



The REYKJAVÍK GRAPEVINE



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THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL & ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

ESPIONAGE

In Iceland,
then and now

POLITICS

Where's Snowden's
Icelandic citizenship?

COMIX

Mompants is back!

MUSIC

Thank you,
Frank Ocean!

TRAVEL

An American in
Ísafjörður

"Siggi the Hacker" <speaks/>

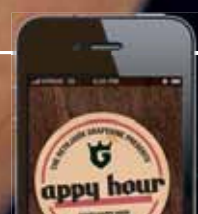
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Editorial | Haukur S. Magnússon

TRANSPARENCY FOR EVERYONE



The story of Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson is unbelievable, incredible. This much is clear: three years ago, at age seventeen, Sigurður managed to get himself deeply involved in a staggering, still unfolding turn of events that continues to have massive global repercussions to this very day. His exact level of involvement is disputed; indeed, he has made claims that have later been proven unfounded or, at best, severely exaggerated.

Not everyone likes the man on our cover, Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson. That much is clear. Some people even think magazines like Grapevine are doing a disservice to truth, justice and several important causes by interviewing the man, thus providing him with a platform to spread his purported lies and delusional fantasies.

Note that some of those very people are outspoken proponents of open information policies; of ‘transparency’ and of ‘liberating’ public and private data, making it widely

available and letting the public judge for itself. I agree with those people. I believe that organizations like WikiLeaks and people like Edward Snowden have been pivotal in changing the way we think about the world at large and how its denizens are affected by various forces and powers. Thank you, organizations like WikiLeaks and people like Edward Snowden.

I believe that information should be out in the open. I believe that everyone has the right to have his or her story heard. I believe discourse should not be controlled, or dominated by a single voice. I believe in conversation, in letting the public judge for itself.

Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson spins a fascinating yarn, and you will no doubt enjoy reading what he has to say—although you will have to take him with a grain of salt. But there’s more to it! Alongside the interview, we are running several connected stories that detail the apparently dead dream of Iceland as “whistle-blower haven,” US government agencies spying on Icelandic citizens, Icelandic government agencies spying on Icelandic citizens and the state of transparency and freedom of information in the world.

In one of those articles—“Paradise Lost Or Still In The Making”—our intern Shea Sweeney investigates why the Icelandic government has ignored whistleblower Edward Snowden’s pleas for asylum or citizenship. Her article is a great read (actually, all of our current interns kick ass—read their stuff!), and she closes with an excellent point: “This is a matter of paying attention to how governments react when they are put under a spotlight and given the opportunity to hold themselves accountable for connecting the values they claim to represent with the actions they actually take.

This applies as much to Iceland as it applies to the United States.”

Now take some time and read all of this stuff.

IS THIS OUR ‘TOURIST OF THE YEAR’?



As all of you surely know by now, we’re running a pretty amazing contest to find the **TOURIST OF THE YEAR** where one lucky person will win a trip to Iceland courtesy of Icelandair, Inspired by Iceland and yours truly! Now that the summer has hit its peak and tourism is at critical mass, we’ve gotten some really cool submissions in from readers who may be our contest winner.

Like Chris Smith from the USA check him out: “I should be tourist of the year because I think you’ll be hard-pressed to find someone that loves your country more than I do—outside of being a local of course. I love it so much, in fact, that I merged my experience travelling along the ring road with my other great love...Juggling! Here’s a link to a video blog of my experience – it’s called Juggling Around Iceland.”

Watch the video here: www.bit.ly/138LCcs.

It’s pretty great, right? But don’t stress! The contest is far from over! If you think you should be our lucky winner, head on over to www.touristoftheyear.is and submit your tale! GOOD LUCK!

TRACK OF THE ISSUE



Plúseinn – “Empire”

Download for FREE at www.grapevine.is

The words say “take it easy now” but the tone says, “fuck, what a boring summer of bad weather we’re having.” Not every electro jam has to be a feel-good hit and this new three-minute tune from Plúseinn (who also performs in FM Belfast) is way more suited for sitting in the coffee shop, staring at the window and sulking at the clouds than for chugging Crabbie’s and throwing your hands in the air like you just don’t care. And that’s great, you know, because when July is this cold and wet, we need an anthem for commiseration! Download it now and reclaim your empire.



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You may not like it, but at least it's not sponsored (no articles in the Reykjavík Grapevine are pay-for articles. The opinions expressed are the writers' own, not the advertisers').



On the cover:
Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson,
Siggi "the hacker", Q

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The Sexy, Exciting Fishing Fees Saga

By Ingibjörg Rósa Björnsdóttir

Last week was significant in Iceland’s political history. President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson decided to sign a bill into law that had caused so much controversy that more than 35 thousand Icelanders signed a petition urging him to veto it and send it to a national referendum (see: IceSave). There were heated discussions, even filibustering, in Alþingi before the bill was passed, and the subject remains the water cooler topic in every single workplace in Iceland. And it’s about fish.

Where else could a tedious, un-sexy issue like fishing fees become such a hot debate but in Iceland? It makes sense, though, as fishing amounts to just over 40% of Iceland’s GDP (down from as much as 90% a few decades ago). And what’s the fuss all about now? In short: last year, the then-reigning coalition government of the Social Democratic Alliance and Left-Green passed a bill that increased the fee charged to fishing quota owners significantly, from 4.5 billion ISK to an estimated 13 billion. In return, family allowance and interest relief were raised, plans were set in motion to start developments on transportation improvements (such as a tunnel to Norðfjörður in the Northeast), and to increase financial support to various smaller industries and trades, such as tourism, film production and the science- and technology development fund.

Women and children, no wait, quota owners first!

The fisheries and quota owners were less than thrilled at the prospect. The Federation of Icelandic Fishing Vessel Owners (LÍÚ) claimed the industry was being put to its knees; that several fisheries would go out of business and be forced to discontinue some of their fish processing plants around the country, rendering hundreds unemployed. LÍÚ organised massive protests that, among other things, entailed sailing a fleet of vessels to Reykjavík harbour—where they blew their horns incessantly for days on end—staged rallies in front of Alþingi, and pleaded to the president to veto the bill. While their efforts certainly raised a lot of attention, they were ultimately to little avail, with the bill passing despite LÍÚ’s massive outcry.

However, the full force of the new law wasn’t scheduled to take effect until later this year, resulting in traditional LÍÚ ally the Independence Party making the revoking of the law one of the main points of their platform for this spring’s election. The party won the popular vote, forming a coalition government with the election’s other victors (slash long-time



was withdrawn and never went to referendum) and the notorious IceSave bill, which was rejected two times in a referendum during the previous government’s four-year reign. Ólafur Ragnar had furthermore stated in interviews during his 2012 presidential campaign that fisheries management, a long-time point of contention for the Icelandic nation, was especially suitable for referendum.

Keep digging

The outside world also seemingly supported this outcome. When IMF delegates visited in June, as part of the fund’s regular audit of Iceland’s economy, they reviewed the fishing fees and concluded that they would not prevent investment in the sector, which has been the government’s primary argument for revoking them. In fact, the IMF recommended the fee be maintained, while noting that it was still waiting to see a detailed plan for household debt relief. As for the general public, a recent survey by newspaper Fréttablaðið revealed that 70.5% of the population opposed reducing the fees.

It should be noted that the new law does not entail completely slashing the fishing fees, or even reducing them to what they were before. According to the new bill, the estimated return to the state treasury for 2013 to 2014 is 9.8 billion ISK, 4.2 billion ISK less than what the fees would have yielded under the old law. However, while Iceland has recovered remarkably from the economic collapse over the past four years, the state’s budget is tight, and the loss of 4.2 billion ISK will make a considerable dent.

All eyes on Óli

Iceland’s proverbial eyes were thus clearly fixed on President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson. Would he or wouldn’t he? After a period of speculation, Ólafur Ragnar announced a press meeting on July 9, five days after the fishing fees bill was passed by Alþingi. In a short statement, Ólafur Ragnar announced that he would be signing the bill, declaring that he didn’t consider such a matter fit for a referendum, since technically it regarded taxation. It would be hard to maintain direct democracy and referendums on decisions that would affect taxation and state revenue, he said, explaining to the reporters in the post-statement Q&A that they had just probably misunderstood whatever it was he was supposed to have said while campaigning for presidency in 2012 (“...due to their nature, relatively few matters are better suited for a referendum as those to do with the quota system,” in case you were wondering).

Iceland’s constitution is a rather confusing document. There are no clear rules or regulations regarding what can and can’t be channelled to a referendum, so for every one of his decisions, Ólafur Ragnar (who remains the only Icelandic president to have used this veto power) usually just goes by his own interpretation or “gut feeling.”

And this is exactly what he did.

Photo by Sigtryggur Ari Jóhannsson/DV

“A new petition has been launched, urging Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson to resign from his post as president. At the time of writing, it has gathered just over 1,600 people have signed.”

collaborators) the Progressive Party in May.

It came as no surprise, then, when the new government approved a new bill presented by the Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture on June 12, which effectively revoked the fishing fee law and reduced the fees significantly. The newly instated minister, Sigurður Ingi Jóhannsson, insisted that by doing so he was responding to the fact that smaller fisheries could not pay such high fees without considerable loss of income, because their profits this year were so far much lower than had been estimated. In effect, Sigurður Ingi went as far as saying that last year’s bill was “technically flawed.”

Considering that the Progressive Party’s campaign promise was to immediately tackle the problems of indebted homeowners—it was in fact their biggest platform point—many were startled when the coalition announced that homeowners’ debts couldn’t

be “corrected” right away, and that they’d form a committee to look into the matter in the fall.

This former priority of the Progressives, which arguably won them the seat of Prime Minister, was postponed, due to “lack of available funds,” while a priority was placed on passing the new fishing fee bill—which severely limits the state’s income—during Alþingi’s short summer session.

Large portions of the general public were, to say the least, not amused. A petition was launched on Iceland’s National Day, June 17, to protest the decision and challenge the president to veto the bill if it were passed by Alþingi, forcing a referendum where the nation would make the final decision on the matter. The petitioners’ hopes were high, as President Ólafur Ragnar had set a precedent by refusing to sign new laws three times while in office: a bill meant to restrict corporate ownership of media in 2004 (the bill

They Said What?

by Ingibjörg Rósa Björnsdóttir



“If you don’t like gay people you must really hate straight people—because they make them.”

– Reykjavík Mayor Jón Gnarr on his public Facebook page, July 12

Mayor Jón Gnarr has long been a staunch supporter of gays, bisexuals and trans people, showing his support by—amongst other things—annually participating in the Gay Pride march in drag. The Mayor was outraged by the anti-gay laws recently passed in Russia, where individuals can now be fined for promoting information “directed at forming non-traditional sexual setup,” and where it is now illegal to say gay relationships are equal to heterosexual ones. Jón Gnarr added in his status update: “Dear Duma. Your religion is more dangerous than homosexuality. Gays are fun. You and your church are just scary.” He went a step further last week, proposing to the Reykjavík city council that the city end its relationship with Moscow, its sister city since 2007. The proposal is still being discussed but Jón Gnarr’s opinion has won praise from the international gay community, with many, many commenters on Grapevine’s story stating that Reykjavík has one gutsy Mayor!



“We knew about this rule before we went but simply didn’t reach an agreement on who should give up his delegation seat for a woman.”

– Progressive Party MP Karl Garðarsson, Alþingi, July 2

We were all cringing with embarrassment a few weeks back, when the Icelandic delegation at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg was scolded for failing to include a single female representative—according to PACE’s rules, at least one delegate has to be a member of “the under-represented sex” in the nation’s parliament.

The Icelandic delegation consisted of Karl Garðarsson, newly elected MP for the Progressive Party; Brynjar Níelsson, newly elected MP for the Independence Party, and Ögmundur Jónasson, MP for the Left-Green Movement and former Minister of the Interior.

When Brynhildur Björnsdóttir, MP for the Bright Future Party, enquired why the delegation had made this mistake, Karl answered in all honesty that...the gang couldn’t decide on who should miss the trip to Strasbourg. What a great vote of confidence in your female party members! Karl then added that somebody should be appointed by the Parliament to handle such matters and make a ruling when the parties can’t reach an agreement on their own. Really? You can’t solve it yourselves? All it takes is for one guy to raise his hand and say: “Hey, I’m not indispensable, I’m sure the ladies in my party can do just as good a job as me! Here have my seat.” *insert swear words*

JÖR

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SO WHAT'S THIS POLICE BRUTALITY I KEEP HEARING ABOUT?

by Kári Tulinius

A couple of weekends ago, a police officer was filmed having an altercation with a drunken woman in downtown Reykjavík. This video, once posted online, spread among Icelandic internet users like a clip of a cat licking an ice cream cone and sneezing. Shot from above, the video shows an extremely inebriated woman who has fallen down in the middle of the shopping street Laugavegur, right in front of a police van. She gets up and tries to stagger away, while the van edges closer to her, eventually clipping her with the side view mirror and car door. She goes to the driver side window and may either spit on the police car, or get spat on by police.



Illustration: Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir

At least it's spittle, the least gross of all the bodily fluids. What happens next, does the officer restrain her?

Not so much restrain her as drag her by her arm and throw her into the nearest bench, specifically the metal armrest of said bench. Then he sat on her while another officer handcuffed her before throwing her into the back of the van. At best this looked like grossly unprofessional behaviour, at worst an attempt to cause grievous bodily harm. This came as a great surprise to most as—unlike in many other countries where police are generally viewed with suspicion—Icelanders generally hold theirs in high regard.

Icelanders are finally learning the lesson NWA preached all these years ago.

The Icelandic police have come by their reputation honestly. If it can be said that they have

had an image problem, it is that they were considered too damn nice. The last time an Icelandic police officer went viral, it was a photo of an officer who was teaching some skater kids how to do a proper ollie.

An important police skill, especially in these straitened economic times; you never know when they'll have to exchange their squad cars for skateboards.

The best example of the high esteem most Icelanders generally hold their police force in can be seen during the “Pots and Pans Revolution,” which followed in the wake of the 2008 financial crash, when opinion of the Icelandic state and its symbols was at an all time low. When rocks were thrown at the parliament building, which was surrounded by police, protesters formed a guard around the police, to dissuade any further rock throwing. So this video came as quite a shock.

Like that time a police officer tazered me in my wibbly wobbles for looking at him funny?

Maybe not quite that much of a shock. Though this caused widespread outrage in Icelandic society, there have been some who defended it, most notably a number of police officers. Snorri Magnússon, the head of the Police Federation of Iceland, defended the officer in the video by saying that everything had been done according to procedure, it was just “unfortunate that this bench had been on Laugavegur, and thus the incident looked bad.”

Next they'll be saying it was the bench that hit her.

Funnily enough that is almost what police officer Gísli Jökull Gíslason said in an opinion piece in the newspaper Fréttablaðið entitled “Faultless Arrest.” He says that the method

of arrest used was “not without flaw in so far as the woman bumped into a bench, but that everything else was done by the book.” Which is a bit like saying after a plane crash that everything went according to plan except for the engine catching fire.

They should've arrested the bench.

Among the people who have criticized the arrest are judo instructor and former policeman Jón Óðinn Waage, who said that “those who think these are proper procedures should not work for the police.” Another Jón who is also a martial arts instructor and former policeman, Jón Viðar Arnþórsson, also criticised the procedure.

You know how the old saying goes, those who can't do, teach, those who can't teach, teach martial arts and are former policemen named Jón.

I am pretty sure that is not an old saying. The police officer in the video has been suspended from duty while his conduct is reviewed, and the woman is reportedly suing for damages. Though the public was shocked, it is unlikely that Icelanders will lose confidence in their police force as it is routinely among the institutions most trusted by Icelanders according to surveys. How much Icelanders trust benches has not been researched.

JULY

NEWS IN BRIEF

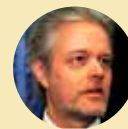
by Parker Yamasaki



RYAN GOSLING. There, we got that out of our systems. **EDWARD SNOWDEN.** Okay, that one's out too. Well, to be honest, Snowden was never really allowed in the system, as **the proposal to grant Snowden Icelandic citizenship was vetoed**, which means it can't be voted on until after Alþingi takes its summer holiday. Could this have something to do with the **letter sent to Iceland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the US Government**, requesting Snowden's immediate arrest should he turn up in Iceland? Maybe. Or perhaps it was **Ban Ki-moon's visit to Iceland**, during which he openly condemned Snowden's public actions for redirecting attention away from the real issue at hand: vast and illegal electronic surveillance by the US Government. Oh yeah, that's right. Sorry Ed, hope Russia is cool for now.



While Snowden is getting cosy over in Russia, mayor Jón Gnarr is publicly attempting to cut ties with Reykjavík's “sister city,” Moscow. On June 11 Gnarr **submitted a proposal to end Reykjavík's relationship with Moscow** on account of the Russian capital's stance on gay rights. Maybe Elín Hirst, the Independence Party MP, would be better received in the Russian capital after being **sent home from a Parliament meeting to change trousers** because her outfit was just not fabulous enough.



Apparently Iceland's got some image issues. Can you blame us? If it's not blue jeans in government gatherings, it's the **approval of a plan submitted by the Muslim Association to build a mosque in Sogamýri**. Isn't that right, Ólafur? **Ólafur F. Magnússon, the former mayor of Reykjavík, publicly expressed worry over the mosque's approval**, stating that “Muslims here don't seem to have any difficulties financing the project, receiving aid from Muslim organisations abroad. Those organisations might want to increase

Continues over



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Europe Needs To Radically Rethink Crisis Management



Huginn F. Þorsteinsson is a former policy advisor to Iceland's former Minister of Finance, Steingrímur J. Sigfússon and currently a philosopher and Adjunct Professor at the University of Akureyri

In Europe, the seemingly endless debate on how to tackle the financial crisis—which is in its fifth year—continues. But as time moves on, the need for a frank discussion of the prognosis is needed. How is Europe to survive the crisis? Some commentators found relief when European authorities relaxed the fiscal targets of six countries, adding that they finally came to their senses about the harmful nature of draconian austerity. However, the sudden turnaround may be yet another short break until the next storm of bad news hits us. OK, there's less austerity, but then what? Is this change in policy due to the need for allocating more funds to ailing financial institutions, or is it a sign of a change in tactics in how Europe deals with its crises?

Europe is no longer fighting contagion risk by isolating and maintaining a financial crisis within a member state as the impact is felt across the continent. The days where individual member states of the EU proclaimed that they were not as bad as the last victim of the financial crisis are past. What is becoming apparent is that even though we solve the financial or banking crisis, Europe still faces

a deeper and even harder-to-tackle social crisis. Of course, any progress on the financial crisis would help solve the social one, but it would not suffice. Business will not resume as usual, even though it would be possible to spark some growth. Something like a Gestalt-switch from the bank balance sheets to social reality in tackling the crisis is needed.

In his Theory of Justice, John Rawls argued that a rational agent would never undergo a social contract that allowed for inequality unless it benefited those who are the worst off. The opposite is happening. Recently in Paris, the OECD expressed that its main worries regarded rising inequality, and according to its studies the "current economic crisis further widens the gap between rich and poor," with the sole exception of Iceland. Images of riots in Sweden, once a paradigm of social equality, are a wake-up call as to how serious the situation is getting. They portray the divide between the haves and the have-nots; of mostly angry young men sensing grave injustice over their lack of opportunities in countries of plenty. Eurostat shows that unemployment is still on the rise, and has yet

to peak in many of the hardest hit countries. Youth unemployment numbers are especially shocking, with the average at well over 20% and four nations suffering from youth unemployment numbers over 40%. And recent news of bank bonuses and banks assisting in tax evasion—in the midst of the tax payer bank bail-out—act as jet fuel on tensions arising from down in southern Europe up into the Nordic heartland.

The main question for Europe is: how do we get everyone out of the crisis? One rarely hears a politician argue that to survive a crisis it is pivotal to focus on how to get the people most sensitive to the economic shocks through it. Former US president, George W. Bush, once worked by a good motto, albeit applying it to educational reform: "No child left behind." It points to the right direction—the need for social inclusion. When facing difficult decisions on budgets, the measures implemented need to be viewed from the standpoint of the most vulnerable in our societies.

All austerity is not bad, but it is rather how it is implemented, which is the key point. This does not mean that it is possible to shelter the welfare system completely, rather trying to minimize cuts by focusing first on progressive taxation and trimming expenditure in maintenance, investment and administration. This is the path that was taken in Iceland in tackling the mountainous 14% deficit that resulted from the 2008 economic meltdown, and

it succeeded, not merely halving it in a matter of four years—but closing the gap entirely without bringing the economy to a standstill. In 2011–2013, Iceland saw more growth than most European countries and one of the best unemployment figures at around 5% in May 2013. By relying on principles of fairness in burden sharing through taxation, low-income groups were sheltered and the most vulnerable groups were not left behind as the OECD and others have confirmed.

European politicians should therefore be vehemently fighting for the financial transaction tax, as it is a good example of where more revenue can come from financial institutions to minimize budget suffering. The seemingly tough stance on tax avoidance of multinational corporations and tax havens is welcome, but the problem is a reminder of how wrong-headed the burden sharing in our societies has become.

What is particularly worrying is that the track record on solving the financial crisis is such that the prospects of a quick resolution of the social crisis are bleak. However politicians can start off by setting the tone differently. The technocrats preaching orthodox measures are not the way forward and it is possible to give people hope without selling out to the populist cause. And the public desperately needs to sense that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Our New Government: Uniting The Left?



Valur Gunnarsson is one of those guys that founded The Reykjavík Grapevine ten years ago. When he's not sleeping, Valur likes to write novels and articles and opinion columns. He also sings a lot, and travels to his heart's content.

At least our new government is wasting no time. You have to give them that. First, destroy public radio and television as independent media sources by making their heads politically appointed. Then, seriously consider arming the police with tasers, which would no doubt have given the 'pots and pans revolution' another name, had they been in use back in early 2009.

Now, you can get on with your real job, which is transferring public money to the wealthy few. One of the major achievements of the last government was to lessen income inequalities for the first time in living memory. Judging by their first actions, the new government is set to change this.

There are two reasons why this latest right-wing government is particularly dangerous. First, the Independence Party/Progressive Party coalition, Iceland's "naturally governing parties" through the ages, had to spend four years in the wilderness in opposition (six for the latter). This seems unfair to those born to rule and has pissed them off royally. The last time the Independence Party was in power, they chose the Social-Democratic Alliance as coalition partners. That was supposed to present capitalism with a human face. This time, there is no such pretence.

Second, after being voted back into power less than five years after bank-

rupting the country, they really do feel like they have a mandate to do as they please. Any mistakes, after all, will soon be forgiven. The results are predictable. Decreased taxes on fisheries owners, the very wealthiest Icelanders. And how do we pay for this? By cutting dental care for children, to name but one example. Or not giving nurses the raise they had been promised, to name another. Or by privatising health care and cutting student loans. Nothing seems safe.

After all the conflict surrounding the last government, people seemed ready to slip into apathy under this one. This, however, has failed to happen. A new law intended to reduce fees on those who profit from harvesting the nation's fish stock (which are in public ownership, but rented out) caused an uproar.

Roughly 35,000 people—over a tenth of the entire population—signed a petition to keep the old laws (and fees) in place. This, however, did not impress President

Ólafur Ragnar. After having introduced the idea of petitions as a way to influence government by repeatedly refusing to sign the IceSave bill, he seems now to have sided firmly with the current government. Petitions seem to have been rendered meaningless. But can the genie be put back in the bottle?

It seems that the new government has already managed to do something that the former government couldn't: they've galvanised the left. It would be very unwise for a President and a Prime Minister, both of whom were elected as a direct result of opposition to IceSave, to now refuse to listen to the people.

We know what happened last time a right-wing government refused to listen. It is unlikely that the next revolution will be as peaceful as the last. A well-armed police force will make sure of that.

the influence of Islam in Iceland, as well as in other countries." Can't we build something more in keeping with "Icelandic national culture?" Something along the lines of a tribute to Nordic gods, as was Ólafur's suggestion? Or maybe a giant statue of Björk?



The timing would be appropriate, considering July 5 marked the twenty-year anniversary of Björk's first solo album, 'Debut.' And come on, who doesn't love Björk? Well, not everybody, apparently. Michael Cragg, a journalist at The Guardian recalls Rolling Stone's disapproval of the iconic Icelandic artist's debut, complaining that she "abandoned rock n' roll" for something "painfully eclectic."



But like they say, you can't please everybody. I guess President Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson had this in mind when he approved the bill to lowered fishing fees, despite a petition signed by 35,000 Icelanders in opposition to the bill. As the Minister of Health representing the Independence Party put it, matters of finance and taxation are not issues for the general public to decide on. Better to ask forgiveness than permission, right? Speaking of asking for forgiveness, sorry about the whale meat, Hamburg. According to RUV, the Evergreen Line carrying shipments of whale meat to Asia via Hamburg has been sent back to Iceland, as it is illegal to transport whale products through Germany.



Nonetheless, it seems the whale meat fluke hasn't upset Germany too badly, as Germans make up the second largest percentage of tourists this summer at 13.5%, falling just behind the US (19.6%) and ahead of the British (7.8%). It's a good thing we've got all of those hotels in the works, right Reykjavík? Wrong, says Sverrir P. Sverrisson, chair of the Resident's Association. According to Sverrir the prolifera-

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The Data Narrative



Smári McCarthy is an Icelandic/Irish innovator and information activist.

Over the last several years, there has been a lot of interest in marketing Iceland as a good place for storing data. The logic is simple—to operate a data centre you need three things: reliable energy, reliable connectivity and good jurisdiction.

Iceland's energy supplies are notoriously plentiful and largely renewable. The country's power grid is well planned and redundant in most places—only the Westfjords and Northeast cannot provide reliable 99.999% availability, otherwise known as 'five nines' in the data centre industry. In terms of connectivity, Iceland currently has three big fat fibre optic cables linking it to the world. It could be a lot better, but it's really not bad.

And then there's jurisdiction. The laws of the land determine how things function within it, which contributes to the overall appeal of the country for foreign investment, living conditions, quality of life, and so on. While many countries openly compete with each other on these grounds, from consumerism-heavy ones like Scan-

dinavia, with high taxes but high quality of living, to boutique banking havens like the Caymans and Tuvalu, there has yet to be a country in the world that has promoted global competitiveness on the basis of the best human rights, data protection and legal transparency.

It is not believed that transparency or human rights are selling points. This happens, despite the current trend of promoting 'green energy' and 'corporate responsibility' as a marketing strategy. But I can't blame people for not understanding that. It just isn't part of our general consensus narrative yet. The general consensus narrative currently says that human rights are nice but don't impact business's bottom line and therefore are relegated squarely to the hippy segment of political discourse. Transparency, accountability, privacy: these are things for crazy activists and those with tinfoil hats. Right?

It's time to alter this narrative, methinks. The importance of information as a non-scarce, non-rival passive commodity

to the global economy is growing so fast it's making people's heads spin. Governments of the world are reacting against promoting more transparency and greater access to information, and instead are discussing cyberwarfare strategy—I currently advise two governments on the subject (the cheap version of my advice: don't do it!)

The pressing need right now is somewhere safe for users to store their data. Handing it off to cloud providers like Google, Amazon or Facebook is a very particular form of insanity: Users of these services need to understand where their data is, and be assured that their data won't be in Indonesia an hour from now just because it's cheaper. People need to have sovereignty over their data. The same applies to companies and governments.

