



Seeking Northern Lights



A Travel Book by

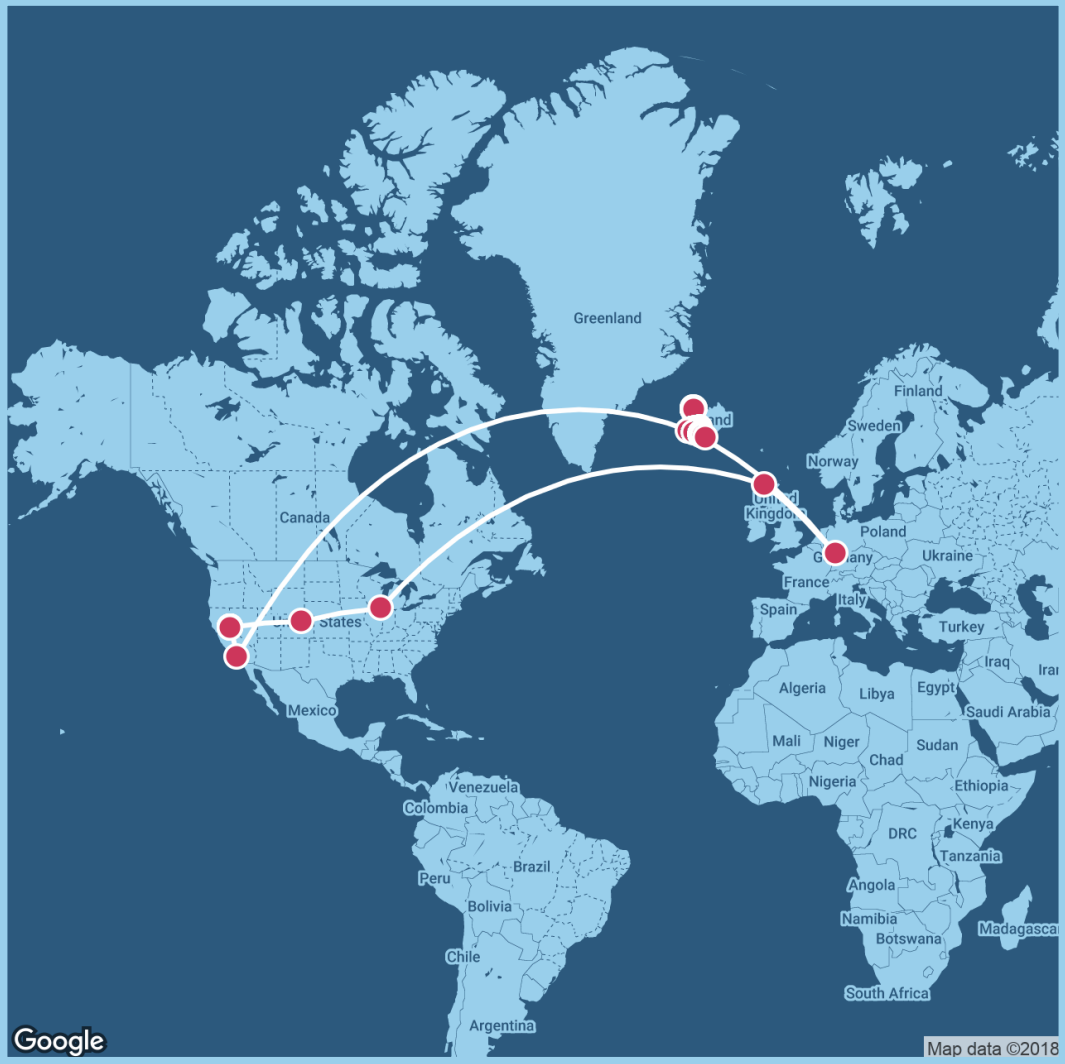







Quail Run Tripping

Seeking Northern Lights

Iceland Summit 2018 and more

September 27 – October 17, 2018



				
65	3	21	273	13.1k
Footprints	Countries	Days	Photos	Miles

Inception

August 29 in the United States, Alpine County



Jill and I have talked often about wanting to see the northern lights as one of the items on our bucket list. In early August, we became aware of the Iceland Summit 2018. One of the two photographers leading the workshop is Kerik Kouklis, someone that Les has taken two workshops on platinum printing.

The workshop will be centered in the mysterious and stunning, Strandir Coast in the spectacular West Fjords of Iceland. Our group of 9 or more participants and two leaders will have the Hotel Djupavik to ourselves for 9 days in early October.

This is not a photo tour of the hot tourism spots in Iceland. The area is remote but includes a variety of deep fjords surrounded by mountains, cliffs and waterfalls and small fishing villages that have not been changed by modern times. And if the weather and solar winds cooperate, we will see the northern lights.

Iceland: Summit 2018

with Bill Schwab and Kerik Kouklis



October 4-13

www.northlightworkshops.com

Getting to Iceland and Back

September 4 in the United States, Douglas County



Our vacations of the past have always involved campers, back packs, or motorhomes, but since Iceland is an island and our motorhome does not float, we decided to fly there and back.

Planning air travel is quite different than just packing the motorhome and driving away. It involves finding a flight there and back that lets us meet up with the workshop, but also have some time to visit the tourist sites that the workshop won't. We considered extending after the workshop but found that getting a flight that would come in right when we needed to meet up was difficult. So, we opted to come in early and rent a car for a week before the workshop.

The travel information online suggested days of the week that were cheaper. We ended up getting tickets from United and its affiliates. Ticket pricing is a tricky thing. We found that the cheapest ticket, you also had to pay for checked bags. However, the for just a little more, one checked bag was free. And as it turned out, the more expensive route was \$20 less expensive.

Going to Iceland will involve changing planes in LA and Toronto and will take about 17 hours with layovers. Getting back is entirely different. It seems all flights (on United) from Iceland go to Frankfurt, Germany where there is a 12-hour layover. Then it's on to Chicago and Denver and finally home to Reno for a total of about 39 hours.

So, I guess we will be visiting Europe on this trip, though we will likely not leave the Frankfurt airport. The trip is currently planned for leaving on September 27th and returning home on October 17th. Of course, there could be delays and cancelations to potentially deal with in route.

Packing

September 11 in the United States, Douglas County



Packing for this trip is way different than just throwing everything you can think of into the motorhome. We will each have one free checked bag and a carry on and a personal item. In our case, the medical equipment and medications must be planned carefully and fortunately these are not counted with the carry on. But the medications must be in their original bottles, so prepackaging in pill bags won't be permitted. Jill has packed different bags several times and we even bought a new bag as well.

We also had to buy clothes for cold wet weather. Les bought new waterproof boots and several layers of coats. Thank you, Costco! The other question was how many days to plan for. We will have to do laundry a few times while in Iceland and that we will have to play that by ear.

Then there is the art equipment for the trip. The workshop is a photo workshop, so Les will take a camera. But the heavy, bulky large format camera is a bit much for air travel. In addition, the winds in Iceland can make using it extremely difficult. Not to mention the risks of taking exposed film through airport security. So, Les will take the new DSLR with 2 newly purchased lenses and the laptop computer for post processing. Jill on the other hand, will be taking watercolors and pastels. This has been an additional challenge for Jill to packing. She has repacked a whole series of bags in the last week.

Pet Vacation

September 23 in the United States, Mono County

The pets, Sampson and Cinnamon won't accompany us to Iceland. Instead, they are going to stay with April and Brent (Jill's sister and brother-in-law) in Swall Meadows near Bishop.

Sampson will enjoy the daily 4 mile walk. Cinnamon likes to explore the loft area of the house.







On our way

September 27 in the United States, Los Angeles County



We left yesterday and traveled to Reno. After stopping at a camera store for another UV filter, we checked in at the Atlantis Resort and Casino. We valet parked the old Chevy Tracker.

This morning, we got up at 4am and went down to catch the 4:30am airport shuttle, which we missed by 2 minutes. So we had to wait for the next shuttle at 5am.

We were TSA pre checked, so the line through security was shorter and faster than the regular line. We had both purchased slip on shoes, so of course we didn't have to take them off.

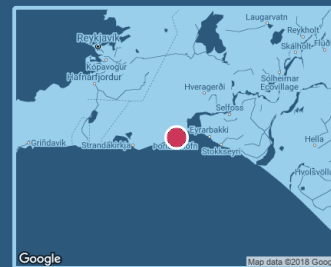
Jill bought us a breakfast sandwich that we ate on the plane as it began loading at 5:50am. This was a short flight to LAX. After a 5 hour layover, we are off to Toronto Canada.

SHIRLEY HACKETT safe travels. Early morning travel is sooo hard but better than taking a red eye. I hope you snooze on the plane. Les, what DSLR did you buy?

Irene Allert Looking forward to seeing some great photos of the northern lights. Have a wonderful time!

Cafe Sol and Minni-Borgir

September 28 in Iceland, Sveitarfélagið Ölfus



Arrived in Iceland. We have been going since yesterday at 4:30 AM. So, sooo tired. Pouring, AKA horizontal rain, and the wind rocked the plane while we waited for a gate. Jill got us a no frills rental, so of course we had to stand in the wind waiting for a shuttle to Blue Rental Car. Got our really plain-Jane car... has anyone heard of a "Dacia Sandero"? We headed out, Jill was planning for us to stop at the famous Blue Lagoon Hot Springs, but too tired, too wet, to stop.

