which tell us that if we do the right thing we will eventually be rewarded, the Spiderman stories have always taken a different and perhaps more realistic approach. Spiderman is constantly being punished for doing the right thing. In fact, the more good he does, the more people seem to hate him. Perhaps you want children to believe that doing the right thing will lead to a reward. But the challenge, as presented to Spiderman, is knowing you'll be punished for doing the right thing but doing it anyway. That's where the question of great responsibility kicks in.

Although the action sequences are better judged than in the first Spider-Man, for a superhero film they're actually few and far between. Perhaps one of the film's flaws is that the engaging Molina seems underused. Instead, we get to witness that rarest of things in a sequel: character development. Spiderman even deals with his own version of impotence, finding he can no longer crawl walls when he starts doubting himself.

His romantic and financial problems take centre stage, interspersed with the odd battle with a supervillain. Spiderman always was a soap opera for boys. Perhaps we boys aren't as averse to matters of the heart as previously thought. We just need the odd explosion to keep our attention.

MOVIES : LISTINGS : july 23 - august 5

Screenings start roughly every two hours, at 18, 20 and 22. However, with films getting ever longer starting times may vary. There are usually ads and trailers for roughly 15 minutes from announced starting time. Almost all films have a short interval in the middle.



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

PREMIERS:
23. july I Robot

Still running:
Spiderman 2
Eternal Sunshine
Day After Tomorrow
Walking Tall



Laugarás
Phone: 553-2075
www.laugarasbio.is

PREMIERS:
23. july I Robot
30. july Shaun of the Dead

Still running:
Shrek 2
Spiderman 2
Godsend



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

PREMIERS:
none

Still running:
King Arthur
Shrek 2
Raising Helen
Harry Potter 3



Smáralind
Phone: 564-0000
www.smarabio.is

PREMIERS:
23. july I Robot

Still running:
Spiderman 2
My Baby's Daddy



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

PREMIERS:
none

Still running:
King Arthur
Raising Helen
The Chronicles of Riddick
Around The World in 80 Days
Mean Girls
Harry Potter 3



Hagatorg
Phone: 530-1919
www.haskolabio.is

PREMIERS:
23. july King Arthur

Still running:
Shrek 2, Troy, The Chronicles of Riddick, Around the World in 80 Days, Devine Intervention The Ladykillers, Harry Potter and the Prisoner Azkaban Mors Elling (Elling 2)

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It was probably obvious to everyone that I wasn't going to buy any clothing. At first I thought I was in the wrong place, but I quietly made my way down to the small basement, feeling like I was sneaking through where I wasn't supposed to be, and discovered the gallery. The salespeople in their super-cute clothes didn't really bother to look into this room, and I felt safe for a moment.

The exhibition space is simple and serene. Its discrete ambiance makes it feel like a peculiar haven, distinctly sans-fashion. But there's no getting around it: it's weird for me, Joe Art-Enthusiast, to walk through a zone of thousand-dollar suits to get there.

I wanted to talk with someone about the gallery and there was a door open at one end of the room. Through it I could see more paintings and photographs. But as I peeked in, a woman stood up and closed the door. I asked her if there was someone I could ask about the gallery. She handed me a pamphlet about the artists, and wordlessly walked away.

I get it, I thought. This is not just a gallery. It's an experience that embodies the inaccessibility of contemporary art! Art in a posh clothing shop that feels exclusive and unavailable... a gallery only for those who can afford it. Yes, just like much of contemporary art itself which can sometimes feel foreign, perplexing and inexplicable. Or perhaps it was

just that I don't speak Icelandic.

I tried to keep this analysis buried as I spoke with the man himself, Sævar Karl, who was kind and friendly, not to mention dapper (who'd have thought?). I tried to subtly suggest that the upmarket shop might make some gallery-goers apprehensive, and they might even be too apprehensive to ask one of the debonair salespeople where the gallery is. "Well, if you never ask questions, you will get nothing," Sævar says, smiling. I guess there's no arguing with that.

It is clear that he is a sincere art devotee as he shows me the various paintings and sculptures throughout the shop. There are pieces by just about every well-known Icelandic artist, fit into every vacant space, probably quadrupling what would fit into the actually gallery space. Even the downstairs offices are packed with photographs, sculptures and paintings by Icelandic artists.

The big picture started to become clear. Sustaining a gallery requires quite a financial commitment; Sævar



has employed someone full-time to run the gallery, for starters. And galleries that don't have such stable backing often fail. In fact, since the gallery opened in 1989, Sævar has seen most galleries come and go, but his has been an unwavering presence. And because of his commitment

and stability, the shop and associated gallery play a considerable role in the propagation of Icelandic art and is a serious asset to local artists.

As much as I mistrust the idea of a gallery hidden in the no-man's-land of a shop that sells Prada, it really is a seamless marriage. Artists

are in constant need of funding, and this shop has a stately purpose in subsidizing their efforts. Although the shop itself is meant for only a few, the gallery is all-embracing. If you don't mind forging through the aristocratic attire.

A House of Culture

by Eydís Björnsdóttir

Parked right in the heart of Reykjavík is a house with the motto of being "at the heart of a nation". This majestic building is none other than the Culture House, situated at Hverfisgata 15.

It is sometimes claimed that globalization is the biggest enemy of culture. If such were the case, I think it only fair to point out that if we had stubbornly denied all foreign influence in order to maintain our precious culture, we would still be living in grass houses, struggling to survive. Still, we should of course be grateful to museums such as the Culture House for preserving our cultural heritage and reminding us what it consists of and how it evolved.

At the moment there are four exhibitions on display. On the top floor is an overview of how the National Museum used to be, of its history and role in the nation's fight for independence and search for a self image. Chests carved in wood, spoons, chairs, and a priest's robe are among the items on display, along with pictures of how they were arranged when they were on display at the National Museum. On the floor below are two exhibitions. The many faces of the Poetic Edda are on display in the library room, both the various illustrations of artists and various publications of the Edda in many different languages. The other exhibition goes by the title of Home Rule 1904 and is held in celebration of the centenary of Home Rule in Iceland. It touches upon many subjects regarding the nation from roughly 1870 to 1918, to give a more comprehensive insight into the



period of home rule and life at that time.

On the ground floor they've got medieval manuscripts, Eddas and Sagas. A tour guide enriches the experience of walking through the exhibition by giving an insightful lecture on the history behind the items on display, every Friday at 15:30. She can even be persuaded to read aloud a part of the vellum scripts on display, thus proving that we can indeed understand the ancient scribbling of our ancestors. The gem of the exhibition must surely be the Elder Edda, a small yet meaningful book, containing the cosmology of Northern beliefs. Without this book it would have been impossible for archaeologists to make sense of many of their findings. The exhibition also goes into the whole process behind the making of vellum scripts, and of course also into the storytelling that gave life to the stories in the first place.

The Culture House is an enchanting place with much to offer, whether you are a boring academic or simply a curious passer-by.

PICKS ARTS and CULTURE

Klink og Bank

TEMPORARY MADNESS

This is a good way to see the work of many young Icelandic artists in a very different exhibition space. After you spend some time in the big open rooms, you can slink around the work spaces throughout the building. Eventually this building will be torn down by the bank who currently owns it, so it feels kind of like a ghost building, with all its temporary creations.

Handverk og hönnun

TO PURCHASE OR TO PERUSE

The gallery defies classification, although it could be described as somewhere between a very nice shop where items are displayed on pedestals and a craft museum. There are some really exceptional and sometimes unconventional pieces along side the more lackluster ones like shawls and pink dresses.

Árbæjarsafn

NOT JUST PRETTY COSTUMES

The outdoor museum features houses that represent various periods in Iceland's history. Visitors wander between the houses and look into them, and speak with the "inhabitants" of the houses. They wear traditional Icelandic costumes but the (mostly) girls wearing them are usually very knowledgeable and have to speak at least two or three languages in order to work there. So, as one ex-worker told me, they are not silly models showing off the sexy wool outfits of times passed.

Saga museum

SILICON HISTORY

If real people don't suit you as much as, say, silicon figures, head up to Perlan (or "The Pearl", the shining grey dome on a hill). The museum "intimately recreates key moments in Icelandic history, moments that determined the fate of our people and which give a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived and thought for more than a millennium." See, even the website sounds like a saga.

Gallery i8

THEY KEEP THE SHADES UP FOR YOU

The general consensus has not yet been reached on this gallery, but for now it comes tentatively recommended. It currently features works by Jeanine Cohen of Brussels. If worse comes to worse, you can do a drive by and see pretty much everything. The gallery's opening hours are a bit obscure, but usually they leave the shades up and you can get the gist.

Einar Jónsson Museum

PERMANENT SHOW

This permanent show of the country's groundbreaking sculptor whose influence on all visual arts has been considerable. A comprehensive exhibition in a fine building.

Live Music

Live People

de PALACE

Hafnarstræti 18, 101 Reykjavík, sími 5115005

In the footsteps of fictional characters

by Eydís Björnsdóttir

I leaned against the firm wall of the City Library. I was early. Not a soul in sight. Did I get the address wrong? I grabbed hold of my mobile to ensure I was at the right place. Yep, right place. An elderly man approached the building. Waiting for the same tour, I wondered? Or maybe it was the tour guide? He walked passed me. Finally, the tour guide arrived and we followed the brilliant blue outfit which served as our beacon of light on our voyage through Reykjavík's streets and corners.

The City Library organises guided walking tours around Reykjavík centre, where scenes of great Icelandic literature are visited. There is a guide who delicately blends the world of fiction with history, while an actor reads excerpts from selected books and brings them to life at the very places they are set in. At noteworthy places, we would stop to listen to her learned lectures on buildings of

importance to the city's history.

The first building we came upon is the oldest house in Reykjavík, which happens to be right next to where the first settler of Iceland lived. Workers attempted to drown out the voice of our tour guide with their vehement sawing but we outsmarted them by relocating. We also saw the government building, where our actor read about its fictional inmates. Yes, it

used to be a prison. Then we saw the lake, where the ducks tried to drown out the voice of the actor, but his deep bellowing overpowered their measly squeaks. Another building we came upon was the first elementary school in Reykjavík. A car roamed the parking lot, but gave way to our insistent method of simply standing there. Our tour guide then bravely confronted a car when we stood outside a local bar, Kaffibarinn, and gracefully manoeuvred it to drive on the further side of the street while we listened to more knowledge. The tour then ended in the middle of a crowded book store as we listened to the last book excerpt. It was refreshing to see how the whole tour gained a certain charm from all its distractions instead of losing ground to it. Not only will visitors benefit from this walk, but more locals also should sign up to see what Reykjavík was like before the time of mobile phones. Either way, it's definitely



not necessary to have read any of the local subject matter to be able to enjoy the walk, and you'll certainly

have a fine introduction to the greatest works of Icelandic literature.



ARTS and CULTURE LISTINGS : july 23 - august 5

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

ONGOING

ASÍ museum
Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
Exhibition by the artist Hafstein Austmann, the name of the show is Colours of the water

Gallery Sævar Karl
Mon-Fri 10:00-17:00

Exhibition by Sigríður Bachman
Gallery of the Icelandic printmakers association

Tue-Sun 14:00-18:00
Exhibition by Ólafur Þórðarson

Culture House
11:00-17:00 every day

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

Gerðarsafn, Kópavogur Art Gallery
Tue-Sun 11:00-17:00

RECENT ACQUISITIONS:
Works by Icelandic artists having exhibited at the museum in recent years. The summer exhibition features a broad spectrum of paintings, drawings, photographs, sculptures and textiles owned by the museum.

Nordic House
Mon-Fri 8:00-17:00, Sat&Sun 12:00-17:00

7-A View from the North: Travelling exhibition - 7 artists from the Nordic Countries. The artists in this group have exhibited extensively and received awards and recognition for their work on an international level. Admission: Icel. kr. 300.-

Kling og Bang Gallery
Thu-Sun 14:00-18:00

Exhibition by world famous american artists Paul McCarthy and Jason Rhoades

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum
Tue-Fri 10:00-17:00, Sat&Sun 10:00-18:00

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum is Reykjavík City's folk museum and the largest open air museum in Iceland. It is composed of around 30 buildings from different periods, most of which have been moved from downtown Reykjavík.