When your government decides to use cloud services, they are potentially violating the rights of the general public and certainly posing a major threat to national security. When companies decide it's cheaper and easier to use Google Docs or Dropbox than to run their own collaboration servers, they're relying on whichever data centre they're talking to at that time to have five nines, otherwise their staff can't get the job done, or worse: they might be breaking any number of data protection statutes and putting the state's secrets at

the mercy of the government in whichever country the data is in.

Of course this stuff is complicated. It's messy and it's weird. We also don't possess a language framework for having conversations about it. Our ability to talk about networks is limited by the fact that until about a hundred years ago, nobody had ever dreamt of one. The closest thing we had to a vocabulary for describing them was what we used to explain how your neighbour is related to your grandmother. So we need to sit down, as a civilization, discuss these issues, figure out what is to be done, and build a general consensus narrative around data.

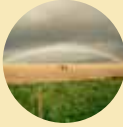
There should be pamphlets called 'Your data and you!' and movies where the protagonist is chasing privacy violations. There should be viral campaigns about transparency, rock ballads about accountability, and above all, there should be more dialogue about how much this stuff matters.

In more ways than one, the problem is that political actors in Iceland are largely unwilling to confront these issues and treat them with the severity they deserve. That should change. Some things in the world are simple. For everything else, we have the Pirate Party.

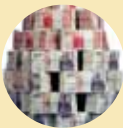
NEWS IN BRIEF

Continued

tion of guesthouses and hotels in downtown Reykjavík is disrupting to the general cycle of residents, not to mention has self-destructive effects for the tourism industry. "It's not exciting if the city is just hotels and guest houses," Sverrir says, stating the (seemingly) obvious.



If tourism is not a strong enough tie to the mainland, how about building a 1,170 km long submarine cable to carry electricity from Iceland to the UK? According to the National Energy Authority, Iceland's electricity output could be doubled, or even tripled, if Iceland is willing to exploit a few environmentally sensitive areas here and there. But before we dip into that buzzing hot pot of electrically charged profits, we need to realise the potential environmental impacts of such a project, warns Minister of Industry, Ragnheiður Elín Arnadóttir. We'll just consider the cancellation of Raudasandur Festival due to "extreme weather" a wind-whipped warning. Luckily, the local schoolhouse and pirate-themed bar were willing to open their doors to disappointed festivalgoers, effectively saving the day.



The struggling public sector directors and higher-ups have finally gotten that much needed pay raise following new public wage counselling. After the financial crash of 2008, the left-wing government passed laws stating that no public director or manager would receive pay that exceeds the Prime Minister's, leading to pay cuts for 42 public sector managers. In June, however, the newly elected right-wing government decided that the higher-ups should get a raise to keep up with today's wage index and dated it back to August 2012. This led to many of the managers getting a pay rise of 6-20%, but the CEO of the state's power company Landsvirkjun, one Hörður Arnarson, must come away from this a happy man. Hörður is now the highest paid public servant after a 21% pay increase, with a whopping 1.6 million ISK per month! Ay Caramba! (TGB)



Comic: Lóa Hjálmtýsdóttir



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			10:00	10:00	10:00					
13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	13:00	
			14:00	14:00	14:00					
		17:00*	17:00	17:00	17:00	17:00*				
			20:30**	20:30						

* From 15 May to 15 September

** From 15 June to 31 July



Elding
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Honouring The Fallen

Reykjavík’s very first Viking festival

By Tómas Gabríel Benjamin

For the last few years, the only full sized Viking festival has been held in Hafnafjörður by Rimmugýgur society, but now their Reykjavík counterparts, Einherjar, have stepped up their game. They had planned to host their first festival in 2014, but after losing one of their dear friends Ingólfur Júlíusson to leukaemia earlier in the year, they decided to speed up preparations and stage an inaugural festival this year.



Before the festival, I met up with the earl of Einherjar, Gunnar Víking Ólafsson. Sitting down in one of Hressingarskálinn’s booths, the broad shouldered, two-metre tall giant looks like he would be more

The festival is named after Ingólfur Arnason, but the first edition honours their friend Ingólfur

Einherjar, I would have thought them to fit in with another band of bearded men who routinely say: “winter is coming.”

Gunnar and Tryggvi quickly identify themselves as storytellers, teachers and Viking enthusiasts, but do not claim to be academic scholars. Gunnar’s interest in the culture came from growing up close to the statue of Viking explorer Ingólfur Arnason. Feeling that Icelanders were not connecting with their cultural roots, he wanted to give the City of Reykjavik something to be proud of, promoting this ancient shared heritage.

The birth of Ingólfshátíð

comfortable with a sword by his side and a drinking horn in his hands than a glass of coke. Sitting next to him is his cousin, Tryggvi Þorleifur Laurum, who is equally blond and bearded, and we converse in great depth about the culture of Vikings and the upcoming festival. If they wouldn’t have their hands full with

To this end, Gunnar organised the Ingólfshátíð festival in Hljómskálagarður public park. It is named after Ingólfur Arnason, but the first festival honours their friend Ingólfur Júlíusson. The city of Reykjavik was supportive and eager to make the festival happen, and most of the Einherjar team volunteered their

work. Gunnar gathered artisans and woodcarvers and a horse master to bring steeds to parade through the park with fully armoured riders. He even managed to get a British medieval society to join in and help them out.

Gunnar and Tryggvi were beaming with enthusiasm as we finished our drinks. They spent a lot of their resources travelling and researching the subject in order to paint a more complete picture for others to enjoy. They may have been overly optimistic about the historical accuracy and completeness of said vision, but I was excited to see what would happen.

Kids losing their shit, Viking style

Checking out the second and less rainy day of the festival, I was immediately astonished with how much they managed to get done with so little, and how buzzing with activity the festival was. Nested on the East side of the park, there were six

tents with large and heavy wooden beams, one memorial tent, and an area sectioned off for the horses and mock fights.

By one tent, children could have a go at each other with wooden weapons and shields. A costumed man was acting as judge, teacher and commentator, explaining the rules briefly before spurring those who lost to let out a good death cry.

There was also an old Viking game of Kubb laid out, which involves hurling sticks at targets. Despite today’s children being raised on video games, they absolutely lost their shit when their turn ended, enamoured with old-school analogue entertainment.

A longboat in the pond

Another tent had helmets, shields and swords on display for people who wanted to see what they’d look like dressed up as Vikings. Several of the other tents had market stalls with memorabilia and jewellery, but

there was unfortunately no food or drink to be found.

The final tent, sitting apart from the rest, was a shrine to the aforementioned Ingólfur Júlíusson. Its wooden beams were darkened, almost charcoal, and members of Einherjar took turns as honour guards outside it with a spear in hand. Inside rested a black and white picture of Ingólfur, as well as his sword and helmet.

The whole festival was booming with potential, but Tryggvi told me it was “held together with duct tape.” Einherjar, and the people I spoke to, all want the festival to be bigger next year. The organisers had learned a lot from the experience, and even talked about getting a longboat into the pond! And I don’t know about you, but I would love to see that!

Photos by Axel Sigurðarson

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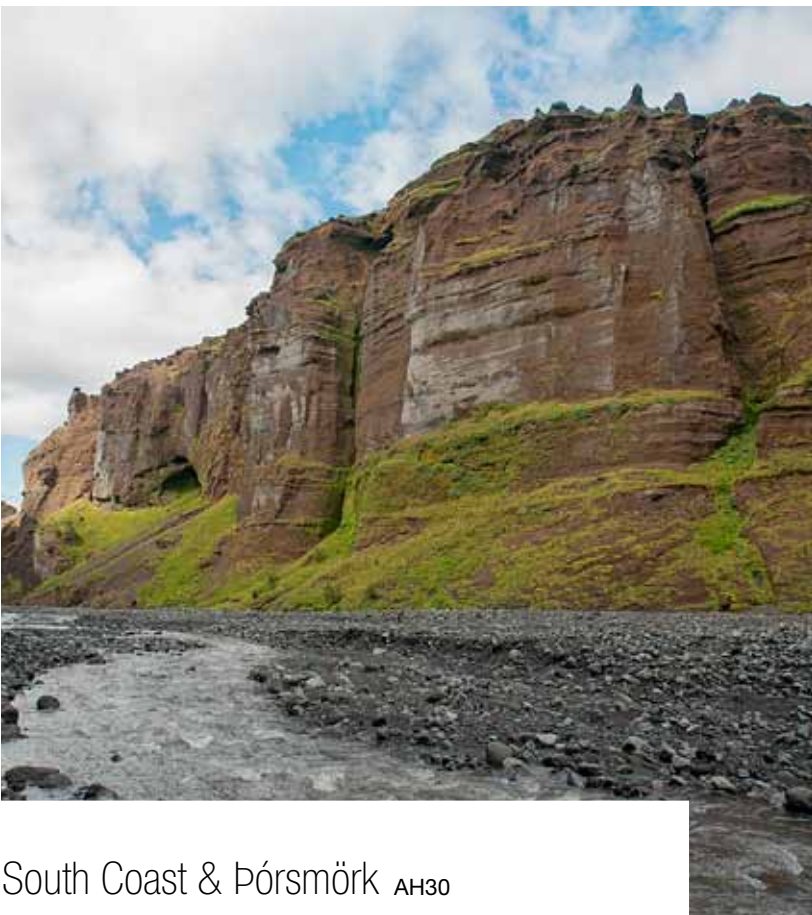
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SEVEN YEARS AGO

Hooray! We turned ten this year. For a humble street rag like Grapevine, turning ten is a pretty big deal—we barely expected to make it to ten issues (and, indeed, all of our contemporaries Reykjavík's street rag market have long since bid farewell... miss u, Undirtónar!). To celebrate our decade of existence,

we thought we'd get a little introspective and spotlight some choice articles from the past that are for some reason significant, accompanied by commentary and even updates. Call it a "blast from the past" or "a look into the dark cauldron of time" if you want to—we call it fun. Thus, for ten issues, expect a page dedi-

cated to a year of Grapevine's existence, starting one issue ago, with a look back into magical 2003.

This issue is a look at 2006, our fourth year of existence when Bart Cameron was editor (and Sveinn Birkir). The articles below are printed as they were printed then, typos and everything.



In 2006, I was in a panic. I'd started as a journalist with the Grapevine in 2004. Then-editor Valur Gunnarsson had allowed me to do the kind of music writing I always wished I could have had access to as a kid. In 2005 I became the editor, and we started building some momentum. I had a pet, crazy theory that Iceland's "boom" was smoke and mirrors, and that the country was being looted. I shovelled out editorials and articles poking the bear of right wing Iceland. We got extremely lucky, and we suddenly had a number of journalists to help us start to explore where Iceland was going.

I'm most proud of the writers we helped develop in 2006 with a workshop thing we did every day. Haukur, Sveinn Birkir, Vala, Sindri and Gunnar Hrafn, who is now on TV, Eiríkur Norðdahl... Some great writers learned their craft in 2006 (there were other writers who didn't need our help but helped us, including Ian Watson and Steinunn Jakobsdóttir).

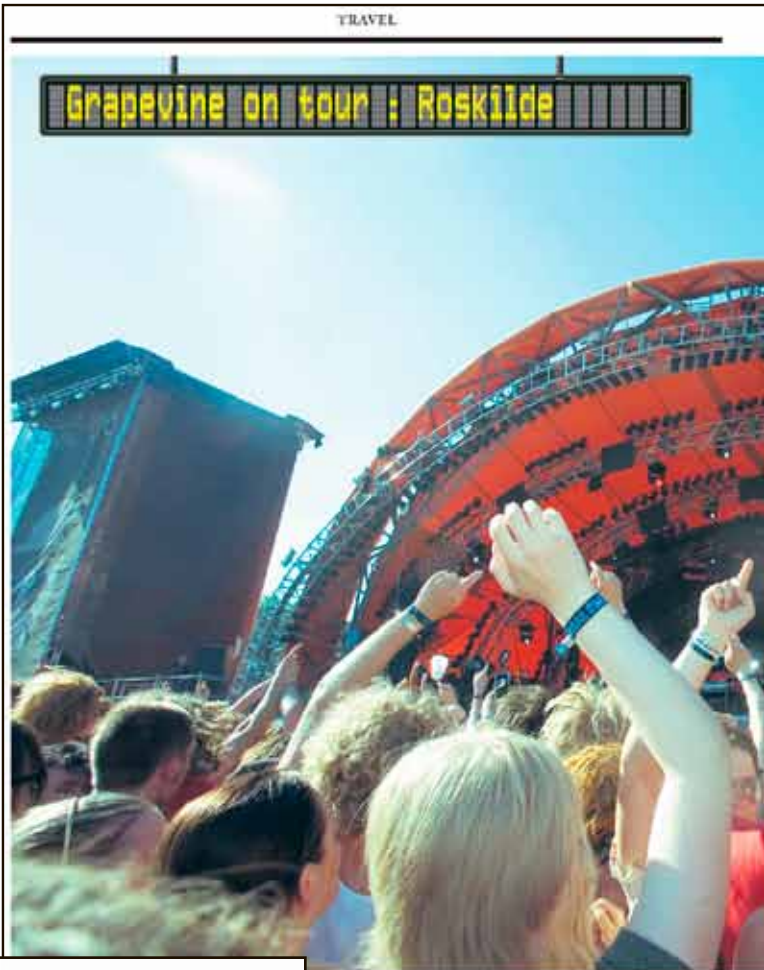
For actual writing, Paul Fontaine's article about the final days of the base at Keflavík and a murder that took place there was truly brilliant. Sindri's fantastic article on the Roskilde Festival was also great.

The panic I mentioned: I was sure we needed more revenue to keep going. I wanted four years with these writers. I thought we'd be a Village Voice for the 21st Century. It's embarrassing to mention now that I was begging for TV deals, book deals, anything to keep our writers on staff. I should also say panic led to one of our strangest decisions—and to one of the best pieces of writing I got to do. We decided to try to prove that we could write about life outside of Iceland. That led to me, our photographer and our publisher flying to the Mississippi Delta to cover the aftermath of Katrina.

This is on my mind because a friend I made there, T Model Ford, a blues musician who lived through damn near every travesty of the 20th century with fearlessness, joy and a mix of honesty and bullshit died today. In 2006, I was desperate to help Icelanders explore their own nation through a foreigner's eyes. In 2006, thanks to this beautiful magazine, I got to visit my home country and see it with a foreigner's eyes, and shit do I appreciate that opportunity.

We never found that extra revenue. We did keep some great writers, and those writers made the paper into what I'd always hoped it would be. I think the behind the scenes stuff from 2006 helped that happen.

Bart Cameron



Lost and Found in the Devil's Country

PART 3 OF 4
Tearing the American Egypt

By Bart Cameron | Photos by Sindri



Loving My Religion

One spiritual destination was a long time coming. The three of us who have flown to Mississippi from Iceland are the only people on the road not headed to church. We have spent the last three evenings with these musicians who have made an attempt to hide their religiousness in women, liquor. Just as the other musicians are unashamed about drinking, even singing and dancing in fights, there are musicians about crack cocaine and guns among the most talented of the younger generations.

When hearing the stories of murder and house arrest, the musicians among us, the white music fans who have come to see the best of Mississippi blues, often mutter the words "Jesus" and "Jesus Christ" in response—when you master a religious name enough, with so much attachment, you come to an understanding of the Southern phrase "losing my religion," even when you never had any to begin with.

Our one spiritual is an accidental stop at a tourist destination. The pull of the Big City Blues, some of the white people we came across in Clarksdale, tell us that any visit to Mississippi would be incomplete without visiting the famous Shuck Up Inn, a blues-themed "house and breakfast" made up of a row of shotgun shacks and cotton lines set up with modern conveniences.



After the Flood

By Bart Cameron | Photos by Sindri

On August 25, 2005, Hurricane Katrina collided with the Mississippi Gulf, all but destroying one of America's oldest cities, New Orleans, and devastating a part of the country already experiencing tough times. The Gulf states have an old rule in American culture: the home of rock n' roll, blues, and jazz is the melting pot of the literary culture that produced America's most celebrated author, William Faulkner. The Gulf states also provide the country with oil and, naturally, a large percentage of its soldiers. As America melted at the immediate aftermath, the state led by Katrina, despite being richest in culture, became the poorest, with social inequities and inadequate infrastructure overlooked for the last few decades.

As a tourist magazine in one of the richest countries in the world, the Grapevine, with the help of sponsor Lantana, decided to put out money, time and energy into promoting the culture of the state of American culture. Our eight days of travel through lands devastated by hurricane and plans that "don't need no hurricanes to have hard times," was not an act of charity. The South, particularly the Delta of America's great river, is as distinct and rich as any place in the world, even as one million of the people who make up this culture look to flee, a third exodus from America's Egypt.

The easiest way to get to the Gulf and the Mississippi Delta from Iceland is to take a direct flight to Chicago, Florida. From Orlando, Mapquest gives us a route of about 1,000 miles to Tallahassee, Florida (2 hours 45 minutes) and from there to Mobile, Alabama (3 hours 45 minutes)—the closest city to New Orleans with hotels that are not full of evacuees and are not too damaged to be used. Arriving in early December, after the first presidential attempt to these evacuees out of the lands that were offering temporary shelter, we realized that Mapquest had not planned for roads choked with Army Corps of Engineers and the already legendary FEMA trailers—brand new, and, by the looks of them, well-used, travel trailers driven from their manufacturing to help get evacuees out of tents and into some housing before winter set in.

"Well, I hope you have a reservation," we're told as we pass through security signs at a chair held in one of the many sprawling suburbs that make up Mobile's exodus zone.



The Gh

Collateral

By PAUL F. FORD

On March 15th, meet made an an decades long ch close and left it effective October Keflavik will be a few "submarine withdrawing the ter squadron and personnel.

Response fr was mixed. Prim an expressed an (although he we the close to happ Leftist-Green P base in Iceland J. Sigfusson was all sides, propos scenario for inc increasing the st team, the Viking NATO countrie

But the way truly under Leid over 200 Icelan Counting outal approaches 1,000 country soon la Couple this with nenty provides r government is a self—and the co greater. And the Grapevine spok that their elect place.

Iceland joined N understanding develop a military of its own. Built in 1951, the NATO base at Keflavik has provided for the defence of the country and was an important outpost during the Cold War. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of military

the dispute between the U one seems to be able to ag form Iceland's defence also Leftist-Green Party of grinnur Sigfusson told the

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his fellow man atrocities like November Rain, a little professionalism couldn't have hurt.

Disgusted with the disrespect the old man was showing the 60,000 people watching, I decided to go and wait for Sigur Rós in the Arena tent nearby, only to find that they hadn't started yet, and some incredibly terrible band was playing. Now, I hate a lot of music, but this was indescribably bad. It sounded like something college students might accidentally play when not smoking pot or masturbating to pictures of Natalie Portman... good God, they were bad. Haphazard melodies, awkward dancing, smug grins, banal guitars, unnecessary keyboards and general lameness flooded the stage and audience, they were so bad that you could practically smell the shit wafting in the air as they played, a scent so strong it almost overpowered the earthy tang of weed in the enclosed tent.

I checked my schedule to find out who these musical toilet plungers were, only to discover I was at the Odeon tent, not the Arena, and was in fact watching Clap Your Hands Say Yeah! while Sigur Rós were on the other side of the concert area from me. I sighed gently at my own obtuseness and made my way through the crowd still watching Guns 'N' Roses attempting to improvise their way out of their Axl-lessness, with extraordinarily bad results.

When I finally got to the Arena the place was absolutely packed, with the crowd extending far beyond the actual edge of the tent and into the yard surrounding it. My view was perfectly dismal, but from what I heard, Sigur Rós' show was particularly illustrious, and well worthy of the massive crowd they had drawn. Their songs practically beamed with a crisp and lamped-up energy that was well received by the largely Icelandic audience, and I did feel a distinct sense of pride, as well as surprise at just how many Icelanders had come.

The fact that they would travel 1,300 miles to see a band from their own shores seems to offer a glimpse of

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16:15, 16:45 & 17:30

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16:30, 18:15, 21:00
& 22:00*

From Reykjavik
to Blue Lagoon

09:00, 10:00, 11:00,
12:00, 13:00, 14:00,
15:00, 16:00, 17:00,
18:00, 19:00, 20:00*
& 21:00*

From Blue Lagoon
to Reykjavik

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I Can, Will And Shall

GÆS is the first café run by disabled people in Iceland

By Tómas Gabríel Benjamin



Right beside the Tjarnarbíó theatre, you'll find a café called GÆS. The brand new café sits by the pond and offers refuge from the ever-present Reykjavík rain (what the locals call "summer"). The coffee is good, the environment is great—but there are other things that set it apart from your run of the mill Reykjavík café.

From the outside, the building GÆS inhabits looks more like a continental inner city church than a café, wedged in between two other buildings, making the best use of the space available. Inside, you find that the café's hall features one long table, and a few smaller ones instead of pews. A working piano rests where you'd expect a church organ, and the counter is located where one would imagine an altar. It may as well be an altar for the coffee hungry, as guests can queue up to receive holy refills of drip coffee. There is a side function room that could equally host prayer sessions or business meetings. And the roof is even a gable roof, with large windows to warm up café guests and churchgoers alike.

This, however, is where the church analogy ends. The furniture is eclectically gathered from multiple sources, and the walls are adorned with brilliantly coloured strips of fabric. The piano can be played by whoever wants to play, and the record player comes with a stack of vinyl for the customers' perusing and playing pleasures.

Most importantly they have a very progressive equal opportunity policy that other local businesses really should take a hint from.

A dream come true

The café was the dream project of Steinunn Ása Þorvaldsdóttir, a place that employs people with disabilities and gives them a chance to engage in fruitful and rewarding activities on their own. GÆS translates as 'goose,' but it's actually an acronym for "Get, Ætla, Skal" ("I Can, Will and Shall!"), which is the mentality Steinunn wants to promote with her staff and customers. Sitting down with Steinunn and three of her co-workers, Óli, María and Unnur, we talk about the adventure of starting a new café, and why it is important to have true equal opportunity workplaces.

"We are all very different, with different things to offer."

All four agree there is a real lack of job opportunities for people with disabilities. "There is assisted employment," Steinunn says, "but that only works for some people." There are also protected workplaces, but people with disabilities do not have much autonomy there. Only a select few private workplaces will consider hiring disabled people. At GÆS, however, the five members of the board all have disabilities of one kind or another. "We also hire people without disabilities," they assure me. The group tells me that they find job market afraid of employing disabled people. We speculate whether they are afraid of giving people with disabilities too many responsibilities, or not knowing what jobs they are capable of performing. This, they tell me, is the root of the problem: people are not given a chance to prove themselves.

Not letting society disable you

Steinunn says she was so tired of letting others tell her what she could and couldn't do, so she decided to start her own business. Her friends who were studying with her were thrilled to be a part of the idea, and after giving a presentation to the city council, the project got the green light. "The real question was 'Can you do it?'" Steinunn says. "With the right help, yes I can. The number one thing to do is just to do it. And you have to follow your heart."

After a six-week work placement at Kaffitár and numerous presentations for staff and members of the board, GÆS opened for business in June. They ran into a lot of hurdles with permits, and their lack of experience with various financial matters, but their biggest hurdle was a lack of cups. They asked online if people could spare any unused ones, and before they knew it they had two thousand cups of all shapes and sizes.

Outside of Iceland there are cafés where people with disabili-

ties can work, but it is very rare for them to run the business. The group says that working on this project has filled them with confidence and positivity.

The group unanimously says the greatest issue affecting people with disabilities in Iceland is a society that disables them more so than their individual impairments. As Steinunn notes: "we are all very different, with different things to offer."

Steinunn brings up the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Iceland signed the Convention in 2007, but as of yet has not ratified. Ratification requires Iceland to modify its legislation in ways that will benefit a whole range of people with disabilities, and among other things promote a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

TWOFRER!

Unnur points out another incentive for businesses to hire people with disabilities. "Often we will have assistants with us, who help us with our daily tasks. So by hiring us, companies actually get two people working for them for the price of one!"

It is encouraging seeing such an idealistic café spring up in Reykjavík. Steinunn says the place is there to change the world and show people that it can be done. "It really is the café of opportunities," she says.

GÆS is currently supported by the City of Reykjavík, which provides the space for the operation. The group tells me city council wants to get investors involved eventually, and phase out its support, but at the moment GÆS is out of the red and breaking even.

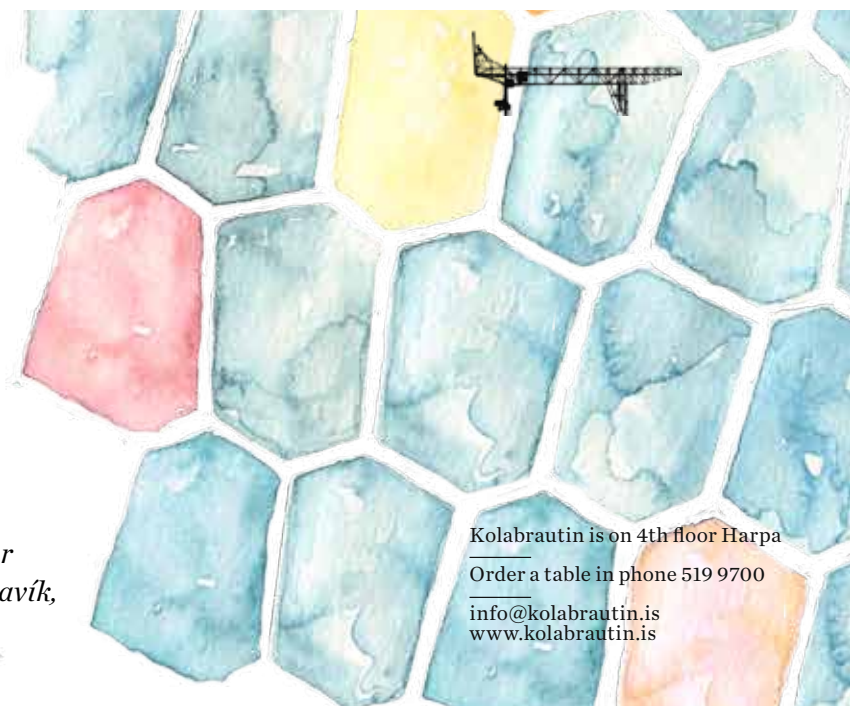
Whether or not investors get involved, GÆS will remain open this summer. The group isn't sure what will happen after that, but they are thrilled to be running and working at the café. If you feel like trying a café with a different vibe, then head out to GÆS. We hear they even have delicious waffles on Saturdays.

Photos by Axel Sigurðarson

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 Smáralind

This Is The Dragnet

America, Iceland, and the dragnet around Julian Assange

By: Shea Sweeney



Smári McCarthy is a twenty-nine year old information activist, developer, founding member of Iceland's Pirate Party, executive director of the Icelandic Modern Media Institute, and former WikiLeaks volunteer. In 2010 he participated in a project with WikiLeaks, called "Collateral Murder." A team lead by WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange worked in Reykjavík, preparing for the April 5 release of leaked United States military footage from an Apache helicopter airstrike outside Baghdad in July 2007. The airstrike wounded two children and killed around a dozen unarmed people, including two Reuters employees. In May of 2010, US Army private Bradley Manning was arrested on allegations of leaking classified documents to WikiLeaks, including the footage of the airstrikes. Bradley Manning is currently on trial. American investigative journalist Alexa O'Brien stated that in November 2010 the U.S. Attorney General at the Department of Justice confirmed an "active, ongoing criminal investigation," of WikiLeaks and Julian Assange, which was again confirmed ongoing in March 2013. It's an enormous investigation—in line with the concerns raised from Edward Snowden's recent leaks—with a wide, catchall dragnet that appears to encompass anyone who has been involved with WikiLeaks.