Drove along the coast and even though it's 4:30 am our time, 11:30 Iceland...we stopped before we fall asleep for lunch. Cafe Sol, a small out of the way local place in Þorlákshöfn for lunch on the way. Of course Jill always finds a bakery. Very nice owner, soup was so warming, also great bread and Icelandic donut. He gave us a map and showed couple places to go. We asked him how to say Thanks... Tak (spelling a guess). Our Icelandic word of the day. We didn't need to learn the Icelandic term for toilet, as they use the English "WC" for water closet. 😊 After lunch we drove 45 more minutes to our home base for the next few days.

We finally dragged ourselves to Minni-Borgir Cottages 16km north of Selfoss. We were hours early for checking in, so we started napping in the reception area. They felt sorry for us and let us check in. WOW, they are really charming! Our cottage is one bedroom, private bath and living room with kitchenette. There is a TV with two stations, microwave, and hot tubs. We took a nap and of course then sun made an appearance. So far no Northern Lights to cloudy tonight.



Walk to our front door



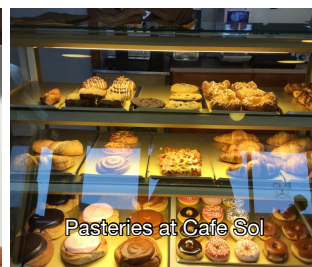
The sun lit up the poplars near by



The hot tubs



We are in #27 in village 1



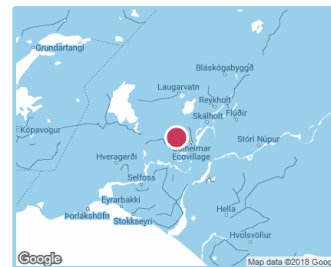
Pasteries at Cafe Sol



Rental Dacio Sandero

First Morning

September 29 in Iceland, Grímsnes- og Grafningshreppur



Stillll misty, but saw a small patch of blue. Breakfast at the restaurant, expected some kind of fish dish from what I read beforehand. Instead nice eggs, bacon and little sausages. Plus homemade bread and jam. Icelandic words for the day ... kaffi = coffee, Heitt vatn = hot water. Jill hopes to get Les in heitt vatn today...



Small text, possibly a signature or title, located to the right of the painting.





Iceland flag umbrella, they spell it island...

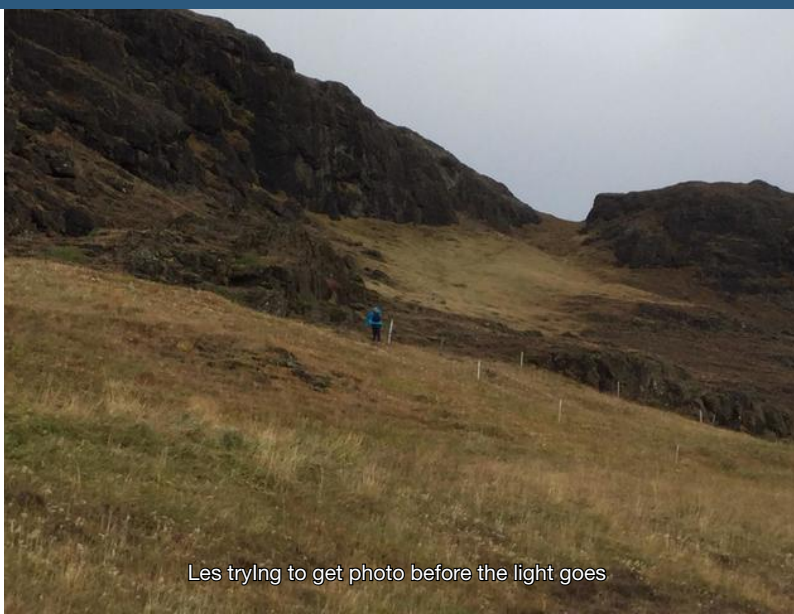


September 29 in Iceland

So my sister wanted me to get a warmer coat before we came, but I said I wanted Icelandic wool sweater. Saw a sign for a wool shop along road...and while I tried on sweaters Les took photos.



Little wool store next just off road



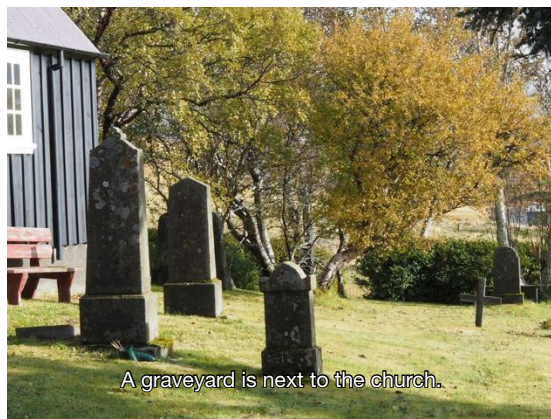
Les trying to get photo before the light goes



I bought this sweater, from the mother of knitter



Little Brown Church next to the Wool Shop in Mossfell.



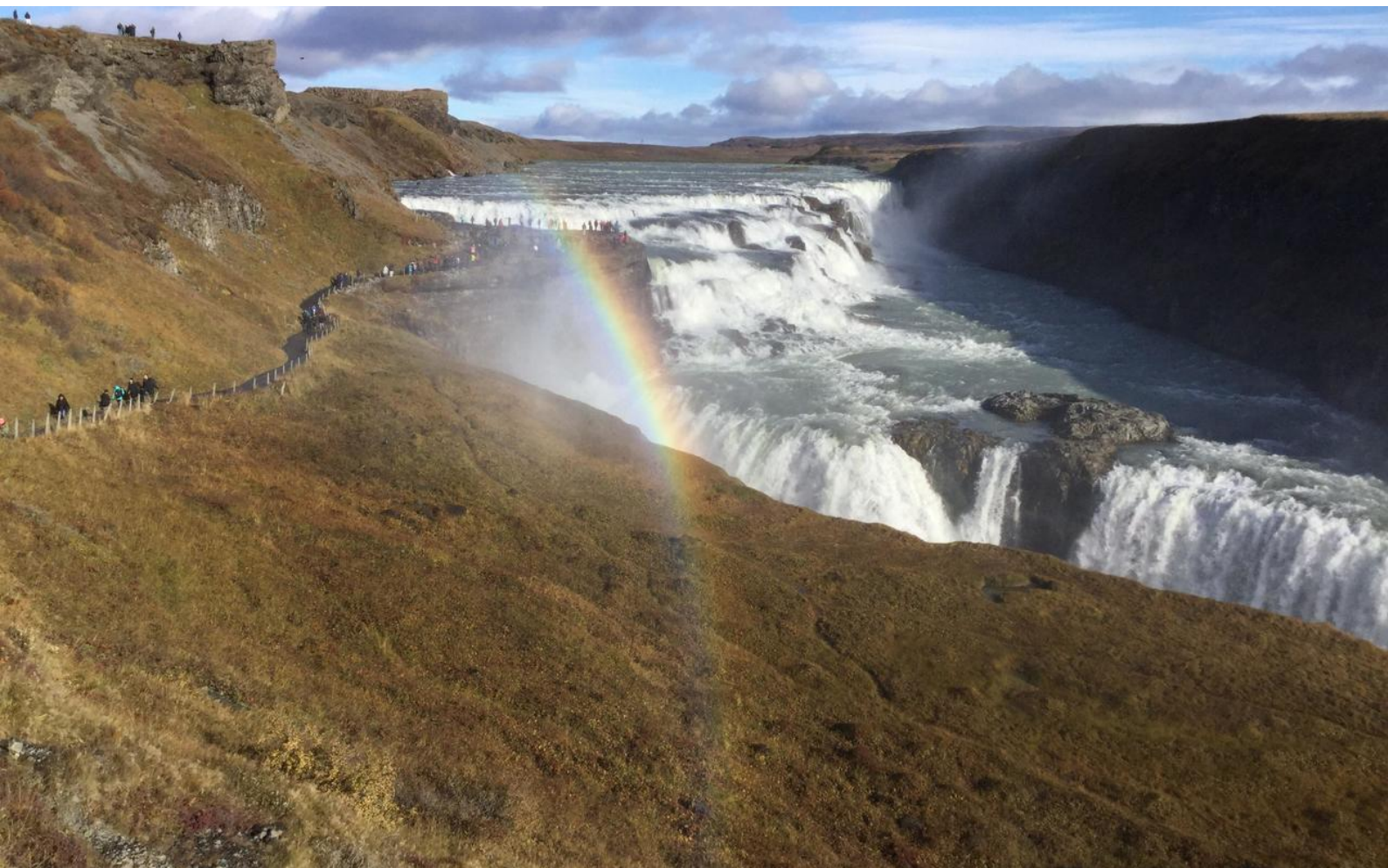
A graveyard is next to the church.

