

All You Want to Know About Iceland

Hallgrimur Benediktson, Consul General of Iceland

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Our Arch Supporters ... THANK YOU !!



Bart introduced our speaker:

"Our guest today, Dr Hallgrimur Benediktson, is a native of Iceland. He studied and practiced at the University of Iceland, the University of Manitoba, and the University of Minnesota. He studied surgical pathology, and is now a specialist in anatomical pathology, and is certified with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. He is now a professor at the University of Calgary. However, he is here today in another capacity.

You may have noticed that Iceland became the smallest country ever to qualify for a World Cup. This, plus the fact that Iceland is becoming a tourist mecca, and the many television programs about this fascinating land, led me to Dr. Benediktson, as he is the Honourary Consul for Iceland in Southern Alberta. He is here today to tell us all you would ever want to know about Iceland."

The speaker was very well prepared with many pages of notes that he was only able to partly cover in the time allotted. I will try to highlight some of his remarks and add some other information you may or may not find interesting.

Iceland is a Nordic island nation with dramatic landscapes, volcanoes, geysers, hot springs and lava fields. It has a land mass as big as England and is still growing from the fresh lava. The capital is Reykjavik where most of the 334,000 residents live.

Largely unsettled before 874, except for a few Gaelic Irish monks, Viking explorers and their



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Bob Gentles had the sole responsibility to welcome us to the meeting room on this cool day. Paul Gaudet, a member of many responsibilities including Club Secretary, was handing out nametags to our newer members. The Sgt-At-Arms of last week (myself) was a little hasty in fining Paul for not having the new members' nametags in place as delivery does take some time.

George Van led us in the singing of the multitude that had gathered for fellowship, a lunch and to get all the Rotary news as well as listen to our guest speaker.



Bob G introduced Sandy Swan a visiting Rotarian from Mexico, and our only other visitor, Hallgrimur Benediktsson, our guest speaker.

President George reminded us that due to our lack of work and the subsequent income from Spruce meadows, the Club will need to curtail spending until other sources of funds are found.



George went on to remind us that District Governor Dan Doherty will be addressing the Club on August 7th. Please come to that meeting so that you can hear his views from one of this District's most enthusiastic Rotarians you have ever met.



Rob Wolfson handed out the money from The Open Golf Pool. The winners were published in the last Arch and I will not mention them again, as I was not one of the experts who came away with the loot. You should be able to tell who they were as they will all likely come to the next meeting in a new suit, or have made another Paul Harris Fellowship donation. Thanks go to Rob for raising more funds for the Club and for making it fun.



Ted Wada paid into the fine-pot to advertise the Calgary Japanese Omatsuri Festival. It will be held at the Max Bell Centre 1001 Barlow Trail SE from 10:00am to 5:00pm on Saturday August 11th. There will be entertainment, food and crafts. Admission is \$7 for adults, youths 6-12 get in for \$3, while children 5 and under are free. Ted did have some free tickets, so if you talk nice to him he might have one for you.



New Rotary Year Begins

July 31st

Jutta Wittmeier, Executive Director, Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre

Membership and New Club Development Month

August 7th

Dan Doherty, District 5360 Governor

August 14th

Rotary Nature Park meeting

August 21st

Gaye Watson Warthe, MRU Professor — Date Violence

August 28th

Kate Wood QC, President Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons

Basic Education and Literacy Month

September 4th

Mandy Patchit, Glassblowing

September 11th

Myron and Elaine Semkuley, MMC

September 18th

Club Assembly

September 25th

Terry Bullick, Editor/Publisher, Apple Magazine

Economic and Community Development Month

October 2nd

Kelly Hrudey, HNIC Analyst

Rotary Foundation Month

November 20th

Tom Higgins, former CFL Head Coach In Calgary, Edmonton and Montreal



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slaves from Norway began to establish settlements on the free land.

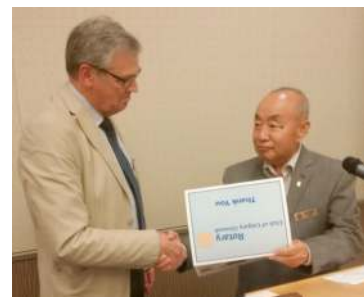
By 930, the chieftains had established a form of government, making it one of the world's oldest parliaments. It has had a history of dominance by Norway or Denmark, and sometimes Sweden, until it gained sovereignty as a Kingdom after WW1. It became a Republic in 1944 and remains one to this day.

Fishing has been one of the main sources of employment which has led to conflicts with other countries over fishing rights in the surrounding waters. There have been several courts cases, especially with England, over cod fishing and the Icelandic claims have usually prevailed.

The speaker mentioned a Financial Crisis but didn't have time to elaborate. The crisis occurred in 2008-2011. In the years preceding the crisis, three Icelandic public owned banks multiplied in size, driven by ready access to short term credit in the international market. Foreign investors in England, the Netherlands and elsewhere invested in the stocks of the rapidly growing banks. However, as the international financial crisis unfolded, investors perceived the Icelandic banks to be increasingly risky, leading to a sharp decline in the Icelandic currency. This made it impossible for the banks to roll-over their short-term debt, and the publicly traded banks were forced into receivership by the government. This caused the foreign investors to lose access to the foreign branches of the banks, and the share holders to lose their capital. The impact on the local economy was devastating and the people lost confidence in their government. A loan from the IMF and the Nordic countries helped to bail-out the country, and confidence in their banking system has been restored as the government works its way out of a large deficit.

Many Canadians have made Iceland a place to visit, and friends of ours living in Vancouver are there as this is being written. It must be the geographical features attracting the visitors as it wouldn't be the golf courses. It could be that there are no mosquitoes in Iceland!

Did you know, that in 1872, Sigtryggur Jonasson came to Canada to find some good farmland for some of his people who wanted to relocate. He settled on Manitoba and called the settlement Gimli, the capital of "New Iceland". The main reason being that he thought that there would be no grasshoppers there to damage the crops of the settlers.



Meeting Minutes

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Terry Green advised that he will be at the gate handing out the tickets to the Dawgs baseball game by 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. I would have liked to have gone to the game with my baseball playing grandson but he is in Woodlands, Washington playing in a Babe Ruth NW Regional tournament.

Neil Beatty was the Sergeant-at-Arms. He auctioned-off two tickets to the Dawgs game that

Rae Campbell donated as he has visitors and couldn't attend the game. Neil suggested that the winners of the golf pool consider a donation back to the Club. He thought that any member who didn't take cover yesterday when the skies turned an ugly gray, the lightning was flashing, and they let their car get damaged by the hail, should have known better. I didn't hear the amount of the contribution he asked the member to make.



Garth Sabirsh won the 50-50 draw.

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