The evening of June 18, Smári opened his Gmail inbox to find a nondescript-looking email from Google. Attached to the email were two scanned court orders from the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia

<
They are fishing.
It was a massive
fishing expedi-
tion, and in my
opinion they
went too far.
>

One demanding Google disclose information from Smári's Gmail account and another outlining the terms of nondisclosure on the then sealed order.

(U.S.C.E.D.V.); one demanding Google disclose information from Smári's Gmail account and another outlining the terms of nondisclosure on the then sealed order. Specifically, "the records and other information described in Attachment A to this Order," which listed eight types of information, considered metadata (i.e. "descriptions of whom I communicated with, when, for how long; who communicated with me, when, for how long; which documents I have authored, when I have connected to Google's services, which services I have used, et cetera, et cetera, ad nauseam," Smári explained), "for the time period of November 1, 2009 to the present," which at the time the court order was filed, was July 14, 2011. The second paragraph of the order, issued July 2011, read: "The Court finds that the United States has offered specific and articulable facts showing that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the records or other information sought are relevant and material to an ongoing criminal investigation." Smári is Case No. 1:11 EC 105.

The court order for Case No. 1:11 EC 105 was unsealed on May 2, 2013 by Federal Judge Liam O'Grady. 'EC' stands for 'electronic communication' order, which is different from a Search Warrant, or 'SW.' "There was no SW issued to me to my knowledge, although Alexa O'Brien says otherwise. I haven't seen the document," Smári told me. Herbert Snorrason also received one of these emails from Google, Case No. 1:11-sw-594, filed August 12, 2011. Herbert is a university student, activist and developer. He was a monitor for the WikiLeaks chat room for a couple of months but left in 2010 along with other WikiLeaks volunteers during a dispute about Assange's leadership style and inadequate redaction of the Iraq war logs. Herbert's email came with an added search warrant, which means the metadata as well as the content of his Gmail account were

Continued on page 22



Step into the Viking Age

Experience Viking-Age Reykjavík at the new Settlement Exhibition. The focus of the exhibition is an excavated longhouse site which dates from the 10th century AD. It includes relics of human habitation from about 871, the oldest such site found in Iceland.

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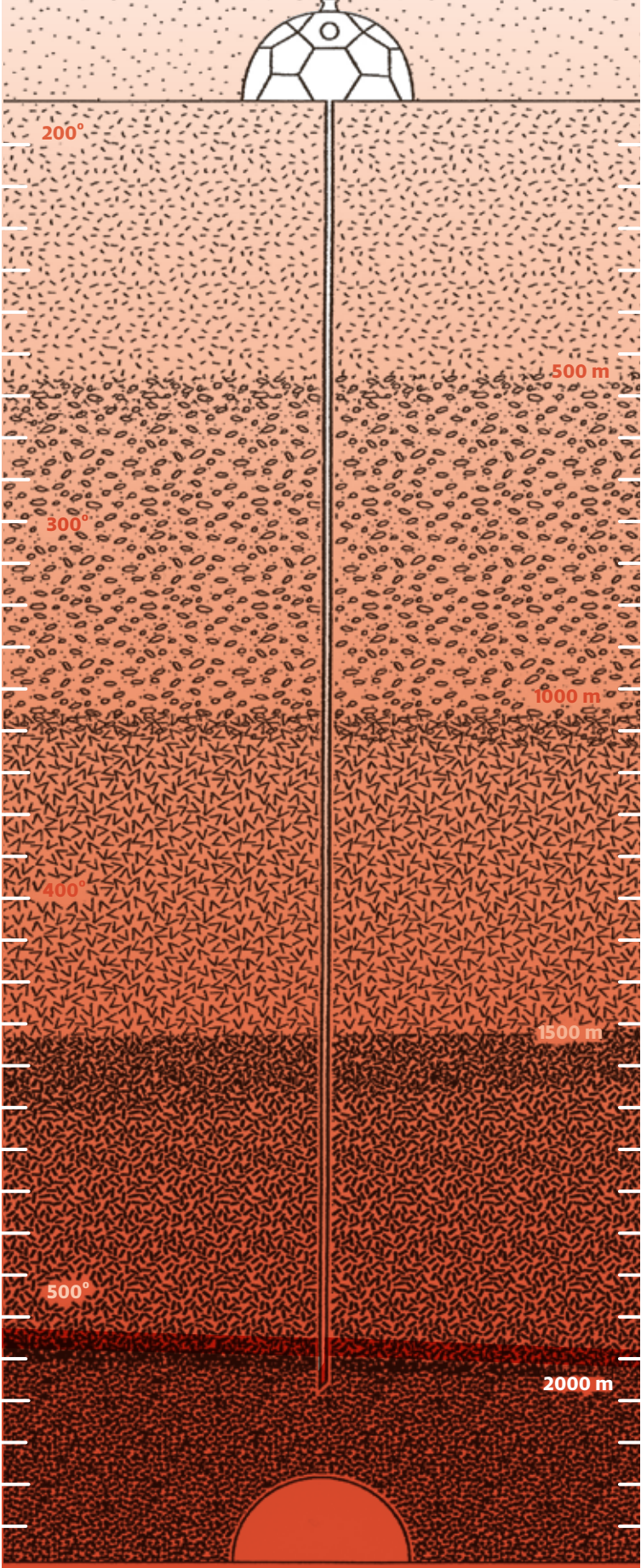
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• JUN •
• SÍA



Continued from page 20

searched.

The U.S.C.E.D.V. claims that there are “specific and articulable facts” that Smári and Herbert’s Gmail account information is relevant to a criminal investigation, but the men haven’t been given any specific facts. Of course, they know the reason they’ve been investigated is because of their respective connections to WikiLeaks and Julian Assange, though neither are active volunteers. Regardless, it’s the principles of the matter that remain problematic. The investigation “appears to have been conducted not for the purpose of attributing criminal behaviour to those guilty of conducting said war crimes and violations of fundamental human rights, but to punish those who performed the public service of making the world aware of them,” Smári and Herbert wrote in a joint blog post entitled “The Dragnet at the Edge of Forever”.

Alexa O’Brien has been closely reporting on Bradley Manning’s trial as well as the investigation into WikiLeaks. On her website she published a document of every search warrant under seal by the U.S.C.E.D.V. between May 3, 2010 (the month Bradley Manning was arrested) and April 11, 2013, as well as another list of electronic court orders under seal. She states that between May and December 2010 there were 456 search warrants under seal, 756 search warrants in 2011, and 292 between January and April 11, 2013. “The 700 number comes from Alexa O’Brien,” Smári wrote when I asked for clarity on the matter, “but she has pointed to a court docket referring to the file numbers of all of the files pertaining to a certain case, and mine and Herbert’s files were included in that docket.” Though not necessarily surprising, it is significant that the personal information of around 700 people may have been searched as an element for building a case against one Julian Assange. Smári and I talked about the possibility of that number of people being under investigation. He told me, “I don’t care about my personal case, but I’m concerned about civil liberties in the larger investigation. You have to ask, what is probable cause?”

I called Iceland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 1, the day Edward Snowden applied for asylum,

to ask for Foreign Minister Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson’s response to the news about Smári and Herbert. The Icelandic government was very quiet about the incident. The music that played when I was put on hold was poppy with rhythmic, echoing claps. It seemed horribly out of place. But in hindsight, it wasn’t. It complemented the already bizarre nature of the call. To ask the Foreign Minister what he thought about citizens of my country spying on citizens of his country. The music cut off and the press officer answered. She told me to email her. I did, and asked if the next day would work for a phone conversation if the Minister couldn’t be reached then. “I suspect that tomorrow is almost impossible due to the Ban Ki-moon visit. But I will check.” Of course, Ban Ki-moon. The United Nations secretary general came to Iceland for an official visit on July 2. While in Iceland, Ban Ki-moon spoke out on the Snowden case, saying that he considers it to be misuse, adding that: “Access can be for the greater good, but sometimes it creates bigger problems through misuse by individuals.”

I asked if anyone else in the Foreign Ministry would be available for a statement. “Neither the Minister nor anyone else at the ministry will be commenting on this particular issue. However, the Minister made some general comments in parliament on allegations of spying, which may be of some use,” she said, and attached a link of written copy from a Parliament session that appeared to have taken place that morning, where MP Árni Þór Sigurðsson (Left-Green Movement) made an enquiry about American intelligence in Europe.

It is “a serious matter, if it’s true that governments, whoever they are, are spying on their most devoted allies and I feel it needs explaining,” said Gunnar Bragi Sveinsson, “at least whether it’s true or not. As far as I know, it’s not quite clear whether news of this matter are entirely true but it seems that some sort of operation against allies in Europe and the EU was going on and obviously, that worries us. The European Commission has demanded answers from the United States and we will follow closely how the matter unfolds. But we have already, just so you know, criticised US authorities here in Iceland, that is, we contacted their embassy in Reykjavík and have also, through

our embassy in Washington, made comments on and requested, or at least stated that it must be unfortunate and even unthinkable if US authorities have been operating like that in Iceland, and that they should respond to that. So we’ve sent to ball to their court. But of course we should absolutely not be so naïve as to think that if governments are spying on other countries, in Europe or elsewhere, that we’re exempt from that.”

I called Pirate Party MP Birgitta Jónsdóttir on July 9. She had a bit of a cough, there was a summer cold going around. On the last day of parliament, only days earlier on July 4, Edward Snowden applied for Icelandic citizenship and the MPs were “running around like a headless chicken” trying to address all the controversial issues always crammed into the last day, Birgitta told me. In 2011, Birgitta found out that information from her Twitter account was disclosed as part of the US grand jury investigation into WikiLeaks. She’s credited as “co-producer” of “Collateral Murder.”

“They are fishing. It was a massive fishing expedition, and in my opinion they went too far,” Birgitta sighed, “and you know, they’re trying to figure out if I knew anything about Manning in advance, which I didn’t. It was as much of a surprise to me as anybody else—that he was who he was. I was really shocked, because he’s just slightly older than my older son.” I asked if she thought these recent events would at all change relations between Iceland and the US. “I don’t think so. I don’t think this current government cares. At least, they’ve not shown any sort of attempt to put their foot down. I talked about these issues with one Member of Parliament and he said, and many of them actually said, not only him, that we should be grateful that they are interested in snooping on Icelanders, because we’re so small.”

At one point in our conversation, Birgitta paused and took a deep breath, “My name has been mentioned in the [Bradley Manning] trial, by the way, a few times. Because apparently he searched for my name, and yeah so, I am—I don’t, I just, I have no idea how this is going to end actually.”



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By Páll Hilmarsson

With additional reporting from Adrienne Blaine,
Shea Sweeney, Tómas Gabríel Benjamin
and Kaisu Nevasalmi

In early 2010, a young man was arrested in Reykjavík on charges of stealing sensitive documents from local financial company, Milestone, which had made their way into news stories in the Icelandic media. The man, seventeen at the time, had worked for the company doing computer related work for a few years. His name is Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson and for the next year and a half he became a part of the whistleblowing association WikiLeaks, operating under the alias 'Q'. In a stunning move, he became an FBI informant in August 2011, mostly providing the United States law enforcement agency with information on WikiLeaks, among them eight data-filled hard drives.

When news came out that Sigurður was an informant, WikiLeaks representatives swore off any connections to him, while the media reported that he was in an unstable mental state and had been admitted to a mental institution. In the past two years, Sigurður Þórðarson has been widely discredited, repeatedly called a pathological liar and/or a psychopath, and sued for embezzlement while remaining entangled in a far-reaching and complicated saga that has had astonishing consequences for the Western worldview in the 21st century.

This is his side of the story.

Continues over

Photo by Hörður Sveinsson



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Photo by Hörður Sveinsson



Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson

The star of this story, Sigurður Ingi—Siggi or Q—is a former WikiLeaks volunteer turned FBI informant. Siggi has claimed several roles within WikiLeaks, however the organisation will only confirm that he operated the WikiLeaks IRC chatroom in 2010.



Kristinn Hrafnsson

Icelandic investigative journalist and WikiLeaks spokesperson. He was working at Iceland’s national broadcasting company RÚV when WikiLeaks released “Collateral Murder.” He and WikiLeaks are currently working with Edward Snowden to assist him in avoiding extradition to the United States.

Kristinn on Siggi:

“Oh I could say a lot about Sigurður Þórðarson. I mean, he is a liar, a pathological one it seems from our experience. He is of course a thief. His involvement, apparent involvement with the US Embassy and the FBI, started in late August 2011, when I was starting to press him about the proceeds of the sales from WikiLeaks merchandise. And shortly thereafter, he indicated that he would break up all relations and was no longer volunteering for WikiLeaks, so from the point he was in contact with the US Embassy and started this contact as a voluntary informant for the FBI, he had no contact with the organisation.”



Birgitta Jónsdóttir

Icelandic MP for Pirate Party, former volunteer for WikiLeaks and Chairperson of the Board of International Modern Media Initiative. She co-produced “Collateral Murder.”



Julian Assange

Founder of WikiLeaks. Currently under house arrest at the Embassy of Ecuador in London to avoid extradition to Sweden where he faces allegations of sexual assault.



Daniel Domscheit-Berg

German technology activist previously known as Daniel Schmitt. He volunteered for WikiLeaks and worked as their spokesperson in Germany until September 2010.



Herbert Snorrason

Former WikiLeaks volunteer, member of the Icelandic Pirate Party and self-proclaimed anarchist. Google gave his Gmail records to the US government.



Smári McCarthy

Former WikiLeaks volunteer, member of the Icelandic Pirate Party and Executive Director at International Modern Media Initiative. His Gmail metadata was given to the US government by Google.

Smári on Siggi:

"I've never met Siggi, and all of my dealings with him have been through others."



Sabu

Sabu, AKA Hector Xavier Monsegur, is a hacktivist and the leader of LulzSec hacker group. He has also been a member of the influential hacker group Anonymous. Sabu worked as an informant for the FBI, and his information resulted in the arrests of other hackers.



Courtesy of Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson

“I was arrested for the Milestone leak in late January 2010. Kristinn Hrafnsson called me after that, I had been providing him with documents [the Milestone leak], and he wanted me to meet this guy named Julian Assange. I had no idea who he was at the time. I tried googling him, but I didn’t come up with much. I found one YouTube video of a radio interview with him, and I just thought that he was like 90% of the activists out there, who say they are going to do all kinds of things and then nothing comes of it. But my schedule was open, so I went to see him give a talk on whistleblowers at a local university.”

“When I walked into the auditorium, he was telling off a journalist who outed me on the front page of his newspaper as the provider of the Milestone documents, so my first impression was great. I introduced myself to him after the talk and he said that Kristinn had mentioned me. We then talked for three or four hours. He ended up giving me a crypto phone to use for contacting him. I was seventeen; I had no idea about anything like this and thought it was very cool. The next weeks we met daily. We went and bought two laptops—by some strange coincidence, they were of the same make and model as the laptop that was later found in Alþingi [see sidebar].

Collateral Murder

“We started meeting regularly, him and me and some Icelanders. Usually at the restaurant Sægreifinn by the harbour. Assange really liked their lobster soup. Then one day Birgitta Jónsdóttir, a local MP for the Movement, picked me up from a café downtown and we went to her home, where Assange showed me the “Collateral Murder” video. This was in February or March of 2010.”

“I remember that night especially well. I had never seen a video like it before. It was like watching a movie or a computer game. Later, I went to a friend’s house, where some people were playing “Call of Duty” [a war-simulation videogame]. I looked at it and thought, ‘wow; this is exact-

ly the same as the video I just saw.’ The day after, I met with Assange, and he told me that there was more material of the same kind coming in. I felt like I was in a spy movie. It was exciting.”

“Assange then left Iceland and I continued working for him. Doing research and things like that. He gave me another laptop and things were going great. And then the “Collateral Murder” video gets published. I was on the phone with Kristinn Hrafnsson that day. He was in Iraq. Everything went crazy. I continued to keep contact with Assange over the Internet and I hung out in the WikiLeaks IRC chatroom. Then, that summer, a number of people left WikiLeaks, Daniel Domscheit-Berg, Herbert Snorrason and Smári McCarthy for example. That’s when my role within the organisation changed.”

Chief of staff

“I essentially took over the organisation’s IRC chatroom. WikiLeaks was getting really famous at that point, and all kinds of individuals were joining in the conversation on the chatroom. A lot of media agencies and people wanting to volunteer for WikiLeaks joined. At that time, the key-group running WikiLeaks numbered 6 or 7 people, which was pretty small for the work we were doing at the time. So it was decided to use the people who joined the chat, if they wanted to help. We set up around 100 groups that each numbered from 10 to 20 people. These were all individuals that I handled for WikiLeaks. Their only connection to the organisation was through me. The tasks came from Assange or whomever needed work done. Some involved programming, some involved research. It all went very well at that time.”

“Instead of explaining my role for each and every volunteer, it was easier to just tell them that I was Chief of staff or Chief of volunteers. In reality, WikiLeaks had no official titles or roles, but this was just easier to say.”

Photos in sidebar by
Árný Herbertsdóttir
Julia Staples
www.newmediadays.com — Peter Erichsen
SHARE conference
JD Lasica

December 2007
WikiLeaks launches official website.

August 2009
Kaupbing Bank secures court order preventing Iceland’s national broadcaster, RÚV, from broadcasting WikiLeaks reports showing Kaupbing Bank loaned suspiciously large sums of money to various owners of the bank, and large debts were written off before the collapse of the banking sector.

February 2010
Julian Assange advises Icelandic Modern Media Initiative proposal that Iceland, “strongly position itself legally with regard to the protection of freedoms of expression and information.”

March 2010
Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson, Siggi, Q, begins working for WikiLeaks.

April 2010
Julian Assange claims US government was spying on WikiLeaks activities in Reykjavík.

April 2010
WikiLeaks releases video of US Apache military helicopter killing Iraqi civilians and two Reuters journalists, a.k.a. ‘Collateral Murder,’ with the help of Icelandic volunteers.

June 2010
US soldier Bradley Manning arrested for supplying confidential documents to WikiLeaks

July 2010
WikiLeaks publishes Afghan War Diaries: 92,000 documents of US military memos.

August 2010
Swedish police issue warrant for Assange on two separate allegations of sexual assault.

September 2010
Birgitta Jónsdóttir calls for Assange to step down during his personal legal battles.

October 2010
WikiLeaks publishes Iraq War logs: 400,000 documents on the Iraq War from 2004–2009

November 2010
WikiLeaks releases 250,000 confidential US diplomatic/embassy cables with incriminating information about US foreign relations and activities.

December 2010
Julian Assange gives himself over to London’s police, awaits extradition to Sweden on sexual assault charges.

August 2010
Prominent WikiLeaks staffers quit the organisation in protest of Julian Assange’s leadership and insufficient redactions in Iraq War Logs



Courtesy of Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson

Growing pains

“Then the WikiLeaks servers crashed and we needed a new web page, a new submission system and a way to finance the organisation. I got volunteers to research ways to finance this, and I assigned others to make a new web page. We had some Dutch volunteers working on a new submission system. It got pretty far, but Assange was reluctant to launch it. I never really understood why. I guess he didn’t really trust that they weren’t putting backdoors into the system.”

“The situation was all one big chaos. But we got the new web up and I received a report on possible ways to finance the organisation. The one idea that I liked was selling WikiLeaks branded merchandise. Kristinn Hrafnsson said that the idea was total bullshit, that it would never work. I discussed it with Assange and he was also unsure. In the end, I just went ahead with it, deciding to take on the losses if the project would fail. I put my bank account on the line for this, as there was trouble at the time with Visa and MasterCard not accepting donations to WikiLeaks. Everybody was happy with it. Assange said to me: just put it into your account.”

Anonymous and LulzSec

“In June or July of 2011, we got in contact with the hacker groups Anonymous and LulzSec. I initiated the contact, but it was with the approval and initiative of Julian Assange. At the time, I discussed this with Assange and he said that he didn’t care where the information comes from, as long as we had something to publish.”

“An Icelander contacted me with the idea of accessing the data servers of the Icelandic Ministry of Finance. I forward the idea to Anonymous and LulzSec, and what essentially happens as a result is that all the computer systems for the national power company, Landsvirkjun, and the Government offices go offline.”

“That’s when I started realising that this might be fun, but that it was also wrong. I was in touch with the hacker Sabu, who kept constantly pushing documents to me. Information on BP Oil, HSBC in Mexico, the Stratfor emails [in February of 2012, WikiLeaks published emails from the global intelligence company Stratfor’s employees and its clients, referred to as the Global Intelligence Files] I thought it was interesting, but I was reluctant in forwarding it to WikiLeaks. Sabu was different from other sources that needed you to take initiative.

He was always like ‘Hey, here’s some documents, here’s some documents!’ It was out of the ordinary. I was at the time involved with FBI and LulzSec, and I had no idea Sabu was also an FBI informant.”

“Eventually, I told Julian that I didn’t want to accept these documents from him, because they were obtained illegally. That’s when our disagreement starts.”

Contact with the FBI

“Around August 24, 2011, I emailed the United States Embassy in Reykjavík in the middle of the night, saying that I have some information they might be interested in. They called me back the next morning, and I met with them for maybe 20 minutes. They told me that it was unlikely that I’d be contacted again, but if it happened then it would be in a few weeks. Then, the following morning at 10, my phone rang, it was them requesting another meeting. I rushed to the embassy, and a man I met there asked me if we could take a walk. We ended up at the hotel Reykjavík Centrum. Two men were sitting by the bar. The man from the embassy leaves and the two men come over and show me identification, stating that they are FBI agents. It felt like a movie.”

“They had brought a team of nine people. They said that a woman from the Icelandic justice department was there, and that she wanted to speak with me before we talked. I had said to the embassy that I did not want the Icelandic authorities involved, that I did not trust them, but I agreed to talk to the woman. They went to get her, but by then she had left. The Ministry pulled her out. We talked for the next four, five days at various hotels in the city.”

Leaking

“The agents told me that they wanted my data, that they wanted to know more but couldn’t operate in Iceland any longer. So they asked me to join them somewhere. They said that I could pick any country in world, any state in the USA. I tell them that I’m not going to the USA—that would be a one-way ticket. I suggest Moscow, Russia, which they didn’t find funny, explaining that their relations with the Russian secret service community wasn’t so hot. We wound up going to the closest country, Denmark.”

“Before I left for the airport I got a text message saying that I should pretend to not know the agents while travelling and that we will only speak after landing. At the airport they all pretend not to know one another,

er, or me, but wherever I went they followed me. In Copenhagen we checked into the Hilton hotel by the airport. To the best of my knowledge, the Danish authorities were not involved. I doubt that they would have been happy with the FBI interrogating an Icelandic citizen in Denmark. We stayed there for 24 hours talking, and their technicians cloned some hard drives that I brought with me.”

Leaving WikiLeaks

“In September, October 2011, I left WikiLeaks. The organisation owed me money at some point, 7–800 thousand ISK. It was accumulated costs for flights, hotels, and travel for Assange’s bodyguards. When I hadn’t been paid for six weeks, I asked Assange if it was OK for me to use the money coming in from the WikiLeaks merchandise shop I had set up, to cover my costs. He said that was fine. I used money from the shop for WikiLeaks related things, buying computers and supplies for volunteers and such.”

“When I left, WikiLeaks asked me to return all the receipts so that they could confirm the accounts. They wanted me to repay all the money, and then pay me back when they’d verified the receipts. I told them that I had no way of repaying 5-6 million ISK on the spot. I knew that WikiLeaks was in financial trouble and owed 3 million Euros in legal fees, so I asked if they were really going to pay me back if I handed over the money. They said they would, but that it could take three months. I reply that they can have the receipts, but that’s as far as I’m willing to go. In May of 2012, they filed charges in Iceland against me for embezzlement, saying that I was involved in fraud and forgeries.”

“I was interrogated by the Icelandic police, but the merchandise shop was in my name. I do not deny that I’ve deceived people and forged things in other cases, but not regarding WikiLeaks. Eventually the case was dropped due to lack of evidence. “

Travelling with the FBI

“In October 2011 I again met with the FBI in Denmark. We stay at five star hotels, and regularly go to McDonalds. It was exciting. They knew that I’d left WikiLeaks at the time, but still kept pressuring me to go and visit Julian Assange in the UK. They wanted me to wear a special watch that could record sound. I told them no, just as I had done in August when they brought it up then. They wanted to know if I feared for my safety, if I was afraid Assange would attack me. I told

Continues over

The Laptop at Alþingi

In January 2011 it was reported that a year earlier a laptop was found in a closet in an unused room in Alþingi, the Icelandic Parliament. The laptop was connected to the parliament’s computer network. The computer was shut off and sent to the police for investigation but nothing conclusive was found. No data was found on the laptop and no fingerprints were recovered. Speculations were made that members of WikiLeaks had put the laptop in place to try to download data from the parliament’s network. In the end the case was dismissed. No one has stepped forward claiming knowledge of the incident, nor has anyone claimed to own the laptop.

THE OTHER SIDE of Siggi The Hacker

Name:
Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson

DoB:
October 12, 1992
Astrology sign: Libra

Eyes:
Blue

Distinctive feature:
That’s a good question.

Education:
College

January 2011
Birgitta Jónsdóttir fights US government’s demand for her Twitter account details.

July 2011
Julian Assange appeals extradition.

August 2011
Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson approaches US embassy in Reykjavík with information about WikiLeaks

November 2011
The British High Court rejects Julian Assange’s appeal.

June 2012
Assange files for political asylum at Ecuador’s embassy in London, takes refuge there.

July 2012
The Reykjavík District Court rules that Valitor, which handles Visa and MasterCard payments in Iceland, was in the wrong when it prevented cardholders from donating funds to the WikiLeaks site.

August 2012
Julian Assange is offered asylum in Ecuador.

September 2012
Julian Assange addresses the UN in support of Bradley Manning and the Arab Spring while criticising President Obama for “criminalizing more speech than all previous US presidents combined.”

December 2012
Bradley Manning pleads guilty to 10 of 22 charges.

June 2013
Icelandic former director of Data-Cell Ólafur Vignir Sigurvinsson says a chartered jet is prepared to transport Edward Snowden to Iceland.

Julian Assange brokers discussion of political asylum between Edward Snowden and the Government of Iceland.

Sarah Harrison of WikiLeaks accompanies Snowden on flight from Hong Kong to Moscow.

Julian Assange tells reporters that he paid for Snowden’s lodgings in Hong Kong and his flight out of the country.

Julian Assange hails Snowden as a “hero” who has exposed “one of the most serious events of the decade—the creeping formulation of a mass surveillance state.”

Assange released a statement asking people to “step forward and stand in” with Snowden.

July 2013
Bradley Manning’s lawyers seek to dismiss charges of aiding the enemy.

WikiLeaks reveals Snowden applied for political asylum in 20 countries.

THE OTHER SIDE
of Siggi The Hacker Continued

Favourite...

food:
Oven roasted chicken with bell pepper BBQ sauce
drink:
Coca Cola
film:
Forrest Gump
video game:
Hitman
song:
n/a
band:
n/a
book:
The Unauthorized Biography of Julian Assange
artist:

n/a
leisure activity:
Outdoor activities
city:
Washington DC, there are such interesting people there
WikiLeaks character:
Joseph
radio station:
Flassback
actor:
n/a
Icelandic MP:
Birgitta Jónsdóttir
international politician:
Hillary Clinton
dessert:
Chocolate Mousse

What's the most fun thing you've done?
Travelling. My travel partner was even crazier than I.

