



SOME OF OUR US GRANTEES GETTING READY TO PRESENT THEIR PROJECTS, MAY 2015

# Newsletter Iceland-US Fulbright Commission



JULY 2015

## Happy summer

Message from Executive Director Belinda Theriault



Dear Fulbrighters and friends of Fulbright,

Summer is here – also finally in Iceland. We have said goodbye to a great group of 2014-2015 US grantees, and look forward to welcoming home Icelandic grantees that have completed programs in the US and are starting a new chapter. It is hard to say farewell, but always exciting to welcome a new group into the Fulbright fold – read about our incoming cohort on these pages. We can only grow stronger every year, as our Fulbright family of talented and motivated individuals grows on both sides of the Atlantic.

We are always looking for ways to improve our program. With the various Arctic grant programs now successfully launched (Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar, Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research and Arctic Initiative), we are looking for new opportunities to strengthen the relationship between Iceland and the US

through Fulbright. I have for some time had my eye on looking at two specific areas for future development: gender issues and entrepreneurship. I recently attended the WE 2015 conference in Reykjavik on closing the gender gap, where I met some excellent US and Icelandic academics and professionals working in these fields. The Commission is very interested in developing partnerships with the private and public sectors, universities, institutes, and others to develop programs specifically targeted towards these areas. I call on interested partners to get in touch about possible cooperation and idea development. Leveraging the Fulbright brand to strengthen cooperation in these fields is a no-brainer. Let's think about this over the summer!

*Belinda Theriault*

### FULBRIGHT TIDBITS

- Dr. Peg Dunn-Snow, Fulbright Specialist, University of Akureyri fall 2014, has published an article on her experience in Iceland in the Delta Kappa Gamma International Journal for Professional Educators, summer 2015.
- Incoming US Fulbright fellow Jerilynn Jackson recently published a book titled *While Glaciers Slept: Being Human in a Time of Climate Change*. For more info see <http://greenwriterspress.com/books/spring-2015-books/while-glaciers-slept-being-human-in-a-time-of-climate-change/>.

### RECENTLY SELECTED ICELANDIC FULBRIGHT GRANTEES

- Dr. Bjarni Már Magnússon, Assistant Professor of Law, Reykjavik University, is Iceland's representative in the **Fulbright Arctic Initiative** (Energy Group). The project started in spring 2015 and will end in the fall of 2016.
- University of Iceland law student Anna Gyda Sigurgísladóttir is participating in the Summer Institute on Social Entrepreneurship at Indiana University.

#### 2015-2016 Fulbright Fellows:

- Ásbjörg Einarsdóttir, MS, Engineering, Stanford University.
- Elín Ósk Helgadóttir, LL.M, International Law, University of Miami, Cobb Family Fellowship recipient.
- Eythór K. Thrastarson, MA, Industrial/Organiz. Psychology, Louisiana Tech.
- Gunnlaugur Björnsson, MA, Classical Guitar Performance, Yale University.
- Ingibjörg Guðný Friðriksdóttir, MFA, Electronic Music, Mills College.
- Magnús Örn Sigurðsson, PhD, Social-Cultural Anthropology, Rice University.
- Thorleifur Örn Gunnarsson, MA, Education, Columbia University.

## Saga Fest - Music, Art, Nature, Community

In the last weekend of May, Stokkseyrarsel was the venue for Saga Fest, an original music and arts festival conceptualized by



Fulbright-mtvU grantee Scott Shigeoka.

The sky was cloudy and the breeze was cool but when entering the festival area it was like stepping into a warmer climate with brighter skies. Walking into the large meadow of Stokkseyrarsel, it was evident that there was something special and exciting happening. The crowd was enthusiastic, yet relaxed and comfortable, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. At the festival site, everything had been organized in the spirit of sustainability to create a space where people could share, learn and create with others.



Everywhere people were embracing their experiences, some by making artwork, others just by observing, taking photographs and connecting with new friends.

The two day festival focused on sustainability, community building and transformation - connecting people to each other and to nature. How did the idea come about? Fulbright-mtvU fellow Scott Shigeoka had become curious about the culture of gathering around fires to share stories and music, after free-style rapping with Bedouin men in the Jordanian desert. His curiosity led him to the Sagas of Icelanders, and from speaking with Icelandic artists and storytellers he got the idea of launching a

music and arts festival that incorporates storytelling.

Saga Fest featured live music performances by 17 local and international acts, including *For a Minor Reflection*, *Fufanu*, *Sisý Ey*, *Ylja*, *Soffia Björg* and *Robot Koch*, to name but a few. Also, 27 artists from many different countries, created deeply engaging art experiences. Events and activities ranged from workshops on skateboard design with found materials, meditation and yoga,



shamanism, storytelling, free-form dance, puppet-making, jam sessions, drum circles and freestyle rapping. If you missed it this year, don't fret. Plans are already underway for Saga Fest 2016. Find out more at [www.sagafest.is/](http://www.sagafest.is/).

### US FULBRIGHT GRANTEES 2015-2016

#### US Fulbright Scholars

- Dr. Rebecca Pincus, Distinguished Visiting Professor of Maritime Policy, US Coast Guard Academy, Fulbright-MFA Arctic Scholar, hosted by the University of Iceland and the University of Akureyri.
- Dr. Robert Patrick Wheelersburg, Professor of Anthropology, Elizabethtown College, Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Scholar, hosted by the University of Iceland.
- Dr. Janelle Knox-Hayes, Associate Professor of Economic Geography and Planning, MIT, Fulbright-NSF Arctic Research Scholar, hosted by the University of Iceland.
- Dr. Leigh M. O'Brien, Professor of Education, State University of New York, hosted by the University of Iceland.
- Dr Tok Freeland Thompson, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Southern California, hosted by the University of Iceland.
- Dr. Linda Gray, Professor of Native American Studies, Union Institute and University, hosted by the University of Iceland.
- Ms. Gwen Holdmann, Director, Alaska Center for Energy and Power, Fulbright Arctic Initiative, hosted by the National Energy Authority.

Additional scholars may be added through the Specialist Program and Inter-Country Travel Grant Program.

#### US Fulbright Fellows

- Jerilynn Jackson, PhD research: Narrating Glacier Loss, University of Iceland & Höfn Nature Research Center, Fulbright-NSF Arctic Grant.
- Elijah Petzold, Icelandic as a Second Language, University of Iceland, Fulbright-Ministry of Education and Culture Grant.
- Nicholas Hoffman, MA Medieval Studies, University of Iceland.
- Rose Rustowicz, research project: Mapping and Monitoring the Hekla Volcano, University of Iceland.

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