Gullfoss and crowds

September 29 in Iceland, Tungufell



I miss Les's cowboy hat! We stopped at Iceland's biggest water fall and even in the off season everyone is here. So Les and I walked to the overlooks and got lost from each other. Boy are there a lot of blue coats here and everyone has their hoods up. Also lots of tall people. Where is that cowboy hat when you need it.



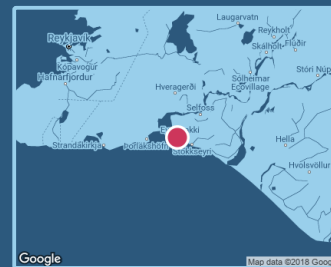


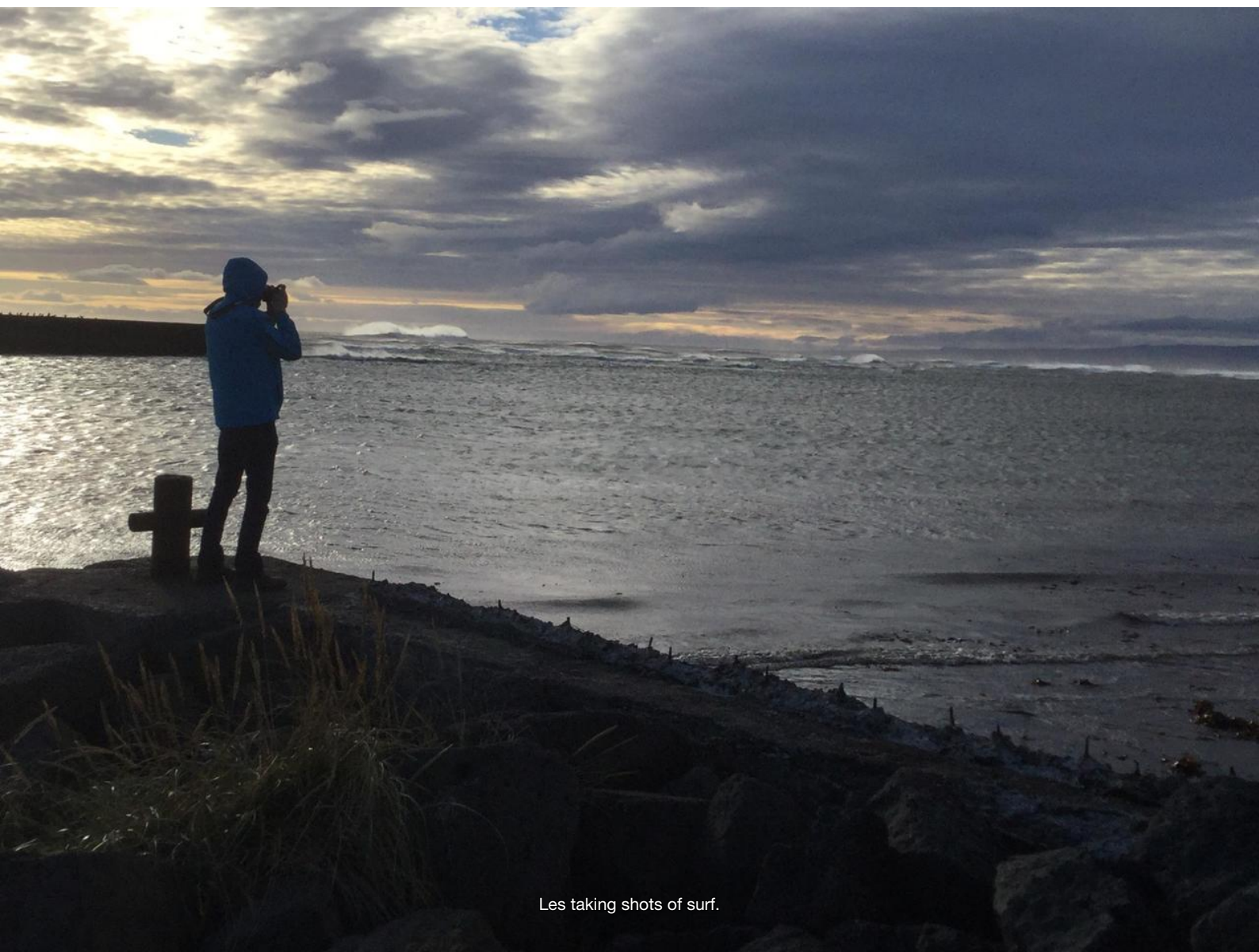
Seaside

September 29 in Iceland, Eyrarbakki

Headed to Selfoss for dinner, drove right through to the little seaside town Eyrarbakki and went out to the jetty. The wind blowing the surf backwards. Les took a lot of photos, but we will have to wait to see those shots as we need the computer, so most of these picture initially are just Jill's IPad. We were so cold, we stopped in the Redhouse in the little town, had hot coco and little lobster tails for dinner. Very beautiful day with plenty of shine.

Jill didn't get Les in hot water...yet!





Les taking shots of surf.



Geysir

September 30 in Iceland, Geysir



Very pretty sunny morning. Yesterday we went by Geysir so fast, because of the crowds, so we planned to get there early and have breakfast there...and take a soak. Oops no pool, and the food place was closed until 9:00 am. So we had a quiet hike around Iceland's Yellowstone. Did you know that the word Geyser, comes from here. We had nice time looking at hot pools and some nice steam vents, without crowds. But the idea for breakfast and a soak was a bust. Down the road...





Breakfast With Cows

September 30 in Iceland

We were getting pretty hungry, so we stopped for breakfast at a tourist dairy farm. We are finding that breakfast here in Iceland are buffet style, and very expensive, which stops us from sharing. We paid about twenty dollars each for couple of cold pancakes and bowl of Cheerios. There was some homemade breads as well. At least the milk and yogurt or “skyr” (Islandic word for the day) was fresh as the restaurant windows looked down on the Cows in the barn. We decided on such a nice day to go along Highway 1 to the seaside town of Vik. We are stopping in Selfoss at a grocery to purchase tomorrow’s breakfast and today’s lunch...





Cow and us breafasting

Seljalandsfoss or lots of waterfalls

September 30 in Iceland



Iceland's most famous waterfall is just off the coast Highway 1. But it isn't just one waterfall but a volcanic cliff face with about five waterfalls. Lot of people again, glad we aren't in season. The largest fall has a trail that goes behind the water, but we were cold and planned to return in the afternoon when the light should be better. Of course in the evening when we came back, there was no light, but lots of people. We kept going for the cottage.



The last fall on the trail has cut back into the cliff.



Les is enjoying the photography



The main falls.

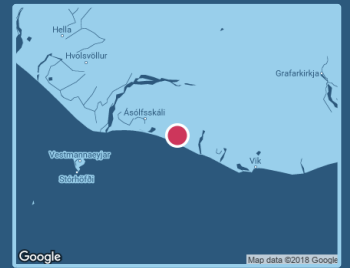


Les coming out of the crack in the wall.



Earth and rock

September 30 in Iceland, Austur-Eyjafallahreppur



Stopped long the road for Les to take photos of the Cliff face and eat a quick lunch. Moved on and just down the road Jill spotted a rock building and Les was over joyed. Cameraman is having fun. I will paint from his pictures. It is getting cold outside the car.

Judy Hohman Are those white rocks or sheep? Looks like they can graze on the roof of the rock house. The rock house is unique.



This building is a cave extension. And, YES they are sheep on the hill.



Volcanic landscapes can produce interesting scenes.

Big Waterfall

September 30 in Iceland



The photographer/driver is getting tired. So when Jill suggests a hike to top of these falls, Les says the light isn't that good, and Jill agrees not to walk to the top. Long day and already three walks and done 9000 steps. The people look like a line of ants going up the stairs/steps to the top,,The falls are called Skógafoss and really impressive and the little town of Skogar looks interesting but both of us running out of go... must make Vik.

Judy Hohman Beautiful but you are right, no trees!



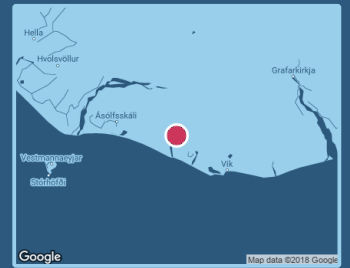
Very large falls!



Up the step to the top...not!

Ice and more ice

September 30 in Iceland



Even though the light is going we decided to drive up to the base of fourth largest glacier in Iceland. We very tired so just a quick walk to see the base.



Ice cubes anyone



Yep thats the name of the glacier.*

Pointy Rocks

September 30 in Iceland, Vik



Made it to Vik! This is the place we started for this morning, so many waterfalls and other stops, we weren't sure we could make before dark. This is a little town of 300, which started as fishing village, but without a harbor it wasn't much of success. It really clouded up so we didn't get very good photos of the nice church on the hillside above town or the neat pointy rocks and black sand beach. We noticed that most of the farms like the Church are white with red roofs...no pastels here.