Austurvöllur out door exhibition
Icelanders: Photography Exhibition in Austurvöllur. A Meeting with the Icelanders over a period of two years, photographer Sigurgeir Sigurjónsson and author Unnur Jökulsdóttir travelled the length and breadth of Iceland and visited people from all over the country.

101 Gallery
Exhibition by various artists

Gallery 18
Thu&Fri 11:00-18:00

Exhibition by Jeanine Cohen. Cohen has never been to Iceland, however. Her work is the result of a more general kind of intense observation.

National Gallery of Iceland
11:00-17:00 every day

This year's summer exhibition will address the theme Environment and nature in Icelandic 20th-century art.

Handverk og Hönnun
Mon-Fri 09:00-16:00

Summer Exhibition of contemporary and traditional Icelandic art and crafts.

Pearl
10:00-21:30 every day

The sculptor Teddi displays his artwork of wood and metal at the Pearl in July. Ends July 31

Hafnarborg Art Gallery
Wed-Sun 11:00-17:00

Waiting: Sculptures donated to the museum by the artist Einar Már Guðvarðarson.

Contemporary Japanese art: An exhibition of contemporary Japanese art made by 40 artists. The works include paintings, sculpture and installations. Ends August 2

Iðnó - Theatre

Summer Season of Light nights July 5th - August 27th. Every Monday and Friday at 8.30 p.m. (duration 2 hours). Light Nights is presented in English.

Volcano show: Red rock cinema
11:00-22:00 every day

If you don't want to wait for the next volcanic eruption, then just go watch a video of the last, it's less dangerous and much more reliable than nature.

Admission 750ISK

Gallery Kolbrún S. Kjarval
Uniquely designed, hand-made ceramics

Ásmundarsafn, Sculpture museum
10:00-16:00 every day

The Man and Material. A retrospective exhibition of works by Ásmundur Sveinsson.

Telecommunications Museum
Tue,Thu&Sun 11:00-17:00

Pictures and items related to the history of telecommunications.

Reykjavík Zoo and Family Park
10:00-18:00 every day

Icelandic horse and sheep, along with local varieties other animals in the zoo. Right beside it is the Park, which has various activities for the whole family.

Reykjavík Botanical Garden
10:00-22:00 every day

All kinds of plants and flowers on display.

Kjarvalsstaðir Art Museum
10:00-17:00 every day

Roni Horn: Her, her, her and her: Photographs taken in the Reykjavík Swimming Hall. Francesco Clemente: New Works. Works from the Kjarval Collection. An overview of Kjarval's work which shows how he developed as an artist.

Einar Jónsson Sculpture Museum
Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00

Works of Einar Jónsson, Iceland's first sculptor.

Hafnarhúsið, Reykjavík Art Museum
10:00-17:00 every day

I Didn't Do It. Private exhibition of Thorvaldur Thorsteinsson - the museum's summer exhibition. And part of the Erró Collection on show.

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum
Tue-Sun 14:00-17:00

Sigurjón Ólafsson's Works in public Space: Poster exhibition and sculptures related to Ólafsson's monuments and public sculptures.

Reykjavík Museum of Photography
Mon-Fri 12:00-19:00, Sat&Sun 13:00-17:00.

A collection of Finnish contemporary photographs.

Museum of Medical History
Sun, Tue, Thu, Sat 13:00-17:00

Artefacts, tools, instruments and pictures on the

subject.

Numismatic Collection of the Central Bank
Mon-Fri 9:00-17:00, Closed 12:00-13:00.

Icelandic coins and banknotes.

Icelandic Institute of Natural History
Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun 13:00-17:00

Geological, botanical and zoological exhibits, displaying the nature of Iceland.

Saga Museum
10:00-16:00 every day.

The Saga museum intimately recreates key moments in Icelandic history and gives a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived and thought for more than a millennium through the use of life size likenesses

Reykjavík Electricity Museum
Tue-Sun 13:00-17:00

A historical survey of the uses of electricity in the city of Reykjavík, from the time of the first hydroelectric station at Elliðaár, in operation from 1921 onwards. Ends August 1

Reykjavík City Library
Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00

Books and periodicals in Icelandic as well as English, Scandinavian and other languages. Also has a childrens and a comic book section.

Hafnarborg Art Gallery
Wed-Sun 11:00-17:00

Contemporary Japanese art. The works include paintings, sculpture and installations by 40 artists. Ends August 2

Gallery Fold
Mon-Fri 10:00-18:00 Sat 11:00-17:00 Sun 14:00-17:00

One of the largest Galleries in Iceland, works by many know artists.

Gallery Hnoss
Mon-Fri 12:00-18:00 Sat 11:00-16:00

Auður Eysteinsdóttir works with aquarelle, pastels and stained glass. Hildur Margrétardóttir works with oil on canvas and aquarelle.

Gallery Meistarar Jakob
Mon-Fri 11:00-18:00, Sat 11:00-14:00

The gallery is run by eleven artists who work in ceramics, textiles, printmaking and paintings and you will always find one of them at the gallery.

Gallery Tukt
Mon-Thu 13:00-18:00, Fri 13:00 - 17:00

Various artists.

Safn
Wed-Fri 14:00-18:00. Sat&Sun 14:00-17:00

The works were the artists' most current works at the time of the museums purchase. The artists in Safn include: Donald Judd, On Kawara, Karin Sandner, Lawrence Weiner, Dan Flavin, and Dieter Roth.

Art Studio Gallery

Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00

Ceramic by Svetlana Matsuda and oilpaintings by Helgi Hálfánarson

SATURDAY

JULY 24

Sirkus

Sirkus Flea Market, see picks for details

Hallgrímskirkja Church

Lunch Time Concert - By Gary Verkade playing on a organ

Austurbær

The musical Hair: Is known world over for its catchy music and hippie ambience. Some of Iceland's most popular entertainers are involved in the show.

SUNDAY

JULY 25

Klink og bank artist workplace

Pancakes concert in Russia

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Haymaking: learn to wield a scythe and rake.

Viðey Island

Family Day on Viðey: Commencing at 13:30 with a cruise aboard the Árnes from Miðbakkí dock at Reykjavík Harbour. Cruise to Viðey, guided by Örylgur Hálfánarson.

Hallgrímskirkja Church

Evening Concerts Sundays - By Gary Verkade playing on a organ

Austurbær

The musical Hair: Is known world over for its catchy music and hippie ambience. Some of Iceland's most popular entertainers are involved in the show.

TUESDAY

JULY 27

Viðey Island

Guided walk around Viðey: The focus on the history of Viðey and especially the western island. Guided with the Rev. Þórir Stephensen

Sigurjón Ólafsson Sculpture Museum

Summerconcerts: The Czech ensemble Musica ad Gaudium; Andrea Brožáková soprano, Jaromír Tichý, flute, Václav Kapusta, bassoon and Alena Tichá, harpsichord, joined by the Icelandic oboist Eydís Franzdóttir.

THURSDAY

JULY 29

Hallgrímskirkja Church

Lunch Time Concert - By Magnús Ragnarsson playing on a organ

SATURDAY

JULY 31

Hallgrímskirkja Church

Lunch Time Concert - By Kári Þormar playing on a organ

SUNDAY

AUGUST 1

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Postal history. Old-style mail delivery.

Viðey Island

Family Day on Viðey: Cruise to Viðey, guided by the Rev. Þórir Stephensen, commencing at 13:30 with a cruise aboard the Árnes from Miðbakkí dock at Reykjavík Harbour.

Hallgrímskirkja Church

Evening Concerts Sundays - By Kári Þormar playing on a organ, Kári Þormar has given concerts both here in Iceland and abroad and has on several occasions accompanied the Hallgrímskirkja Motet Choir both in concerts and on television.

MONDAY

AUGUST 2

Árbæjarsafn, Folk Museum

Family Day at Reykjavík Museum: Childhood and toys in olden days. Children's horse rides. Children's games and activities.

TUESDAY

AUGUST 3

Safn

Opening of two exhibition, The German painter Katharina Grosse (b. 1961) is among the most interesting contemporary artists working with this old medium, the painting. Other is Eggert Pétursson, Pétursson's (b. 1956) canvases have to make you think of all the hours spent on completing them.

Viðey Island

Guided walk around Viðey: Guided walk with geologist Ásta Þorleifsdóttir, who tells visitors about the geology of Viðey and the surrounding area.

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MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE

I CAN'T GET NO... SATISFACTION...

The Band of the Brides wants more

by Anna Koskinen

Being a relatively new band at the tender age of six months, Brúðarbandið deserves a proper introduction. Kata, Unnur, Gugga, Sigga, Eygló, Melkorka and Sunna are the seven girls releasing their debut album on the 22nd of July. Although they have just started, they have named their album *Meira!* (or *More!* as the English speaker might say).

Yes, it's a girl band in the sense that all of its members are of the female gender. But Brúðarbandið is not Iceland's answer to the Spice Girls, or at least as such it would be

quite an ironic one. These girls (or women) are not marketed or targeted for a certain audience but are purely a creation of their own, meant to entertain and to be cherished but

most importantly, to play music, and to play it loud. Having landed a record deal with the record company 12 tónar, one gets the feeling that Brúðarbandið does definitely want more.

Drinking, smoking and wedding dresses

Brúðarbandið means the band of the brides and, you guessed it, the members play their gigs wearing wedding dresses. On meeting the band one does quite quickly discover that each one of its members has been around the block and knows

that there is quite a lot more to life than wedded bliss - they sing of life and experience, each having made it well out of their teens. The irony of the dresses is that these girls do not believe in one perfect, white wedding per lifetime, even announcing in their manifesto (which can be found on their website www.brudarbandid.biz) that one of their goals is more weddings for everyone. But to set the record straight, for them the wedding dress is first and foremost a stage outfit, a stylistic choice, and is definitely not the weirdest thing one could come up with to play a gig in (just think of David Bowie, the Red Hot Chili Peppers (socks, anyone?) or Kiss, to name a few). All and all, judging by their drinking, smoking and the topics of their talks, there is not much that separates Brúðarbandið from your typical rock-'n-roll band (except perhaps the collection of Madonna posters on the wall of their rehearsal studio), but they are familiar with the problem that all-girl bands have to face: the trouble of not being taken seriously. But as it is with most things in this world, the only way of proving you are serious about something is by actually showing it in action, not just with words.

Something old, something new...

The point here being that a band with the work morals equal to those of Brúðarbandið can't be just a joke: the band has been up and running for six months, during which time its members have learned to play their instruments (most of them com-

pletely from scratch), made songs, played a few gigs and recorded an album. But there is also another side to this band, the fact that despite having done all this, they at least claim that they do not take themselves too seriously, manifesting that what they want is groupies and free drinks at the bar. By saying this, they maintain that come what may, they will always be able to laugh it off, be it a bad record review or a gig gone down less than well. Having fun, and actually doing something, is better than not doing anything at all. Big plans aside, basically it's just all about wanting to play some good music and not giving a damn whether the world will listen or not.

As the band has had free hands at creating the songs, each member's personality and musical preference is reflected on the album, and as a result Brúðarbandið's music has the joy of a band not being controlled by a big record company. It's obvious that they play music that they like, rather than sticking to one style at its purest. Their attitude seems to be "something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue," the blue in this case being the harmonica that wails at the background like some lovelorn seafarer. The lyrics are straightforward in the style of the Seattle grunge and riot grrl bands, and the melodies range from pretty to gritty, making them a great live band.

To judge for yourselves, check out the band's album *Meira!*, which is available in record stores now.

The settlement of Geir

by Hrafn Práinsson

A quick review of the album *Landnám*



Iceland has a lot to offer in matters of music and the way the industry works today, many musicians are trying to keep up with new and fresh sounds. But some still stay in touch with the good old vibe. Geir Harðarson, an Icelandic troubadour, carpenter and fisherman, has managed to bring almost a little bit of everything into one album, which is recorded in mono instead of stereo. Asked why, he says it simply lasts better. His album is called

Landnám, which translates to English as Settlement. He describes it as very national and fitting for the whole year. It pays tribute to Icelandic folk music, blues and rock songs with lyrics about being Icelandic and amusing thoughts about his own life. The lyrics, his unique voice and the instrumental accompaniment put together a solid album with inspiration from Iceland to India. It is recorded in a studio called Stúkuhúsið, an old venue for teetotallers, and is located in Akranes, a town not so far from Reykjavík. The old house gives the album a soulful, fresh, but still classic sound.

