

# The Geysir Chronicle

Edited and published by: Clubhouse Geysir, 105 Reykjavík, Iceland. Tel: (354)5515166 Fax: (354)5515136 e-mail: kgeysir@kgeysir.is Website: www.kgeysir.is

1st. ed. 2005

14. June 2005

## ***Facts of interest about Clubhouse Geysir and Iceland.***

- Klubburrinn Geysir is the only clubhouse in Iceland.
- There are 210 members.
- The club has 5 TE placements.
- The first Scandinavian Fountain house conference was in Iceland 2001.
- Current location of clubhouse would not have been possible if The Kiwanis movement in Iceland wouldn't have had a nationwide fundraising for buying a house for Geysir
- From 1999 30 members of club have had independent and/or supported employment

## **Inside this issue:**

**The Snack bar: Interview with the guy in the corner** 2  
**Editors note: Benedikt Gestsson**

**Article: The third floor Benedikt Gestsson** 3  
**Question of the month. Two poems**

**TE placements: Interview with Edda Hjaltested** 4  
**Article: Stigma, misery and arrogance Benedikt Gestsson**

**To connect with other members: Interview with Aðalheiður Davíðsdóttir (Ally)** 5

**Childhood memories: Once up on a time... by Gísli Richardsson** 6

**Article: Relatives day** 7  
**Article: Geysir is proudly heading for the future. Ögmundur Jónasson member of the board**

**Article: A Boards member's perspective. Guðrún Hannesdóttir** 8

**Article: Is recovery from mental illness possible in a clubhouse? Ólafur Stefánú Jak**



**Members and staff in front of Geysir clubhouse 8th of June 2005**

## **New director for Clubhouse Geysir**

A new director for Clubhouse Geysir will start working the 1st of July to come. His name is Kristinn Stefan Einarsson and he says that he is looking forward to taking on this new job and inhaling more knowledge on the Fountain House program. Kristinn has finished his studies on politics and official governance at the University of Iceland and will start writing his master thesis

this fall. He is even considering a subject related to the clubhouse model "I've also worked at various jobs throughout my study years, so I've gained quite an experience for being capable of taking on this job."

Former director Anna S. Valdemarsdóttir has found herself a new challenge in Denmark. She will be missed

enormously both by members and staff in Geysir, and clubhouse colleagues both in the US and Scandinavia. "I've not decided on a certain job yet," Anna says, "I might go and study art therapy, which I've been interested in for many years, but first of all I'll start relaxing and enjoy my new Danish garden under a blue sunny sky."

## **Geysir's happy trail for certification**

As soon as Clubhouse Geysir started its activities as a new option for the mentally ill in Iceland it was one of the first goals to obtain certification off the ICCD within reasonable time. In October 2004 Geysir reached its fifth formally operating year and followed by a post site visit from Peter Foulkes and Peter Travisano colleagues from Genesis Club. In December the same year a positive recommendation was given to apply for a certification process. In april this year two cool girls of the ICCD



**Board member Jón Snorrason with Iris, and Lori**

certification team, Iris Lövnord from Fountainhouse Stockholm and Lori D'Angelo from Magnoliahouse Ohio visited Club Geysir and stayed for three days checking how the club was complying with the standards and operating according to the the Fountain House model. Now in the end of June we are expecting to know the result and everyone is excited about it.

## The Canteen and snackbar

News from the corner



The clubhouse canteen and snackbar have been operating for one and a half year now. It has been managed successfully during this period of time, and clear that it's here to stay.

The operating manager of the canteen is Porkell usually known as —the corner merchant—. He has been a member of Geysir for three years. Porkell used to be in the maintenance unit, but decided to try some other demanding clubhouse work, and has surely been growing taking on new tasks at the snack bar.

He says, that although he is dealing with different things on daily basis as a snack bar manager he is always communicating with people. "This job is very encouraging for me, because I'm learning a lot of new stuff about book keeping and how to map out the needs of my customers for me to meet them. I'm interested in going more into the healthy stuff although there will still be chocolate and sodapops



Gardening in front of the Geysir Clubhouse

## Editor's note

Club Geysir is facing a turning point this year. Members and staff worked hard on the the self-study and profiles concerned with the certification process and are still waiting for the result from the certification team as this is written. In late April we had a visit from two members of the certification team; Iris Lovnord from Fountainhouse Stockholm and Lori D'Angelo from Magnolia house Ohio. They stayed at our clubhouse for three days observing and talking to staff and members. It was very encouraging having them in the club those days, and we sure missed them when they left.