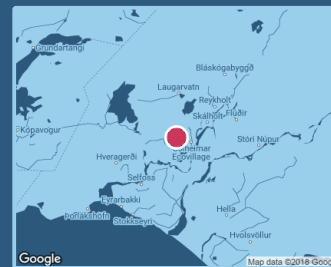
Pointy rocks just south of town



Red and white church above the town

Snow and Soak Day

October 1 in Iceland, Grímsnes- og Grafningshreppur



We got to bed late last night, downloading photos to the laptop and finalizing the day's posts. We slept until 9am. When we awoke, we found it was snowing. So the light will not be very good today. When we get going, we will go get into hot water. Last night we were looking online to find the closest laundromat, but Iceland has NO laundromats. Laundry services are available, but at \$1.40 per pair of socks and \$1.70 for under ware, they must be using champagne instead of water. It does look like our cottages has a laundry facility, so we will check that out too today.

Yesterday, we put gas in the car. 95 octane gas was 2243 kronurs per liter or about \$8.40 a gallon. It is a good thing we got an economy vehicle.

Slow day because we have been going...going...going.



Snow on the porch and bushes.

Gamla Laugin (Secret Lagoon)

October 1 in Iceland, Fludir



Well, we finally got into hot water at Secret Lagoon. We soaked in the semi-natural pool next to Little Geysir and several un-named hot springs. Les got out first and took some photos. Then we ate lunch in the dining room watching others in the pool.



Jill in hot water *



Old changing rooms? *



The pool *

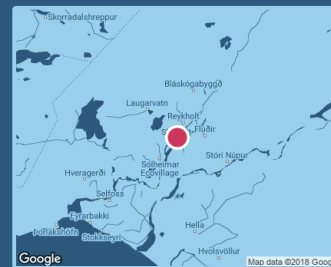


Hot springs by pool *

Dinner and Church.

October 1 in Iceland, Laugaras

When out to dinner at Skalholt, a community initially established in the 11th century. Skalholt was one of the most important places in Iceland for 8 centuries. Now just very small religious center for the Church of Iceland. The current “cathedral” was built in 1950’s but there is a priest buried in the basement from the 15th century. They are doing a lot of archaeological studies in the area. Next to the beautiful church there are dormitories, cottages and the wonderful restaurant we ate at. We were the only dinners for most of the time. Food was great, but most interesting to Les was a very old looking building next to the church. Unfortunately, the light was already gone, so we will have to come back to the photograph it in the next few days.





A rift and a trail!

October 2 in Iceland



Sunny morning and we are off to Þingvellir National Park. The strange looking "P" character is pronounced as a soft "th". Once in the park, Les wanted to stop and take a picture of the "rift" we saw a pull off marker with a sign with a big M. My map says it means Marked...for what we don't know...so we park, Les gets out and took pictures. Then we get honked at by what we assume is a Park Maintenance vehicle, we think we are parked in traffic turnout, so vehicles can move over for large buses on the narrow park road...oops. Moving on we find a clearly parking area for a trail, I head up the trail, Les takes pictures of the lake. This park is in a rift valley where the North American and Eurasian tectonic plates meet and are splitting apart. Pictures taken on to the main event...



Great lake...



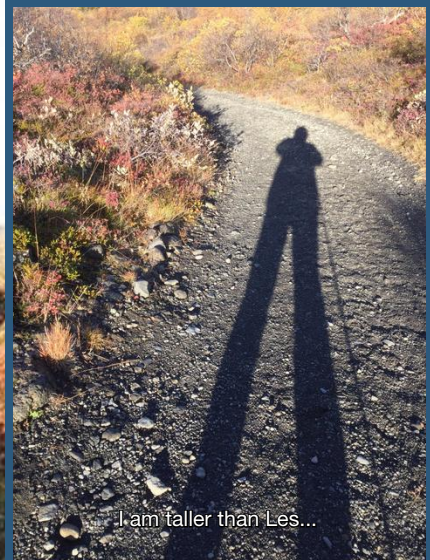
Þingvallavatn Lake



Rift



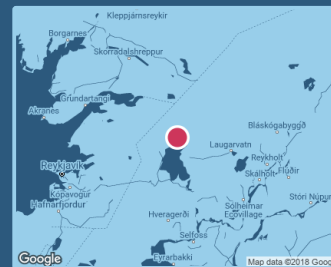
More rock in Morning light..love the Moss



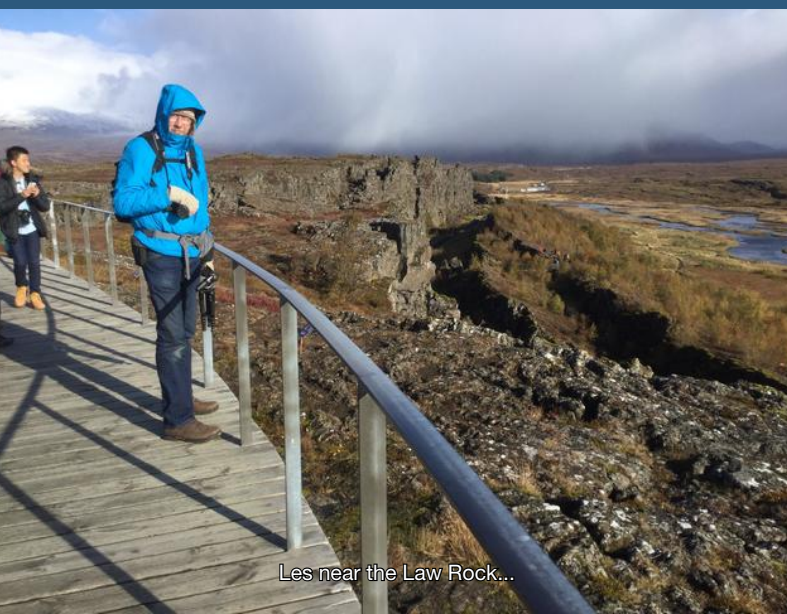
I am taller than Les...

The other side of the rift and the Law..

October 2 in Iceland



We had to wait to get a parking spot, but we walk over this great natural and cultural site. This is where Iceland held their Althing and created their laws ” starting around the year 930. Think of it as their Constitutional Hall. The people would gather here every June for two weeks and Laws would be formed and court held. In the beginning, before the 13th century, there was a couple guys known as the Law Speakers, who would recite the laws standing on a rock, in front of this natural amphitheater. This formation is the other side of the Rift Valley. We walked up the rift canyon and then down to the actual Logberg or Law rock.



Les near the Law Rock...



Look down the rift



The rift canyon



Church came to Law in about 1200. Don't think this is actual church



Pretty nice church though

Another couple of waterfalls

October 2 in Iceland



Ate lunch in the car looking at the rift wall, and more waterfalls in and then river falls down the escarpment first in to the canyon then into the river/rift valley and lake. Lots of walking but no WC near any of the parking area...and all that water.

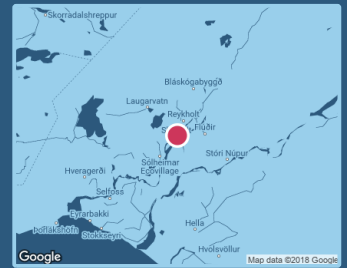




Oxarafoss was feature in a scene from "Game of Thrones" I was told by another visitor.

Back to the Cathedral

October 2 in Iceland, Laugaras



Les really liked the old replica of traditional building next to the Cathedral/and where we ate dinner last night. So with the sun still shining when we went back. Les was so disappointed, the Church shaded the old building he came back to shoot. Oh well, the light is still better than last evening.

While Les shot the building I looked around the Church and area.



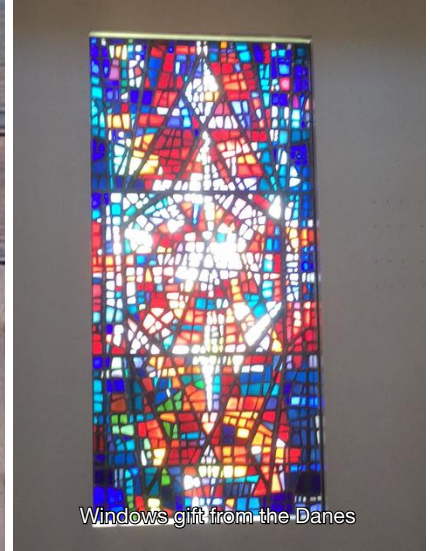
12th Century Bishop's resting Place under new church



Better light this afternoon



Door to Traditional building *



Windows gift from the Danes



Lots of history in the area but town burned late 18th century



Remains of the old town dug up in 1950s

Silly stuff

October 2 in Iceland, Selfoss



We went out to dinner in Selfoss. We thought we would go to a little seaside town...no restaurants..oh well back we went to Selfoss. Couple of thoughts..yes there is a foss or water fall, in Selfoss but not much of one. Second, We like the international picture signs we see everywhere here...especially the leaving a town. I really like those electric speed signs, like we have back home. The sign says the speed you should be going, and flashes your actual speed. Here they take it one step further, it flashes a frown-y face if you are going to fast, and smiley face😊 if you are under the speed limit. Also they have large marshmallows in all the fields here, OK they are hay bales but they look almost eatable.



Fields and fields of Marshmallows



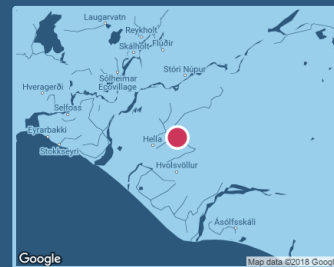
Marshmallows anyone



"End of town"

No story...