The songs are written over a long period of time which adds variety to the album. Geir has been into music most of his life although *Landnám* is his first album. A few months ago he hit the road around Iceland with Hera, a well known Icelandic female vocalist and musician. The album will be released in the beginning of August but at least one of its songs, *Aha*, is now played regularly on some of the radio stations. The release will be followed with a publishing concert shortly after in a yet unknown location but interested readers should keep up to date with Grapevine's concert listings.

In my own opinion the album is unique, amusing and beautiful and fits for all kinds of weather, which is important to me as a native Icelander. As described by Geir himself, I think it belongs everywhere.

PICKS MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE

Iðnó theatre, July 31st, 16:00

INNIPÚKINN FESTIVAL



For those wise (or broke) enough not to attempt to spend the 1st weekend of August (or the last of July) drunk and wet in a tent somewhere in Iceland's wilderness, there is now a way out...or in.

While the other outdoor festivals offer a cocktail of booze, bad weather and bad coverbands, "Innipúkinn" (roughly transl: couch potato?) is the alternative choice. The music is made by bands such as Skakkamanage, Súkkat, BenniHemmHemm, Trabant, Mammút, Fræbblarnir, Brúðarbandið, KGB, Talnapúkinn, Singapoore sling, Drep, Skyttarnar, Rass and Ómar Ragnarsson! Entrance fee: 3000kr, 2200 if bought beforehand at 12 Tónar record shop on Skólavörðustígur 15

NASA, August 1st, 23:00



Partyzone; DJ Sasha

Alexander Coe better known as DJ Sasha will hopefully show up this time having unexpectedly cancelled his original date in May. There are DJs who turn up, play records and make people dance. And there are producers who make the dancefloorigniting records those DJs will kill for. There are very few people in dance music who do both and Sasha is one of them. Entrance fee: 2500ISK

Sirkus, all Saturdays, 14:00



SIRKUS FLEA MARKET

In the garden behind Bar Sirkus is now an Amsterdam style mini-version of a street flea market open Saturdays only where whoever can sell their used stuff, clothes, LP's, CD's or whatever, and of course buy some themselves. The prizes are rather reasonable and as a bonus, you can haggle all you like until you either get shouted at or you get what you want for as much or little as you want. A good deal anyway.

Jómfrúin, July 24th, 16:00



JAZZ QUINTET

This Saturday double bass player Þorgrímur will be playing jazz with his band in the garden behind Restaurant Jómfrúin. Band members are Þorgrímur, Sax players Ólafur and Jóel and drummer Erik Qvick. Guest member is Irish guitarist Simon Jermy.

De Palace, July 23rd, 21:00



ROCK & PUNK

A non stop live gig with four bands; Dark Harvest sport the best musicians and explore the "hard to find thin red line" between music and sports. Hölt Hóra is new wave/punk band from Biskupstungur, famous for covering Peyr's song Rudolf. Dead After School are from England and when this is written that is all Grapevine knows about them. Innvortis is the happiest punk band there is while their lyrics are some what not as happy, just pray to god they end their performance with playing "The Ace of Spades".

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Finding everything you lost on the way

by Sindri Eldon

I sailed past the monstrous bouncers with celebrity suave and straight into the lobby. After overcoming my initial relief (I was underage and had no fake ID), I looked around me as I waited patiently in the ticket line and studied the place admiringly. The least understood, or at least the most misunderstood place, in Reykjavík.

"I don't get Nasa," people would tell me. "That place gives me the creeps." But Nasa didn't worry me at all. You see, any question you can ever have about the place's admittedly mysterious nature can be answered with cocaine.

"How did they get the financing?"
"Cocaine."

"When did this place become popular?"

"The same time cocaine became popular."

"How do they get all those bands to play there?"

"Cocaine."

"What else goes on in that place anyway?"

"Cocaine deals."

"Where are the fucking bath rooms?"

"Where you do the cocaine?"

I said my name to the woman at the desk, a weathered fortyish thing who looked bored out of her skull, and she let me in. Wow, I thought, President Bongo actually

came through. After my short stint in the music industry, I had picked up several "golden rules", and one of them was Never Trust A Man In A Techno Band. Rules, apparently, were made to be broken.

The ultimate niggaz

And then, from behind the mixing desk, I saw it happen. I have no idea how or why I didn't know this was going to happen. And at a GusGus show it was so underlying, so unavoidable, just so goddamn inevitable that it seemed like everyone knew it.

A woman started dancing. And not the usual hey-I-kind-of-like-this-song kind of hip gyrating that usually accompanied some bimbo's second Breezer, but a wild strut that went all over the floor, the kind of hot-blooded pouncing moves that could only be made to a staggeringly cold and rhythmic electronic beat. And it did not take long for others to follow her example.

I spotted a foreigner, that despite

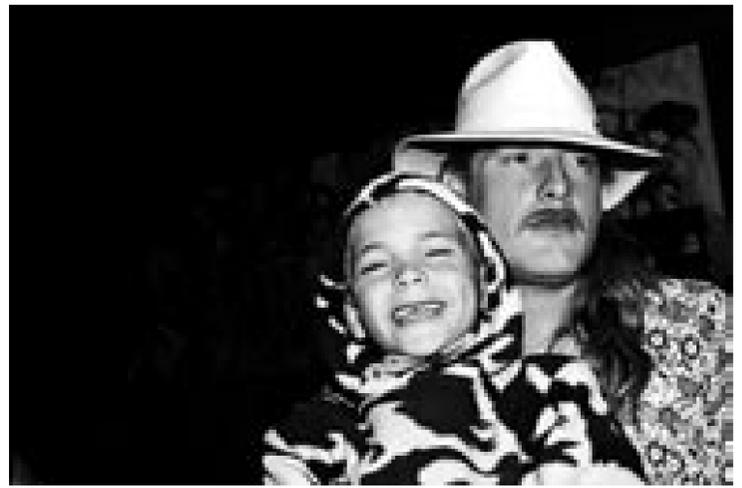
his sarcastic comment to a friend, had a glint of recognition in his eye. There were acts like this all over Europe, and everyone wanted to be them. They were the club's ultimate niggaz; the ultimate shining examples of revolutionary non-conformity that sees an inevitable transformation from ridicule to admiration.

In the end it all became so incredibly appealing to mix it with these freedom fighters that I jumped right into the fray, ripping off my army surplus jacket and exposing a violet hawaiian shirt I bought in Japan a year ago. And as I swayed there with them, I closed my eyes and drifted away to something surprising, something so completely serene that I wasn't even there any more.

And she appears in a stained wedding dress...

In the time it took me to fantasize, the dance-floor had turned into an insane jumble of sweat-soaked corpses bouncing unstopably to the DJ's beat. A slobbering drunkard started clawing at my leg and begging me for "some coke, or speed, or anything - please, I just don't want to stop dancing!"

I booted him off and went back to our table, and as I sat there waiting, the band came onstage.



"Hi. We are Gus Gus, and we're going to play some old songs, possibly mixed with some new ones. We'll call it a dance rehearsal," President Bongo said, brandishing a cowboy hat and his trademark suit. Behind him, the two masterminds behind the music, Biggi Virus and Buckmaster De La Cruz, immediately commence much button-pushing to magically bring the good stuff into existence. At first I thought Earth, the band's freshman, was going to be a no-show, but then she suddenly appeared in a stained wedding dress, eliciting much cheering from the crowd.

If the audience had already become an ecstasy-riddled scene

from Ibiza Uncovered, the band had mutated them into a single pulsating organism, throbbing to their techno like a dying, beached whale, shuddering while struggling to take it's last breath.

I felt stoned, but alright. And from the looks of it, that was how everyone else felt: Like this was the greatest thing they would ever do, like nothing would ever matter again, and like the end of the road was not where you had to stop and get out of the car but a place where you could finally rest, dream and hope that driving back down the road, you find everything you lost on your way there.

MUSIC and NIGHTLIFE LISTINGS : july 23 - august 5

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

FRIDAY

JULY 23

Glaumbar: 09:00 Ex many things, among them ex-convict Árni Johnsen sings and plays guitar

Dillon: 23:00 Band Dikta

Mojito Club: 23:00: Launch Music

Felix: DJ Andri

Hressó: DJ Atli Partycop

Hverfisbar: DJ Benni

Café Victor: DJ DeeJay disc jokes

Nasa: DJ Ísi, free entrance for the first 200

Sirkus: DJ Maggi Lego from band GUS GUS

Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900

Kaffibarinn: DJ Raggi

Vegamót: DJ Sóley

Amsterdam: DJ Steini

Café Sólón: DJ Þróstur 3000

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi & Hlynur Mastermix

Pravda Barinn: DJ's E&E CREW, two hot blond chicks take care of the music

Kaffi List: DJ's Palli & Biggi from band MAUS

Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Band Spilafiklarnir

Upstairs: Troubadour plays songs by request

De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's

Café Rósenberg: Jazz band Mogadon play jazz

Gaukur á Stöng: Coverband Oxford.

Kapital: R&B, Disco, Dance, HipHop. DJ's Bjarki

Batman, Valdi and Gummi Gonzales

Café Culture: Salsa Night

Ari í Ögri: Troubadour duet Halli & Kalli

Dubliners: Vinir Adólf

Miðbar: Young musicians, armed with a piano,

guitar and a horn, play some music

Jón Forseti: DJ Party & Dance

SATURDAY

JULY 24

Jómfrúin: 16:00 Jazz band, see picks for details.

Glaumbar: 23:00 Troubadour Ari & Gunni

01:00 DJ Þór Bæring

Mojito Club: 23:00: Launch Music

Grand Rokk: Bands: Úlpa & Lokbrá

Gaukur á Stöng: Coverband Land & Synir plays.

Dillon: DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir, grandmother of Icelandic rock 'n roll

Hverfisbar: DJ Andri

Hressó: DJ Atli Partycop

Café Victor: DJ DeeJay disc jokes

Felix: DJ Doktorinn

Prikió: DJ Gísli Galdur

Kaffi List: DJ Heiða

Kaffibarinn: DJ Kári

Sirkus: DJ KGB

Café Culture: DJ Luis

Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900

Pravda Barinn: DJ Tommi & DJ Don Balli Funk

Vegamót: DJ Tommi White & MC Maggi Jóns

Café Sólón: DJ Þróstur 3000

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ & Hlynur Mastermix

De Palace: DJ's Exos and Thor

Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Band Spilafiklarnir

Upstairs: Troubadour plays songs by request

De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's

Café Rósenberg: Jazz band Mogadon play jazz

Kapital: R&B, Disco, Dance, HipHop. DJ's Bjarki

Batman, Valdi and Gummi Gonzales

Amsterdam: Rock cover band 101

Miðbar: Sigurjón plays the piano

Nasa: Soulband Straumar & Stefán

Ari í Ögri: Troubadour duet Halli & Kalli

Dubliners: Vinir Adólf

TUESDAY

JULY 27

Prikió: DJ Daði

Dubliners: Th Fitzgerald

Nelly's: Troubadour Night

WEDNESDAY

JULY 28

Prikió: 21:00 Singer Páll Rósinfrans, frontman of

band Jet Black Joe does a few numbers.