Secondly the club's director since the founding of the Geysir Clubhouse, Anna S. Valdemarsdottir, a real clubhouse star has resigned and decided on moving to Denmark. Anna will be missed both by members and staff and all the good clubhouse people she has been working with during the years of her clubhouse work.

An enthusiastic young man has be hired to take Anna's place as the director. His name is Kristinn S. Einarsson and is very promising and interested in the clubhouse model. Members and staff have welcomed him already and are looking forward to

seeing Geysir prosper in the years to come. He will start working formerly on the 1st of July.

Members and staff have been preparing for the Thirteenth International seminar on the clubhouse model and will be sending two representatives, one member and the new director. It's belived to be of the utmost importance that the new director introduces him selfe to the clubhouse community, and meets colleagues and friends for further cooperation and relationships.

Geysir's TE program has been going good the last year and is still improving. Geysir has now five TE placements, and will hopefully increase them in the following months to come. Employers have been very positive towards the idea of TE and member's and staff looking forward to further development of the club's TE program.

Now the Geysir Clubhouse has 210 registered members and four staff. Average of 25 to 30 members attend the club each day. Geysir has proven to be a positive option for people with mental illness and is ready to take on further responsibilities in the community. Have a happy summer.

## Future plans: The clubhouse third floor



**Two opposite views of future studyroom for Geysir's members.**

Club Geysir is a three story high building located in a friendly neighborhood, where there are apartments and office buildings. It's well situated according to distances and public transport. So far most of clubhouse activities are taking place on the first and the second story, but with increasing number of members and their different needs. The largest room on the third floor is now taking on more shape for it's future purpose being a place where members who are studying and attending school can do their homework and seek help from each other and staff.

For being able to establish a functional study room the club has been seeking assistance from two different funds. The club has already received money from one fund which has been confirmed, but are still waiting for an answer from the other. This has been very important, because the room has to be equipped with

computers, lighting, and furniture. It's necessary for a study room like that to be attractive and inviting so all the best is required for the interior. But luckily the club has been donated many books so now there is a good library in one of the rooms on the third floor, which will also come in handy for both studying members and members taking part in work ordered day

Until now the future room of studies has been used as a living room, though not used much for that purpose. Also the clubhouse band, Keli and the kidlings has used the local for rehearsing. The third local on the third floor is a large hall, where different seminars and lectures have been held. That hall will still serve the same purpose. The fourth local on the third floor is let out to a small soft-wear company but hopefully the club will have hold of that room within a reasonable amount of time.

### Black Fog

So pull me out  
I'm cold and all alone  
In the black fog  
your smile is what I need  
to hope again  
and finally  
get rid  
of the black fog

Sigurður Ármann Árnason

### The Icelandic Clubhouse limerick

There once was a small clubhouse in Iceland  
who became the smartest and most grand  
the members were cool  
and threw out the fool  
and joined their forces hand in hand  
then Iceland became suddenly Niceland

Benni and Odinn

## The question of the month

How are you going to spend your summer holidays?



**Kristín Kristjánsdóttir**

I'm going to spend two weeks of July in Croatia, and when I'm back again I'll travel around Iceland during the week end in my new trailer.



**Árni Jóhannesson**

I'm going to spend most of my time on the airport where the Airplainmodelclub is situated. Fly my planes and maintain the field.



**Hulda Rún Mortensen**

I will go camping and trout fishing and for sure I will keep on attending Club Geysir.



**Ólafur Stefaniu Jak**

I'm going to enjoy the good weather in Iceland

TE placements at the Social Service for the elderly at Vitatorg:

## We are all equal on this earth

- Says the director Edda Hjaltested in an interview

The director Edda Hjaltested says that the Social Service at Vitatorg had started their cooperation with Clubhouse Geysir the year 2001. "Since then we have had three members working independantly at Vitatorg. These members have been working different hours in 50% placement from 10am to 14pm weekdays."

Edda says that in January 2005 they began a cooperation based on the TE program Club Geysir has been developing. "This has been working good so far and the member who started in January has proved to be great. We are looking forward to meeting the new member who will take over this placement in July. This TE placement is mostly taking place in the dining hall, where the job is concerned with serving and assisting people attending there, cleaning and preparing for the coffee break, and attending the flowers."

Edda adds that the cooperation with Geysir and the members working in

these placements has been very prosperous. „This has given both staff and clients the opportunity to understand that the mentally ill are quite ordinary people, as we all consider ourselves to be, and therefore opened our eyes to the fact that we are all equal on this earth. We all need each others respect,



Kristín at her workplace at Vitatorg.