October 3 in Iceland, Rangárvallasýsla



Sagnagardur, a museum, that is “Telling the story Restoring the Land” is Closed. Les is taking pictures anyway outside the building. We are off the beaten path today...more stuff might be closed but we are enjoying the ride. We keep seeing flocks of large white birds in the fields. We are guessing that that they are gaggle of Swans. First time we been on a quiet enough road to stop and take pictures of them.

Judy Hohman What an interesting building!



swans, lots of swans walking away from us stopped on the road.



Les still taking photos.



Les photographing a replica of a traditional icelandic house of years gone by.

Keldar

October 3 in Iceland, Rangárþing Ytra



Saw this place on our tourist map. Old Icelandic farm with tours...internet this morning said it was open...sort of open, no tours but able to walk around and take pictures on a rainy day



Most houses did not have much outside light.



Sheep across the river near very old sod building.



Back of the church with the graveyard.



A group of sod houses.



Interpretive sign in Icelandic and some English.



Front of the church.



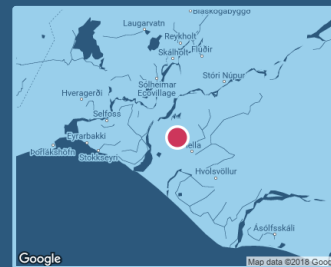
Over time, housing has evolved.
Most today are poured concrete.



Sod houses with a connecting room without windows.

Oddi, Home of the Learned

October 3 in Iceland, Rangárfing Ytra



So went to Hvolsvöllur to see another museum, this one about the “Sagas” the old stories about the settling of Iceland...you guess it too was closed. The exhibition about volcanoes and earthquakes was open. But suddenly our car won't lock! Between that and the entrance fee of \$32.00 each we thought we understand enough about geology and we wanted to spend our money on hot cocoa and coffee. The car started locking again, so we came to this little church, Oddi. While this church hasn't been here that long (1920). The location was home to one of the first churches in Iceland. It was also home in 1078 to Seamundur the Learned, who studied in France at Sorbonne to become a priest. OK, it's raining and I have time to read.

Angela Gatto A lot of churches, what is or was the predominant denomination of Iceland. Having fun, glad to have the opportunity to follow along.

Judy Hohman A church with trees nearby. I assume you are in a less windy place. The architecture is so different than the US, quite amazing. Glad you are sharing your adventures with friends.



Another old church



Jill in front of the church

Too Rainy

October 3 in Iceland, Grímsnes- og Grafningshreppur



We gave up around 4:30 today. We went to one town west of Selfoss that supposedly had waterfalls, town gardens, hot springs and other stuff. Got to the parking lot to walk around the geothermal area. People looked cold and wet, and we are tired. The rain was beginning to turn to snow. We decide come back to the cabin and get ready to leave tomorrow to join our tour/workshop folks at the airport.

Just couple of thoughts, it seams almost everyone speaks a little English so far no issues. Yes, they take credit cards everywhere, including at a dirt parking lot at one of the waterfalls. It was a machine, but easy to use. Iceland has a bad case of little, hairy horses. Everywhere you go there are herds of Icelandic horses and today was the only time we saw anyone riding one. There was a rancher herding his cows and sheep, he was riding and two other people were herding on foot. So, what do they do with all these cute little hairy horses. I wanted to take a ride as there are lots of places to do that as a tourist, but it's just to rainy. PS these pictures taken on earlier day with Sunshine.

Also for dinner had a Icelandic traditional tapas.. smoked lamb (lamb ham), dried cod (papery fish), raw salted salmon, sheep pate (looks like dry tuna salad), Islandic flat bread (think a tougher whole wheat tortilla), dark rye sour dough bread, Skyr and black pudding (it looks like a brownie but I think it has pieces sheep meat in it). I should have taken a picture, but by the time I thought about it...it's too late. Big difference from our first dinner here, a hamburger and fries. Eating out is expensive but Les and I split, that way we save money and we get dessert!



The horses come in a full range of colors.



Most horses don't sport a crew cut.



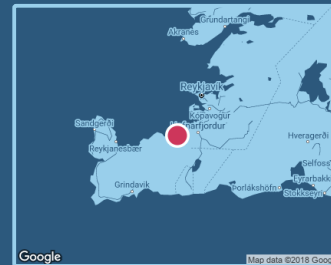
Horses here are about as tall as me.



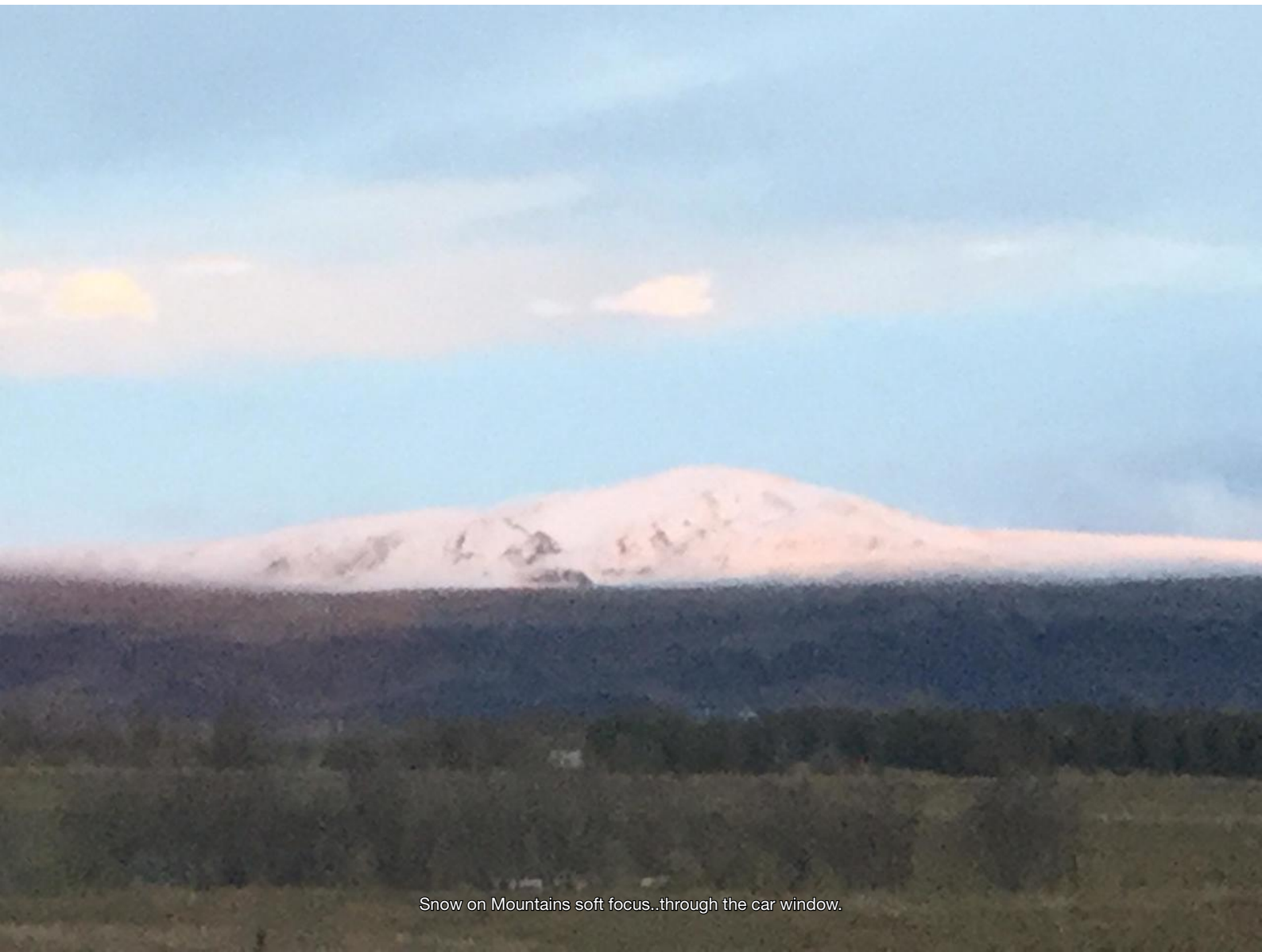
Les shares dry cod, but not dessert!

Back to airport...

October 4 in Iceland



Back to the airport. Left rental car, they questioned some scratches on the top of the car, we didn't go under any trees. There aren't many trees anywhere. They let it go...next time video the whole car. We walked back to the airport with all our luggage, it was easier and warmer than waiting for a shuttle. The sun is peaking out. Meeting everyone in the terminal at Joe and the Juice. There are six us women, me, Laura, Sue, Linda, Brenda, and Karen. There are six men including the two leaders, Bill, Kerik, Stephen, Eben, and Stan and of course, Les. We have two nice vans with Wifi. It is afternoon and we are off...couple of the people this is their second and third time at this workshop. Only trouble is no cup holders in the van.



Snow on Mountains soft focus..through the car window.