Dillon: 22:00 DJ Sunboy from NYC

Grand Rokk: Bands Atómsstöðin, Hoffman,

Dáðadrengrir and Amos

Kaffibarinn: DJ Benni

Kaffi List: Jazz jam session, go join the band

Café Culture: Tango Night

Nelly's: Troubadour Night

Dubliners: Troubadour Tryggvanoff

THURSDAY

JULY 29

Café Victor: 1664 Night

Kaffi List: Band Úlpa plays

Kaffi Reykjavík: Cabaret and lunch night

Sirkus: DJ Chuck

Prikió: DJ Jói

Kaffibarinn: DJ Kári, reggae night

Amsterdam: DJ's and drunk people

Café Sólón: DJ's Tommi white & Andrés

Kapital: Live Music, covers

Café Rósenberg: Smokey Bay Blues band; front

man Mick Pollock is presenting his new album here

with a band. Mick was member of famous punk

band Utangarðsmenn, and is one of the guys who

brought punk to Iceland. We thank him and hope

others do by showing up!

Dillon: Surprise night

De Palace: THE Gig, various live bands, no covers

Hverfisbar: Troubadour duet Bítlarnir

Nelly's: Troubadour Night

Dubliners: Troubadour Tryggvanoff

FRIDAY

JULY 30

Glaumbar: 01:00 DJ Þór Bæring

Prikió: 21:00 Búðarbandið, 23:00 DJ KGB

Mojito Club: 23:00: Launch Music

Gaukur á Stöng: Disco Night

Hverfisbar: DJ Andri

Café Victor: DJ DeeJay disc jokes

Dillon: DJ Eiki

Kaffibarinn: DJ Gísli Galdur

Nasa: DJ Ísi

Sirkus: DJ Jón Atli

Felix: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot

Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900

Jón Forseti: DJ Party & Dance

Café Sólón: DJ Svali

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi & Hlynur Mastermix

Kaffi List: DJ's play fun stuff

Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Band 3Some

Upstairs: Troubadour plays songs by request

Ari í Ögri: Duet Acoustics, ask for BeeGee's

De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's

Café Rósenberg: Jazz Band Miles from nowhere

Grand Rokk: Patient Zero

Kapital: R&B, Disco, Dance, HipHop. DJ's Bjarki

Batman, Valdi and Gummi Gonzales

Café Culture: Salsa Night

Dubliners: Troubadours Bjarni and Ingi

De Palace: Various DJ's

SATURDAY

JULY 31

Glaumbar: 01:00 DJ Þór Bæring

Mojito Club: 23:00: Launch Music

Gaukur á Stöng: Disco Night

Felix: DJ Andri

Café Culture: DJ Bobby K

Café Victor: DJ DeeJay disc jokes

Sirkus: DJ Gísli Galdur

Nasa: DJ Ísi

Prikió: DJ Jói

Kaffibarinn: DJ KGB

Hverfisbar: DJ Kiddi Bigfoot

Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900

Jón Forseti: DJ Party & Dance

Café Sólón: DJ Svali

Pravda Barinn: DJ Tommi

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi & Hlynur Mastermix

Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Band 3Some

Upstairs: Troubadour plays songs by request

Ari í Ögri: Duet Acoustics, ask for BeeGee's

songs. Pref. Staying Alive

De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's

Kapital: R&B, Disco, Dance, HipHop. DJ's Bjarki

Batman, Valdi and Gummi Gonzales

Sirkus: Sirkus Flea Market, see picks for details

Dubliners: Troubadours Bjarni and Ingi

De Palace: Various DJ's

Dillon: DJ Andrea Jónsdóttir, Grandmother of Icelandic Rock n Roll

SUNDAY

AUGUST 1

Glaumbar: 01:00 DJ Þór Bæring

Mojito Club: 23:00: Launch Music

Dubliners: B.T. And The Russians

Kaffi Reykjavík: Cabaret and lunch night

Gaukur á Stöng: Coverband Kung Fu

Felix: DJ Andri

Kaffibarinn: DJ Benni

Hverfisbar: DJ Benni

Café Victor: DJ DeeJay disc jokes

Prikió: DJ Gísli Galdur

Nelly's: DJ Nonni 900

Jón Forseti: DJ Party & Dance

Nasa: DJ SASHA, see picks for details

Café Sólón: DJ Svali

Pravda Barinn: DJ Tommi

Amsterdam: DJ's and drunk people

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi & Hlynur Mastermix

Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Band 3Some

Upstairs: Troubadour plays songs by request

Sirkus: Heavy drinking, need we explain?

De Boomkikker: Heavy Metal DJ's

Kapital: R&B, Disco, Dance, HipHop. DJ's Bjarki

Batman, Valdi and Gummi Gonzales

De Palace: Various DJ's

MONDAY

AUGUST 2

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi & Hlynur Mastermix

Celtic Cross: Downstairs: Band 3Some

Upstairs: Troubadour plays songs by request

Dubliners: Troubadour Ingvar Valgeirsson

Nelly's: Troubadour Night

TUESDAY

AUGUST 3

Prikió: DJ Daði

Thorvaldsen bar: DJ Daddi & Hlynur Mastermix

MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE



THE HAIR

by Marcie Hume

Every time a production of *Hair* goes up anywhere in the world, the question resounds, "Is *Hair* relevant today?" It's really a pedantic question, not because there are current events comparable to Vietnam, but because we are increasingly aware of the abundant injustices present in the world and are constantly grappling with our desires to fight them. Until we are all living blissfully, feeding dried fish to one another, calm and happy and enthralled, we can put that question to rest.

But a question that I had to ask is: Where are the Icelandic hippies? How can an Icelandic audience connect to these freaks dancing around and grabbing each others' asses? I certainly don't see a lot of embracing on the streets. In fact, once I gave a carefree hug to a friend while standing outside Bónus and someone passing said, "Pau eru útlendingar" ("They're foreigners"). How do I find the Icelandic hippies?

"If there were hippies in Iceland, they would be energetic," the director, Rúnar Freyr Gíslason,

said. "They'd be that much 'screw the system', but with hard work and power, not laziness."

"I do feel that people are breaking out more, proud of what they stand for," Selma Björns, who plays Sheila, told me. "What's lacking today is believing that we can actually change the world. We should speak out more, like they did."

Their belief in this show is obviously earnest, which may partly explain how they have managed to create viable characters in a musical that can seem one-dimensional in its

compulsive commitment to peace-n-love.

There are many outstanding voices and several performers who are unfailingly enjoyable to watch, most notably Guðjón Davíð as Voffi, an innately endearing character who is uber-lovable here, and Unnur Ösp as Dionne has a kind of spark that keeps her consistently in focus. Björn Thors, who plays Berger, seems to have been actually transported from 1960s America and simply rocks. The voices of Sverrir Bergmann, Selma Björns and Alma



Rut add massively to the show. Some of the supporting cast members look like they're just excited to be on stage, but at least you can tell they've been having a good time.

The production thrives in other ways as well, and it is especially visual; the lighting is uninhibited and the choreography similarly serves to build a graspable atmosphere. The show is also pretty rock and roll, and the CD is probably the best thing one can bring to friends outside

Iceland as a souvenir.

Although Iceland may seem somewhat removed from out-of-control wars, it is not without its unfair fights and poorly-motivated political actions. The fact that *Hair* is still relevant in contemporary society is verification that we have a long way to go. Even though the show is in many ways simply a good time, it still emphasizes that aiming at unity is anything but silly.

Tom Waits

by Eyvindur Karlsson



Thirty-one years ago, a struggling young artist named Tom Waits published his debut album entitled *Closing Time*. He went on to tour with Frank Zappa, record with Bette Midler, publish a number of hit jazz and blues records and even get nominated for an Academy Award for his soundtrack to Francis Ford Coppola's unsuccessful love story *One From The Heart*. In 1983, ten years after his debut, he released *Swordfishtrombones* and changed the face of music forever with his outrageous vocals, his vivid imagery and insane, cabaret-like music. Tom Waits has been king of the weird ever since.

And there's more change on the way. A new Waits album is scheduled for release on October 5th by Epitaph Records, an Anti Publishing subsidiary. The title of the new album is *Real Gone*, and it seems to promise a real change for Tom, while it may not be as abrupt as that

of *Swordfishtrombones*. Waits' last three records, 1999's *Mule Variations* and 2002's simultaneously released *Alice* and *Blood Money* felt, in a sense, like a summary of his entire career, from jazz to rock to blues to Kurt Weill. But on *Real Gone*, Waits is way out there, experimenting like never before. The most notable of these experiments is his vocal percussion technique, which he played around with a bit on the track "Big in Japan" on *Mule Variations*. This time, though, he's taking it much further. He made vocal tracks in the bathroom of his house, using a small four-track recorder. These were not looped - he would actually do the riffs for 3 1/2 minutes, and then bring them to his band.

The musicians on the new album are mostly old Waits veterans, the most notable perhaps Les Claypool of Primus, or bass genius Larry Taylor, who has been Tom's bassist for the larger part of his career. But he has one new collaborator, and this may be the most interesting one. Casey Waits - yes, Tom's own son - has joined hand with his dad for *Real Gone*, adding percussion and turntables to songs like the bluesy urban nightmare "Metropolitan Glide". Until now, Tom and Casey had only played together on very rare occasions during live performances.

Waits fans might have an idea about what to expect. It seems that Tom is going all the way in the direction of *Mule Variation* tracks like "Big in Japan", "Filipino Box Spring Hog" and "Eyeball Kid". There's no way to know exactly what it'll be like, though, but he has left us some clues. For those less familiar with the artist, he's almost impossible to describe. Try to imagine Marilyn Manson with a blues band, and you might come close, but it'll still be off. The only thing to do is to listen to the damn thing.

The God Damned Skunks get drunk

by Bart Cameron



The first thing you need to know is that the God Damned Skunks aren't a band really. They were formed to deal with the need that certain members of Singapore Sling had to "go on a case" or extreme bender, in public.

On Thursday, July 1st, I witnessed one such occurrence. The evening began with forty minutes of feedback, interrupted briefly when the drummer stood up and beat a drum a couple times, then wandered off saying he needed his drugs.

He got his drugs. Everybody got their drugs. They returned to stage and began playing admirably raw psycho-hillbilly-style rock. With two guitars, overdone echo vocal effects, and a snare and bass drum, they made it through one song. Then they were interrupted when a shirtless man attacked the lead singer. Amid the broken glass and feedback, I witnessed Einar, guitarist for Sling and salesperson at 12 Tónar who was there only to support his band mates, come over midfight and support the shirtless man. He did this not by fighting, but by grabbing and patting the belligerent drunk's hand, as one might do to a sick boy in a hospital.

When the Skunks resumed playing, they were distracted and less in control of bodily functions. Henrik the singer repeatedly dropped his guitar. He once confused the mic stand for the mic. The band tried to struggle through the songs—all of which consist of the same chords, E, A, B—but they just couldn't quite make it. Einar stood by, fixing the sound, putting the guitar back into Henrik's hands, and nodding his head to the beat.

A friend described the recent Peaches show as an anything goes event. The Skunks demonstrated what it means to do an anything goes show. The result, for those of us without Einar's demeanor, was extreme discomfort fading slowly into ecstatic joy at not being a member of the band, at knowing that our livers might still be functioning tomorrow, our skin might be free of bruises and glass shards.

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A SPECIAL BULLET FOR A SPECIAL STAG

by Beerman

The bachelor party was in full swing when I arrived. The groom-to-be was lying sleeping on the bed, having had his trousers removed by a humorist after passing out, and was sleeping on top of an equally clad compatriot. A very drunk man was standing, and having trouble doing so, by the grill, burning the remains of a chicken. Outside, a couple of the guests were going through the motions of the beginning stages of a fight without seemingly knowing why.

This seemed to wake up the man at the grill who jumped up, spun round and wrestled both men to the ground. There he held them until

both had agreed to take it easy. All three stood up, the two fighters looked apologetically at each other and they moved on to chew their way

through the unrecognisable remains of the burnt chicken.

At this point, the groom-to-be emerged, still wearing nothing but his underwear, and attempted to walk home. The three men dropped the burnt chicken and ran after him. They felt he was looking a bit tired, so to raise his spirits they decided to give him some vodka. This put him back to sleep, and the mood of the party seemed to drop noticeably.