Kristín's (third left) with coworkers at Vitatorg and clubhouse on a tour before TE dinner at Club Geysir

which we have managed to build up in a prosperous way. We have not been experiencing any prejudice so far. There is no doubt that the people attending the dining hall really like these individuals and that fondness is blooming on both sides."

Edda wants to express her gratitude and respect to those members who have been working at Vitatorg with good result. "I also want to thank Geysir for the important work they are doing for society as a whole, and it is my sincere wish that this cooperation will continue to grow for the years to come."

## Benedikt Gestsson: Stigma, misery and arrogance

Although people's ideas on mental illness have changed and improved in many ways through the centuries, not mentioning treatment which takes more notice of the needs of the individual, there are always new issues to confront, and new methods of dealing with them. But however we improve, the various faces of stigma seem to be one of the everlasting tasks to fight.

One aspect of stigma is the stigma we impose on ourselves. For my opinion it's there because people often seek the state of misery through stigma to reach out for compassion, which can end in a vicious circle controlled by arrogance.

This trinity of stigma, misery and arrogance can't be treated or dealt with reasonably except confronted within

ourselves. One opportunity to do so is by joining a clubhouse, where members are evaluated and respected on their own basis and capability, not others point of view. In clubhouse they have different roles and experience the feeling of being needed, and of use both to clubhouse and society.

A person given the right



Benedikt Gestsson

surroundings to function along with his illness, and accepting the illness without getting caught in the vicious trinity of stigma, misery and arrogance can truly lead a qualified life.

# To connect with other members and build relationships

Aðalheiður Davíðsdóttir in an interview

Aðalheiður Davíðsdóttir (Ally) has been a member of Geysir for a little more than one and a half years. She is 21 years old and has been a solid and enthusiastic member since the first day in clubhouse.

## **Where did you hear about Club Geysir?**

I heard about the club at Hvítabandið which is a treatment option after treatment in a mental hospital or sessions with a psychiatrist, as it was in my case. In some cases it also can be part of an occupational therapy.

## **How did you feel when you first came to clubhouse on a tour?**

The first time I came I thought the club wouldn't suit me, but next time when I was looking around some members asked me to assist them on a project they had going on in the office unit. It went well so I thought I could maybe be of more help to other members and the club as a whole.

## **Which unit did you join?**

I joined the office unit and have been working there since, at times I've also been helping in the kitchen unit, and brought up the idea of restoring the snack bar. But I've never worked in the maintenance unit.

## **In what way do you think the clubhouse has supported you the most?**

Mostly the club has helped me to connect with other members and build up relationships both through work in the club and social life outside the work ordered day.

## **When do you attend in the morning and when do you leave?**

Usually I arrive at 8.30 am when the club opens in the morning, and leave around 4.00 pm in the afternoon when the club closes.

## **Do you have a car or do you take the bus to the clubhouse?**

Of course I take the bus. I had a bad experience with cars because I was hit by a car when I was twelve



Ally assisting Guðrunu Jónu practising her computer skills.

years old and was badly injured. My best friend and my boyfriend drives a bus so it is much fun.

## **How is your life outside the clubhouse?**

I am quite happy now. I have my own apartment, and a boyfriend who is very kind to me. He is very supportive and a good friend too. My

our speciality is clothing for women needing bigger sizes. For impatient husbands there is a special space where they can drink coffee eat confectionery and read papers and magazines. There also is a small corner for children to play. There they can build all kinds of funny structured things from little cubes, draw and color pictures, read and play with toys.

## **Do you have any other hobbies or matters of interest?**

I am feeling good and I'm happy, but I'm thinking of stop eating candy, smoking and drinking sodas. I like to go to coffee-houses, but then I always drink ice-te or water.

## **What are you going to do in your summervacation?**

I'm going to be nice with my boyfriend and maybe we will go to a summer house for a week and in August I'm going with some friends to the North of Iceland and that will also take a week.

Ally says that it has been fun to watch the club grow the time she has been a member of Geysir. "A lot of members have had jobs and are attending schools. I hope that I will be able to attend school this fall. If I won't manage that I will work in Belladonna. We'll see how it goes. Everything is possible if one is focused and has clear tasks. If you smile to the world the world will smile to you too."