We started early at Sun Rise

We made it to Djupavik

October 4 in Iceland



It was a four hour drive to our hotel from the airport. We stopped an hour out at what I can only describe as islandic trunk stop. Cold, rainy and windy...Les and I shared a hamburger. Then we drove through the country side heading north...lots of foss or waterfalls and mountains with fresh snow. The last hour was on a narrow, gravel road with lots of potholes. This road hugged the hills/cliffs along the fjord and coast . They really didn't slow down so it was an exciting ride. But the place is worth the ride, lovely room, great food, and two dogs to pet. Only trouble is there is no decaf coffee...I am a little jittery. The hotel was built as the rooming house for women working in the fish factory, next door in the 1930's. The stairs to our room are steep and narrow, Les and I are little afraid of them. We are in bed now with the sound of rain and sleet on the window at our head. Very cozy.



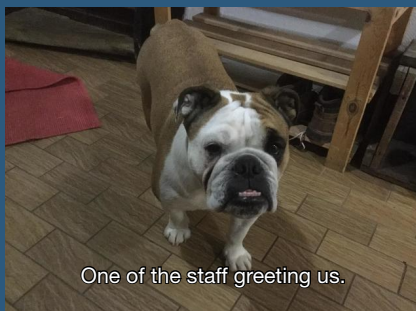
It overlooks the fjord



Lunch time view



Cozy dinner area, just our group here



One of the staff greeting us.



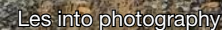
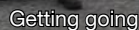
Les got to bring up all our luggage...I am afraid to.



Our room



Awoke to a nice Islandic breakfast spread. Then its off to take photos...it was a balmy -7 C. Little breezes. We stopped at least 4 times this morning. One sketch for Jill and lots of pics for Les. Jill also walked along the road ahead of the vans to get her steps in. Lunch was great warm homemade bread, hot mushroom soup...afternoon tour of the old factory for Les, Jill is staying in the lodge doing pastel drawing.





Three people are using drones



Another church Arnes, IS our host is getting married here in two weeks



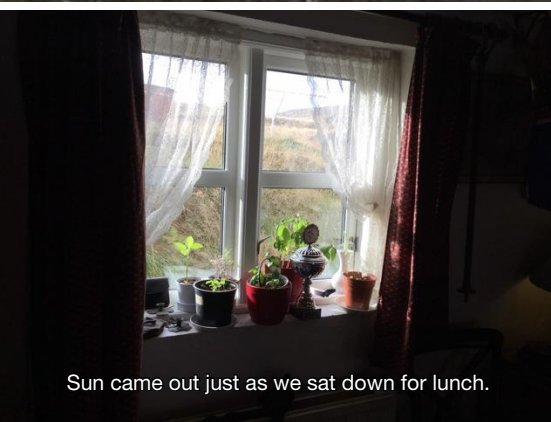
Stop, everyone grab your cameras



Breakfast

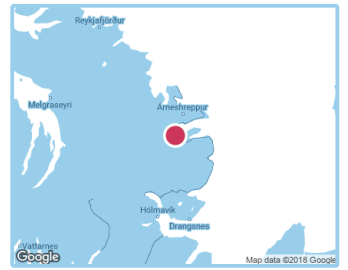


Light on the fjord



Sun came out just as we sat down for lunch.





A northern sunset.

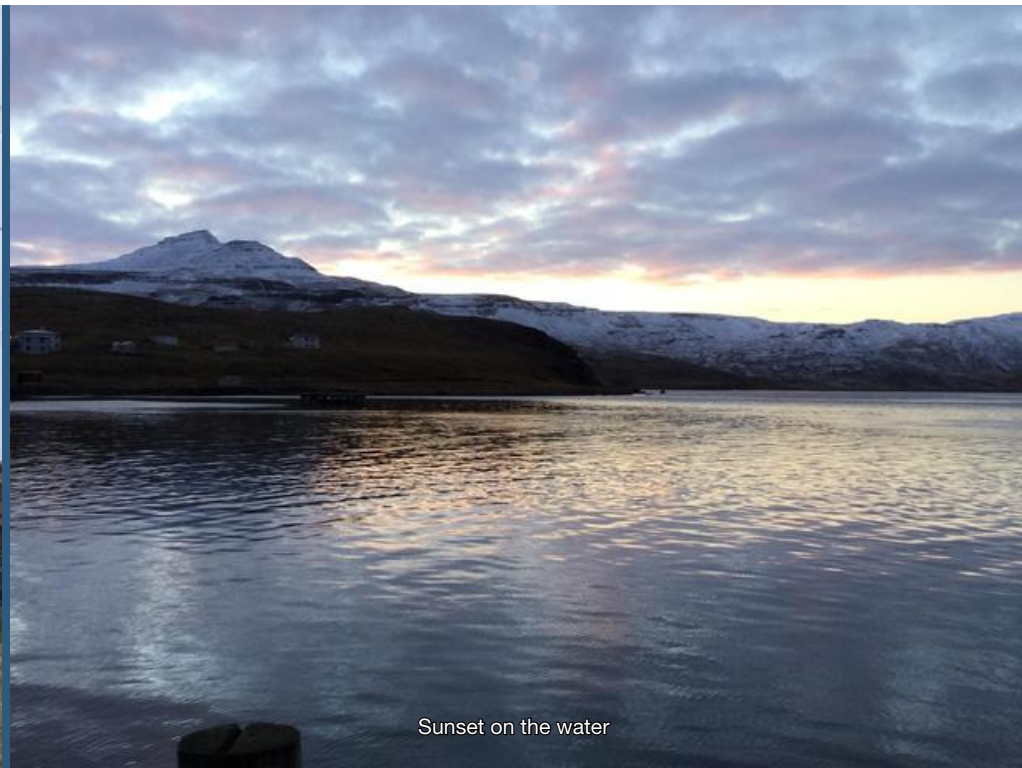
October 5 in Iceland

The sun came out for sunset. Everyone ran outside. So I walked to the other side of town, more steps! I took iPad pictures of the sunset, and the factory a real nice evening.

Judy Hohman All the different shades of gray in the sunset! The lighting is beautiful. Love the soup sign.



Behind the green door



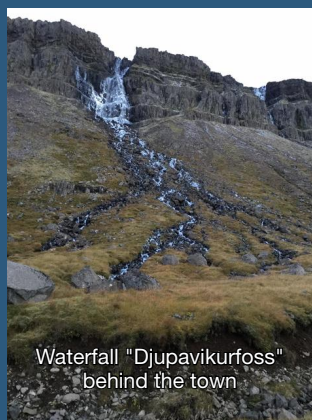
Sunset on the water



Sitting on the Dock of the Bay



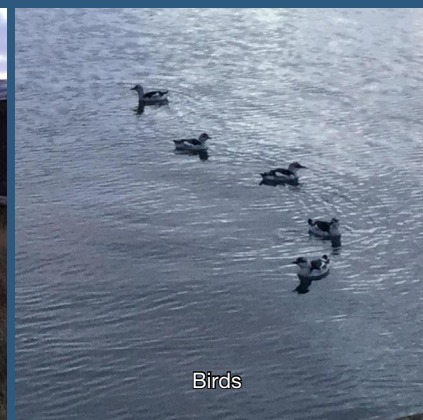
The factory



Waterfall "Djupavikurfoss"
behind the town



Town has everything...including soup



Birds

Check one off our bucket list!

October 5 in Iceland



WOW...Wow...Wow. Tonight was clear for a change but, the aurora was only projected to be a 2 on a scale of 0-9. The northern lights danced overhead tonight. At first it was quiet and just fuzzy area to my naked eye. Suddenly it snaked, dance, spinning and brilliant. Les has lots and lots of shots. While it was spectacular for me, the color captured by his camera, as I said WOW..Wow !Wow. One of the leaders, Kerik, has scene them about 5 times but, this was the best he has scene. We have #3, #4, and #6 nights coming up. Hopefully the sky's are clear then too.

Riley Heron spectacular!!! almost as good as being there? thank you so much!

Angela Gatto Yay for you guys! That is awesome!

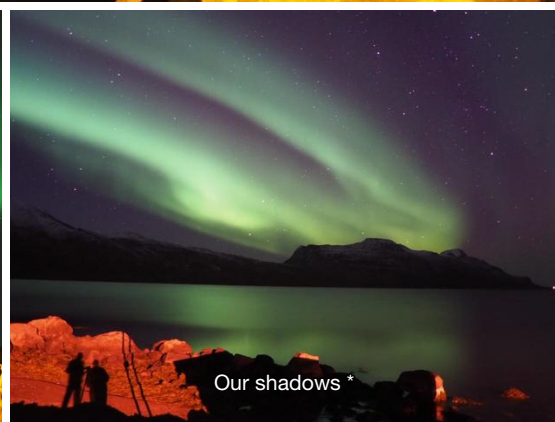
SHIRLEY HACKETT Wow! very nice.