The groom taken care of, the chicken was picked up from the

ground and the chewing was commenced with. I went into the living room and had a beer. The floor was littered with empty beer cans and remains of food. One look in there, and even I wanted to get married. As it soon appeared the groom-to-be would not be waking up again in the foreseeable future, the guests scattered into small groups and headed downtown. Someone called a taxi and then, just as it arrived, decided to drive downtown anyway. The car sped away, and I wondered if I would ever see them again. I con-

sidered calling the cops since their lives, along with anyone who might cross their path, might be in mortal danger. But I decided not to, as they probably wouldn't be grateful for my concern. Not even the day after.

Everyone's getting married this summer. Everyone I know's been putting it off for as long as possible, not wanting to get tied down. Two kids and a mortgage later, they decide to let go of the illusion of freedom and get on with it. I haven't been to a wedding since my parents got married. I was five at the time, still a single child but that was about to change. Now I find myself drinking with a younger crowd as my old friends drop out of the scene, waiting until they get divorced and drop back into circulation.

Getting married is an expensive business for all concerned. There's the stag party, where you not only have to shell out to get yourself drunk but the stag as well. Then there's the wedding itself. Expensive gifts must be bought but this time, at least, the booze is on the groom.

Still, sometimes you wonder whether getting married might make sense from a financial perspective. Sure, you need to shell out for the party but after that you can get laid for free whenever you want. No more taxis, no more 600 krónur beer. No more late night bars or early morning visits to the clinic. No more two-day hangovers. Hangovers get worse with age, I'm finding out. At the point when they become intolerable is the point when you start to think about marriage. But me, I can still take it. For now.

...Next: The ceremony



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A LOVING MEAL AT HORNÍÐ

by Sonny Greco

My uncle Roberto, bless his memory, used to say that there was no such thing as an Italian restaurant. He said that if you wanted proper Italian food you should eat at home. If you could not do that, you should go to a trattoria, the type that was run by a family; with papa in the kitchen, the daughter serving the guests and mama looking after the Cash Register. And maybe Rosa, the distant cousin, taking care of the hats and the coats.

We may be in Reykjavík but if you go to Hafnarstræti you'll find a place called Hornið which would have pleased my uncle Roberto. It is as plain as a good slice of Mozzarella with thick slice of tomato on top, and a generous dose of good basil and olive oil in order to give it the right taste. What else would you want for a moderate price? Just check the Menu and you will find a wonderful selection of tasty, simple and fine dishes. Even the breadbasket looks tempting, - with "crestino de pane con pesto e olivo." The pizzas include the traditional Margheritas, Calzones (with a generous helping of mushrooms), Pescatore, and my favorite, the quattro stagioni. Among the Pasta selections you will also find a fine Tagliatelle prosciutto e funghi and an outstanding pizza with scallops, mussels, langoustines and other goodies selected from the pure Icelandic fish categories to pepper steak.

The amiable atmosphere is complimented by a competent staff that serves you with a happy flair. They obviously like their job - and it shows. The cooking is overseen by Chef Jakob Magnússon. Yes, and the place is run by his family. There may not be a cousin Rosa to check your hats and coats, but it seems that Hornið has everything else. This restaurant was founded exactly 25 years ago when Chef Magnússon returned to Icelandic after having worked for a few years in Copenhagen at (you guessed it) an Italian pizza place, serving clients from all over the world. It was not an easy task to open such a place in Reykjavík at the time. Hornið was a first in many ways. Chef Magnússon had to fight for a wine license and other necessary trappings. In 1979 Icelanders were not used to this type of restaurant. If you went out for a meal, it was a dress up affair. There were fine grill rooms



and restaurants, mostly connected to the bigger hotels. But few locals knew what the word pizza stood for. And many Icelanders thought that Chef Magnússon was plain crazy to think that a small place with table service and seating for less than 40 people would survive. Let alone such a ridiculous idea as serving coffee in tiny cups, something called Espresso

(most people called it Espresso and many still do). Chef Magnússon is today one of our foremost culinary experts. He has served as a chairman of the Icelandic Chef's Association and of the Nordic Association of Master Chefs. He has also served as a consultant to the team of international Judges at the annual Food & Fun Festival in

Reykjavík, along with experts such as the American culinary expert David Rosengarten. Well, it seems that Hornið, a restaurant in Reykjavík has combined all the little things that make you enjoy a meal that is made with loving care. Congratulations to the Magnússon family. May you continue for at least another 25 years.

Northern Delights

by Robert Jackson

This time of the year the bookshops are full of illustrated books directed at the tourist market. In them, the sky is blue, the moss is green, the lava is black and the horses manes trail in the breeze. Not many of us who live here have actually witnessed much of this particular scene, but the books sell well and do a fine job in promoting the flora and fauna of Iceland to those who see them on the coffee tables of returning visitors.

A new book joins the 'Lost in Iceland' brigade this year, which has a refreshing take on a area of growing interest - Icelandic food. It seems that fine food restaurants have never been more prolific, nor busier, in Reykjavík, and Erna Kaaber's 'Northern Delights' is well worth a read, particularly if you would like to understand something about the development of restaurant dining in this country. The tradition of Icelandic hospitality is at its core; Kaaber refers to its inclusion in the ancient Book of Settlement.

*Fire is needed by the newcomer
Whose knees are frozen numb
Meat and clean linen a man
needs
Who has fared across the fells.*

In the introduction to the book Kaaber traces the history of dining and hospitality when, in 1809, guests were treated to a feast of sago soup with red wine and raisins, followed by salmon and tern's eggs (who was brave enough to collect them?) all



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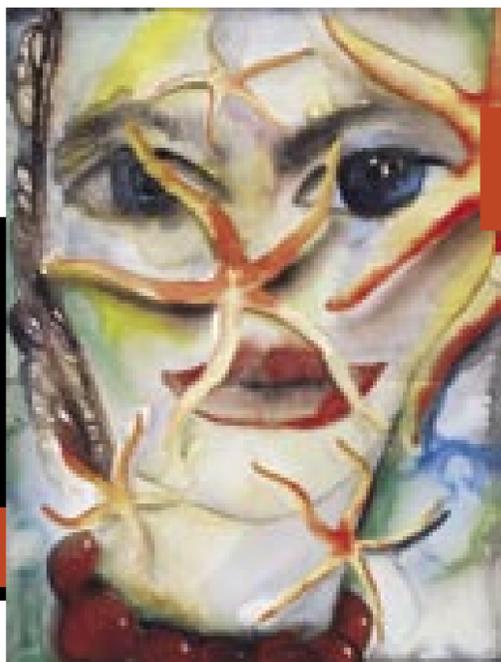
washed down with cognac. Here, too, is the history of some Reykjavík's most famous eateries. The narrative is laced with interesting detail and colourful characters; the communists and Kommakaffi and the journalists and actors at Prikið, all feature. The second half of the book is a tour of the famous restaurants containing more anecdotes and history. They're all here. Siggi Hall, Vox, Einar Ben, La Primavera, Listasafnið and others. And what makes it so good is that for the cash-strapped reader (which undoubtedly you are), Kaaber gives each restaurant's signature dish accompanied with photos, which themselves are good enough to eat. So even if you can't afford to actually

visit these places, a quick visit to the supermarket and an evening of determined work will enable you to eat off Humarhusið's lemon grass lobster tails, pig out on Apotek's creme brulee or, if you are truly getting into the spirit of the country, The Three Frenchman's whale steak with peppered gravy. If all this proves too much for you, then Kaaber completes the tour of Reykjavík's best with a visit to the world's most famous hotdog stand, Bæjarins Beztu. So if your soufflé won't rise and you've incinerated the lamb, seek solace in the way we lesser mortals do, with a brace of 'Eina með öllu' - that'll sort you out.



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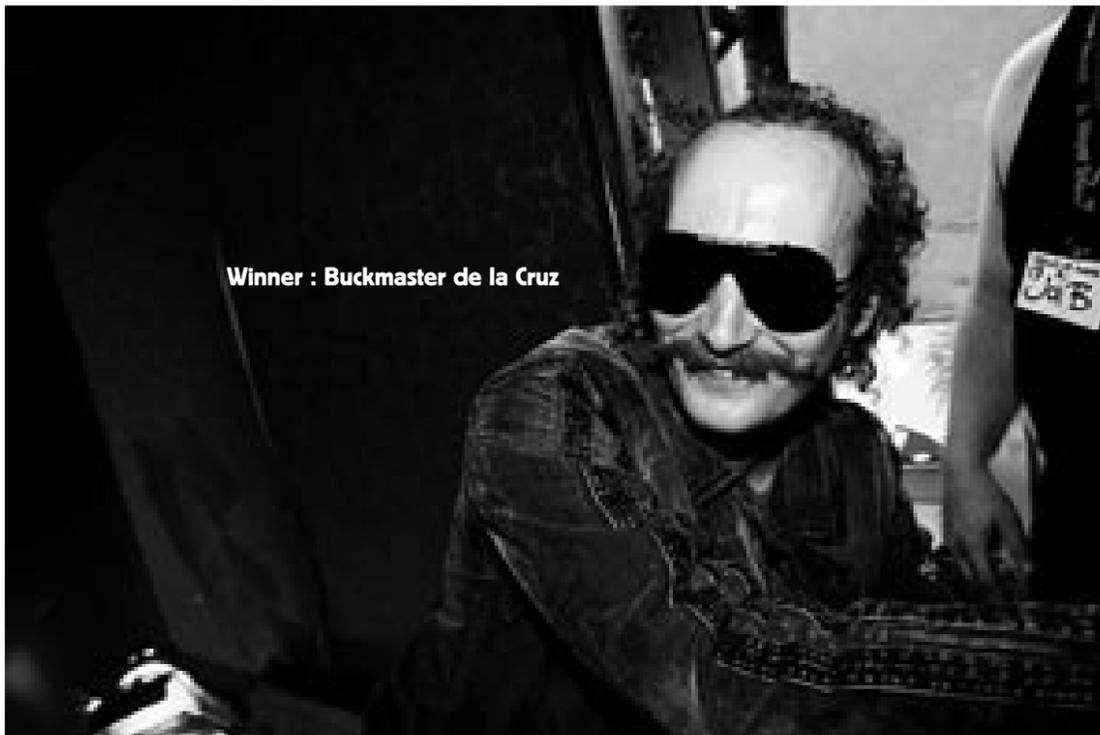


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TWENTY MEN AND A MOUSTACHE



Winner : Buckmaster de la Cruz

by Anna Koskinen

On Thursday the 15th of July, the bar Sirkus was full of people. What looked like an audition for the Village People with cowboys, construction workers and leather-clad bikers was actually the third annual Tom Selleck competition, dedicated to the art of growing and mowing a moustache.

The competition has been appropriately named after Tom Selleck who had the title role in TV series "Magnum, P.I." for eight years (a whopping 164 episodes) in addition to having starred in numerous films, including the All-American classic "Three Men and a Baby" (actually a remake of a French film -ed.) as well as the lesser known "Daughters of Satan." One could say that mister Selleck is a noteworthy actor, a Hollywood staple, but more famous

than his performances is most likely his well-proportioned moustache that crowns his irresistible smile.

To the question of why Tom Selleck's moustache was chosen as a rolemodel moustache for the competitors, the answer is both complicated and simple at the same time. How many other famous people (Adolf Hitler aside) can you name who have carried their moustache with pride throughout the years and made it their trademark?

So the competitors of the Tom Selleck competition were striving for the the laid back masculinity of a well-groomed moustache, together with the right attitude. The rules of the competition were not strict, genders were not tested and alcohol usage was not prohibited (if anything, it was encouraged). The competition, hosted by a puppet, saw each one of the twenty competitors descend a flight of stairs, grab a pint of beer and walk back up again. The competitors found plenty of room for improvisation in this seemingly simple task and each one had his own way of doing it. Some seemed so at ease in the competitive atmosphere one could have mistaken them for moustache competition professionals while others seemed shy and completed the task with minimum effort, quickly reaching



for the beer waiting for them at the bar and sneaking right back upstairs. The ones who were more relaxed took their time and stripped off various items of clothing, teased the audience, posed for the cameras and flirted with the judges. After each one of the competitors had been given a chance to flaunt what they got, the jury took its time to mull over the twenty moustaches they had just seen in action.