Aðalheiður Davíðsdóttir posing for the photographer

mother runs a women's clothing shop called Belladonna, where I sometimes work along with my mother. This is a very highly respected shop with good prices and the women just love to shop there,

# Once upon a time there was a little boy

by Gísli Richardsson

He was born at Patro and was named Gísli. He had two older sisters, who's name were Gudrún and Árný. Then came a younger brother whose name was Viggi. We were at the same age for one month, he was born in April 1963 but I was born in May 1962. We were like twins and still are.

I was raised up in Patro until I was 10 years old. We did lot of fun things together. My first memory was when I was 3 years old . I was in my grandfather's car. It was a big American sportscar, I was honking on the horn, which was a iron inside.

I was honking like a maniac which ended when I broke the horn, and my grandfather got really furious.

Me and the other boys at Patro did many fun things together. We were often playing by the sea, built a raft, on which we sailed on the sea. If kids would do so today it would make the headlines in newspapers and the police would have stopped us.

We often made small huts, which we heated with a little stove and insulated with cardboard. Then we headed into the valley catching trout in small creeks and the girls would later cook on the stove.

We would sometimes make our own toy trucks. The only thing we had to buy were the tires, every thing else we made ourselves. We made all kinds of cars with shock absorbers and steering wheels. We made roads with the gravel we drove around on the trucks. Sometimes the girls joined us in this game; but then things got more complicated. They brought in some matador money and wanted to pay us salaries.

One winter when everything was covered with snow we were sledding down big hills. We walked down Mainstreet and approaching the church there was this very high hill which nobody daerd to sled down, except me. I decided to go and the first trip went OK, but nobody would dare to follow me. But the second

trip did not go as expected. I lost con-trol of the sled and was thrown into the blueish white air and landed in a pile of rocks, broke my sled and was severely injured. My brother Viggi and the guyes burst out laughing where I lay screaming in pain. They thought I was faking the pain, which suddenly turned out otherwise. Viggi and my nephew put me on another sled and dragged me home, yelling all the way babu, babu, babu. I was then taken to the hospital where it was found out that my rump bone was bruised and my other check of behind was so swollen that it was at least triple the size it used to be. For a month I had to lay on one side and I had to be carried to the toilet. I struggled for many years to get well from this ride.

Mom and dad were good to us, although my father might have been considered rather severe, but maybe it was because Viggi and I were sometimes scarey rascals. My father had been a fisherman since he was fourteen years old, and all he earned went to take care of the family and the house. When I first remember glimpses of life, my father had quit the see and was driving a Bedford truck to Patro transsporting oil, but me and Viggi often drove with him when he was bringing oil to the farms. I always remember when my father asked us why we were so silent when we drove with him in the truck. Sometimes we had to drive for hours on dangerous slopey roads. My dad had a radio telephone in the truck which he allowed us to talk in. We would call up on the radio this gravel machine no. 11. The operator, Höskuldur was our friend.



**Gísli Richardsson on the front poarch at Geysir Clubhouse.**

Once we went mountaineering. The mountain lies very steep over the little town and we went climbing in the highest cliffs. We were five of us. When we had reached very high into the cliffs, we came into a deadlock and could not move in any direction. Then we burst into tears. That did work, because when we stopped crying we could keep on climbing and reached the top.

My best friend and nephew was Bjarni Leifsson. He was also kind of a rascal. We used to go to the Co Op and stole chocolate crackers, which we considered our spinach. Once we were throwing snowballs in Doddi's the jar windows. We were a gang of young rascals and didn't stop the snowball attack until Doddi the jar came yelling out of the house. Then I was so unlucky to step on a nail sticking out of a piece of wood. On our way there was a ground for a house, called the Dry cleaner. We sneaked into the ground while Doddi the jar ran by. Then we ran to my grandmother, who put lamp oil on my foot, to prevent blood poisoning.

Though it seems like we were a group of inventive rascals, we did some good things to, but mostly forgetting us in joyfull plays of innocent youth.

# Relatives day in the clubhouse

The 19th of May Club Geysir decided to have a friends and relatives day for introducing the club to friends and relatives and other interested. This was the the second time the club promoted its activites this way, so it has been quite a success. There was much fun this day, but the peak was reached when the Icelandic South River Band was awarded a gold CD for



selling more than 5000 copies of their CD called - One could ask for more fair weather, - which was sold for the benefit of Club Geysir.