What's the craziest thing you've done?
I'm not allowed to tell.

What would you bring to a desert island?
A cell phone tower, a 3G stick and a laptop.

Which country do you most want to visit?
Russia

Which country do you least want to visit?
The United States

Where would you rather go, a space station or the bottom of the sea?
Space station, it has better view.

Of what achievement are you most proud?
Running up the Eiffel tower with a box of strawberries for provisions.

Kanye or Jay-Z?
Who?

What would your dream day be like?
For McDonalds to come to Iceland.

What's the wackiest thing you've found out during your hacking exploits?
How unsafe Icelanders are.

Does the Illuminati exist? Did you find out anything about them while hacking?
No comment.



them, Assange isn't a violent man." "In February of 2011, they flew me to Washington where we talked for four days. Intelligence analysts from all kinds of three letter acronym institutions joined. We talked about individuals, about Assange's physical security; who his bodyguards are and such. They were mostly interested in Assange, but also in Icelanders like Birgitta Jónsdóttir, Smári McCarthy, Herbert Snorrason and Kristinn Hrafnsson. They explained that if I wanted, I could walk out anytime, and requested that I refrain from recording the sessions. I thought that was understandable."

Outed

In January of this year, WikiLeaks spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson was interviewed by local news programme, Kastljós, revealing that the FBI had conducted an investigation into WikiLeaks in Iceland. "Kristinn didn't know it was me who had been interrogated, not until I phoned him. 'It was me who they were talking to,' I told him. I swear he went silent for a full minute—I could tell he was fuming on the inside—and then he said that I shouldn't talk to any media. I replied with 'If you can do it, why can't I?' He became furious. He's the only person that I've ever been afraid of. This was the last time I had direct contact with Kristinn, all our interactions have taken place through third parties after this."

"The same day that the story broke

in the Icelandic media, I'm on my way to Amsterdam. I got a phone call from an Icelandic journalist. He told me that he has sources saying that I'm in a mental institution, that I have mental problems and that my history with the police is long. He made me an offer: 'You give us an interview on this FBI case and then we won't publish that.' I told him no, but offered to send him any information on me that he wants, medical records, to disprove the mental problem allegations. He then says that he's not interested in this. Later that day I read in the media that I was in a mental institution."

"I know who his source was, it's a person I used to work with at a security company and whom I once hired to be a bodyguard for WikiLeaks. He was present when I met with the FBI in Denmark and he told this Icelandic journalist that I had gotten paid for providing information and made up a lot of stories. I've never bothered discussing things with the media. My experience with that is not good."

Whistleblowing or leaking

"I don't view Bradley Manning or Edward Snowden as whistleblowers, I view them as leakers. They leaked information. There is a great difference. Bradley Manning just leaked everything. To whistleblow is to expose something criminal. Less than 10% of what he leaked showed something that could theoretically be criminal,

and maybe 1% was criminal behaviour. That's the big difference. Who cares if a United States ambassador buys a pink toothbrush? This is information that does not need to be disclosed. Edward Snowden leaked information on legal activities. The spying is legal, Congress and judges approve it. Do I think the treatment they've received is fair? No, not at all. But I don't view them as whistleblowers."

"To say that Iceland is a country for whistleblowers is like saying that we all live in igloos. It's equally out of touch with reality. Like IMMI, it was named 'the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative' and now its named 'Icelandic Modern Media Institute.' And what have they done? Nothing. I was arrested for leaking information, I tried what I could. You could say that I tried to 'save the nation' by leaking information."

"I whistleblew on the whistleblowers. I know that there were some things that Assange and others connected with WikiLeaks, me included, did where laws were broken, both in Iceland and the United States. I don't know what happens next. I'm not going to the USA in the near future. In my last meeting with the FBI they discussed the possibility that I would testify in court. I told them I'd decide on that if it would come to that."

Sigurður Þórðarson says that he has no contact with Assange today.

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Photo by JD Lasica

Siggi Disclaimer

A Q&A with WikiLeaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson

By Shea Sweeney

We called up WikiLeaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson to run some of Siggi’s statements by him and also offer him a chance to give his perspective on the whole Siggi/WikiLeaks/FBI affair. What follows is our conversation.

Hi Kristinn. We are publishing and in-depth interview with Sigurður Ingi Þórðarson, Siggi, regarding his role within WikiLeaks and his involvement with the FBI. Would you care to comment on your dealings with him?

I’m sure I would like to comment.

Firstly, can you confirm that you introduced Siggi to Julian Assange?

Let’s see. I think that he met Assange for the first time when Assange was speaking at the University of Iceland [in 2010], at an open lunch forum about the IMMI project. He attended, and I believe it’s correct that I probably introduced him to Julian at that point. I don’t think that they had met before that.

What was Siggi’s role within WikiLeaks?

Well, his role within WikiLeaks was volunteer, as he has testified himself. Unless he’s lying about it, which he has done frequently on various different venues, calling himself a board member, a chief of staff, what have you. His role was basically as a volunteer. Around the fall of 2010, he took part in moderating the open chat forum. And then when one of the supporters approached him on that forum with the idea of raising money for WikiLeaks through on-line sales of t-shirts and coffee mugs and things of that nature. He was tasked to oversee the project, which resulted in him stealing or embezzling—whatever words you would use for it—around \$50,000, which was the proceeds from the sales.

Is there anything else that you would like to say about him?

Oh I could say a lot about Sigurður Þórðarson. I mean, he is a liar, a pathological one it seems from our experience. He is of course a thief. His apparent involvement with the US Embassy and the FBI started in late August 2011, when I was starting to press him about the proceeds of the sales from the merchandise I mentioned. And shortly thereafter, he indicated that he would break up all relations and was no longer volunteering for WikiLeaks, so I mean from the point he was in contact with the US Embassy and started as a voluntary informant for the FBI, he had no contact with the organisation.

Why was he allowed into WikiLeaks? Was it not obvious that he was a pathological liar?

You can talk to various journalists in

Iceland and they will basically tell you the story that it took a little time to come to that conclusion. And, I mean, his role was not of any major importance from a security point of view. He didn’t have any access to source material. He couldn’t compromise any great things. We did have to rely on a lot of volunteers, and he seemed honest. He had a back history that lead us to believe that he understood the importance of the cause, but it turned out to be quite a disappointing connection.

Did he do anything positive?

Did he do anything positive?

Yes.

You know, apart from being an FBI informant and trying to steal \$50,000 from a cash strapped organisation, well I mean you can just imagine how that question would sound in anybody’s mind. Trying to balance anything positive. The question is a little bit absurd.

He set out to do damage. He is an attention seeker who is still going on, in between the phases when he’s attempting to apologise to my colleagues and myself. He has signed a confession admitting to the thefts. This amount, so, I don’t know what to say, I mean it’s very hard for an organisation to guard themselves from rotten apples like this troubled young man. And I am appalled. The simple type that he is, he is getting his way, his attention seeking characteristics, by actually getting a platform for his continued lies. So, I mean, what is the story here?

It’s just an interview with him.

KH: Do you go around interviewing a lot people that are charged with embezzlement, theft, who are notorious liars, and...

You know, I personally am not the one who did the interview. It’s just my task to call people and follow up to see what their response is to what he said...

I’m not very pleased when you have this pathological attention seeker going around trying to get, you know, attention anywhere. And he is basically getting this, for what? As an organisation, we’re the party he damaged and that’s something that, in my mind, should be acknowledged. But if you’re giving him a platform with a good public warning that people should stay away from this person, I basically applaud you for doing that.

That might well be the case.

The more people who know the better. Are there any more specifics you want to run by me?

Yes, actually. We were hoping to ask Julian Assange for his response to Siggi, if you are able to transfer a question to him.

Everything is out in the open. It’s been discussed in detail in various media. I think Wired Magazine did quite a big one recently. The fact of the matter is that it’s not possible to trust any of the material that he has been trying to shop around, for example, to various media, because he’s a notorious forger and has forged the documents. That is basically known, and it has been exposed. I mean, I know of various media organisations that have just about almost made a fool of themselves when they were about to publish something, whether it was chat logs or documents that he mentioned. They just didn’t hold scrutiny when they took a better look. And I’m just telling you to, not to discredit him, but just a warning to you guys not to be another one bluffed by this guy. He is quite an amazing achiever when it comes to that.

We definitely heed your warning and understand that. I’ve read the Wired article. It’s quite interesting. So, would it be possible—would Julian be interested in making a comment?

Jesus Christ, I can assure you that he is not going to be interested in that.

That’s completely understandable.

If you are following the current affairs we are at this moment trying to assist a man of truth. And trying to put behind us the man of lies we had to have among us for a short period of time.

Yes.

You understand that.

Yes.

Well if you want an Icelandic angle to a WikiLeaks story, for heaven’s sake, try to write a critical piece about why Edward Snowden is not in Reykjavik at the moment with an Icelandic passport. I would be very interested in contributing to that.

Actually, that’s what I’ve done.

Ah, brilliant.

Adrian Lamo vs. Siggi

By Páll Hilmarsson



On June 2010, threat analyst Adrian Lamo, in recent years most famous for participating in (and publishing logs of) chats with Bradley Manning, which resulted in Manning being detained and charged for leaking documents to WikiLeaks, received a message via Facebook. It read:

“My name is Sigurdur Ingi i am a journalist living and working at the newspaper Pressan.is in Iceland. And i was interesting in getting in touch with your regarding the Wikileaks source being arrested and perhaps get an interview with you that i would later translate into Icelandic, this case about the source being arrested is making a huge influence here in Iceland. People here in Iceland "love" Wikileaks couse couple of months ago they released the Kaupthing Bank Loan book. People are interested in the case. Could you please contact me via email [REDACTED] or via phone.”

As far as the Reykjavik Grapevine knows, Sigurður Ingi was not working, nor has he ever worked, at the online news site Pressan.is

Adrian did not trust Siggi and the interaction went no further. Two years later, in October 2012, he received another Facebook message from Siggi:

“Hello Adrian, My name is Sigurdur as my facebook states, but my other name is "Q" and ofted reffered to as the chief of staff, chief of volunteers or somethings else, at WikiLeaks, my old alias was "PenguinX" you state in your facebook comment that Simon at BBC might be interested on talking to people in relation to anonymous or lulzsec, do you think that Simon would be interested in talking to people like me? i can't say im a very popular person at the Wikileaks group right now, but iv'e had my moment like someone said.”

Lamo replied:

“Absolutely. What's your e-mail address? Oh, and um I'm sorry I missed your message from 2010, it was kind of a busy time for me. :x”

And Siggi replied:

“Yeah understandable, and that was basically me pretending to be a news reporter, trying get some information that wasn't know, for Assange so im sorry about that to :)

When asked what he thinks Siggi’s intent was, Lamo stated “Because of ST’s penchant for misrepresentation, it’s difficult to ascertain the veracity of his representations regarding JA’s [Julian Assange’s] involvement in his contact with me—it’s possible that he was freelancing and simply thought JA would be positively disposed towards his actions, but may not have actually been aware of them a priori. I have no particular reason to doubt this particular representation, but the element of doubt exists”

We asked Siggi about his reasons for contacting Lamo. He replied via email:

“Assange asked that he'd be 'looked into.' I contacted him under the pretense that I was a reported looking for an interview. Then it was tried to get information out of him (because of Manning).”

Lamo said via email that: “to some extent I can understand the motivation—when I was his age, I was not always particularly judicious in my choices, and I was rather cavalier about how my actions affected others. I imagine that the entire affair must have been exciting for him while it lasted, and I don't think he's really internalized the seriousness of it—he seems to still be treating it as a bit of fun. On the other hand, JA involved ST [Siggi] in affairs that he may not have been mature enough to understand the gravity of—it's my same take as with Manning, that JA, as the older and more sophisticated individual, should have been aware that these people were getting in over their heads, and that things would probably end poorly for them. Perhaps he was. I can certainly understand the concept of having values that matter more than another person's well-being, even if I disagree with the execution of the ones in play here.



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Cold War Espionage In Iceland

Big Brother’s been listening in for quite a while

Snorri Páll Jónsson Úlfhildarson



“Wire-tapping has commenced,” stated a front-page headline in socialist newspaper Þjóðviljinn (“The People’s Will”) on March 27, 1949. The paper claimed to possess confirmed intelligence proving extensive tapping of the newspaper’s office phones, as well as the home phones of individuals considered “dangerous” by the coalition government of Sjálfstæðisflokkur, Framsóknarflokkur and Alþýðuflokkur. The reason for said surveillance was reportedly a demonstration scheduled to take place on March 30, when the parliamentary majority would vote in favour of joining the recently established North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The protest eventually turned into momentous riots on the parliament square, Austurvöllur, where a “furious mob attacked Alþingi,” according to conservative newspaper Morgunblaðið, whereas Þjóðviljinn stated that “treason was perpetrated” inside the parliament while “violent and barbarian attacks against peaceful civilians” took place outside the building.

A LONG AND COMPLICATED STORY

Like every report of state surveillance against Icelandic socialists during the Cold War, these particular accusations were unconfirmed until May 21, 2006, when historian Guðni Th. Jóhannesson presented the results of his research into the matter at the Third Icelandic History Forum, and more extensively in his book *Þóvinir ríkisins*Ð (“Enemies Of The State”) later that year.

In an introduction to the book, Guðni explains that in 2003, while studying history in the UK, his attention was brought to a few documents at The National Archives in Britain—the secrecy of which had just been lifted—mentioning a systematic gathering of information about Icelandic communists. In the archives of former US President Dwight Eisenhower, he furthermore stumbled upon documents regarding “internal security in Iceland,” which talked about a card index of “communists and their supporters.” This lead Guðni on a quest for bulletproof evidence, as well as vocal testimonies by people possibly involved in the matter—communists and establishment figures alike.

To shorten and simplify a long and complicated story, he finally managed—via the National Archives of Iceland—to acquire theretofore inaccessible documents from the then dissolved Criminal Court of Reykjavík. The documents confirmed that 32 homes of army-base opponents and socialists—some of whom had been parliamentarians at the time—had indeed been tapped, as well as socialist parties and newspapers, trade unions, and various political and cultural associations. Guðni was able to put his finger on six confirmed examples of this, during the period from the above-mentioned NATO conflict in 1949 to a NATO foreign affairs ministerial meeting in Reykjavík in June 1968. Among other occasions was the 1951 visit of Dwight D. Eisenhower—then Supreme Commander of NATO and later US Presi-

dent—and that of then US Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1963.

As no information collected by the wire-taps was ever used as evidence in court, many wondered what sort of information the authorities gained by the acts of surveillance, to which Guðni replied at the History Forum: “Most likely, we will never get to know anything about that. All documents concerning these police operations were apparently eliminated no later than in 1977.” This elimination was quite a spectacle indeed, as according to historian Þór Whitehead, most of the documents were burned to ashes in an oil barrel just outside Reykjavík by the summer cabin of police chief Sigurjón Sigurðsson, who saw the bonfire as a necessary step on his way to a post at Iceland’s Supreme Court.

NO APOLOGIES

The 2006 revelation immediately brought forth strong responses that—not surprisingly—pretty much followed the same old Cold War lines. Former socialist MP Ragnar Arnalds called the affair a scandal, and told newspaper *Fréttablaðið* that he believed the information presented by the historian only to be the tip of the iceberg. Interviewed by *Morgunblaðið*, Ragnar referred to the tapping as “political espionage” and “an attack on democracy and parliamentary government.” *Morgunblaðið*’s editor Styrmir Gunnarsson, however, justified the operations, stating that in view of the political situation back then, “it’s actually remarkable that wire-tapping wasn’t used more extensively.”

Among the main arguments of those justifying the espionage—one of them being Björn Bjarnason, then-Minister of Justice—was that it had been legally executed, i.e. by a court ruling, and due to a considerable threat to state security. But as another former socialist MP, Kjartan Ólafsson, noted in a *Morgunblaðið* article in May 2008, the requests sent to the judges by the Minister of Justice—who usually was Björn’s father Bjarni Benediktsson—didn’t really include any well-grounded reasoning, save some vague mentioning of potential risk of turbulence. Additionally, only in two out of the six mentioned incidents were the requests supported by actual paragraphs of law.

At the end of his article, parallel to which the names of those spied upon were published for the first time, Kjartan called for an official apology from the Iceland state, an idea supported by many on the left. Björn Bjarnason, however, defended his father’s inheritance, stating that judiciary authorities should never apologise for a judge’s verdict. Referring to collapse of the Soviet Union, Björn concluded by locating himself—and his political brothers in arms—on the side of what he called the “verdict of history,” maintaining that “the Icelandic State doesn’t have to apologise to anybody because of this verdict.”

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Keep Your Secrets Secret

Grapevine’s nifty guide to encrypting your emails

By: Shea Sweeney

Oliver Schneider was wearing a green t-shirt with yellow print that read: Just because you aren’t paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t after you! I told him I might need a photo of that and he laughed sharply. Oliver is a young, computer-oriented guy who came by the Grapevine office to show us how to encrypt our emails. Simply put: encryption is the process of converting data into ciphertext so that only someone with a key that decrypts the data can view it. You would send an encrypted email so that no one along the way could view or alter the content. We’re all a little paranoid. Some of us more than others, and all with good reason. It’s actually not that complicated to carry on being paranoid—encrypting your emails is very simple, at least, the act of doing it is straightforward, though the actual science is not. There are many methods for encryption, but here’s a guide for one simple way to encrypt your emails.

1. Oliver taught us how to encrypt in Gmail, so here’s a disclaimer: if you are using another email provider, the steps may be different. First, go to openpgpjs.org – “PGP stands for Pretty Good Privacy,” Oliver said. I couldn’t tell if that was real or a computer-people joke, but confirmed: it’s not a joke. OpenPGP is a website that simplifies the process of encrypting. You don’t have to download anything, which is nice. Once you’re at the website’s main page, pick from the list of icons under “Downloads/Plugins/Examples.” I chose Google Chrome, since that was the browser I was using. There are actually two Google Chrome icons—I went with the one on the left.

2. After you click the left Google Chrome icon it takes you to a page that says “Mymail-Crypt for Gmail,” which has information about what the hell you are doing and all that. Click on the top right button that says “ADD TO CHROME.” A little bar will come down: click “tools,” then click “extensions,” which should take you to a page called “mymail-crypt for Gmail options.”

3. Once you are at “mymail-crypt for Gmail options,” click on a tab at the top of the screen that says “my keys.” There add your name, email address, and passphrase. Emphasis on the term ‘passphrase,’ not ‘password’. You’re trying to protect your information here, so it’s better to go for something more complex. Don’t use only letters. Get funky. For the name box, type your name then something specific about you, just one word even, in parenthesis in the same box. For example: “Ryan Gosling (Feminist).” Do this because there’s probably someone else in the world that shares your name, and there’s no reason to get mixed up with anybody else. It’s also a good idea to click on the “options” tab and check the box that says “add myself as an encrypted recipient on all messages.” Allows decrypting sent messages.” This will add you as your own friend under your “friend’s keys” tab and allows you to go back and read your sent emails without them being encrypted.

4. Go back to the “my keys” tab and have a look at your private key by clicking “show key.” So, that key you will obviously want to keep private. Oliver stressed that it’s very important to protect your secret key (be

your own hero, you know), which is why a complex passphrase is necessary. If you then go to the “friends’ keys” tab, you’ll see your own key ID. If you click “show key” on that page you’ll see your public key. These keys are what allow people to decrypt one another’s encrypted emails. If Oliver wants to send me an email, he has to know my public key and I have to know my private key, and vice versa. If you know other people who have encrypted Gmail accounts, ask for their public key (which is a very long page of numbers and letters), and add them to your list of “friends’ key” by pasting their public key into the text box.

5. Stay in Google Chrome and your Gmail inbox—you’ll probably see that at the bottom of every email is a box for a password (you’ll always use the password you used just moments ago to create a key for yourself through Mymail-Crypt) and three buttons: “Encrypt and Sign,” “Encrypt,” and “Sign.” “Sign” refers to your digital signature, which “is like your handwriting on a postcard,” Oliver said. It’s an indication that you are who you say you are. It’s rather nifty.

6. Now all you need is other people who are into encryption as much as you are. Exchanging encrypted emails requires that people on both ends of the email are involved in the encryption and decryption process. It’s not a one-man deal. If no one else you communicate with sends encrypted emails, then it’s pretty useless. Many people upload their public keys to public key servers like pgp.mit.edu—where I uploaded mine. That way if a friend wants to find your public key, you can give them your key ID and finger print (a long list of numbers and letters that make it even harder for your info to get mixed up with someone else’s) and they can find you on the server.

So that’s how it’s done. If you have any further questions, consult the Internet.

On a final note: what’s very interesting about encryption is that while it sounds mechanical and distant, it’s actually very interpersonal and requires people to be thoughtful about exchanging information and working together for the security of their data. In a larger sense, the aim is to “create a web of trust” between humans, as Oliver put it. “If someone I know has signed your key, then I have a certain level of trust in that key. So if I get something from you that is signed by you I can have a certain level of confidence that it is you.” Not everyone trusts PGP, but there are a lot of people who use it and a lot of people who do.

Oliver thinks that the argument of not protecting your information because you have “nothing to hide,” is a very weak one: “Someone says, I have nothing to hide, okay, so you can strip and I can take a photo of you, and show that photo to your neighbours and have all the rights to that photo?”

Oliver also mentioned that people have key signing parties where they exchange information and in turn strengthen the web of trust. I’m into going down to the beach, building a bonfire, and exchanging public keys while we sing.

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Paradise Lost?

IMMI and the mythology of Iceland as “whistleblower paradise”

By Shea Sweeney



“My predisposition is to seek asylum in a country with shared values. The nation that most encompasses this is Iceland. They stood up for people over internet freedom,” American whistleblower, Edward Snowden, said in his June 2013 Guardian interview. Regardless of what Edward was specifically referring to, one result of the comment was furthering the already prevalent trend of misconceptions about IMMI and what Iceland is currently able and willing to do for international whistleblowers.

IMMI is the shared acronym of the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative and International Modern Media Institute. The Icelandic Modern Media Initiative is a parliamentary proposal aimed at developing legislature that is more effective at protecting free speech and freedom of information in an age when digital development has outgrown existing legal frameworks. The proposal was unanimously passed by the Icelandic parliament in June of 2010. The International Modern Media Institute, founded and run by MP Birgitta Jónsdóttir and information freedom activist Smári McCarthy, is a small research-based organisation created to further the development of the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative and connect with other organisations and countries doing similar work.

Information, not people

The Icelandic Modern Media Initiative is still in a developmental stage. The proposal has passed, but the laws are still being written by a steering committee appointed by the former Minister of Culture and Education.

Indeed, IMMI legislature has been moving notoriously slow. “This is mostly, but not entirely, due to the enormous amount of filibustering that happened during the last parliamentary term,” Smári wrote in an email correspondence. There are, however, some laws that have already passed. Thanks to IMMI,

Iceland has very high quality source protection, and IMMI has raised the overall standard for any future laws passed in the categories it addresses.

Birgitta hopes that more laws will be put before parliament this fall. One of the laws she’d really like to see pass is greater protection for whistleblowers, but it’s important to understand that the IMMI laws aimed at protecting people are only domestic.

The IMMI legislature cannot directly protect foreign whistleblowers. This seems to be the origin of some confusion. “I think that there is a misunderstanding, which has been coming from [WikiLeaks spokesman] Kristinn Hrafnsson. I have never claimed—and Smári McCarthy has never claimed—that the Institution or the Initiative can protect whistleblowers from other countries,” Birgitta said. “On the contrary, what we are trying to do is to ensure that the stories that are being published are safe, that they cannot be taken down. That was the sort of information refuge, the safe haven element. But that was not for people. We recognise that we cannot protect people unless they are based in Iceland.”

Formalities

In the weeks leading up to Edward Snowden formally applying for asylum on July 1, WikiLeaks took on a primary role in providing him with needed assistance. On June 12 in-

vestigative journalist and WikiLeaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson stated that he received a message from Edward Snowden asking him to notify the Iceland government that he wanted to seek asylum. Kristinn tried to talk with the Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, but neither was able to meet.

“I expected them to reach out and extend a helping hand to a man that was requesting a shelter from the political persecution that he’s under,” Kristinn said over the phone. Kristinn was told that Snowden could not apply for asylum unless he was either in Iceland or at an Icelandic embassy. “He can however apply for citizenship from wherever, which is what the ‘Fischer approach’ amounts to. This is a route that has not been travelled, presumably because the people who have the ability to communicate with Mr. Snowden have not informed him of the formal mechanisms,” Smári McCarthy wrote on June 24. Applications for asylum and citizenship go through the Directorate of Immigration.

Edward Snowden did eventually apply for asylum through an official route—a fax of his application was reportedly sent to the Icelandic Embassy in Moscow. As to the formalities of granting asylum or citizenship, Kristinn noted that, “there are exceptions to every law and basic rule, and if ever in history when it comes to asylum seekers and even granting of citizenship, that should be it. That should have been that moment for exceptions.”

Insanity of asylum

The “Fischer approach” is in reference to Bobby Fischer, an American chess player who was granted Icelandic citizenship in 2004 while detained in Tokyo. He faced US criminal charges for violating sanctions when he accepted prize money after playing chess in former Yugoslavia. Iceland seemed to have an affinity for Bobby Fischer because of his famous Cold War era match in Reykjavík.

Bobby didn’t mess around with asylum, and the reality is that Iceland’s Directorate of Immigration (UTL) does not have a good track record when it comes to handling political asylum seekers. The UTL has complained of being understaffed and having bad working conditions, and its true that pressure has increased in the past few years as the number of applications for asylum and citizenship have risen substantially. However, many activist and human rights groups think that that long processing periods for applicants and the often-ambiguous decisions of the UTL are unethical. There have also been a number of incidents where the UTL has deported asylum seekers still considered to be at high risk.

“Iceland’s asylum record is abysmal, mostly due to the blatantly hostile tendencies of the Directorate of Immigration. That said, the concept of asylum would hardly be of much value if extradition treaties could trump asylum, and until a final decision would be made on the subject, there would be little chance of [Snowden] being extradited,” Smári wrote.

Birgitta agreed that asylum in Iceland was a bad option for Snowden. “If he would have asked for citizenship much earlier on, it actually would have been an option to process it. I tried every possible way that I could to make this clear. But unfortunately the message was maybe never delivered to him, or he got advice that was not the best possible advice on this regard.”

By the time Iceland received Snowden’s request, which Birgitta said was still not entirely formal, it was July 4, the last day of parliament before summer recess. Six members of parliament from the Pirate Party, the Left Greens, the Social Democrats, and Bright Future sponsored a bill to grant Snowden citizenship. “We put forward a bill and since we did it on the last day we never anticipated it would be agreed on,” said Birgitta. Realistically, she hoped the

bill would be put on the fall agenda, but it was rejected that day. “The Progressive Party, well, they have been more interested in these same issues I’ve been fighting for. Both the Foreign Affairs Minister and the Prime Minister have their names as sponsors on the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative, so I was surprised. I thought they were more...progressive,” Birgitta said with a small laugh, “except there were I think five MPs that abstained, they were on the yellow button.”