"Does size matter?" was naturally the question on (and over) everybody's lips. But there was no worry, for even the ones sporting a not-so-fully-developed moustache had their chance, as another title in addition to the Moustache of the Year was awarded - loosely translated as whiskers of the year. And as the competition was not solely about shape and size, but of overall performance, the most popular boy was chosen amongst the competitors and, judging by the audiences reactions, he was also a firm favourite within the crowd.

One might think that growing a moustache is simple and that winning such a competition is not hard. But it was obvious that this year

the competition was tough and the winner had to have a few aces up his sleeve - one moustached fellow felt it was necessary to drop down his trousers while another took off his top, leaving little to the imagination (and one can only wonder if this was meant as a distraction from the main thing - the moustache). Some of the boys seemed to have well thought-out tactics to earn them the prestiged title - one even tried to earn extra points by being accompanied by two children (who were wearing matching outfits, of course.) The winning trick, though, seemed to be having a pulled-together look that even a Hawaiian private inspector could be proud of: the owner of the title "Moustache of the Year 2004" competed with style, wearing a pink t-shirt that perfectly matched his pink and bright medium-sized moustache. It seems as colour co-ordination together with a very Tom Selleck-y smile was the right choice for this eager moustache grower who had taken part in all the previous competitions and finally managed to nail down the title this year. Congratulations to mister Buckmaster, Moustache of the Year.

Advertising Lifestyles: Reykjavík's Gay Scene

by Marc Mettler

When I arrived in Reykjavík last September, I was anxious to explore the gay life in a society that embraced my lifestyle with open arms. With the gay club Spotlight having recently closed, I enjoyed the acceptance I felt in the mixed-crowd clubs around the city. It was comforting to know that being gay or lesbian in Iceland did not mean having to be separated from the mainstream.

But when I heard several guys utter the words "I'm gay, but I'm not advertising it," I began to question what was happening. The statement slapped me on the face and threw me into a state of paranoia. Am I advertising it? And if so, what does that mean?

For me, this declaration resembled a hesitation to live openly, regardless of how society has labeled gays and

lesbians. Besides a small clique of more eccentric types, much of the community stays hidden beneath the straight lifestyle. This small percentage of visibility is common in small communities like Reykjavík. But wandering through artsy bars and clubs filled with fashionable young men, how do I know who is gay if no one is willing to advertise it?

My first attempt was a sad scene,

staring at an empty coffee cup.

"It takes one to know one," Baldvin explained to me in Samtökin '78. It was plainly true; the smallness of the community allows most gay Icelanders to know their own. For the visitor, however, going to uniquely gay places is the key to getting to know who's who in Reykjavík.

Samtökin '78 is a membership-based

organization that opened in 1978. It has about 300 members and houses a library of gay books and publications as well as a café (both are open on Monday, Thursday and Saturday nights). These evenings are typically filled with regulars, while the occasional tourist (or "new flesh") does make an appearance.

But whether you are new flesh or old meat, breaking into such a tightly knit community is trying. My first attempt was a sad scene, staring at an empty coffee cup and trying to strike up a conversation with an uninterested bartender. It may help to bring a friend to chat with while you work on the locals.

This suggestion also holds true at the gay-friendly Café Cozy, a tiny establishment that welcomes its guests to candlelit chats over cheap beers, coffee or a delicious hot chocolate drink.

Owner Ásta Williamsdóttir opened the café two and a half years ago when her lesbian daughter complained that there were no coffee-houses for the community. Although "La Bamba" and "The Macarena" may sometimes be questionable music choices for the place, the current three beers for 1000 kronur (from 11-23) is too good to pass up.

"I'm gay, but I'm not advertising it"

Late-night weekends at Cozy are

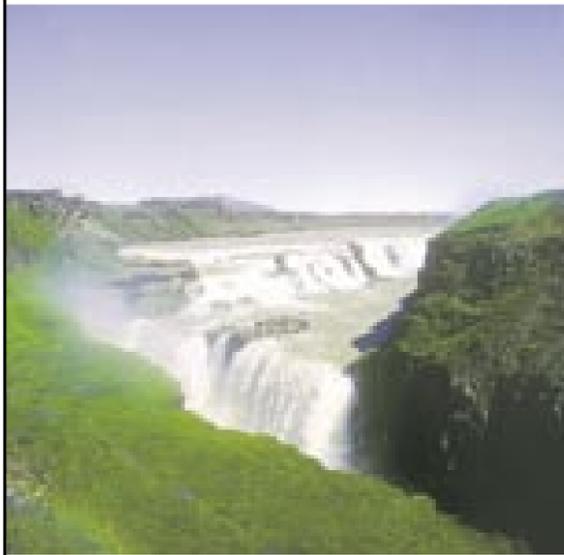
probably the wildest adventure in gay Reykjavík, as the tension rises with drunken customers jammed between chairs and tables. Here you can experience anything from a brawl to a bold gesture from a seat partner.

Jón Forseti is the most recently opened nightclub for the community. The weekends vary from relaxed to rowdy and the interior design keeps the atmosphere moody. The dance floor, however, feels awkwardly exposed, so it usually takes me a few drinks and the milkshake song to get out there.

But the milkshake doesn't always bring the boys to the yard, often leaving Jón Forseti and the other gay establishments desolate. I wonder if there aren't enough members of the community to go around. Or people think a proper gay club is unimportant. Maybe it threatens their comfortable assimilation into the straight world.

It's been a long winter for the gay community. But with the opening of Jón Forseti, the drag performances and gay pride on the way, Reykjavík's gay scene has a chance to blossom into something wonderful the whole year-round. Something no one should be afraid to advertise.

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BEST LOVED IN SCOTLAND.



THE FAROE ISLANDS FROM QUAIN TO COOL

by Valur Gunnarsson

Coming to the Faroe Islands reminds you of Iceland before the fall. Before baseball caps. Before pizza deliveries. Before FM hnakkar. When people had less and appreciated more. To experience the real Iceland, perhaps that's where you need to go.

The last time I was in the Faroes, five years ago, there was only one fast food place in the capital, Tórshavn. Not a McDonalds or a Burger King, but Icelandic franchise Pizza 67. There were two bars, one of them appropriately titled Kaffi Natúr, which had (and still has) a grass roof. The other one, Mímir, may well be the least advertised bar in the world. Having no sign and a perpetually locked door you need to knock on, you really need to know it to find it. Now they have 7 other bars, with names like Manhattan and Cleopatra, and they have a Burger King as well as pizzerias and kebab places.



We arrived at the airport in Vágur just before midnight. From there it's a 45 minute drive to the capital, but even in the near dark you can't help but be impressed by the stunning cliffs. No matter where you are in the Faroe Islands, you're never more than 5km from the sea. The Faroes, as I said, are more Iceland than Iceland. For every connoisseur of wind and rain who doesn't feel he's getting his money's worth round here, the Faroes are the must-see destination.

How much is that in real money? But saying that the islands resemble Iceland is displaying the same arrogance that Icelanders usually express to Faroese, it being one of the few nations on earth smaller than ours. An Icelandic can go there, speak his own language expecting everyone to understand, try the Pizza 67 to see if they taste like they do at home and say that everything is bigger in Iceland. And Faroese girls, man, are really the most. It's not often that an Icelandic gets to be in the shoes of an American abroad, so many go for the whole experience. Even when the Faroese people banded together to collect money for survivors when snowstorms devastated villages here in the mid 90s, giving far more relief than any other nation, they received little gratitude from many people in

Iceland too busy trying to be cool.

The Faroese language is similar enough to Icelandic to be read, but they have an accent almost impenetrable to the Icelandic ear. Even though still a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, they have a culture all their own. Faroese music has recently been making it off the island, and it's about time. Artists like Týr and Eivør have had hits in Iceland, and perhaps before too long they'll have their own Björk who will finally bring the Faroese music scene international attention.

We checked in at the Sailor's Home, formerly just that and set up by a missionary who had a very strong anti-alcohol policy. Now it's a fairly nice hotel, and fairly priced, too. At the nearest bar, a not too bad blues band was playing The Doors' Roadhouse Blues. I asked a local about the music scene. He told me the only Faroese musician he liked was Kári P., a sort of Faroese Bubbi who plays sailors songs. I asked him whether he liked Bubbi, and he told me he did.

The next man I talked to told me he had been living in Iceland and that he had moved back when his father had promised him a horse. Back home he found out he had been tricked, the horse in question is actually living on Suðuroy, the southernmost of the Faroe Islands, and he had still not gotten to see it.

The bars in the Faroes close at four, and everyone still standing gathers on the mainstreet. A couple of girls sit on a bench and wave people over to a bench, next to which a crate of beer sits open to all. They proceed to sing some Irish folk songs, rightly renowned for their brilliance but seem in the process of exterminating folk songs everywhere else. When I complain about this, a ringdance is started for my benefit, but then falls apart as inebriation and stepping in time don't mix. As this afterparty peters out, the last survivors make their way to the old town, where we stand by the harbour and enjoy the morning sun in which I am later told is the first good weather day of the year.

Yet another Jón

After a couple of hours sleep in the Sailor's Home, we head out for Gata on the neighbouring island of Eysturöy. We were turned away by police on our way out of Tórshavn, as a city marathon was in progress and the road was closed. We therefore had to take the long road over the ridge out of town.

Gata is best known in history as the home of Prándur, who successfully opposed Christianity and the Norwegian king until his death in the 1030s. The Islands were incorporated into the Norwegian kingdom after his death, from whence it was

passed to Denmark when the crowns of Norway and Denmark were unified. Prándur í Gøtu remains an expression for someone getting in your way in the Icelandic language.

These days, an annual music festival is held in Gata, the G-festival. Among the guests playing there this year were the Swedish Lisa Ekdal, the Norwegian Kashmir and Gata's own Eivør Pálsdóttir. The band playing when we arrived was Hoffman from the Westman Islands. It turned out that Heimaey on the Westmans is Gata's friendship town in Iceland, and so Hoffman were asked to play. They made references to drinking and told the audience they like the Faroes, doing their best to impersonate rock stars from the large country up north, and doing fairly well while seagulls flopped about in the background. A larger stage was situated down by the sea, and past that you could see people rowing a pocket sized Viking boat and hotshots giving girls rides on Jetskis.

Half the town is closed down for the festival, which is growing every year. Last year, 150 inhabitants of the town's roughly 1000 inhabitants bought tickets. Now, the number was 700 with an estimated 3000 attendants in all. The man organising the festival is called Jón, an even more common name in the islands than here, and the festival headquar-

ters are set up in his ex-girlfriends house, who was away for the weekend.

God, incest and alcohol

On the larger stage, the Christian band I Am are playing, and are pretty much what the name suggests, sadly. In a tent between the stages a makeshift church has been set up where smaller Christian acts perform. God is never far away in the Faroes. On the smaller stage a bored looking aging blonde in a long black coat is running through folk numbers. Her name is Annika Hoydal, and her main claim to fame is having participated in the Danish Eurovision contest in 1979 with the song Aldan. After a while she picks up, and so does the crowd.

As the night wears on and the drunkenness gets more apparent, Páll Finnur Páll take the stage. They introduce a song about incest, a popular pastime in isolated communities. This gets the crowd going. Apparently, they have some of the same social problems as we do. The same sense of humour as well.

As the festival winds down I remember that I have no place to stay. I bump into a couple of girls from the Westman Islands, here with the band Hoffman. One of them, Hafðis, is a performer in her own right. The other one asks me what I do back home. I tell her I edit a paper. She tells me she doesn't like to read, but she watches a lot of TV. Hoffman, Hafðis and hangers-on take a taxi back to the Boy Scout home, where they have been quartered. The remaining beer in the fridge is disposed of. The girl who likes to watch television tells me I am very tall. People sometimes point this out to me. It's not until two days later that I realise she may have been coming onto me.

I wake up to the sound of streams running, seagulls screeching and sheep doing whatever it is that sheep do. The day after, we make it back to Vágur airport. The remaining hour is spent examining the ruins of a British WW2 military base (they were there a month earlier than they came here). The airport chicken, however, is probably the worst in the North Atlantic area and should be avoided at all costs.