It got all over the sky *

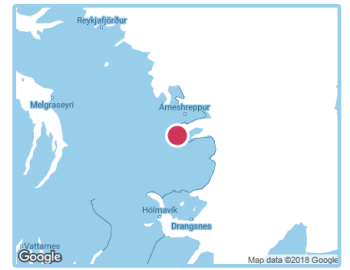


Then it got going *

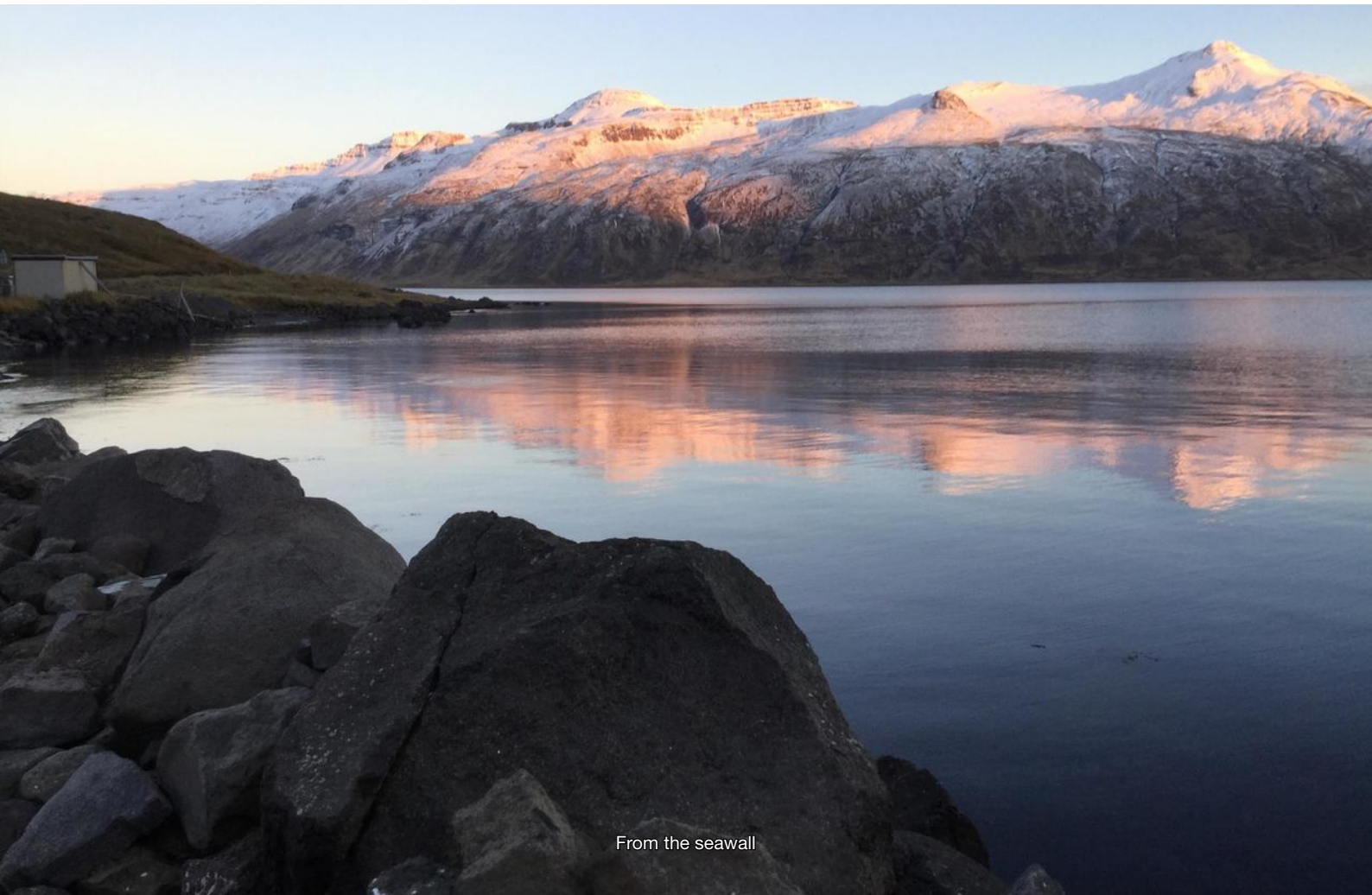


Morning light

October 6 in Iceland



What a Morning! Sunrise on the nearby mountains are great



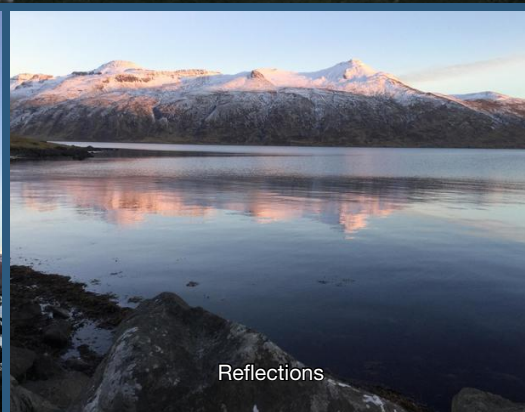
From the seawall



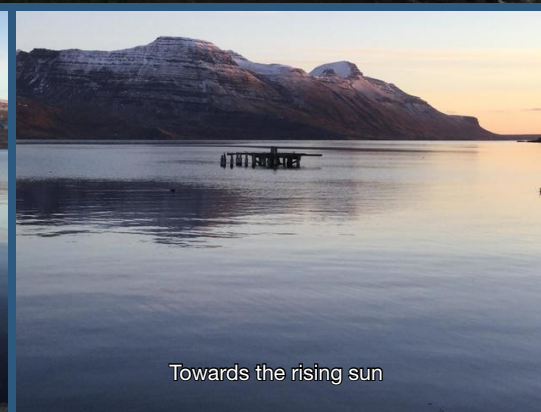
Off the front porch



Very blue skies



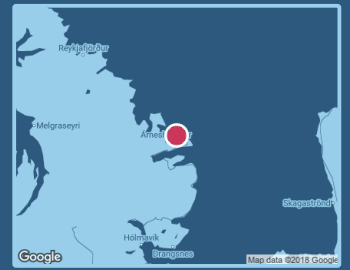
Reflections



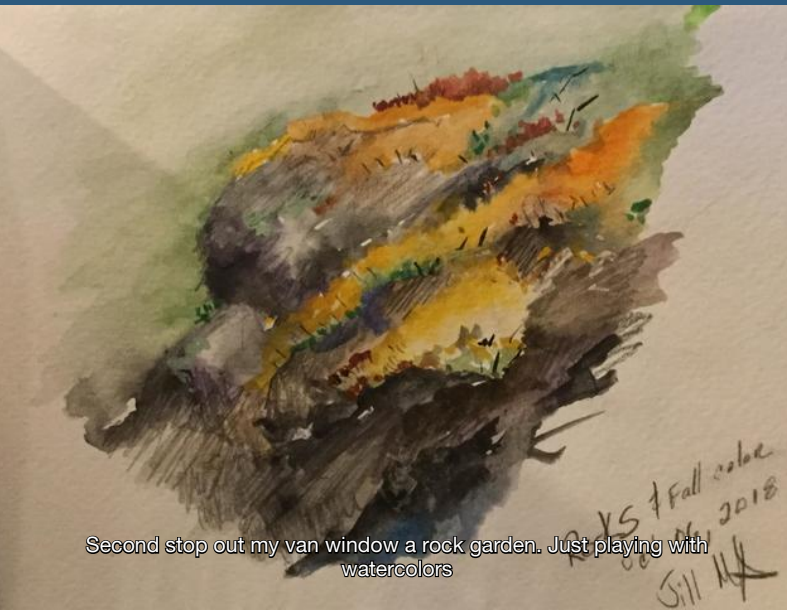
Towards the rising sun

Blue house

October 6 in Iceland, Árneshreppur



Third stop for the morning. Sun is dimmed by high clouds, but that doesn't stop this group. First two stops I did quick sketches. The wind is coming up and too cool to draw or even walk. Luckily they have the van running for us wimps.



Second stop out my van window a rock garden. Just playing with watercolors



First Sketch



First stop



Third stop



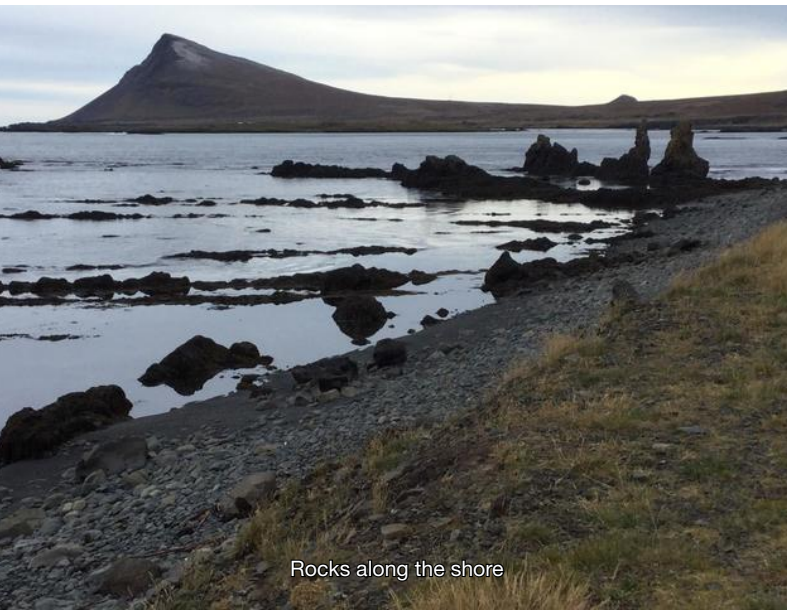
Yes, there was a blue house



Lunch, seaside swim, and a walk.