Pressure from the US

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently received a letter from the American Embassy in Reykjavík regarding legal assistance with a US citizen. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs wouldn’t further divulge the content of the letter beyond saying it had been forwarded to the Ministry of the Interior, which was unauthorised to give information, and the American Embassy would not even confirm that a letter had been sent. Other countries where Snowden applied for asylum also reportedly received this letter. It hasn’t been confirmed when exactly the letter was sent, but Birgitta thinks it probably affected parliament’s decision.

As of July 19, it has been only 34 days since the Guardian released the Edward Snowden interview. And only three months since the new Icelandic government was elected. Its not a matter of blaming the Icelandic government for what it did or did not do in regards to Edward Snowden, which would divert attention away from the core issues in the content of Snowden’s leaks.

This is a matter of paying attention to how governments react when they are put under a spotlight and given the opportunity to hold themselves accountable for connecting the values they claim to represent with the actions they actually take.

This applies as much to Iceland as it applies to the United States.

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Pobody's Nerfect

Even Iceland can be average sometimes

By Adrienne Blaine

After reading our "Best Of Reykjavík" issue, you may be wondering if there is anything Reykjavík, or Iceland at large, isn't "The Best" at. "Average Iceland," a Tumblr blog created by Grapevine intern, Parker Yamasaki and Red Cross intern, Morgan Mead, is refreshingly dedicated to all things completely average in Iceland. This blog, unlike so many texts that target tourists, isn't afraid to say Iceland is "just okay" in many respects.

"Average Iceland" covers everything from "garden-variety gardens" and imprecise Google maps of Iceland, to "passable" venues and "thoroughly ordinary" views (note that many of these pictures are far too average to publish). "Interested in Iceland? Want to find out the most beautiful spots in Reykjavík, or the coolest thing to do, or the nicest bars?" Morgan explains, "Then this blog isn't for you. Myself and Parker tried all the average things, so you don't have to."

It's easy to romanticize Iceland, what with its remote location, ancient language and powerful yet delicate nature (to start), but Iceland shouldn't put so much pressure on itself to be the best at everything all the time. Parker and Morgan remind us all that sometimes it's okay for Iceland to be just okay. We still love you Iceland.

If you've ever wondered why so few Icelanders openly reject tourists, it might have something to do with the

fact that foreigners are often the first to proclaim Iceland as the best country in the world or the home of the best (fill in the blank). Without this ego stroking, who knows how Iceland would survive those long dark winters.

Yet after the honeymoon ends and the tourists pack up as the warm glow slowly fades, those who stick around are forced to reconcile the day-to-day and the run-of-the-mill. It is only after recognising and accepting these flaws that you can attain a deeper love and understanding of Iceland. Parker and Morgan's attention to detail shows that they embrace daily banalities as extraordinary in their own right.

If you have encountered something incredibly average about Iceland in the course of your travels that you would like to share, pass it along to Parker and Morgan at averageiceland@gmail.com.

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"it is very clear to us that this is both the most incredible and the most average window display in the whole of reykjavik. we double checked inside, and that chair was most definitely where they wanted it. AND THERE'S A SALE ON."



this picture is so depressingly average that we almost didn't upload it because we had no desire to look at this forecast again, ever.

Bar Etiquette And Beer Ignorance

By CodWars



Axel Sigurðarson

Dramatis Personæ:
SIGGI: Generic twenty-something Icelandic male. SIGGI has never lived outside Iceland.
ASSISTANT: Nondescript shop assistant. ASSISTANT has never worked in a store in a real country.
AMERICAN TOURIST: Generic American citizen, visiting Iceland.

Scene:
City-centre music store, walls lined with CDs and DVDs

Act One:
SIGGI enters stage right.
SIGGI: "Hey you! Give me a CD!"
ASSISTANT reaches behind the counter, scans a CD, presents it to SIGGI.
ASSISTANT: "Two thousand krónur"
SIGGI hands over his credit card, whilst looking over his shoulder at a tall blonde that has just walked in. He makes no eye contact with ASSISTANT.
SIGGI pockets the CD and walks off, wordlessly, in the rough direction of the blonde.
AMERICAN TOURIST approaches the counter.
AMERICAN TOURIST: "Hi, I'm looking for the latest B-york album, do you have it?"

Fade to grey...

Sounds strange? Of course it does. It's the sort of behaviour you wouldn't expect from anyone in a music store, except maybe the eyeing-up-the-blonde part. You'd expect people to know what they want, at least within broad genres, and to ask for it, or at least ask for some guidance.
So why is it that this is the norm for bar life in Iceland? Why does Siggie seem to assume that all beer is equal and that he has no choice? Because, to be frank, the beer-drinking habits of Icelanders have yet to catch up with the reality of what's on offer. People simply haven't learnt that they have a choice and that not all beer looks like a carbonated urine sample and tastes just as bad. They

have yet to experience the joys of beer that is opaque or beer that actually has more character than elevator muzak.

Dear Siggie, do the following:

- Pretend you're in a record shop when you're in a bar. Pretend you need to impress a bunch of cute blondes with your sophisticated taste and worldly experience (that means outside of Kópavogur). Check what's on offer, look behind the bar, ask the bar staff: What beers do you have?
Develop your taste. Now I'm afraid there's only one way to do this. Go to all the decent bars in downtown RVK and try at least one small glass of all their beers. Get a taste for dark versus light, sweet versus bitter, wheat beers, etc. Life's a bitch when you need to have a pub-crawl in the name of cultural education.
Engage the bar staff in eye contact. Ask to try some of the beers, if the music isn't so loud that you're in post-midnight sign language mode. Most decent pubs in the UK will happily offer a wee taste of their beers if you ask. Imagine the novelty of drinking a beer of which you like the taste, rather than gambling on whether you'll be able to stomach enough glasses of tepid chlamydia-test sample to be drunk enough to make a credible pass on the blonde you just eyed.
Whether or not we like it as expats, and whether or not the Icelanders care to admit it, there is massive Danish influence here. It pervades everything from the language we use, to the pylsa we eat to the thermostats on our domestic radiators. So why not take it one step further? The Danes may well come from a two-dimensional country reeking of pig fat and speak like they are about to vomit, but they certainly respect their beers. They know a good brew and they're not afraid to ask for it, so copy your Danish cousins (yet) again and learn their beer habits.

Cheers!

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Drowning In This Frank Ocean Do Not Resuscitate

Frank Ocean ends his European tour in Reykjavík. Thank you.

By Adrienne Blaine

During Frank Ocean’s Reykjavík show—the final one of his European tour—fans drowned metaphorically in the tides of his music and literally in the sea of people pushing towards the stage. It was great.

Swim Good

Before the show, excitement at Laugardalshöllin was palpable. Frank Ocean may not be as well known throughout Iceland as he is in the United States, however those who invested in the sold-out show demonstrated their dedication by staking out spots near the stage long before the concert was set to begin, fiercely guarding their positions.

The overexcited crowd screamed periodically as they mistook sound technicians for The Man Himself. The background music played such R&B classics as Otis Redding’s “Sitting On The Dock Of The Bay,” and some whistled along impatiently while negotiating the rippling waves of the crowd.

A chant of Frank’s name rose up and died down—sounding comically foreign to an American ear. Just as Talking Head’s “Psycho Killer” reached its chorus, the man we were waiting for finally appeared on stage and even the most reserved fan couldn’t help but scream like a little schoolgirl.

Thinkin Bout You

Wearing his signature red and white striped handkerchief headband, Frank Ocean opened the show with a song about travelling all the way from California, befitting the title of his tour, ‘California Live: You’re Not Dead...2013.’

On his Tumblr page, Frank Ocean wrote, “all the travel isn’t in support of an album or anything like that really- past or ahead. there’s no label or touring firm dollars involved. all pennies from my pocket. in support of some odd daydream. ops to photograph crowds and clouds from planes. contrast all the quiet with some noise. new noise and old noise...sober crowd, faaded crowd. all welcome [sic].”

Super Rich Kids

The demographic largely corresponded to the age group most familiar with Tumblr, a ‘micro-blogging’ website popular among the Millennial Generation that Frank Ocean uses to connect most directly with his fans. There were even some surprisingly young fans in their early teens who were much too short to see the stage from the standing area. A few of their chaperones could even be spotted wandering around.

Many of these youngins were preoccupied with taking pictures and videos of Frank Ocean and themselves with Frank Ocean in the background before and during the concert, presumably to post them to social media as soon as possible. Other fans felt the

need to shout the lyrics to each of Frank Ocean’s highly nuanced melodies.

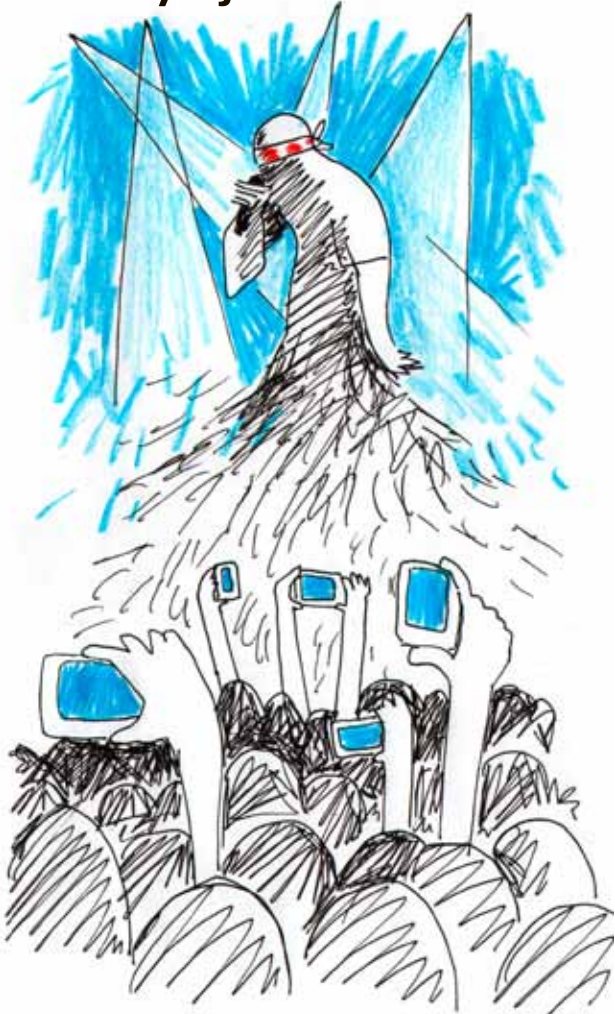
The star mostly played the hits from ‘Channel Orange’ but mixed in “Novacane” and “Songs For Women” from ‘nostalgia, ULTRA.’ He also unveiled two new songs from an album in the works, and tested the crowd with a few deep cuts, noting that he would be impressed if they could sing along to “Golden Girl.”

We All Try

Based on the Icelandic scenery Frank Ocean posted his blog we can gather that after travelling to Germany, Sweden, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Norway, Belgium, England, Ireland and Scotland, Frank Ocean was looking forward to ending his tour here in Iceland. Although he added, “i’d tour for a year if it didn’t interrupt my recording or my weekend driving [sic].”

During his last show in Norway, Frank Ocean ended the concert abruptly after only four songs. On Tuesday he once again left the stage after performing a few songs giving many of his fans heart palpitations, however, he returned gleefully with a camera to snap a photograph of the crowd. Afterwards he said, “I probably should have said, ‘say cheese,’ or some shit like that.” And although his concert in Reykjavik lasted just under two hours, he showed no signs of exhaustion or disdain.

He ended the concert with a performance of “Wise Man,” which he said he likes to end each show with because it expresses a “core sentiment” of his. As he left the stage and his fans resurfaced, the statement, “In a dream you saw a way to survive and you were filled with joy” was projected on the backdrop. Some waded towards the stage for an encore, but it was clear that Frank Ocean had finished his tour on the note he wanted to. Until his next album release Frank Ocean’s fans will gasp for his music like fish out of water.



Illustrations: Megan Herbert



Note: As all photography was prohibited at the concert (which was kind of amusing in light of ALL THOSE FUCKING CELL PHONE CAMS OBSTRUCTING THE VIEW), we sent the wonderful illustrator Megan Herbert to the show so she could document it, courtroom-style. This is her illustration that you’re looking at right now. Pretty good, right?



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Album Reviews



Samaris

Samaris

2013

samaris.is

More than just promising.

Two—possibly three—eras mesh in Samaris’s music: lead vocalist Jófríður Ákadóttir melodicalizes poetry by Icelandic writers such as Steingrímur Thorsteinsson, Örn Arnarson, and others who wrote around the turn of the twentieth century, to minimalist beats presented by laptop-dude Þórður Kári Steinþórsson while clarinetist Áslaug Rún Magnúsdóttir weaves folksy threads that conjoin the trio. The interaction of these three very distinct parts constitutes the magic of Samaris’s overall sound, as do the widely distinct impressions that each element conjures.

The lyrics, melodies and performance of Jófríður bring a long-gone rural world to mind: distant yet simple societies—at the very least completely different from our everyday lives. A shepherd, she has lost her way in the gathering shadows of a late summer’s night. As the dimming light and her loneliness bring elves and trolls and otherworldly creatures to life, she has nothing to soothe her restless mind but a song. At the same time, Þórður’s electronic accompaniment evokes a nerve-wrecking comedown on the underground—jaws clenched, eyes bloodshot, reflecting neon lights and barely legal afterparties.

‘Samaris’ is a compilation album. It collects both of Samaris’s EPs on a single CD, which is to say that this is not a traditional album. At times, this patchwork quality is quite notable. For example, the simple yet effective palette of airy vocals, heavy bass, subtle electronic percussion, distant woodwinds and wavering synths does grow old after a while. On an album, the band could easily sidestep this by incorporating different sounds and guaranteeing a tighter flow by

careful sequencing.

And they should—because at their best, Samaris are a great band. “Góða tungl,” (“Dear Moon”), probably their best known track, is infectious; the skeleton-shifting bass, eerie backing vocals and cool garage-styled programming make for an enticing web of sound, but ultimately it’s the melody proper that haunts you. “Vöggudub” (“CradleDub”) is a spaced out and pretty affair with an especially folksy melody that really drives its point home once Jófríður harmonizes beautifully with herself halfway through the track. The vocals are cut up and fucked around with for added effect and even though the tempo is slow, you’ll find yourself in knee-deep-house mode, more than ready for any hotel lounge or pricey meal.

The last four tracks of the ‘album’ are remixes. Muted’s version of “Hljóma þú” (“Sound!”) and Subminimal’s take on “Stofnar falla” [“The Trunks They Are a’Fallin’”) far surpass the rest. The first is a laid-back, hazy, slow, minimal mix that probably sounds closest to Samaris themselves out of the remixes represented (I even think they’ve been performing this version live as of late). Subminimal’s version is a drum’n’bass opus reminiscent of Photek’s work in the nineties. It wildly exaggerates the distance between the Icelandic turf-house and the London rave to great effect.

Samaris base their work on a simple, well executed idea. And even though this CD only serves as an introduction to the band’s sound (One Little Indian will put this out in Europe before long, while 12 Tónar do local duties) I must say it sounds more than just promising.

✎ - Atli Bollason

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Snæfellsjökull Healing

The spirit of Extreme Chill Festival 2013

By Adrienne Blaine



Magnús Andersen

Read an extended version of this article on www.grapevine.is!

Armed only with rumours that I would most likely encounter cold weather and people doing A LOT of drugs, I headed for the fourth annual Extreme Chill Festival bundled up in my warmest gear, haunted by visions of neon booty shorts and glowsticks. What I didn't expect to find was a warm and welcoming group of electronic musicians and fans communing with nature under Hellissandur's mystical glacier, Snæfellsjökull.

Calm before the storm

We set up camp in a grassy field near a corral of friendly Icelandic horses that came right up to the fence to watch the first tents pop up. A group had already established itself at the far end of the site, with eight smaller tents surrounding a covered communal area complete with a voodoo skull planted on a stake. Despite the skull, the group was incredibly welcoming and explained they had come together to honour the memory of a recently passed friend who had brought them all together. As the campsite began to fill up, car stereos pumped muffled beats and a small colony of nomads formed and spread out along the banks of a small stream.

Up the street from the campsite, a few Extreme Chill posters pasted to covered windows identified Röst, a modest venue with all the necessary amenities including a sizable stage, a projection booth and acoustic wood paneling. Inside, electronic music pulsed along to visualizations from the surrounding environment: snowy roads, rushing waves, craggy rocks and grassy fields. Tea candles and incense burned on tabletops surrounded by chairs. The overall effect was more calming than raving. Throughout the festival it was common for the crowd to sit or lay-down, some even practiced yoga near the front of the stage.

According to Árni Grétar, a.k.a. Futuregrapher, Extreme Chill is unlike any other electronic music festival because of this spiritual element. While violent fights are common

at many Icelandic festivals, Árni maintained Extreme Chill attendees "don't want to destroy themselves or others." Which is an atmosphere the controlled number of attendees, purposefully capped at 400, helps maintain.

However, this is not to say the festival was lacking in moments of intensity. The second day in particular featured the eerie stylings of father-son duo, Stefán Finnboga Péturs; the heavy beats of the Swiss artist Mimetic, and the hardcore dance rhythms of 101 Reykjavík's Futuregrapher and Maggi Lego.

Beyond the MacBook

I talked with one of Extreme Chill's organisers, Andri Már Arnlaugsson, at Kaffi Sif, where performers and attendees congregated over beers and hamburgers. As we sat on the outdoor deck, he explained the festival's rigorous selection process: "We seek out performers with a stage presence. Nobody wants to see a guy standing behind a MacBook. Enough of that already."

Acts like Úlfur, Modesart and Samaris featured live instrumentals, most unconventionally with Tumi Arnason on saxophone. My only criticism would be that with the exception of Jófríður Ákadóttir and Áslaug Rún Magnúsdóttir of Samaris, the festival's line-up was overwhelmingly male. Overall, the festival successfully highlighted some of the best experimental electronic music in Iceland while attracting big foreign names. Unfortunately, Le Sherifs from Egypt were unable to make it due to political unrest in Cairo.

Techno teepee

After the official sets ended at around 3:00, the party continued at the campsite. Local kids took matters into their own hands, appearing over a ridge shuffling under the weight of large speakers. On Friday night the biggest tarp I'd ever seen was turned into a pop-up techno teepee with the help of a few pieces of wood. The party continued well into the wee hours until the wind ripped the tarp off the ground and the structure collapsed.

Strangely enough, sleeping through this 24-hour dance party was easier than you would expect. It was only when the music stopped around 8:00 in the morning that I would wake up with a start. At Extreme Chill your body becomes accustomed to a constant, persistent beat and without it, you become suddenly lost. Luckily it usually wasn't long before someone else's stereo would take over the metro-nomic duties.

Clouded in mystery

On Sunday a blue sky peeked through the clouds and I hoped to get a better look at Snæfellsjökull, but the winds were not in my favour. Until my next journey, this glacier will remain clouded in mystery. But as Futuregrapher said, "It is beyond man to understand, but for man to feel," which sums up most of my experiences at Extreme Chill this year.

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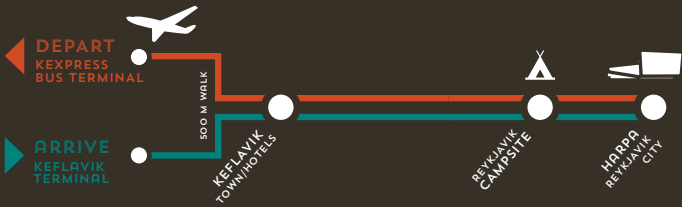
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13:30	13:40	14:25	14:40
20:30	20:40	21:25	21:40

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Album Reviews



Grísalappalísa

ALI
2013
grisalappalisa.bandcamp.com

A new voice has emerged in Icelandic rock—it is loud, angry, literate and groovy.

Grísalappalísa’s debut LP is a romper stomper of an album, a high-pitched scream of youthful existential male angst meditated through grooves, riffs and words. They lay it out sonically and lyrically in the opening song, aptly titled “Kraut í G” (a reference to krautrock and “Pop Song in G major”—a classic Icelandic pop hit). Starting with a motorik drum thump and angular guitar noises, a mood of anxiety is built before the desperate narrator screams into the void: “Infinite apartment blocks, infinite cars, infinite closed gates. How, how, how can I reach you?” A story slowly unravels through the course of the album, the tale of the narrator’s muse, object of obsession and, quite possibly, stalking material—a girl called Lís. He describes seeing a light in her window and champagne glasses on the table but no one answering the doorbell.

Vocalists Gunnar Ragnarsson and Baldur Baldursson don’t sing as much as scream, rant, yelp and blurt out the lyrics, in exceptional Icelandic. Full of clever wordplay they are literate, yet trashy, poetic in a raw and unsophisticated way. You can hear traces of Megas (the band takes their name from one of his songs) and Einar Örn Benediktsson in the words, and a bit

of David Byrne’s herky-jerky delivery and Ian Curtis’s detached baritone in the vocal performances.

The subject matter is a young man’s journey through his consciousness and Reykjavík nightlife, fraught with danger, self-doubt, desperation and illusions of sanity. A loose thread is the girl Lís—who he yearns for and wants to be like—and who seems to be more like an ideal than an actual person. He numbs himself with alcohol and nights out on numerous occasions, as in “Allt má (má út)” (“Everything Is Allowed (Allowed To Be Erased).” The journey is chock full of references, from Jesus to Elvis to Icelandic national heritage.

The musical backing is an expertly produced rollercoaster ride of funky punk, krautrock and psychedelic slow jams. The bass is jogging, the guitars sting and come at you from unexpected directions and drums pound your inner ear with the force of a man-machine. Aside from the traditional rock instruments, they also have a saxophone player, which lifts songs like Skrýtin birta (“Strange Lighting”) and Fjallkirkjan (“Mountain Church”) to another level. You can hear strains of Gang of Four’s nervy post punk in “Lóan er komin” (“The Plover Has Arrived”) and the grinding beat of Neu! in Kraut í G. The music sometimes underlines the unease of the words and at other times contradicts it, as in “Hver er ég” (“Who Am I?”), where Gunnar cheerfully yells: “I’m going to commit suicide! But fall asleep with the knife as usual!” to a backdrop of twee female backing singers’ lalala’s.

The band comes through as a fully formed entity on the album, a group that has studied their influences and has a clear direction. But it’s the lyrics that make them stand outside and above the box. It’s been a long time since I’ve heard such depth in discussion on the young male condition, and as much playfulness with the Icelandic language in rock music. Consider the scene stormed.

✎ - Davíð Roach Gunnarsson

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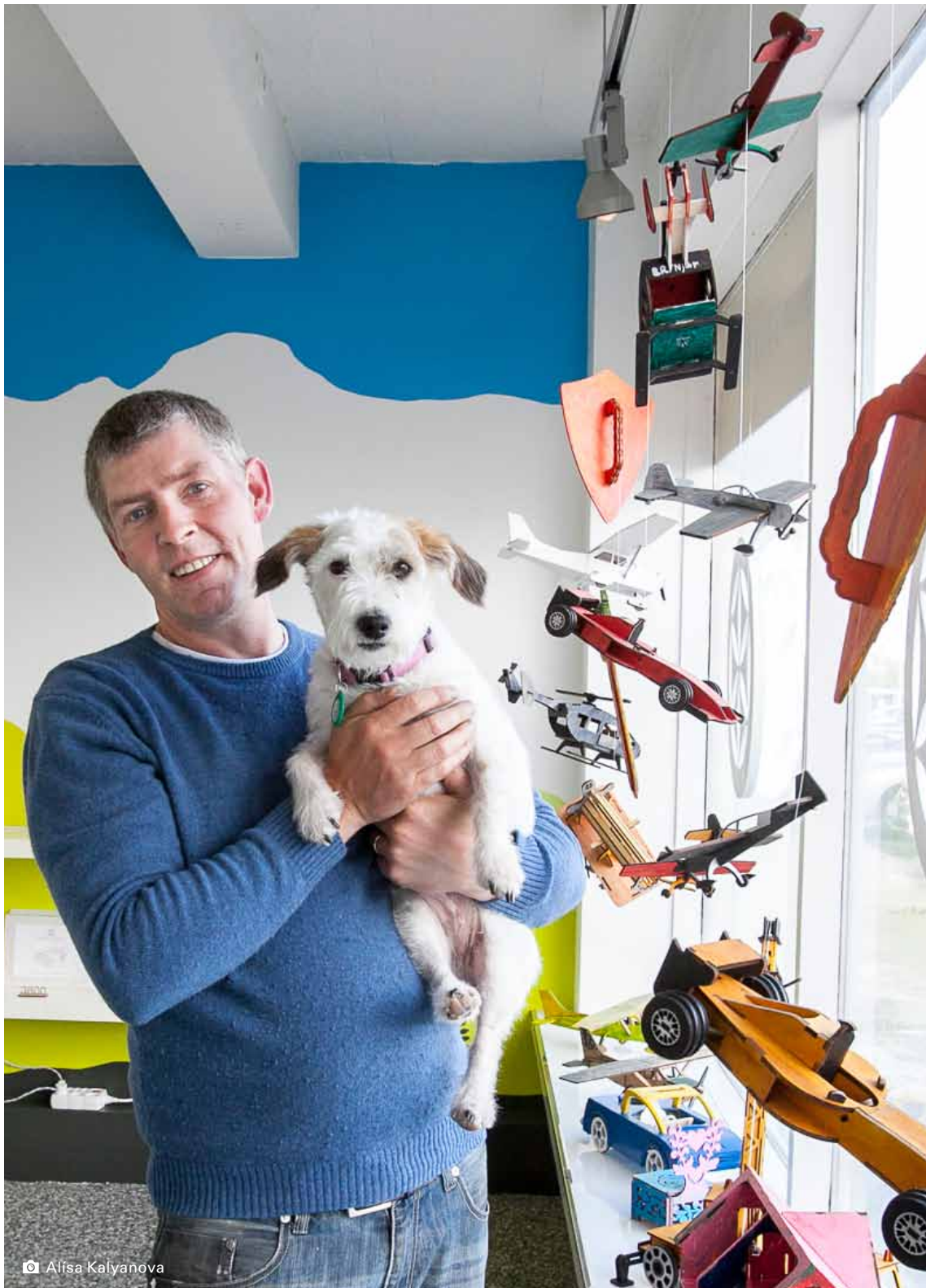
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Design

42

Innovation and the future ahead

by Ingibjörg Rósa Björnsdóttir



A few years ago, industrial designer Pálmi Einarsson looked around at the world and his two young boys and thought to himself: "What state will this planet be in when our kids inherit it?"

He then up and left his successful long-term career with an international prosthetics manufacturer and set up Geislar hönnunarhús, where he designs and produces toys and giftware in an as eco-friendly manner as possible. Amongst other things he makes model planes and cars that his sons helped him design.

"Kids are so much better at thinking outside the box than the rest of us," Pálmi says and points out a truck with a lid on its bed, a detail his son Róbert insisted on adding. The model toys are easy to assemble and can then be painted to anyone's taste. "I've discovered that my kids take better care of the toys they designed, put together and painted themselves, they're more precious to them."

This, Pálmi says, is one of the reasons he is also developing a tablet and mobile app for kids, where they can design their own toys that Geislar will carve out and then deliver to their homes.

The model toys are currently being carved out of MDF (medium density fibreboard), but in the future, Pálmi plans on using hemp. To that end, he has already started cultivating industrial hemp, but thus far he has

only used them to produce hemp oil. "We really should focus on hemp, it's the future. You can get more mass of paper out of hemp than trees, and it can be compressed and used instead of wood," he says enthusiastically.

All of Pálmi's designs are produced in limited edition runs, and he keeps track of who purchases his products.