Thanks to Atlantic Airways, the Faroese Airline and their new jets, the distance to Reykjavík has been shortened to just over an hour. The idyllic islands are still down there. Enjoy them while you can.



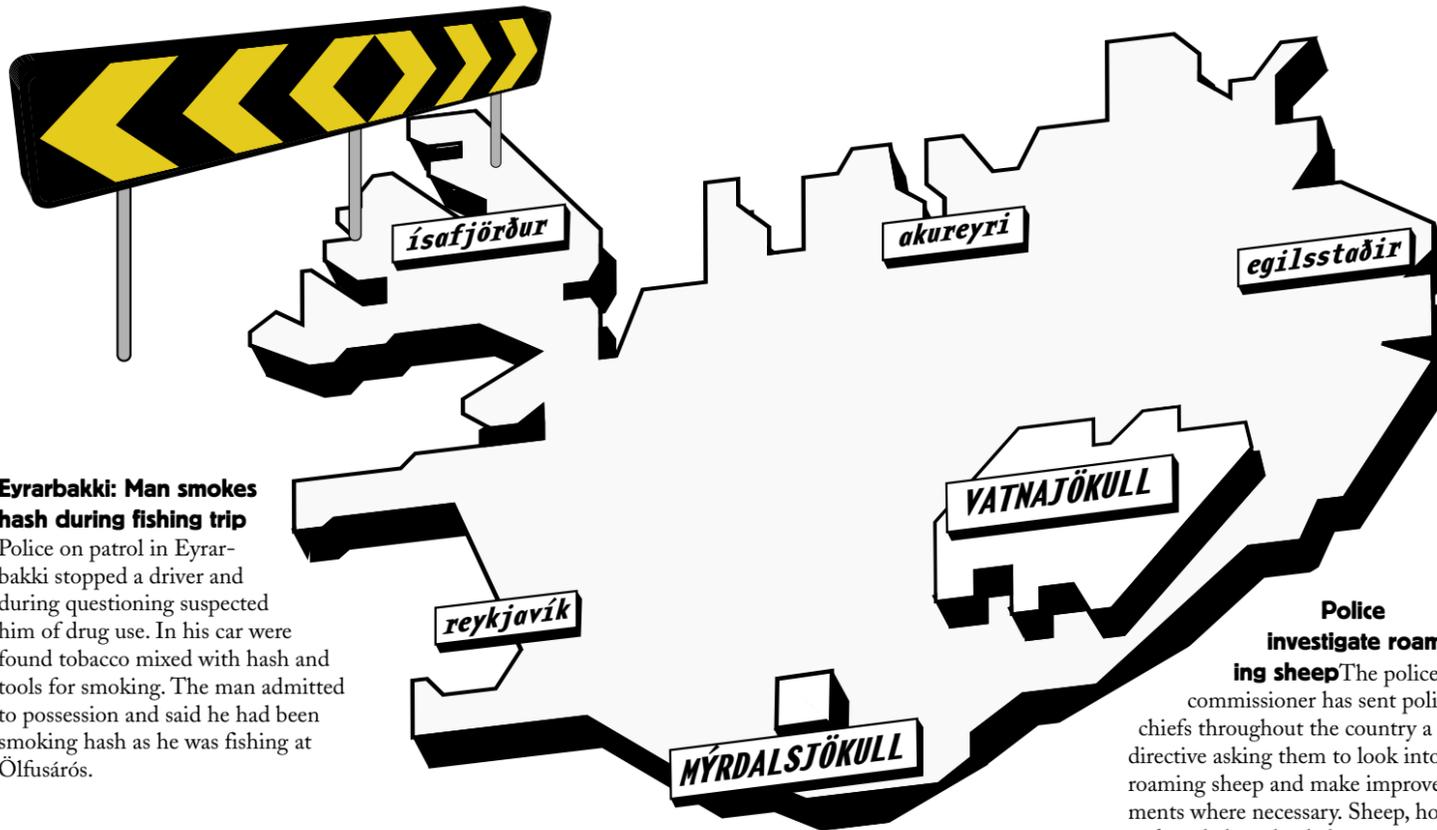
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Eyrbakkí: Man smokes hash during fishing trip
Police on patrol in Eyrbakkí stopped a driver and during questioning suspected him of drug use. In his car were found tobacco mixed with hash and tools for smoking. The man admitted to possession and said he had been smoking hash as he was fishing at Ölfusárós.

Police investigate roaming sheep
The police commissioner has sent police chiefs throughout the country a directive asking them to look into roaming sheep and make improvements where necessary. Sheep, horse and cattle have lately been seen crossing roads and are thought to create danger of accidents. Ölfusárós.

Island Life

Reykjanesbær: Terror fences prevent fishing

US NATO base authorities have started building fences "in defence of terrorism" in the harbors of Reykjanesbær. Those fences will eventually prevent the soldiers from going on late summer evenings to fish, which is supposed to be a great hobby of theirs.

Sauðárkrókur: Youth seen engaged in healthy activities

The National Youth Association held its first competition a few days ago. The aim with these competitions is to activate youngsters to take part in healthy activities. The Icelandic youth seems to be a wide concept because the oldest participant was 87, took part in the bridge card game league and did quite well.

Westman's Your Man

by John Boyce

For almost two years now I have blighted this fiery island with my presence. For nearly as long every Tom, Dick and Þorsteinn has been asking me this recurring question: "Have you been to the Westman Islands yet? What! You haven't made it out there yet? Man, you don't know what you are missing!" Well, I already live on a small remote island. Why go to a smaller and more remote one? But, tired of fending off incredulous and indignant Icelanders, I retrieved my tent from the attic, borrowed a sleeping bag and headed off to see what all the fuss was about.

The islands, just a few miles off the south coast, are composed entirely from lava, formed when volcanoes erupted under the sea. For many years these subaquatic fissures were thought dormant. In 1963, however, the earth surprised

scientists, not to mention islanders, throwing up a whole new island, Surtsey. An eruption on Heimaey in 1973, the only inhabited island, led to the temporary evacuation of the island. Fortunately, no one was hurt. When the islanders returned, they found that their island had grown somewhat in size.

The group is composed of at least 15 islands, depending on whether you count every outcrop or not. While the Westman islands are small in comparison to the mainland, the variety of landscape and wildlife is truly impressive, from rugged lava fields to rich fertile agricultural land. Tourism, fishing and agriculture provide the small population with a prosperous standard of living.

So what to do when you get there? Well just taking a hike up the now dormant volcano cone was enough for me on the first day. From the summit the view is splendid and on a clear day you can see clear across the island group. For the nature enthusiast, bird colonies abound and are easily visible from any of the major island peaks. The most incredible aspect of these islands is their pristine nature. The earth is still literally forming under your feet.

In a strange reversal of normal trends for a natural phenomenon, these eruptions actually brought

immediate beneficial results. The still hot rocks provide geothermal heat for many buildings and newly formed tongue of lava provides improved shelter for the harbour. If only all eruptions were so benign and indeed downright helpful. The highlight of the trip was a visit to the outstanding Natural History Museum that contains all manner of stuffed birds and fish and is a mine of information about local wildlife. Though I didn't get a chance to do it, the boat trip around the island is apparently also very worthwhile.

Summer is undoubtedly the best time to go, though even then good weather is not guaranteed. A lesson I learned to my cost on the first night. I was unlucky enough to get caught in one of Iceland's summer downpours. Soaking in a circa 1950s tent that was not really up to the job, I was forced to seek more concrete shelter the following evening. As you might expect in such a small, touristy spot, even the most basic accommodation does not come cheap. If you are, unlike me, properly equipped and on a tight budget, camping is definitely the way forward.

To get there you can take an expensive internal flight or take the daily ferry, which is much more reasonably priced. More to the point, it's much more fun.



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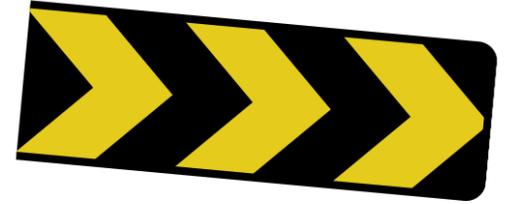
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LIFE BEYOND GULLFOSS

by Jónas Moody

The Better Half of the Southern Coast Pt 1



For most travellers, the southern coast of Iceland ends after their whirlwind tour of Gullfoss, Geysir, and Þingvellir. However, pushing past Selfoss on route offers one a wealth of unusual landscapes and natural peculiarities. The area can be well explored in two days (one day out and one day back to Reykjavík) with plenty of time at any site that catches your eye. This is dominated by the Vatnajökull glacier (Europe's largest) and almost all the curious land formations are in some way a result of this icy beast. While this area is far less frequented than the area of the coast closer to Reykjavík, accommodations and other necessities become few and far between. Make reservations and, most importantly, gas up when and where you can. A good place to start is at the pink gas station as you come into Selfoss. It's probably the cheapest on the southern coast right now.

From mighty death blow to a slap in the face

The landscape between Selfoss and Vík is fairly uniform, verdant farmland with an occasional glimpse of ocean. This is the setting for the majority of Njáls Saga, probably the best known of the Icelandic sagas.

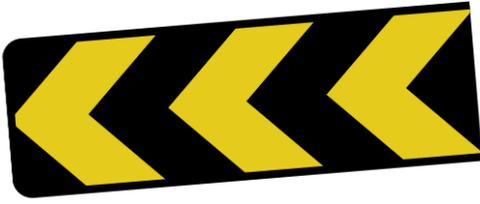
To pass the time, I suggest reading a few of the more action packed passages about banahögg (mighty death blow) and kinnhestur (saucy slap across the face) to put you in the mood for the region. The Saga Center in Hvalsöllum is fairly good at satisfying those who are curious about life in the Viking age, but I think one's time is better spent at one of the outdoor sights. Beyond Hvalsöllum, the landscape becomes far more interesting, driving between black sands and tall cliffs with countless waterfalls trickling over the edges. Keep your eyes peeled for caves and turf houses set into the rock. Skógafoss is a brilliant waterfall just off the road. If your lungs and nerves are up to it, climb the precarious iron stairs up to the top of the falls. Just before Vík is a turnoff for Dyrhólaey, a nature reserve comprised of massive cliffs, natural rock arch, some rock columns, and about a trillion puffins and arctic terns. It's truly stunning and worth a gander, even if only for fifteen minutes.

Having a drink and dancing on graves

The approach to Vík is lovely, driving through tall, green valleys, dotted with sheep. The town itself is nestled where the valley meets the sea, straight out of a salad dressing commercial. On the weekends, the town cemetery situated high above the town on a hill becomes a popular drinking spot/dance party/make-out point for the younger and rowdier folks in Vík, who are quite friendly once they've got a little alcohol in them and a few graves to dance on. It's no wonder the people of Vík share such intimacy with their dead; living in Vík is flirting with disaster - the town is situated at the foot of a glacier with a volcano underneath it. Norður-Vík is a nice but very small hostel that fills up unless you book well in advance. If you can't find accommodation here, the next hostel, Hvoll, is rather large and just past Kirkjubæjarklaustur. But before leaving Kirkjubæjarklaustur, fill up with gas if you need it. This is the last town before entering Skeiðarársandur, Iceland's mini-badlands. Hvoll is set on a farm and run by a very nice lady, but the real charmer is the farm dog, who has the body of a normal dog and the legs of dachshund. With Napoleonic fierceness for something so little, he terrifies the waterfowl and puts on a real show for all the guests. Get a good night's sleep. Day two is even more spectacular than day one...

...(to be continued)





THE MUSK OX: NOT AS STUPID AS IT SEEMS?

by Valur Gunnarsson

I got off the plane in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, and lit a cigarette. A woman immediately came over and told me in a heavy Danish accent that smoking was not permitted. At least we weren't that far from civilisation. For anyone who's ever promised to love each other till the end of the world, Kangerlussuaq is as good a place as any to call it quits. There's something unreal about everything this far north. Perhaps it's the lighting. Even though it was past midnight, it was still bright as day. I should be used to that by now, but somehow it seems even more apparent up here. I wondered if this was how travellers coming to Iceland for the first time viewed it.