And of course the band played



some songs from the CD. Some 80 friends and relatives



came to celebrate the day with members and staff and meeting other friends. We sold coffee and cakes for fundraising, and wrote articles in the local papers. This day is here to stay for sure and everybody is looking forward to next years relatives day

## GEYSIR IS PROUDLY HEADING FOR THE FUTURE

by Ögmundur Jónasson a board member

I have been on the board of Geysir in Iceland since it was founded in 1999. Why? Because the Fountain House philosophy, Geysir is part of, appeals to me; its strong belief in the individual and its insistence that we should always look for the strenghts and not the weaknesses in people. This is an attitude to life I very much agree with. Above all, however, it was the enthusiasm, fervour and steadfastness of the founders of Geysir in Iceland that lit my fire. I have more or less been a passanger on the "boat" or at best a member of the crew with extremely modest functions. But I think I can say with some pride that I try to do what I am asked to do. Anna our manager until recently and other board members will I am sure testify



**A board meeting in Geysir. Ögmundur is third from the left.**

to this effect. The members of Geysir have over the last half a decade, the club has been in existence, turned it into a force that has made itself felt in Icelandic society. The club started its work in an extremely modest location

but is now operating in very good facilities. This has not just "happened". It has been made to happen through a concentrated effort over the years by the members of the club. I have a feeling that all those associated with the club take great pride in it. We all know it is helping a lot of individuals realize their capacities in various fields of working life, in training or by contributing to some valuable functions in society. This in turn means that through the effort of Geysir our society at large has become stronger and better. Knowing this we proudly head for the future.

*Ögmundur is member of Parliament and the chairman of the Federation of State and Municipal Employees in Iceland*

# Clubhouse Geysir

## A Board Member's perspective

In 1997 I was introduced to the Fountain House ideology and the Clubhouse Model of psychiatric rehabilitation. I instantly liked this model of



**Guðrún Hannesdóttir**

intentional community designed to create a restorative environment based on membership and active participation.

In 1998 when the first Icelandic clubhouse was in the making I was offered a seat on its board. I accepted with delight and became a board member of the Fountain House- Club Geysir. In November 1998 I went, together with a few prospective staff and members, to an International Colleague Training Program in The Mosaic Clubhouse in London. We were very well received and here we Icelanders got our first training and inauguration into the Clubhouse world.

Clubhouse Geysir was then formally established in 1999. These were really exiting times and Geysir set off with flying colors and had a good start thanks to our wonderful pioneering staff and members.

It has been a privilege as a board member to be able to follow the great work being done in the Geysir-clubhouse and to see how well it has been received in the Icelandic community. Observe the ideology put into practice, not always without struggle but always in the right spirit and with the joy of work and in the climate in which each participant feels wanted and needed.

As a Board Member I have occasionally been able take part in the daily program and various activities, besides meetings. It is always a pleasure to see how applicable the Fountain House model and its Standard Rules are. It



**Lunchtime at Mosaic clubhouse 1998**

is really worth striving for a certification and become an ICCD-certified clubhouse and we are in the process of doing so. I am proud of being part of what I consider a Clubhouse-community that offers respect and opportunities for its members.

Geysir Clubhouse's greatest pioneer, its leader from the infant stage on is leaving for new pastures and adventures. She will be very much missed by all of us, but now I feel that Clubhouse-Geysir has left the infancy and childhood-stage of development and an exciting time of adolescence with new challenges lies ahead.

*Guðrún Hannesdóttir  
Board Member  
Clubhouse-Geysir*

## Ólafur Stefaniú Jakobsson

### Is recovery from mental illness possible in a

After years of schizophrenia, different kinds of medication and all kinds of mad behavior I got in touch with the forming of The Club Geysir still not having all the right ideas on some matters. As I was not a threat to the clubhouse community I moved along watching the club grow, moving from a small place to a bigger one and finally to the house were the club is now, and see: Without any treatment, still having though the injections every three weeks and some assistance from the staff of The Club Geysir I was free. Wrong ideas, being paranoid on one man and all kinds of illusions have



**Two mebers: Ólafur left talking to Ágeir on clubhouse matters**

faded away and I am not afraid that it will be back or some new ones will appear.

Lucky you may think. Since 1997 I have been studying the standards and ideology of Fountain House, went to training at the Mosaic

clubhouse in London in 1998 and have done what I have been able to at The Club Geysir and it has been a constant effort. Never give up, fight untill you are free, without fighting. The kindness of members, staff members and members of the board can make miracles and you can have a more fullfilled life.

So the answer to the headline is yes on my behalf.

First we must admit that we are not functioning up to the claims of society. We must give medication, if we are using some, a chance. And we must hope to get so lucky that we will realise our own responsibility on our health.