In the giftware section, you can find jewellery made of wood and steel and it comes in pretty wood packaging that can then be used as a Post-it stand. "I hate the idea of using all this material for packaging and then throwing it away," Pálmi says and shows me how the bigger items are merely wrapped up in thin paper when sold.

All of Geislar's products come in light, flat packaging and are easy to assemble if needed, and are made of either MDF, oak or thin stainless steel. The giftware varies from key rings and jewellery to sketchbooks and carving boards to candle holders and lamps. This is not only good Icelandic design, but also innovation and global thinking at its best.

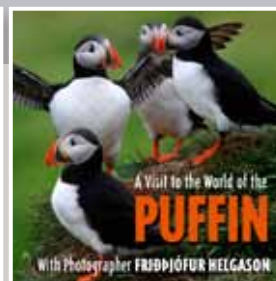
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Stormy Adventure Time

Storm-lashed Rauðasandur Festival pulled back from the brink

Rauðasandur (English: “red sand”) is a small festival in a relatively remote part of the Westfjords, offering a daytime programme of wholesome fun stuff like seaside yoga, hill walking and a sandcastle contest, followed by a party, a schedule of live music, and a bonfire for the finale. But even with a well-picked line-up that includes local heroes like Nolo, Samaris, Borko and Prins Póló, at Rauðasandur the location is the real star of the show.

The beach itself is about as far west as it is possible to get in Europe, nestled in a deep coastal valley accessible only by dirt road. After coming off highway 62, the track ascends steeply into the mountains, offering a widescreen view over the glittering fjords behind. But the big reveal comes around a final blind corner, when a wide plain of glittering shallows and vivid red ochre sand sweeps into view, framed by the graceful mountains of the Westfjords. It would be easy to think this place was a mirage, such is the startling contrast to the mossy volcanic land that makes up much of Iceland's countryside.

Shepherd's warning

After descending a gravel track scraped into the sheer scree cliff, new arrivals are waved past by festival helpers onto the grassy campsite field. Most choose to pitch their tents just feet from the sand, taking in some opening night open-mic performances in the nearby barn, before hopping over a fence for a nighttime walk. A line of wheeling, dancing silhouettes punctuate the sand for a kilometre between the campsite and the surf, dotting the shining expanse under a luminous pink sky—the spectacle is not unlike Iceland's very own miniature Burning Man.

But the weather doesn't hold. I wake up at 6am to find the Grapevine's trusty festival tent collapsed, both poles having been snapped like twigs in the gales. Outside, other sleepy campers hastily attach guy ropes, stamp loose pegs into the soil, or just try to sleep amidst the rising noise.

Blown away

After an uneasy night spent dozing in the passenger seat of the car, the morning offers no respite. In fact, the wind worsens throughout the morning with tent-tearing, car-rattling gusts, to the point where the glum organisers call in the emergency services for a risk assessment. Things are not looking good. The campsite slowly empties, and a couple of hours of solid downpour later word filters through that the festival has been cancelled in its original form, with an invitation to regroup in the nearby town of Patreksfjörður.

As we take the mountain track once again, I look down to see the white festival bus far below laden with staff, bands and equipment, crawling sadly away from the beach.

Yo ho Nolo

But a bunch of hardy Icelanders aren't going to let a bit of blowy

weather get in the way of a party. It turns out that our meeting point is Sjóráeningjahúsið, a spacious pirate-themed cafe-bar, and before long, the festival crew are setting up the PA system once again. Festivalgoers get coffee and soup and dry off by the open fire, and the atmosphere starts to buzz with excitement.

It falls on Reykjavík duo Nolo to start the party, and they step up admirably, mixing languid synth pop, soft guitar tones and earworm melodies into a slick, seductive whole. Their sound is more West Coast than Westfjords, bringing to mind bands like Seattle's Beat Connection and the soft, easy tones of the Cascine label. The addition of a drummer injects a fresh impetus to their endlessly enjoyable set, which flies by way too quickly. For all the casual affectations of their performance, Nolo make purposeful and well-crafted music, and their set is the starting gun for the festival proper.

Scholarly melancholia

Borko bring things down a notch with their trademark scholarly melancholia, built from tightly scored guitar work and loose, responsive drums. Blasts of trumpet hint at their big-band intentions, but playing as a trio, the sparser sound serves to focus attention on their songwriting and musicianship. There has always been something listless and plaintive about Borko's lyrics and minor-key compositions—the optimism of "Born To Be Free" (the title track of their new album) is surely ironic. In the hands of Björn Kristjánsson, life sounds like a long trudge towards its certain end, during which happiness is temporary and hard won.

Prins Póló are on confident form, delivering the most well-received set of the night with a run through their 'greatest hits'. The word "shabby," oft-used to describe their sound, is not applicable to this tight and well-practised performance, although their other main descriptor, 'charming,' applies more than ever. Prins Póló play with smiles on their faces and an infectious energy that's transmitted to the teeming crowd, who are whooping and whirling by the time the encore comes.

Since signing to One Little Indian, Samaris are now label-mates of Björk, Ólöf Arnalds and Ásgeir Trausti, thrusting them straight in the pantheon of most-likely-to-succeed Icelandic bands. Pressed for time and harried by technical difficulties, they get to play only two songs here, but their quality is apparent. Jófríður Ákadóttir, also often seen performing as one half of Pascal Pinon, is blossoming into

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one of the most promising young stars in Icelandic music, delivering a breathy and emotive vocal performance with preternatural, instinctive ease before the three disappear with an apologetic wave. All eyes and ears will be on their next steps.

Back to school

Before long people gather outside and trail up the hill to the local elementary school. It's a surreal ending, with every classroom and corridor becoming carpeted by sleeping bags, blankets and duvets. People tiptoe between the shelves of chess trophies and national maps, dodging the careworn desks and wall displays about American rappers, trying not to wake those already asleep before settling in some unclaimed corner for the night. Rauðasandur may have been blown to brink and teetered there precariously for a moment, but the organisers pulled it back admirably. Their labour-of-love event may not have happened on that glorious beach (the organisers go back later to ceremoniously ignite the bonfire themselves) but it was a party to remember.

✎ - John Rogers



In fact, the wind worsens throughout the morning with tent-tearing, car-rattling gusts...



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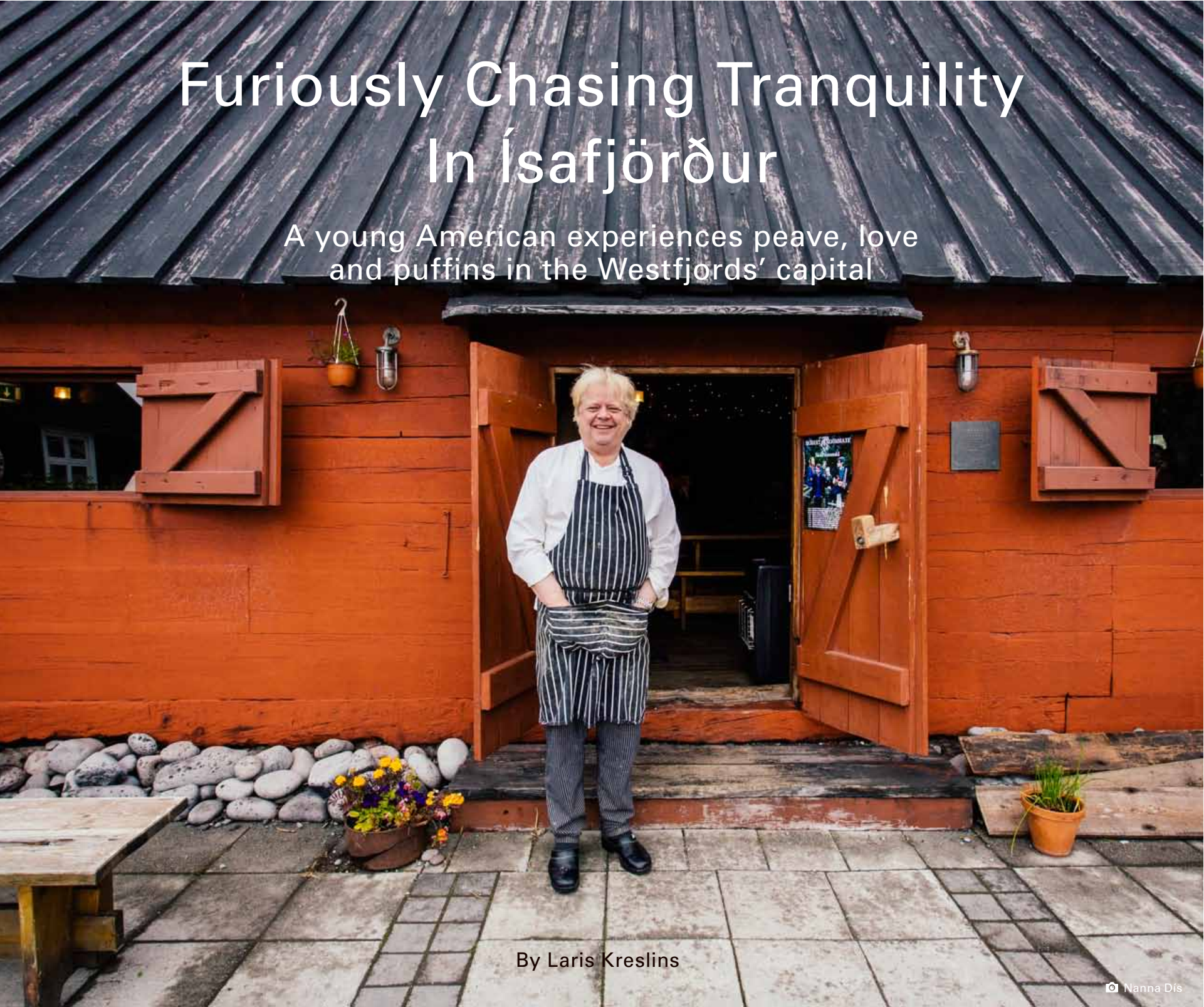
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Furiously Chasing Tranquility In Ísafjörður

A young American experiences peace, love
and puffins in the Westfjords' capital



By Laris Kreslins

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Through my travels, I've been lucky enough to meet a ton of Icelanders who have become some of my closest friends—I might call them family. At this point, I'm proud to say I'm fully enmeshed in the "Icelandic Connection" now, which means being open to Icelandic travellers (individuals, artists, musicians, grandparents—you name it) to my home in Philadelphia. The "Iceland Connected" have a code to my home's lockbox for easy access. If you don't mind cats, the place is yours. Be in touch.

I've thus gone to Iceland a couple of times, and always greatly enjoyed my visits. This time, when I learned that I had an opportunity to make a third trip to Iceland, I crowdsourced suggestions as to where to stop on my way to Nuuk, Greenland, where I would be working on a research project about Greenlandic artists. Based on friends' suggestions, my plan was to skip Reykjavík and head Northwest to Ísafjörður. As I would learn, they advised me well.

I'd never been to the West Fjords. Over the years, a myth of Ísafjörður has built up for me, mostly based on the stories I've heard about the music festival Aldrei fór ég suður ("I never went south"), which takes place during Easter. I'd heard that the festival involves over 40 bands, and unlimited drink on limited time, so they pack it in. Impromptu collaborations and aural stumbling and bum-bling. A festival that seems to be the antithesis of Iceland Airwaves, one that celebrates passion and insanity—one where commerce and market forces are checked at the door. Sadly, the timing just didn't work for me to experience it this time, but there's always next year.

An odd adventure

Getting to Ísafjörður was an odd adventure, which was my fault entirely: I misread my layover-filled itinerary while trying to get the cheapest tickets possible. One day of travel from Philadelphia to Newark to Boston to Reykjavík to Ísafjörður. An expected few hour stopover in downtown Reykjavík turned into a mad dash from Keflavík to Reykjavík airport to catch my Air Iceland jumper flight. Fuck it. Who needs sleep?

Upon arrival in Ísafjörður, I settled into my accommodations—my friend's sister's bedroom that was kindly cleared out for an incredibly comfortable stay. The first day was mostly spent hanging out at the restau-

rant Tjörúhúsið ("The Tar House"), a culinary legend that I had heard about and had to see. The action was non-stop, the food amazing. There are no menus—you only get what is served to you, the catch of the day at the chef's discretion, for a fixed price. I ate cod cheek for the first time. It was fatty and crispy and melted in my mouth. Aside from serving food, the restaurant seems to act as an active community hub, with all kinds of people dropping by throughout the day, sharing stories and having a taste of whatever's being cooked up at the time. At the end of the day, I fell asleep, happy and satiated even though my room was filled with bright sun. I think I was too tired to be bothered by it.

Tunnel time

I spent my second day in Ísafjörður venturing to the nearby villages of Þingeyri and Suðureyri, via the Vestfjarðagöng road tunnel. The tunnel was built in 1996, and remains the only tunnel that I've ever seen that has an intersection. Parts of the tunnel are one lane, with courtesy pull-overs to accommodate the traffic, at times the drivers are so polite that it slows down traffic. Getting back to town, I was invited to an impromptu dinner party for eight travellers and locals, where Icelandic lamb was served. After hours of revelry, we thought we'd try to catch a set by Prins Póló, who were playing in the nearby village of Flateyri. We missed them, but hung out and drank beers near the water in Öndarfjörður as the sun shone brightly upon us. It was past 3 AM.

I decided to head home. While cabbing in full stupor, I was asked, "What are you doing before you leave?" I answered, "Going to Vigur." And my friend replied, "that should

be good. You're going at a very 'puffetic' time," referencing the legion of puffin, that inhabit the tiny island.

Peace and tranquillity

The beginning of the end of my time in the Westfjords started with a West Tour to the island of Vigur, where I would see how down is harvested and puffins managed, and get a glimpse of the tranquillity of a simple life. The tour is booked solid, but it's not so crowded you can't breathe. The boat is filled with locals as well as tourists from Japan, Australia, France, Denmark, and the US. As we depart, the sea air is crisp and refreshing, amplifying the meditative loop that's played in my mind over the past two weeks. As we cross the calm waters, I'm reminded of a quote from a wall decoration I saw at the dinner party the night before:

"In the embrace of blue mountains, where the cold wave sparkles. In the high cliff mountain halls, the kind elfin queen rules. Which makes the torches glitter around the dark mountain passes, as the evening beams swell and kiss Ísafjörður."

As we floated towards our destination I was fully embraced by the blue mountains. I'll return to this memory, I believe.

Upon our island arrival you're smacked with tranquillity—if tranquillity can smack. The first stop is a rock formation housing nesting eider ducks, the leading producers on the 2 kilometre long, 400 metre wide island. The eider ducks just hang there. Calm, yet protecting. Resting on their eggs. Trust-

ter a spear ("vigur" means spear, I learned).

Digging apart the island

There are other indicators of otherworldliness on the island. Our guide stops periodically to take questions and give us a bit of history. The same family has lived in Vigur for the past 135 years, managing over 3,600 eider nests. The family ensures that the eider down is collected and processed without disturbing the nesting ritual. To keep the eider ducks undisturbed, the farmer replaces down with fresh cut grass.

The family manages the land in other ways, too. For example, a portion of the puffins is culled as a conservation strategy. Puffins dig up the island dirt lush island grass, creating holes for breeding and defecation, thus speeding up the process of land erosion.

There are around 8,000 puffins on the island. These impressive birds live by the proverb: "one should not shit where they eat"—creating separate holes for each activity. That their fascinating way of life can also potentially dismantle the land and have it forever disappear into the sea is astounding to ponder. I couldn't help but think, "this island is a tranquil toilet that generates life and softness," the softness being the pounds and pounds of down harvested each year.

The tour is coming to an end, and I walk by the escapist escape cabin overlooking the Hestur ("Mt. Horse"). It's a deep red A-Frame wood and corrugated metal shack covered in windows hugging the island cliff for safety. I want to live there. We're ushered to the inhabited part of the island for cakes and coffee in the old rustic farmer home, painted a beautiful and crisp yellow. We drink and eat with the smell of a nearby smokehouse in the air. I feel paused. I feel good. Thankful for the thank-

At the end of the day, I fell asleep, happy and satiated even though my room was filled with bright sun.

ing that the humans will let them be.

As we begin our march around the island, I walk on rocks, sea urchin shells, grass, random down and moss. Next to me, a 7-year old child from Ísafjörður collects a fistful of sea bones. I can't help to think how normal this might all seem to her. As we walk the 90-minute stroll around the island, the yelps and coos of the eider males and black guillemots continue to amplify the calmness. Arctic terns also fly overhead. It's odd to think that a place so filled with peace is named af-

ful things.

In the Icelandic way, we're urged, but not rushed, back to the boat to return to shore. I sleep the entire way back, waking up again in the blue mountains' embrace. As I step on the dock, a traveller's anxiety sets in. I need to be in Greenland tomorrow. World is weird. World is wide. I'm still trying to figure things out. Maybe Nuuk will help.

Westfjords, see you next time.


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For The Hikers:
Three Thunderous Summits

Hiking For Volcanos



Ari Trausti Guðmundsson is a trained geophysicist and mountaineer who has written a number of books from short stories and poetry to fiction. His most recent English language books are ‘Focus on Iceland,’ a road guide for tourists, ‘Magma,’ a book documenting Icelandic volcanoes from the Katla eruption in 1918 to Vatnajökull in 2011, and ‘Summit – 100 Mountain Hikes’.

From the hundreds of mountain hikes and climbs (both equipped and un-equipped) Iceland has to offer, I have chosen to spotlight three mountains that should be suitable for most hikers. The hikes are intended for the late spring to early autumn months, and range from the light Helgafell-outing close to Reykjavík to the more demanding hike to the summit of Kristínartindar in Vatnajökull National Park. The peaks are selected to represent mountains in West, North and South Iceland (see www.grapevine.is for Hólmaticindur in the East, left out of the print version of this article due to space constraints. It is a great peak). All of them are portrayed in my guidebook to 100 peaks in Iceland, called ‘Summit,’ which was published by Uppheimar Publishing House in 2012.

Helgafell:
A holy mountain?



There are a few low mountains in Iceland named Helgafell (“Holy Mountain”). One possible explanation for the name’s popularity is that these mountains were consecrated or considered holy in the days of the old Nordic religion, perhaps

because of their geographical position or other special attributes. The Icelandic male name Helgi could also have something to do with the name Helgafell, but the former explanation is probably more to the point.

Helgafell (338 m) is one of the many sub-glacially formed piles of volcanic rock found in Iceland, albeit one of the smaller ones. Such structures are very common within or adjacent to active volcanic zones and belts. Helgafell’s brownish, sandy tuff was once black basalt glass, consisting mainly of tephra from an explosive eruption tens of thousands of years ago under a relatively thin Ice Age glacier that covered the Reykjanes Peninsula.

Many different lava formations can be found while walking towards the mountain, especially west of it: small volcanic craters, plate lava (pahoe) and scoria lava. The walk towards the mountain is just as interesting as the ascent itself, and you may even decide to take a hike around Helgafell instead of—or in addition to—climbing the mountain. The summit is a gentle dome with a cairn and a small dyke, probably the feeder dyke of the ascending back once upon a time.

How to get there:

The road to Kaldrársel from the old cemetery of Hafnarfjörður town (no number) ends at a waterworks reservoir. The trail from here is initially marked and leads eastwards across lava, gravel and fine sand. A cairn at the northeastern base of Helgafell (which looks like a dented upturned bowl) marks the beginning of the climb. The trail is steep at times and the fine scree soft. The going gets better on firmer tuff rock. Still visible in most places, the trail leads you to the top—you won’t need to pay much attention to the route. The views are fine, including those over urban areas and various volcanic features in the neighbourhood. It is possible to continue (with the aid of a few markers) over the summit and down the much steeper southern slopes. This requires good weather, sure-footed hiking and the will to turn around if you are unsure about the trail.

Time:

The ascent time should be around 90 minutes

Distance:

The elevation difference is 260 m.

Pórðarhöfði:
An island attached to land



Rögnvaldur

Let’s head north, to the wide fjord of Skagafjörður. The drive along the entire northern shores is very interesting. The road north of the small town of Hofús directs you close to a bulky promontory, named Pórðarhöfði, after one of the first 9th century settlers in the area (find more info at www.visitskagafjordur.is).

Pórðarhöfði (202 m) is really an island. It got connected to the mainland through the build-up of two gravel and boulder ridges (berms), formed by the surf. It is situated opposite the de facto island Drangey, and not far from the other large island in the fjord, Málmei. The imposing 200-metre-high cliffs on the seaward side of Pórðarhöfði, which are more or less vertical, are a cross-section of lava and tuff rocks with intrusions. They show that Pórðarhöfði is a ruin of an early Ice Age volcanic formation like Drangey and Ketubjörg, found on the west coast of Skagafjörður. The outlines of a top crater are still visible. The landward slopes of Pórðarhöfði are gently angled and covered with various types of vegetation, the cliffs are a choice nesting site for seabirds.

How to get there:

Head north on Road 76, passing Lake Höfðavatn and the farm of Vatn en route. The Höfðamöl (northern) berm leads to the mountain, which should be ascended from the northeast along a marked path. The walk may become somewhat tedious, as the oval rocks are rather large. However, the grassy slopes provide easy ground. The summit is called Herkonuklettur; three conspicuous tuff rocks on the southern slope are said to be a church, store and house, belonging to elves. Despite this long-ish approach along a coarse gravel and boulder berm, the climb itself is easy and the view splendid. After the hike, try to visit one of the best countryside restaurants (and guesthouse) in Iceland, Lónkot (www.lonkot.is), which offers fine slow-food cooking.

Time:

You probably use one and a half to two hours for the ascent

Distance:

The route’s distance is 4.5 km

Kristínartindar:
The wow-view-point



Steve Smith

For hikers enjoying the southern part of Vatnajökull National Park, an ascent of Kristínartindar

1,126 m) is a must—the mountain’s popular panoramic viewpoint in the heart of the national park (www.vatnajokulsthjodgardur.is) has few equals.

The higher summit has a flanking rock pillar that serves as a landmark en route. Various types of eruptive rock can be found at Kristínartindar, but the mountain as such is part of an eroded volcanic complex, long since vanished. There is a lot to take in while walking across the Skaftafellsheiði heath, including a number of popular destinations for shorter hikes (like the Svartifoss waterfall) and very fine views of glaciers, peaks, snow domes and the vast expanses of the Skeiðarársandur outwash plains, created by meandering glacial rivers and glacial floods (“jökulhlaup”) from the Örfæfajökull volcano and the glaciated Grímsvötn volcano, hidden underneath Vatnajökull, some 50 km to the north.

How to get there:

You start at the Skaftafell service centre. The marked trail walk to Sjónársker from the there is an enjoyable hike. From that vantage point, take the Austurbrekkur trail, walking roughly to the

northeast, high above Skaftafellsjökull, a long valley glacier outlet of the Vatnajökull ice cap. Soon after Austurbrekkur, you will start gaining elevation at an increased rate as you head northwest. A good trail leads on into a bowl-shaped valley (Gemludalur) towards the steepening scree flank of the northern peak of Kristínartindar. Here, you are rewarded with nature at its best: the full splendour of the high mountain world of the Örfæfajökull volcano and the peaks closer to you can only be revealed from a lofty vantage point such as Kristínartindar.

Time:

Ascent time should be close to three hours (eight to nine km)

Distance:

You have to surmount an elevation gain of about 1,020 metres).

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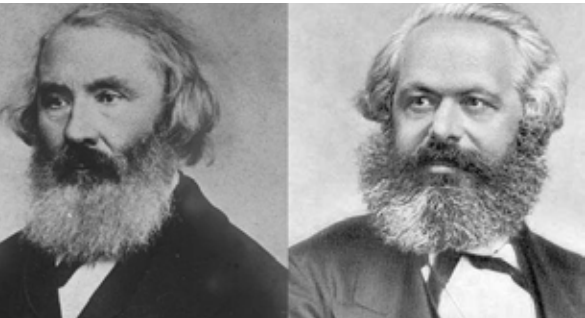
Icelandic Doppelgängers

Words by Helgi Hrafn Guðmundsson – Photos by Lemúrin

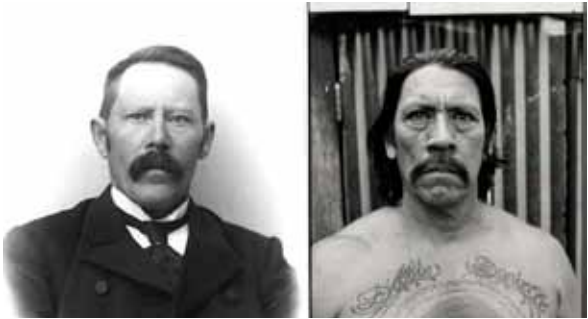
Doppelgängers are a mystery. Why does Russian President Vladimir Putin totally look like the Italian merchant Arnolfini in the haunting masterpiece by Jan van Eyck, painted in 1434? And how did Saddam Hussein find the look-alikes that he allegedly employed as his stand-ins? We set out to find look-alikes of Icelandic people, and this is what we found.



Neil Young is from Winnipeg, Canada, where many Icelanders settled. Is he a descendant of Helgi Thordersen (1794–1867), who was the Bishop of Iceland and a politician?



Jón Pétursson, editor and a Member of Parliament (1812–1896), and Karl Marx (1818–1883) were look-alikes and of the same generation. A meeting between those two would have been surreal.



Despite his looks, Guttormur Vigfússon (1850–1928) was just another Icelandic farmer and Member of Parliament, and had nothing to do with train robberies in the Wild West. But can we still make a film about him, please? Meet the actor who will portray him: Mexican badass and former jailbird Danny Trejo.



Grímur Thomsen (1820–1896) was a gifted poet of the romantic era and a Member of Parliament. Perhaps someone like Steven Spielberg could make a film about his life? Irish actor Cillian Murphy is perfect for the leading role.



Strange Beasts Bárújárn And Árni-related News

By Óli Dóri and Davíð Roach Gunnarsson

The group Bárújárn is a strange beast indeed, a dark surf rock group with a twist; their tunes feature the rarely used, sci-fi sounding theremin. After a long hiatus, the band has finally released their self-titled debut LP, and we're happy to say that it makes for an exciting listening experience. It starts with the sound of the ocean, before the twanging guitars chime in, underscored by low key theremin hiss. It's like The Shadows with a darker shade of sunglasses playing in the nighttime on a black sanded Icelandic beach. Leader Sindri's guitar playing on the album is excellent, and lyrics and song-writing are also top notch. Recommended.

Árni Rúnar Hlökkversson from the Reykjavík electro-pop band FM Belfast just released a new song, "Empire," under his Plúseinn moniker. Árni wrote, produced, performed, mixed and mastered the song himself at his home studio in Reykjavík. The song sounds a bit like a darker version of one of FM Belfast's first singles, "Underwear," in a really good way! Check out Árni on his SoundCloud page, www.soundcloud.com/pluseinn, for more feisty tunes. "This is my empire, take it easy now." This man is clearly in the empire business!

In other Árni related news, Árni Guðjónsson, Of Monsters and Men's former keyboard player, has founded a new band called Blóðberg. The members of Blóðberg have been working on a EP last three months, which is slated for release this fall. Their first single, "Óskir" ("Wishes") is currently streaming on their SoundCloud page, www.soundcloud.com/blodbergband. The music is of the 'atmospheric dance-oriented elctro pop' kind, and features a strong hook.



Straum.is has been active since last summer, with writers Óli Dóri and Davíð Roach documenting the local music scene and helping people discover the best new music. It is associated with the radio show Straumur on X977, which airs every Monday evening at 23:00.