The town has around 500 inhabitants, almost all of whom work at the airport. The area was uninhabited until World War II, although it was used for fishing in the summer by the natives and still has some ancient burial grounds. In 1941, a year after Denmark was occupied by the Germans, the Danish ambassador in Washington DC handed protection of the vast country over to the United States. Kangerlussuaq, known as Søndre Strømfjord in Danish, Sondrestrom in English, was chosen as the best location for an air force base as it is situated inside a very long fjord, promising reasonable weather conditions at all times of year.

Codenamed Blue West 8, it became one of the most important stopover sites between North America and Europe during the war. The base was handed back to Denmark in 1950 but, just as in Iceland, in 1951

the Americans were back having signed a new defence agreement with the government. The Americans also operated early warning radar stations in the area, and in the mid-fifties the airport became a stopover for SAS on its transatlantic journeys between Copenhagen and Los Angeles. The American base was finally shut down in 1992, and control was handed back over to Greenland's Home Rule, and renamed Kangerlussuaq. It remains the country's biggest airport.

A musk ox's reputation

As I got out from the airport, a guide herded us into a bus the way his ancestors may have herded reindeer over the tundra, and we set off for the mountains. In Kangerlussuaq, there seem to be two things to do; golf and search for musk ox. This particular night, we were searching for musk ox. The musk ox looks like a cross between a sheep and a bull.

It's Latin name, *Ovibos*, implies a combination of the two. Translated into Icelandic, this comes out as sauðnaut. In the Icelandic language, someone inordinately stupid can be called a "sauður," a sheep. If those boundaries are passed still further, the term sauðnaut may be applied, denoting someone even more daft than a mere sheep.

But does the musk ox deserve its reputation? The bus stopped, and we tourists got out to take pictures. Somewhere out there in the distance, the oxen were blots in the landscape. "Can we approach them?," asked a girl. "Sure," said the guide. "But they'll run away," he added. The girl decided to put this theory to the test. Whether it was curiosity about the habits of musk oxen or just an ingrained habit of following girls in whichever direction they were heading, I followed. It was a long downhill run. As we approached, we

learnt that the guide's prediction had proved correct. The oxen disappeared over a hill, and I looked back at the long uphill walk back, which seemed somewhat more imposing than the run down. In the intellectual battle between man and musk ox, it seemed the ox had won this round.

Breeding like a musk ox

It may have been the musk ox that originally brought man to Greenland. Before the invention of the kayak, the inhabitants lived mostly off land animals. There not being a great variety of these in Greenland, the musk ox must have been a staple. The natural habitat of Greenlandic musk oxen is the east coast, facing Iceland. From there they have lately been transported to other parts of Greenland. 27 specimens were moved to Kangerlussuaq in 1965. Now their population there numbers some 3500. No doubt the

expression "breeding like musk ox" will be catching on soon.

Sweating more than I thought possible this far north, I made it up the hill. The guide herded us back into the bus. He told me he had been doing this for 17 hours straight now. He used to work in a shop at the airport and do part time guiding. He had recently taken the leap to being a full time guide. Business was good, but tiresome.

We drove back the narrow mountain road to the airport. The airplane took off and headed back over the glacier towards that centre of civilisation and urban excitement known as Reykjavík. During the Ice Age, musk oxen were found as far south as Illinois. When the icecaps retreated, the musk ox followed them north. Perhaps you need to be a "sauðnaut" to follow a retreating glacier. But then what does that say about all of us inhabitants of the far north?



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TSp

1. Last Town in the Valley (Síðasti bærin í Dalnum) by Loftur Guðmundsson. 1950. I saw it on Channel One in 1972, then four years of age, and pissed in my pants and shat myself with fear. No horror film is better in my recollection, and I still have a fear of large flying coffins.
2. Hadda the Bug (Hadda Padda) by Guðmundur Kamban. 1924. Hadn't seen it in many years, not until last year at Hafnarfjarðarbió with the genius Hilmar Örn playing accompanying music. A real love story, up there with the best of them; love, despair, hate and betrayal. Guðmundur Kamban is a misunderstood superman.
3. Rescue at Látrabjarg (Björgunarflekið við Látrabjarg) by Óskar Gíslason. 1949. Saw in Langholtskirkja church at age five with Reverend Árníliús who preached God's love to children with the screening of the film. I realised that heroes could have human qualities, ironic it had to happen in a church.
4. Sharp for His Age (Ern eftir aldri) by Magnús Jónsson. 1974. Dramatised documentary which very concisely shows the history, corruption and fate of the Icelandic nation. The Lady of the Mountain appears to our protagonist, Sharp for His Age, at Þingvellir on his eleven hundredth birthday. A political documentary. Predecessor of Michael Moore, only better.
5. Lilja by Hrafn Gunnlaugsson. 1978. I started to cry at age ten, along with my grandmother, upon watching this short story by Halldór Laxness. Hrafn and Laxness himself narrate. Pure brilliance, the story of a dead drifter which stirs up childhood memories in a medical student. The most beautiful short film Iceland has produced.
6. The Blacksmith (Eldsmiðurinn) by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson. 1981. The old blacksmith that gave Friðrik the idea for Children of Nature. A real man of genius, an inventor in touch with the supernatural. Friðrik still uses lines from the old blacksmith in his films.
7. Cowboys of the North (Kúrekar norðursins) by Friðrik Þór Friðriksson. 1984. After Rokk í Reykjavík, Friðrik Þór turned to my favourite and the best documentary made in Iceland. Friðrik Þór captures the atmosphere of the moment, Hallbjörn the Cowboy is not of this world. A screaming masterpiece.
8. Nói Albinói by Dagur Kári. 2003. I felt happy when I walked out of this film. Here was a genius of my own generation.

TSp

1. Megas og spilverk Þjóðanna: *Á bleikum náttkjólum*
2. Vonbrigði: *Kakófónía*. If songs and great lyrics were the only consideration, this one would be on top. Unfortunately, there are other factors, namely the production which does the material no justice. This is one of my favourite albums of all time, and at the same time I can't really listen to it much, because the "sound" is so crappy. Remake it!!!
3. HAM: *Buffalo Virgin*. HAM. It's a shame that HAM didn't do more good albums. At one time they seemed set to rule the world, but they never got it together on plastic after this one. Some fantastic live shows but no more good recordings. Shame shame shame... boo hoo hoo...
4. Þeyr: *Mjötviður Mær*. These guys know how to conjure some really strange moods. I actually could taste blood in my mouth when I first heard this album. Unforgettable.
5. Mínus: *Halldór Laxness*. The only "current" album on my list, this music talks to me, in a way their two other albums could only mumble incoherently.
6. Purrkur Pillnik: *Googooplex*. Crazy anarchic melodies, mixed with spontaneity and erf. A spunky attitude, great lyrics.....they seem to have it all nailed down.
7. Sugarcubes: *Life's too good*. "Good times music" is a phrase that describes this album well, simply the best option on the car stereo on those long trips to Hella.
8. Slowblow: *Fusque*. This album blew me away. So utterly unpretentious and sincere in it's own pretentious way. It's a paradox that has a beautiful effect on me when I listen to it.

TSp

1. Brennu-Njáls saga.
2. The Folk Tales of Jón Arason. I immersed myself in these as a kid. Better for you than Disney and grimmer than the Grimms.
3. Poetry collection (Ljóðasafn) by Steinn Steinar. Priceless for a teenager who wants to be a poet.
4. The Highlands in Iceland's Nature (Hálendið í náttúru Íslands). A document of the land we were given but that the government is going to destroy.
5. Paper Boat Rain (Bréfbátarínginginn) by Gyrðir Elíasson. Or all of Gyrðir Elíasson for that matter.
6. Úlfhamssaga. I have been reading these medieval rhymes because of a dramatisation I'm doing for Hafnarfjarðarleikhúsið. A powerful and strange tale about a man who turns into a wolf in the winter and men who desire birds among other things.
7. Wallpapered infinity (Veggfóðraður óendanleiki) by Ísak Harðarson. As if written by a possessed typewriter. It takes you a long time to get to the bottom of it.
8. Shadow boxing (Skuggabox) by Þórarinn Eldjárn. A great and crazy work of fiction, experimental and perhaps underestimated as a piece of experimentation. Perhaps because Þórarinn is too funny.

by Ari Alexander Ergis Magnússon



Ari graduated from the Parsons Paris School of design in 1996. He has directed the short 'I am an Arab', about the Iceland government's support of the war in Iraq, and 'Possibilities', a study of the life and work of artist Sigurður Guðmundsson. He is currently shooting a film called Screaming Masterpiece about the Icelandic music scene, produced by Sigurjón Sigvatsson and featuring Sigurrós and Björk as well as a host of others.

The following films are neither classified alphabetically nor chronologically and by no means in order of merit. I have classified them according to impressions that have stuck in memory and moulded me as a filmmaker.

by Bogi Reynisson



Bogi, still in his mid teens, joined Iceland's premier Death Metal band Sororicide after they won the Músiktilaunir Battle of the Bands contest in 1992. He later became bass player with the band Stjörnukeisla, which again won Músiktilaunir. He now runs his own studio, Védurstofan, which has recorded a number of illustrious bands, among them Ríkið and The Bacon Brothers. He also works as sound engineer for the Icelandic Symphony Orchestra. Bogi has recently spawned his first offspring of flesh and blood in addition to his musical progeny.

I have no god, I have no Idols. An artist, a group, a guitarist or songwriter is no better than his/her/their best song. An atheist not only in the religious sense, but also in the way that I denounce Idolising pop artists, although I'll be the last to say they're all equal..... Anyway here's a list of Icelandic music that has influenced and inspired me through the years....

Á bleikum náttkjólum by Megas and Spilaverk Þjóðanna is something really special. The lyrics and music intertwine to make so much more than the sum of the parts. If you buy only one album in your life, make sure it's this one. Non-Icelandic speakers beware, though; there's a lot to be missed if you can't understand the lyrics.

by Andri Snær Magnason



Andri Snær started his career with publishing poetry books, one of them called Bónuspöms, and was published by supermarket giant Bónus. He then published a collection of short stories. His children's novel, The Story of the Blue Planet, gathered widespread praise and was also made into a play, now being produced in Canada. His next novel, LoveStar, also gathered much attention. His other activities include collecting Icelandic folk songs from the years 1903-70 for the CD Raddir, and editing a book by young poets where the idea was that instead of being published, copies would be distributed to coffeehouses where they would be passed from man to man. The current whereabouts of these are unknown.

At some point I wanted to prove to myself that Njála was overrated but wound up getting goosebumps three times in a row by the end of the story and thought: "Damn it, this is one helluva book." These were pure artistic goosebumps, a stalling in the storytelling where three parts which weren't directly related but worked as premonitions convinced me that the book is sheer art. It might as well be the only book in the world.

TOP
8

MOVIES

TOP
8

ALBUMS

TOP
8

BOOKS

Fogrufjoll in the Langisjor lake - Vatnajokull glacier in the distance



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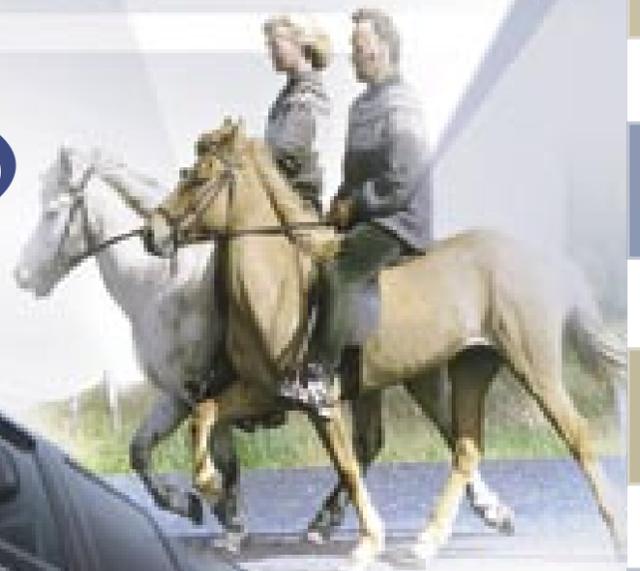
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