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Whale Watching



Page 34



"My predisposition is to seek asylum in a country with shared values. The nation that most encompasses this is Iceland. They stood up for people over internet freedom."

Edward Snowden might want to rethink that whole thing...

Page 24



"In October 2011 I again met with the FBI in Denmark. We stay at five star hotels, and regularly go to McDonalds. It was exciting."

Sigurður Þórðarson quite enjoyed being an FBI informant.

Page 26



"Do you go around interviewing a lot people that are charged with embezzlement, theft, who are notorious liars, and..."

WikiLeaks spokesperson Kristinn Hrafnsson is not pleased with our Soggi interview.

Page 6



"Where else could a tedious, un-sexy issue like fishing fees become such a hot debate but in Iceland? It makes sense, though, as fishing amounts to just over 40% of Iceland's GDP (down from as much as 90% a few decades ago)."

Tempers are flaring up about fishing fees! Fucking fish.

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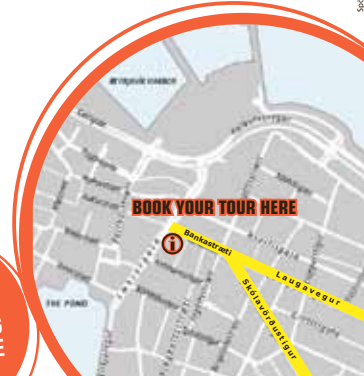
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Music, Art, Films and Events Listings
+ Eating, Drinking and Shopping + Map

Issue 10 - 2013

www.grapevine.is

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO LIFE, TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT IN ICELAND

PARTY DOWN, MELT YOUR FACE OFF, KEX- STYLE!

KEXPort Block Party 2013


KEX Hostel | FREE! | July 20 12:00 - 0:00

A twelve-hour block party put that caters to all the cool cats of Reykjavík. Spectacular Hjaltalín, jazzy Samúel J. Samúelsson Big Band and face melting Muck all come together for a brilliant day of fun. Expect delicious food and a great selection of beers and other drinks. Oh, and a lot of cool peeps, too! TGB

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Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Open Mic
Prikið
22:00 Introbeats

Thursday July 25

Bar 11
22:00 “Experiment” Stand
Up Comedy
Boston
22:00 DJ Þórunn Antonía
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Brother Grass
Dolly
22:00 Guilty Pleasure #9:
Orang Volante
Faktórý
21:00 Introbeats / John Grant
Gamli Gaukurinn
22:00 The Big Band Theory /
Funkaholics
Glaumbar
22:00 Beer Pong!
Harlem
22:00 Óli Dóri
Hressó
22:00 Jam Session
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Borg
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Flassback Night
Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 DJ Matz
Loft Hostel
20:30 Tónleikur #2
Nordic House
12:00 Picnic Concert Series: Fríða
Dís Guðmundsdóttir
Prikið
22:00 Young Ones Night
Thorvaldsen
20:00 Salsa Night

Friday July 26

Bar 11
22:00 Ophidian I
Boston
22:00 DJ Kári
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Brother Grass
Dolly
22:00 Mæja & Sunna Ben
Dillon
22:00 DJ Andrea
Faktórý
22:00 Agent Fresco / Mammút /
Benny Crespo's Gang / Kanill /
DJ KGB
Hallgrímskirkja
12:00 Schola cantorum
Harlem
22:00 DJ Dauði
Harpa
22:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song
Hressó
22:00 A+ DJ's / DJ Solid
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ CasaNova
Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 DJ Seth Sharp Live
on Flass Xtra
Prikið
22:00 Emmsjé Gauta / Árni Kocoon

Saturday July 27

B5
22:00 DJ Jónas
Bar 11
22:00 China Choplin
Boston
22:00 DJ Bensolo
Dillon
22:00 DJ Andrea
Dolly
12:00 DJ Karíus
Hallgrímskirkja
12:00 Kári Þormar, Dómkirkjan í
Reykjavík
Harlem
22:00 Solaris Sun Glaze
Harpa
22:00 Pearls of Icelandic Songs
Hressó
22:00 Dalton / DJ Solid
Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 DJ Tommi
Prikið
22:00 Benni B Ruff
Faktórý
23:30 Hausar #005
– First Anniversary

Sunday July 28

B5
22:00 DJ Eerin
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Reynir Sigurðsson band:
In memory of Gunnar Sveinsson
Faktórý
21:00 Live Jazz
Harpa
22:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song

Monday July 29

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Ingvar Örn
Hallgrímskirkja
12:00 Matthias Giesen
Harpa
20:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song
Kaffibarinn
22:00 DJ Katla
Prikið
22:00 Súrasti Berndsen
Thorvaldsen
20:30 Bachata Night

Tuesday July 30

Café Rosenberg
21:00 Rauðir fiskar
English Pub
20:00 Troubadour Night
Faktórý
21:00 Svavar Knútur



Melodies Of A Northern Island Nation
Pearls of Icelandic Song

Harpa | Various Dates July & August | 3,900 ISK

This concert series features a delightful array of Icelandic songs, folksongs and hymns performed by some of Iceland’s very talented, young classical musicians. The songs will be sung in Icelandic, but English annotation will be provided so you can understand exactly why Icelanders consider these songs the pearls to their oyster. For the full performance schedule check harpa.is. **SS**



We Are Difficult People
kimono

Faktórý | 22:00 | Price TBA

kimono makes experimental rock at its best. Formed in 2001, the group is a beloved element of the Icelandic music scene and a true gem in this glorious land of rock, water, and ice. The band has morphed a lot over the years, as musicians moved in and out of its lo-fi membrane and the band briefly relocated to Berlin (If you haven’t noticed, Icelanders really like Berlin). The group has also released albums with two great independent Icelandic labels, Bad Taste and most recently, Kimi Records. The title of their latest album: 'Easy Music for Difficult People.' And aren’t we all difficult people, just looking for some easy listening. It is going to be an excellent show at dear Faktórý, which, need we remind you, is sadly closing very soon. **SS**



Icelandic Serenade
Hjaltalín

Faktórý | 22:00 | 1,500 ISK

Have you ever wished a Viking with long flowing blonde hair or Iceland's answer to Adele would serenade you on a Friday night? On the 20th, Faktórý gives you a chance to fulfill these fantasies with Hjaltalín's Högni Egilsson and Sigríður Thorlaciús. Be still my beating heart. The band's award-winning album, 'Enter 4,' has been a hit this year, so they will have plenty of fresh ballads that will make you swoon. Tickets are only sold at the door so don't plan on being fashionably late, this is surely going to be a sold-out event. **AB**



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Summer in the city

Reykjavík will be vibrant and full of life this summer. Numerous events and activities will be ongoing all around the city.

Merry merchants will greet you on every city street. You can choose to go with the flow of the latest fashion trends in **the Lighthouse Village** or treat yourself to delicacies at the **Restaurant Village**.

Our **Summer streets**, Laugavegur and Skólavörðustígur are closed to car traffic until the 5th of August.



WWW.MIDBORGIN.IS

MUSIC CONCERTS & NIGHTLIFE

Hallgrímskirkja
17:00 Matthias Giesen
Harpa
20:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Óli Dóri
Prikið
22:00 Súrasti Berndsen

Wednesday July 31

Bar 11
22:00 Foosball Competition
Café Rosenberg
21:00 Bad Days
English Pub
20:00 Troubadour Night
Faktóry
22:00 Grísallappalísa Release Show / Dj Eijill
Harpa
20:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song
Kaffibarinn
22:00 Alfons X
Prikið
22:00 Dungeon Massive & ThizOne

Thursday August 1

Bío Paradís
22:00 Tilbury / Arnljótur
Dolly
22:00 De La Rosa
English Pub
21:00 Troubadours Baggi & Maggi
Faktóry
22:00 kimono / DJ Benson
Is Fantastic
Harpa
18:00 The Deep
20:00 Pearls of Icelandic Song
Hressó
21:00 DJ Katla & friends
Kaffi Zimsen
21:00 Flassback Night
Kofi Tómasar Frænda
22:00 Throwback Thursday
Thorvaldsen
20:00 Salsa Night

1
August



What Was Hot In 2012 Is Still Hot
Tilbury Plays Summer Cinema Concert

Bío Paradís | 22:00 | Free!

Last summer it was all about Tilbury. Whenever you would turn on the radio in your car, the blissful tunes of this mellow Icelandic indie group would be poured into your ears. If it does occur to you that somehow their songs have dissolved from your memory, or if you are just a plain old popcorn addict, then head to the funkiest cinema in town. Tilbury will play a set in one of the screening rooms of Bío Paradís. Arnljótur, the Icelandic God of Reggae, will play a set too! **KN**

26
July



Record Records Blasting Their Best
Mammút, Agent Fresco and Benny Crespo's Gang's last time in Faktóry

Faktóry | 22:00 | 1,500 ISK

Think about a stage where you could witness intense female singing, guitar-heavy alternative rock and a drummer with an orange afro all in one night. If you started to drool, then this is your chance to check out the mayhem! The independent record label Record Records is hosting a kick-ass goodbye concert for the about-to-die music venue Faktóry. There is no place like front row, when it comes to this line-up of three top Icelandic rock bands. **KN**



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ART

OPENINGS AND ONGOING

July 19 - August 1

How to use the listings: Venues are listed alphabetically by day. For complete listings and detailed information on venues visit www.grapevine.is Send us your listings: listings@grapevine.is

Opening

Prikið

July 21, 22:00

Hangover Cinema: Lone Wolf & Cub

Enjoy this Japanese Samurai film from the '70s on your lazy Sunday with some free popcorn.

July 28, 22:00

Hangover Cinema: Speed

Enjoy this 1994 American action thriller starring Keanue Reeves on your lazy Sunday with some free popcorn.

Harpa

July 25, 12:00

The Art of Being Icelandic – Literature and Lunch in Harpa

Can Iceland be the Scene of a Crime? Yrsa Sigurðardóttir is one of Iceland's best known crime story writers, who will read from her books in English and talk about her novels, with a special emphasis on how it feels to be a crime story writer in a country that is blessed with a low number of violent crimes.

July 28, 21:00 & August 1, 18:00

The Deep

The Deep is a film by Iceland's famous director Baltasar Kormákur. This film was Iceland's Oscar nominee in 2012 and now you have the possibility to see it in English.

Kunstschlager

July 28

Steingrímur Eyfjörð Exhibit

Kunstschlager will reveal one of Steingrímur Eyfjörð's old paintings.

Runs until August 18

Ongoing

ART67

Art in Reykjavík

Thirteen artists will show in this exhibition, including Auður Björnsdóttir, Fríða Rögnvaldsdóttir, Yvonne Kristín Nielsen and Þóra Ben. Each month one wall changes in the gallery.

Runs until July 31

Bíó Paradís

Cool Cuts - Icelandic Cinema with English Subtitles

Between June 14th and August 31st Bíó Paradís will screen six Icelandic films with English subtitles. The films include White Night Wedding, Sigur Rós's Heima, Children of Nature, Either Way, Backyard and Noi the Albino. To find out more about these movies check out Bíó Paradís's website.

Runs until August 31

Summer in Bíó Paradís

All summer long Bíó Paradís will be screening two classic films each week. From July 19 - 25, Teen Wolf (1985) and The Other (1972) will play. And from July 26 - August 1, Some Like it Hot (1959) and Bedazzled (1967) will play. For their full schedule, check the Bíó Paradís website.

Runs until August 15

The Culture House

Medieval Manuscripts, Eddas, and Sagas

It includes principal medieval manuscripts, such as Codices Regii of the Poetic Edda, Prose Edda, law codices and Christian works, not forgetting the Icelandic Sagas.

On permanent view

Child of Hope - Youth and Jón Sigurðsson

Exploring the life of Icelandic national hero Jón Sigurðsson, made especially accessible for children, families and school groups.

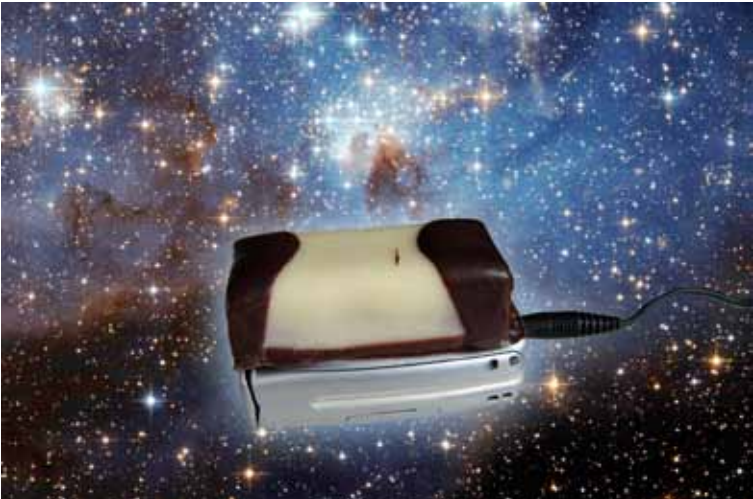
On permanent view

Millennium - Phase One

A selection of pieces from the collection of the National Gallery displaying a variety of works by Icelandic artists over the last two centuries.

On permanent view

The Library Room

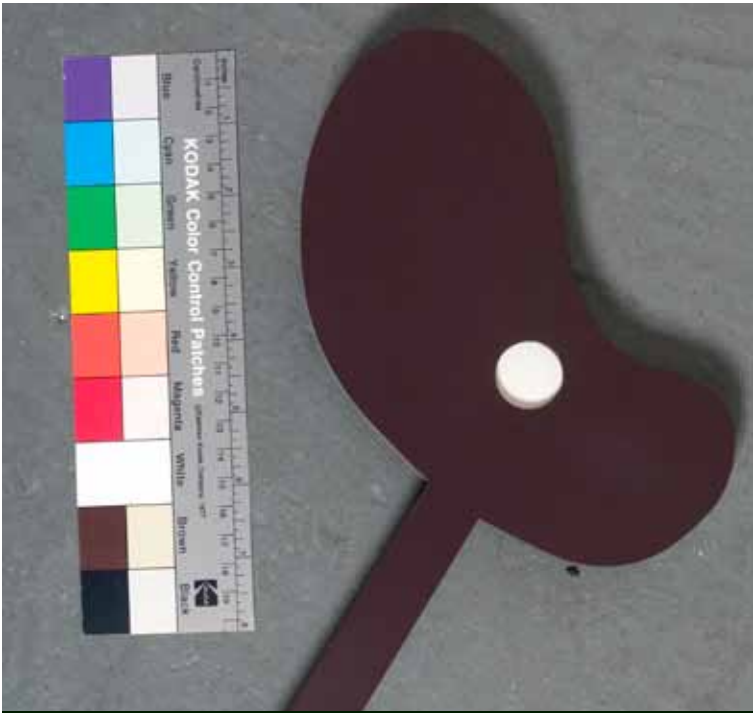


The Making of Art

Arna Óttarsdóttir's 'Gangi þér vel'

Kunstschlager | July 13-17 | Free!

Arna Óttarsdóttir adds her drop to the endless river of the debate on the relationship between art and functionality with the show "Gangi þér vel" (Good Luck) at Kunstschlager. Throughout her exploration of the inverted and everlasting twins Art and Functionality, she turns artworks into utilitarian objects or develops the artistic potential of functional items, pushing back and forth the limit that makes one another. **AA**



Out With The New, In With The Old

Steingrímur Eyfjörð Exhibition

Kunstschlager | July 28 - August 18

The good folks at Kunstschlager are revealing an old painting by Steingrímur Eyfjörð, a veteran of the Icelandic art scene who's been painting for over 30 years. Needless to say, his exhibition belt has quite a few notches on it! For the art aficionado, this opportunity to see one of Steingrímur's older works is like catching a meteor shower and the northern lights at the same time--elusive and incredibly beautiful. He will also have a few of his newer pieces on display, and we hear they can even be purchased! Lucky! So pay Kunstschlager a visit, they tend to be pretty cool and up for a chat about all things artsy. **TGB**

The old reading room of the National Library displays books of Icelandic cultural history dating from the 16th century to the present day. Works include the oldest published versions of the Sagas, Edda Poems and more.

On permanent view

Lightplay

Dramatic watercolours by Derek Karl of Iceland's ethereal light.

Runs until August 31

The Einar Jónsson Museum

The museum contains close to 300 art works, including a beautiful tree-clad garden adorned with 26 bronze casts of the artist's works which is located behind the museum.

On permanent view

Gallerí Ófeigur UPPÍMÓTI

An exhibit by Gugga, two years in the works, she uses oil and canvas to explore the magnitude of Icelandic

waterfalls. Her work is bold and she captures the clarity of the unique Nordic light.

On permanent view

Gallery Sign

Skirt

36-year-old Alison Willoughby displays a new large-scale piece. The photographic work is a playful inverted take on the cultural iconography of the British Kebab Shop and will appear as an illuminated signage on the exterior of the gallery itself.

Runs until December 20

Hafnarborg

Eiríkur Smith - Existence

The fourth exhibition in an ongoing series spanning the wide artistic career of Eiríkur Smith. The exhibition focuses on works from 1968 to 1982.

Runs until August 25

Hallgrímskirkja

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5.7. – 25.8. 2013

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JEANINE COHEN | 27 JUNE - 3 AUGUST 2013

ART ONGOING

ART ONGOING

- continued -

In Green Pastures I Rest

Paintings of green, black, and white by Aðalheiður Valgeirsdóttir in reference to Psalm 23: "He makes me lie down in green pastures." The paintings evoke the feeling of nourishment and content of lying in green grass on a summer's day.

Runs until August

Beating Time

A set of translucent photographs by Jo Yarrington adhered to the four clock faces of Hallgrímskirkja's bell tower. The photographs were taken on Iceland's Outer Ring Road and references Eadward Muybridge's sequenced action photos of a conductor's hands, also titled 'Beating Time.'

Runs until September

Hverfisgallerí

Jeanine Cohen

A unique exhibit by Jeanine Cohen featuring fluorescent and acrylic paint on wood.

Runs through August 3

i8 Gallery

Belief

Ólafur Elíasson's exhibit, 'Belief,' is an exploration of natural phenomena and perception. His work often combines design, architecture, and science to create thought-provoking work and spaces. He never overlooks the relationship between the object being viewed and the viewer.

Runs until August 17

The Icelandic Phallogical Museum

The museum contains a collection of more than two hundred and fifteen penises and penile parts belonging to almost all the land and sea mammals that can be found in Iceland.

On permanent view

Kling & Bang

London Utd.

A group of British artists including Dominic from Luton, Gavin Turk, Laura White, Peter Lamb, Mark Titchner explore English nationalism.

Runs until August 4

Knitting Iceland

Come and knit at Laugavegur 25, 3rd floor, every Thursday, 14:00 - 18:00.

On permanent view

Kunstschlager

Good Luck

A new exhibition of works by Arna Óttarsdóttir that engage with size, functionality, fullness and negative space.

Runs until July 27

Latin Dance Studio, Faxafen 12

Guided Practica

Argentine tango, Sundays from 17:30-19:30. Register by phone 821 6929 or email tangoadventure@gmail.com, 500 ISK for students, 800

Museum of Design and Applied Art

Chance Encounters - Toward Modernity In Iceland Design

The exhibit focuses on the introduction of modernism in Icelandic domestic interiors from

Mokka Kaffi

ÓBÍÐ

Óli Róbert Hediddeche and Bjarnheiður Bjarnadóttir join forces for this exhibition of oil and acrylic paintings.

Runs until August 1

Living Art Museum

The 6th Volume

An exhibit created and compiled by Katrín Inga Jónsdóttir Hjördísardóttir Hirt. The 6th Volume presents works and writings chosen by Katrín in an attempt to define contemporary art via the Icelandic practices that have influenced her. Katrín personally crafted several hundred "gratitude sculptures," and offered them to artists, writers, and theorists in the field of visual arts in exchange for participation in her exhibit.

Runs until August 25

ISK for others. Six-week courses are also available.

On permanent view

Distinguishing the Riel

Sara Riel's 'Memento Mori'

National Gallery | July 5 - August 25 | 1,000 ISK

Mr. Magritte was onto something when he painted an item that looked like a pipe, but was in fact, not a pipe. So what happens when you combine Magritte-style inquiry with the artistic talents of Reykjavík artist Sara Riel? Either you wind up on Hverfisgata pondering the deeper significance of many mini-mushrooms joined to form a super mega-mushroom, or you get something like Memento Mori. In her new exhibit at the National Gallery, Riel toys with viewers' sense of the artificial and the real. Immersed in a room of stuffed birds and cold eggs, Riel asks viewers, "What does the natural museum tell us about art?" Real objects, fake mediums, real museum. And an artistic discourse. Are you dizzy yet? Good, now go get some air and check out that mushroom painting on Hverfisgata. I'm not kidding, it's astounding.

PY

the 1930s to the 1980s. It will feature well-known designs that have emerged from the modernist movement of the 20th century and made their way to Iceland.

Runs until October 13

The National Gallery

Sara Riel - Memento Mori

This museological comparative study examines the relationship between museums and their depictions of life and death.

Runs until August 25

Treasures

During the whole summer three distinct exhibitions will be dedicated to the collection of the NGI, which possesses nearly 10,500 works, foreign and Icelandic, dating from the 16th century to the 21st. Under the common heading - TREASURES - 19th and early 20th Icelandic painting and drawing

Runs until August 25

The National Museum

The Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland

This exhibition is intended to provide insight into the history of the Icelandic nation from the Settlement to the present day.

On permanent view


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Reykjavík Map

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Best Of Reykjavík

Practical Info

Reykjavík Area

July 19 - August 1

Keep it in your pocket

Two Weeks

The Grapevine picks the events, places and what to experience the next two weeks

20

JULY

Metamorphosis Baby
Mixing It Up

July 19 THE VANGUARDS Moses Hightower, the acclaimed Icelandic quartet, is playing a live gig at everyone's favourite venue, **Faktory**. Head on over before it's too late!

All Summer YES MINISTER Feeling cultural? Check out **Hannesarholt**, the home of Iceland's first prime minister, Hannes Hafstein. It offers a café, guided walks, short film exhibitions, dinner and Monday concerts.

July 21 & 28 HANGOVER CINEMA If you're having a lazy Sunday and haven't fully recovered from the previous night, head on over to **Prikið** for free popcorn and a movie pick-me-up at 22:00. See the '70s samurai classic, Lone Wolf & Club on the 21st and Keanue Reeves in Speed on the 28th!

Every Night YOU'RE THE PIANO MAN If you know how to play the piano and want to show off your chops (or chop-sticks as the case may be), **Kaldi Bar** is the place to go. It has a piano that anyone can play, which means you can be the piano man too. Even if you can't play, sit back and enjoy the variety.

July 25 BEER PONG! The guys at **Glaumbar** are busting out the red solo cups for another of their fortnightly beer pong nights! Here's hoping you don't join the legion of Icelandic trolls with a bad game. On the other Thursdays they have karaoke nights.

Submarine

Harlem

23:00-04:00

Art group Tóamengi and DJs Rix & Kerr team up to put on a truly memorable night. The DJ duo promises to play both original music, as well as more recognized beats. Meanwhile the girls at Tóamengi will be transforming Harlem before our eyes with video art, as well as live performances. It sounds terribly Icelandic doesn't it? So check 'em out to see if they are more like Of Monsters & Men or Björk, we're sure you won't regret it! **TGB**

28 & 1

JULY AUGUST

Icelandic "Feel-Good" Movie
Such Sweet Sorrow

THE DEEP

The Deep

Harpa

21:00 or 18:00

This film directed by Baltasar Kormákur and written by Jón Atli Jónasson is "based on the true story of an unexpected miracle." Stefán Hallur Stefánsson plays a fisherman whose ship capsized off the south coast of Iceland. This drama gets as close to a feel-good movie as Icelandic cinema will allow. This film is such a national treasure, that it was last year's official submission for Best Foreign Language Film from Iceland for the 85th Academy Awards. And although these screenings are in English, there is no place more Icelandic to watch such a film than in Kaldalón hall of Reykjavík's iconic Harpa music hall. **AB**


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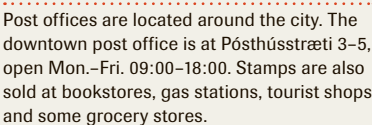
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The BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013

AWARDS

The BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013

BEST KEBAB: HABIBI

You can't find a kebab in Reykjavík that quite compares to what you would find in almost any major European city (and whatever you'll find is going to cost you more than you would expect), but the Icelandic ones still make for a pretty fast food option--and they keep getting better. By now Reykjavík has a handful of kebab places with the latest one, Mandi, opening last year right next door to another one called Ali Baba. Last year's winner, Kebab Grill, is still pretty good, but we thought the title should return to Habibi, which took the award in 2011. "Habibi is the only kebab place that does proper spicy. If you ask for spicy, you'll get spicy," one of our writers explains.

Located at Hafnarstræti 18

ACTIVITIES AND FUN-TIMES

The BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013

AWARDS

The BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013

BEST MUSEUM: THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

There are so many curiosities about Icelandic culture, art and history that have been focused on in other museums around town, but this one has neatly condensed it all into one awesome building. We were totally on board to give it this honour as it's one of those places that kind of blends into the landscape, but when you go for a visit, you remember how fucking cool this country is. The permanent collection is impeccably displayed and is full of hidden gems (look up, look down) and their temporary exhibits are state of the art. Plus, they turned 150 this year! Top THAT!

Located at Suðurgata 41

SHOPPING AND COMMERCE

The BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013

AWARDS

The BEST OF REYKJAVÍK 2013

BEST PLACE TO STOCK UP ON LOCAL DESIGN: KRAUM

Kraum is THE place to stock up on local design. It represents more than 200 Icelandic artists, with a range of products and prices that are sure to satisfy any shoppers' cravings. We threw around some contenders to take the title this year, but it ultimately came down to the undisputed variety at Kraum, and the professionalism and dedication that the folks there have in curating their excellent variety of products. Naturally, they took this category for their fourth straight year. Keep up the good work, Kraum!

Located at Aðalstræti 10

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A GUIDE THAT FUCKS YOU UP

A list of every Happy Hour in 101 Reykjavík

101 Hótel

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 475 ISK, wine 645 ISK, cocktails from 1000 ISK.

Austur

Thursday to Saturday from 20:00 to 00:00 Beer 550 ISK and wine 550 ISK.

B5

Every day from 17:00 to 22:00. Beer 550 ISK, cider 700 ISK, wine 550 ISK.

Bjarni Fel

Monday to Friday from 21:00 to 23:00. 2 for 1 on all tap drinks, Beer for 445 ISK.

Boston

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00, Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK.

Bunk Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Wine 700 ISK, Beer 2 for 1 900 ISK.

Celtic Cross

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 on Gull and Polar for 900 ISK.

Den Danske Kro

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. All Draght Beer 950 ISK and wine for 900 ISK.

Dillon

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 Beer 850 ISK.

Dolly

Tuesday to Saturday from 17:00 to 20:00. Beer 500 ISK and wine 500 ISK.

Dubliner

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 beer Tuborg 1000 ISK.

Faktory

Monday to Friday from 17:00 to 00:00. Gull and Tuborg beer 500 ISK.

Glaumbar

Every day from 21:00 to closing. Beer 390 ISK.

Harlem

Every day from 17:00 to 22:00. Beer 550 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

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Iða Zimsen

Every Day from 19:00 to 22:00. All bottled beers 550 ISK.

Kaffi Kompaníð

Thursday to Sunday from 16:00 to 18:00. 2 for 1 beer 850 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

Kaffi Zimsen

Every day from 17:00 to 21:00. Beer 550 ISK.

Kaldibar

Every day from 17:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 on beer and wine.

Kiki Queer Bar

Thursdays from 20:00 to 22:00. Beer 450 ISK, wine 600 ISK.

Kolabrautinn

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 450 ISK, Wine 700 ISK, Cocktails from 1000 ISK, Champagne glass 1500 ISK.

Lebowski Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 beer 900 ISK and wine for 1100 ISK.

Loft Hostel Bar

Every day from 16:00 to 20:00. Beer 500 ISK, cider 500 ISK, wine 700 ISK.

Micro Bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Draught Beer 500 ISK.

Miðgarður Bistro bar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. All drinks half price, Beer 500 ISK, Wine 600 ISK.

Nora Magasin

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Viking Beer for 500 ISK, House Wine for 600 ISK.

Prikið

Monday to Friday from 16:00 to 20:00. 2 for 1 Viking 750 ISK, Viking Classic 850 ISK.

Roadhouse

Friday and Saturday 22:00 - 23:00. 2 for 1 Beer 895 ISK, Wine 895 ISK.

SKY Bar & Lounge

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00, Beer 500 ISK, Wine 800 ISK.

Slippbarinn

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. Beer 500 ISK, Wine 500 ISK, selected cocktails 950 ISK.

Stofan

Every day from 17:00 to 21:00. Beer 650 ISK and Wine 800 ISK.

Tapashúsið

Every day from 16:00 to 18:00. All beer and wine half price.

Uppsalar - Bar & Café

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. 2 for 1 on all drinks except cognac.

zzPinghólsbar

Every day from 17:00 to 19:00. Beer 500 ISK.

ART ONGOING

— continued —

Sigfús Eymundsson Photography
A pioneer of Icelandic photography, an exhibit that taps into the cultural heritage of Iceland.

Runs until January 2014
Icelandic Silverwork
Various silver items that have been made in Iceland over the last 150 years. 'A Part-Time Silver Smith,' a separate exhibition, will run simultaneously and display a silversmith's workshop from the turn of the century.

Runs until December 31

The Reykjavík City Library

The collection centers around new Nordic literature, both fiction and nonfiction. The library lends out novels, academic publications, audio books and more.

On permanent view

Dark Deeds in Reykjavík

A weekly walking tour, every Thursday at 17:00. The tour guides visitors to literary sites plucked from crime novels and folk tales of “dark deeds and diabolical doings” in downtown Reykjavík.

Every Thursday until August

Reykjavík Art Museum

- Ásmundarsafn

Tales From the Vault - Sculpture Inspired by Literature

A collection of Ásmundur Sveinsson's sculptures tied together by a common literary thread. The exhibit presents key works inspired by Icelandic folklore, myth, and poetry.

Runs until December 13

Reykjavík Art Museum - Kjarvalsstaðir

Icelandic Art 1900-1950: From Landscape to Abstract Art

An overview of Iceland art across five decades. The exhibit is comprised of four elements: Romantic and Radical 1900-1930, Landscape 1930-1950, The Human Scale 1930-1950 and New radicalism and the beginning of the abstract 1940-1950.

Runs Until September 13

Reykjavík Art Museum

- Hafnarhús

Erró - Graphic Art, 1949-2009

For the first time the general public is able to view Erró's graphic art spanning half a century.

Runs until August 13

Interval

An olfactory exhibit by Huginn Þór Arason and Andrea Maack, the two have collaborated to create a perfume intended to embody the smell of the museum of the future.

Runs until September 1

All State

A sound installation in the elevator of Hafnarhús. Theresa Himmer's "All State" uses old elevator tracks to create a six-hour long mechanical soundtrack of the elevator experience.

Runs until September 1

The Sound of a Bugle in a Shoebox

A retrospective of performance work by Magnús Pálsson, an avant-garde artist inspired by a love of and participation in Icelandic theatre. The exhibit develops over a week of live performances, including a premiered work by Magnús himself.

Runs until September 30

Reykjavík City Museum
Reykjavík 871 +/- 2: The Settlement Exhibition

Archaeological findings from ruins of one of the first houses in Iceland and other excavations in the city centre, open daily 10:00-17:00, 1,100 ISK per adult, 650 ISK per person in groups (10+) and free for children 18 and under.

On permanent view

Reykjavík Maritime Museum
From Poverty to Abundance

Photos documenting Icelandic fishermen at the turn of the 20th century.

On permanent view

The History of Sailing

Iceland's maritime history and the growth of the Reykjavík Harbour.

On permanent view



(Not) Icelandic Patriotism
How To Become Icelandic In 60 Minutes

Harpa | Various dates in July and August | 3,950 ISK

Everything you need to not be labelled as a tourist while staying in Iceland. As the lesson goes on, you might even think "this country is so great that I might stay", so bring along your pen to write down the pronunciation of 'Eyjafjallajökull', the recipe of pickled ram's balls and the three steps to the Icelandic swagger. Bjarni Haukur Thorsson takes you through the intricacies of the Icelandic lifestyle and customs with a hilarious and smart show that leaves you wishing it would last at least another hour, just for extra credit on the course. For more information see Harpa's website. **AA**



Find all art listings online
listings.grapevine.is

The Coast Guard Vessel Óðinn
This vessel sailed through all three Cod Wars and also served as a rescue ship to over 200 ships.

On permanent view
75th Anniversary of the Seaman's Day Council

An exhibit celebrating the 75th anniversary of Seaman's Day by telling the story of the dttay from its first envisionment to current celebrations.

Runs until November 30

The Reykjavík Museum of Photography

Horse With No Name

Spessi took portrait photographs of numerous bikers during his travels and exploration of the biker culture in the United States from 2011 to 2012.

Runs until September 15

Wild Cats

Fragments of the ever-growing photography collection that Sunna Ben has accumulated from carrying her camera with her day and night for the past seven years.

Runs until September 10

Saga Museum

A Viking Museum that intimately recreates key moments in Iceland's history, giving a compelling view into how Icelanders have lived for more than a millenium. From the time of the earliest settlers, history is brought to life in a unique and exciting way with life-like figurines.

On permanent view

Sigurjón Ólafsson Museum
De Profundis

A collection of sculptures by Sigurjón Ólafsson and the paintings

of his contemporaries. This group of artists are known today as “trailblazers of modernism” in Iceland. As the title points out, beneath the smooth surface of the works lies the turbulence and anguish of the Cold War tensions.

Runs until September 1

Sím (CIA)

Arngrímur Borgþórsson - Bananakonungsveldi

The title of this exhibition translates into Banana monarchy.

Runs until July 25

Slátur Húsið

Icelandic Movie Days

Every Monday, Slátur Húsið (Slaughterhouse) shows Icelandic movies at 20:00 for free all summer. For the latest check their facebook page.

Runs all summer

Spark Design Space

Anatomy of Letters

Sigrún Rún Kristinsdóttir explores ancient Icelandic letters by imagining them as organisms with their own particular anatomies. She has just received the Art Directors Award of Europe in the student category, one of the most distinguished graphic design awards in the world.

Runs until September 30

Wind and Weather Window Gallery

Claudia Hausfeld - A Self Portrait

This exhibit focuses on the character and life of houses. The aim of the window gallery is to connect art in the urban setting of Reykjavík with the people on the street.

Runs until August 30



A Guided Walking Tour

Dark deeds in Reykjavik Literary walk

- Every Thursday in June, July and August at 5pm
- Starts at Reykjavík City Library in Tryggvagata 15
- No booking is needed - Free of charge
- This 90 minute walk is at an easy pace and suits everyone
- The focus is on crime fiction, ghost stories and other dark phenomena

www.borgarbokasafn.is
www.cityofliterature.is

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Closed on Mondays
www.gerdarsafn.is

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Hönnunarsafn Íslands Museum of Design and Applied Art
Garðatorg 1, Garðabær
Tel. +354 512 1525
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Closed on Mondays
www.honnunarsafn.is

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- “Lives up to it's reputation!”

INCLUDED
PHOTOS from the tour. Pick up - drop off in Reykjavík

ISLENSKI HESTURINN THE ICELANDIC HORSE

RIDING TOURS IN REYKJAVÍK

TOURIST GUIDE

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OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

OUTSIDE REYKJAVÍK

North Iceland

Akureyri

Akureyrarkirkja

Kristjana Arngrímsdóttir

July 21, 17:00

The singer, Kristjana Arngrímsdóttir hosts a concert. Free admission.

Sigurður Flosason and Gunnar Gunnarsson

July 28, 17:00

Sigurður Flosason and Gunnar Gunnarsson put the groove on playing saxophone and organ respectively. Free admission.

Akureyri Centre for Visual Arts Aðalheiður S. Eysteinsdóttir - Fundamentals

June 22 - August 11

Culmination of an ongoing project since 2008, Fundamentals examines the importance of the Icelandic sheep and agriculture. It will be shown simultaneously at the following galleries: Listagilið, Ketilhusið, Mjólkurbúðin, Flóran, Populus Tremula, Deiglan and the Visual Arts Hall.

Græni Hatturinn

John Grant

July 26, 20:00

American singer-songwriter John Grant is known for his captivating stage presence. Recently the man has been touring Europe after the release of his newest album 'Pale Green Ghosts' but surely he will play those favourite songs from the old album, 'Queen of Denmark,' as well.

John Grant

July 26, 23:00

Playing an extra concert. Because he's worth it.

Ojba Rasta

July 27, 22:00

This 11-piece reggae band makes all the little wankers bounce.

Hvannadalsbræður and Ragnvaldur Gáfaði

August 1, 22:00

The former member of the band Hvannadalsbræður, Ragnvaldur, joins them for tonight's concert.

Akureyri Botanical Garden Women's Photography Club - LYST-SEMDIR

June 28 - September 3

An eclectic group of photography enthusiasts, ÁLFkonur are in the habit of taking photos of everything that concerns them.

Dalvík

Berg Culture House

Þorri Hringsson

Ongoing until July 31

Þorri Hringsson art exhibition. Free entrance.



Arctic Reggae

RVK Soundsystem at Akureyri Backpackers

July 26, 22:00, Free!

Iceland is probably the last place you would expect to discover a burgeoning reggae scene. "Chilling" tends to have a more literal meaning in the land of ice. But thanks to the efforts of DJ Elvar, Gnúsi Yones, DJ Kári, Kalli Youze and Arnliótur of RVK Soundsystem, reggae has spread far north from Jamaica and established itself in Reykjavík. At Backpackers' newly opened hostel in Akureyri, RVK Soundsystem's musicians and guests will bring the tropical tunes to this free event, rain or shine. **AB**

Byggðasafnið Hvoli á Dalvík The North In The North

June 2 - March 1 2014

An exhibit about Greenland and artifacts from there.

Eyjafjörður

Gásir Medieval Festival

July 19 - 21

About 11 km north of Akureyri, Gásir's area has undergone extensive archeological digging and the recovered remains showing that the region was active until the 16th century can be observed at the Medieval Festival. A traditional-style trading post has been set up to commemorate the event.

Húsavík

Gamli Baukur

"Lets Talk Local" Comedy Show

Every day at 15:30

A daily hour-long comedy show at 15:30. The show is presented in English and takes listeners on an entertaining and informative journey through Húsavík.

East Iceland

Egilsstaðir

Sláturhúsið

Icelandic Movie Days

June 4 - August 28

All summer long Sláturhúsið holds free showings of must-see Icelandic movies, every night from Monday - Thursday beginning at 20. Showing start the week of June 4, check the Facebook page for this week's titles!

Skaftafell Center for Visual Art Bananas

June 17 - August 26

In this evolving exhibit, Danish artists group A Kassen explores the connection between Icelandic nature, bananas and aluminium, as the artists in residence at Skaftafell from June through July.

Borgarfjörður Eystri Bræðslan Music Festival

July 27

A festival called Fusion (Bræðslan) in the eastern village of Borgarfjörður. It is so popular that it has already been sold out, but maybe you'll get a chance to get in? Icelandic artists include Mannakorn and Ásgeir Trausti.

South Iceland

Hafnarfjörður Hafnarborg

Existence - Eiríkur Smith

June 29 - August 25

This exhibition of Eiríkur Smith's oil paintings, watercolours and drawings from 1968-1982, deals with questions of existence.

Hveragerði LÁ Art

The Landscape of Time - Ásgrímur Jónsson and Arngunnur Yr

June 9 - September 15

The exhibition showcases two Icelandic artists from different eras, exploring how they saw the world differently.

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OUTSIDE

REYKJAVÍK

Keflavík

Reykjanes Art Museum "Við geigvænna mar"

June 1 - August 18

A collection of art of the harsh nature found around the Reykjanes peninsula.

Pabbi minn er róinn

All summer

A part of the museum's boat collection, featuring more than 20 boats and accessories.

Brúðir konu meyja

All summer

A collection of dolls wearing the traditional national costume, as well as other dolls.

Mosfellsbær

Gljúfrasteinn

Gljúfrasteinn Summer Concerts

July 21

Duo Weinberg Ögmundur, Þór Jóhannesson, guitar and Páll Palomares, violin.

July 28

Snorri Helgason. One of Iceland's favourite singer songwriters shot into fame by his second album Winter Sun.

Westman Islands

Pompeii of the North

On permanent view

Excavation project at the site of the 1973 volcanic eruption on the island of Heimaey.

West Iceland

Borgarnes

The Icelandic Settlement Centre The Settlement Exhibition

On permanent view

A thirty minute-long multi-media exhibit that provides insight into the settlement of Iceland, from the first man to step foot on the island, to the establishment of the world's first parliament, Þingvellir. Admission is ISK 2,400.

The Egils Saga Exhibition

On permanent view

Located in the stone-walled basement of the centre, this exhibit leads visitors through the colourful saga of Egil, one of Iceland's first settlers

Galtarviti

Ragnar Kjartansson

Open all summer

Galtarviti in collaboration with Slíjm sf. invites you to a Midsummer Night celebration on a full moon, on the occasion of Ragnar Kjartansson's residency at Galtarviti. Boat trips will be available from Suðureyri at 11:00 and 17:00. A roundtrip costs 6,000 ISK. Camping available. Guided walk from Skálavík at 14:00 on Sunday in addition to the boat trips!

Drangsnes

Pier Festival

July 20 from 10:30 to 03:00

Family friendly festival by the pier. Several events including a fish-off,



Strings Attached

International Residents at Cliffs of Skagaströnd, Blönduós

July 26, 15:00 - 19:00

Four artists from abroad have taken textile from surreal to extreme and back again during their time as artists in residence at the Textílsetur in Blönduós. The community based textile project they've been working on since June will come together in a performance exhibit on the beautiful cliffs of Cliffs of Skagaströnd. We've have heard through the grapevine (not our Grapevine, another grapevine) that there will be knit and woven mass lurking along cliffs. Iceland is known for integrating art with land-scapes, and the project these artists have been working on is certainly in tune with Iceland's artistic spirit and traditional skills. Come out, enjoy the scenery, and support these unique international artists. **SS**

Photo by Zac Monday



No Excuses

Bræðslan in Borgarfjörður-Eystri

July 27

It's the middle of July. If you haven't dirtied up those fresh new hiking boots that you bought in your annual summer's-here-let's-go-do-shit shopping spree, then it's about time. Well friends, Bræðslan is here to give you that extra pat on the pack and kick out the door. As with any proper Icelandic festival, the main attraction is the music. This year's line-up features Ásgeir Trausti, John Grant, Mannakorn, and Bjartmar, with local off-venues and cafés featuring a number of other acts. Time to step outside and give those boots that rough love they deserve. **PY**

Photo by Aldís Fjola

scarecrow making competition, football tournament, choirs singing, bonfire and a party at the end of the evening.

Stykkishólmur

Vatnasafnið / Library of Water 'Water, Selected'

On permanent display

'Water, Selected' is an ongoing exhibition with twenty four columns

filled with glacier water from all over the country.

'To Place'

On permanent display

'To Place' is an audio exhibit offering insight into the Icelandic psyche, where you can listen to recordings of people talking about the weather.



Fun For The Whole Family By The Pier

Harbour Festival in Drangsnes, Westfjords

July 20 from 10:30 to 03:00

With scarecrow making competitions, bait fishing challenges, children's song competitions and an array of other activities, the Drangsnes harbour festival should be lots of fun for people of all ages. There is even an art exhibition with three generations of artists showing their work at the same time. So head on to the beautiful Westfjords, have a bite from their seafood market, watch the bonfire and enjoy live music until the sun doesn't go down! **TGB**



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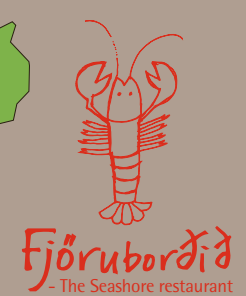
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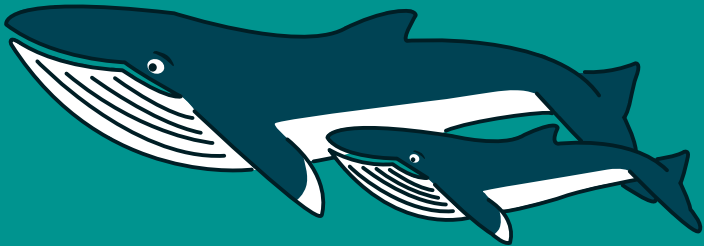
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Thu-Fri 11:00-1:00 (Note: the kitchen is open every day till 22:00)

What We Think
This is a student hangout heaven

Flavour:
Pub grub with some healthier options

Ambiance:
A laid-back, rainforest-meets-disco lounge

Service:
Upbeat and professional

Price for 2 (with drinks):
3,000-5,000 ISK



The University of Iceland was the last place I expected to be busy on a rainy midsummer afternoon, but beneath dim coloured lights, the basement lounge Stúdentakjallarinn was buzzing with activity. People were conversing or sitting bleary-eyed in front of their laptops, waiters scooting about behind the bar while a small crowd waged a miniature war at the foosball table. The music was buoyant but laid-back, perfect for lounging on the numerous cushions and armchairs strewn all over the place. Above the concrete stage, the movie “Napoleon Dynamite” was playing on the huge screen; often they’ll host bands here or show football games. Perhaps most fascinating of all is the wall of vegetation—mostly ferns—near the entrance, which makes me wonder whether I’m in a bar or part of a biology experiment. But the real lesson is the business model: there was obviously a demand, and this is the long-awaited supply.
The menu was short but satisfying: there’s the typical greasy hangover fare as well as more wholesome options such as salads, fruit and even Greek yoghurt. The most expensive dish was the Atlantic catfish at 1650 ISK; most snacks are just a fraction of that. We ordered at the bar, where a confident waiter recommended that we skip the pizza and go for the spinach and chicken salad and the burrito. As an afterthought, I added mozzarella sticks and nachos to our order. Best of all, they serve Tuborg Classic on tap and offer a student discount on beer.
Here, the kitchen calls up your order and you pick it up by the counter near the back, cafeteria-style. Students are nothing but self-sufficient, it seems. (You’re also expected to clear your own plate when you’re finished, according to the everybody-do-your-share propaganda on the walls). Our mozzarella sticks came first, nicely crunchy, slightly spicy, though I doubt they were cooked up from scratch. Our nachos were just tortilla chips with salsa, but just as welcome with our beer.
My spinach and chicken salad turned out to be an ideal compromise between light and filling. Piled high with chicken and cashews, it was doused in sweet-and-sour sauce and mango chutney and sprinkled with dry ramen noodles: a cheap but creative alternative to croutons. The best part was the abundance of strawberries cut into bite-size chunks, and sweet fat blueberries (one was the size of ping-pong ball, I swear). Perhaps this was not a combination worthy of five stars (mango chutney does little to flatter strawberries, which were deliciously sweet on their own), but savoury enough for a student bar.
My partner’s burrito was less exotic but just as satisfying; containing a funny mix of chicken, sundried tomato and barley. I’ve yet to have a killer burrito in Iceland, so maybe I should have been more disappointed, but I’m past expecting fireworks when it comes to Mexican food. With a great beer in a mellow atmosphere, nothing really tastes bad. Why not swing by, have a pint and vote for Pedro?

 PATRICIA PORMAR
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Crossroads

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What We Think:

An all-rounder. Rough around the edges but dependable and not stingy with the portions.

Flavour:

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Ambiance:

Watching some meathead gym bunny try to work a fork is funny.

Service:

No complaints. Pay at the counter kind of deal.

Price for 2 (with drinks):

4–5,000 ISK

Vegamót is a hodgepodge of different cuisines. The name literally means “crossroads” and it fits like a patchwork glove. But that needn’t be a bad thing—it’s the kind of anything goes bistro with generous servings, fairly reasonable prices and a laid-back vibe.

Vegamót recently changed its opening hours to shift the emphasis away from the nightclub atmosphere to a cocktail and dinner kind of deal. A smart move seeing as it always felt like a half-assed club (where the skinka* types would go if they got

tired of the queues at Austur or B5) but I’ve always had a soft spot for their kitchen. It’s nothing mind-blowing but it’s a decent, filling and dependable place for when you feel like a beer and a basic pasta/tex-mex/salad/burger. It’s also one of the most popular brunch places in Reykjavík.

I have already tried most of their burgers and sandwiches (the Louisiana Chicken Strips and Steak sandwich are frequent favourites)—so I decided to switch it up and have a look at their Italian offerings. And what better than to invite my Roman friend along, who had just popped over to Reykjavík for a surprise visit.

The cocktail menu is perfect for the kind of crowd that used to frequent the club Vegamót, but their strange, syrupy concoctions (cheesecake martini??) didn’t exactly appeal to old men like us. They weren’t familiar with Negronis so we settled for two whiskey sours (1,700 ISK each). I prefer my whiskey sours with Jim Beam rather than Jack Daniels, and I’d recommend the switch. The cocktail was still a bit heavy on the sugars and low on the booze.

For the meal we picked a Tommasi Romeo (4,990 ISK) because it bore the name of my friend’s son. Cherry aroma, full bodied, some spice. Much like my Italian friend, who, incidentally, took a break after the cocktail to start twirling around the place to the blandest house music I have ever heard.

We were flabbergasted to see a buffalo mozzarella Panini (1,690 ISK) on the menu and couldn’t resist ordering it for the first course. I asked three members of staff if

they were absolutely certain that this was buffalo mozzarella and they confirmed it. That’s a strange claim considering it’s twice the price of regular mozzarella, hard to find outside of Italy and, I believe, illegal to import into Iceland (due to a ban on the import of fresh cheese). The cheese was of course in no way a buffalo mozzarella. I ate those creamy bastards every day when I lived in Italy and I’ll take a Pepsi taste challenge on it any day. Wrong shape, colour and flavour. But the Panini was actually not that bad if only they had skipped the raw red onion slices. A caramelized onion or a proper Tropea onion might have worked.

For the main course I picked the lobster “tagliolina” (2,990 ISK) and I was pleasantly surprised. It came with big chunks of lobster that had barely touched the pan, the pasta was al dente and aside from the addition of too much garlic and mushrooms it was one tasty-ass crustacean course.

The Italian ordered the pepper beefsteak (3,990 ISK). He requested a rare steak—and it came to the table perfectly rare. The broccoli and veggies were cooked very lightly and the sauce was not too heavy. Bang on. I’ve seen steak houses do a worse job.

Vegamót did exceed my expectations and we ended up having a great time catching up on old hijinks from our days in Rome. But I will mostly be coming there for the brunch. Old habits die hard.

**skinka: Too much bronzer, too much make up, not enough dress.*

RAGNAR EGILSSON
AXEL SIGURÐARSON



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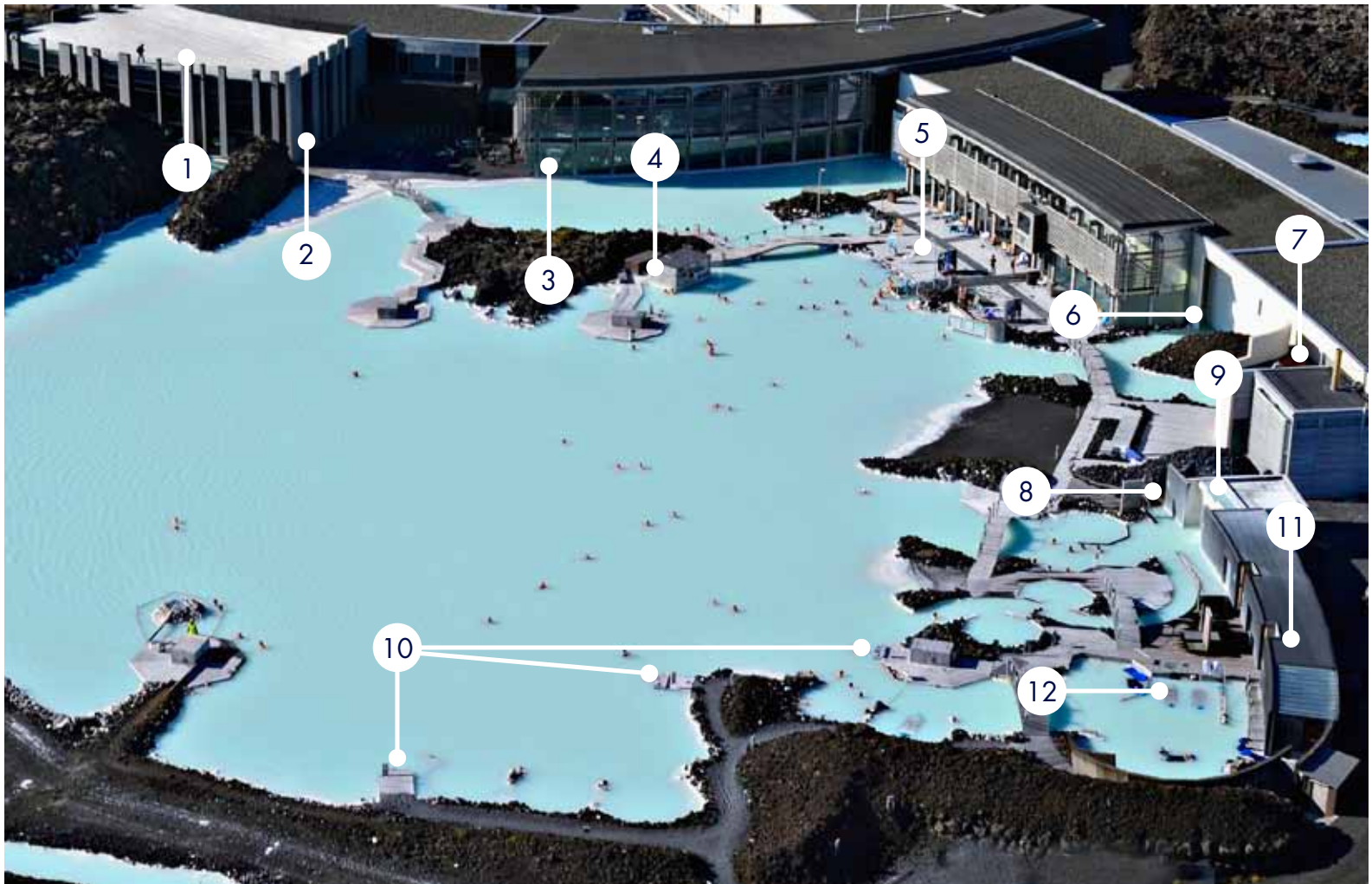


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