October 6 in Iceland

We first ate our sandwiches in the car because it was so cold. Then we walked down to this neighborhood hot spring pool which is right on the edge of the sea. You have to take a shower first, then move quickly into the pool because it soooo cold. But the pool is wonderful and it had a hot tub with really hot water. Then we headed back, stopping to take pictures of rocks along the sea. Everyone got busy, I (Jill) walked ahead to get my steps, took a lot of iPad pics and walked for about 45 minutes.



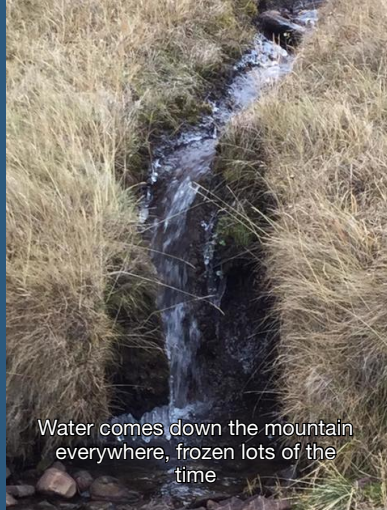
Rocks along the shore



Pool seaside



Get the point of this stop



Water comes down the mountain
everywhere, frozen lots of the
time



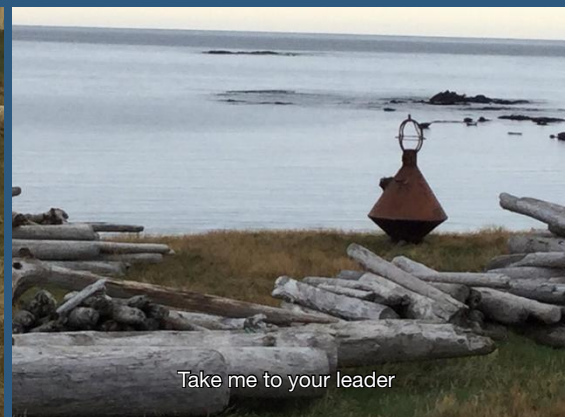
Swimming pool this way



Waiting for their ship to come home



Lots of sheep...please don't chase



Take me to your leader



Back at the Hotel and it's snowing.

October 6 in Iceland

So no Northern Lights tonight...snowing outside and everyone is working on their photos, only one person isn't shooting digital.



Bill Schwab live video streaming.



The other host...just don't ask for the chair



Line up for power.

Walk about...

October 7 in Iceland



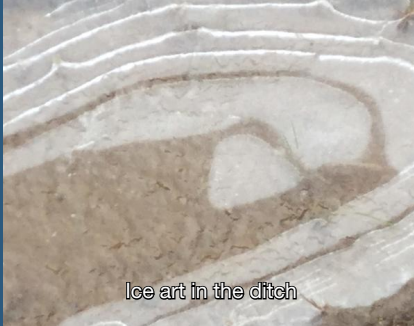
Today, is stay around the town. Les is going to take pictures inside the old fish factory... me I am going on a walk about. This is best done in the morning, as the sun is often out below the clouds. As the day goes on the sun goes behind the high clouds and it gets cold. I walked about a mile up the road to the trailhead which leads to the top of the town waterfall. Getting tired and the actual trail was icy, so back I came. Editor's note: We decided to put * the end of a caption when it's for one of his photographs from the Olympus Digital Camera. These attached to this entry are all shot on the iPad from my walk about...



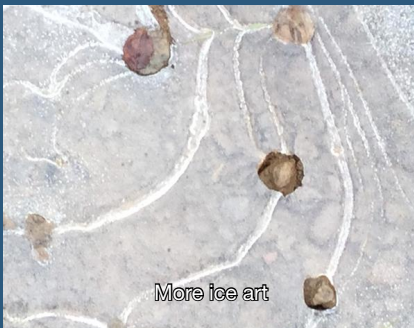
Town waterfall, or icefall at this time of year.



The town with the herring factory on the left. The rusty boat was the men's dorm for the factory.



Ice art in the ditch



More ice art



This is where I turned around



Little plants along the road



Snow Abort!

October 8 in Iceland



The plan for the day was everyone pile in to the vans and drive an hour to Holmavik to get fuel and take photos. Unfortunately, it has been snowing at the upper elevations and the road goes through a pass. Even equipped with studded snow tires, the vans had trouble climbing up the pass. So we ended up turning around and returning to the hotel.

It rained here all day so Jill stayed in and painted. Les returned to the old Djupavik Herring Factory to take more photos. The factory was built in the 1930's and operated for a couple of decades before closing. It is a huge concrete building with lots of equipment still in place. The people that own the Hotel also own the factory, so we have access. It is quite dangerous inside because the concrete used beach sand and salt water. Steel and salt do not mix, so the concrete is crumbling, but this is a unique opportunity for photography.

By the way, several of the opening scenes from the Marvel movie "Justice League" were filmed in and around the factory. Several of these scenes are available on YouTube.

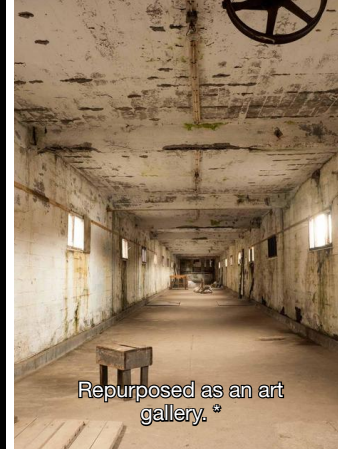
Tomorrow the weather should be better and we will try for Holmavik again.



The rope is holding a window closed. *



Looking out of a herring oil tank. *



Repurposed as an art gallery. *



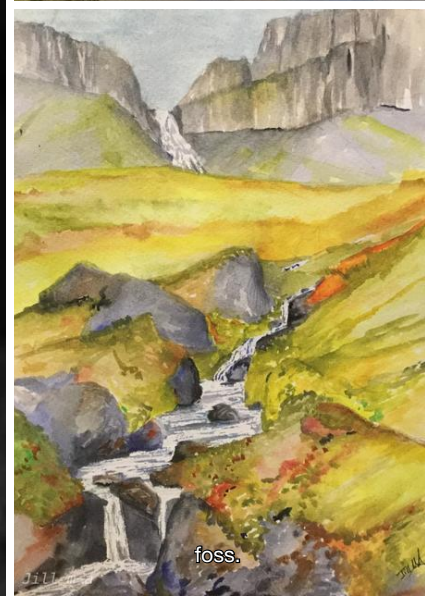
Barrels in the factory. *



Turning around to go back. *



Rope with lead weight. *



Big town today...

October 9 in Iceland



Yesterday, we availed ourselves of the hotel laundry service. No clothes last night, I came down and asked about it. Clothes not dry, because they hang them out to dry! Rainy day, so no clean clothes. Gives new meaning to “cold wash.”

Hope to go to big town today for fuel. It's cloudy, but a warm 3-4 degrees (centigrade) Les said. The sun is peaking out and the pass is doable. Stopped a couple of places on the way. Had lunch at the Gas station/market/diner. Les was able to buy more Mountain Dew, He is a happy camper. Everyone photographed the town and it's little harbor. I tried to draw, but the pen wouldn't work...was it frozen? Anyway, the boat I was drawing left. So will have to work from photograph. On the way back, we had great afternoon light, more pictures. I was able to get my steps in by walking the road ahead of the van at a couple of photo stops.

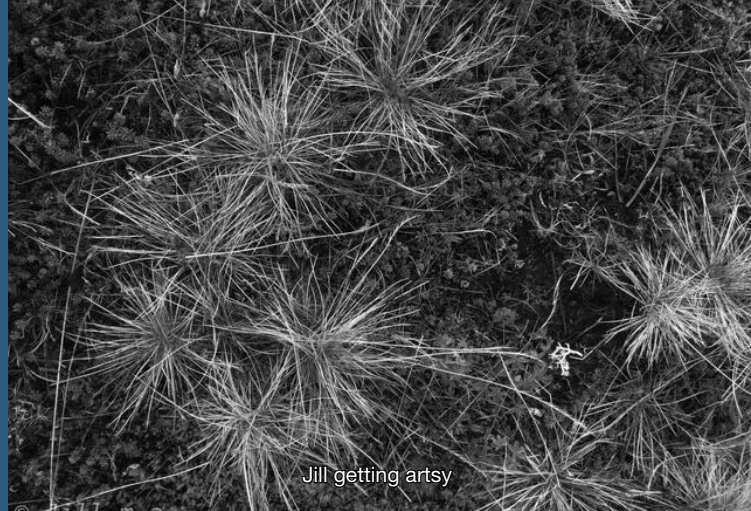
So we hit an Icelandic traffic jam. The Farmers were driving two sheep down the narrow road which was at this location way up on the cliff above the fjord. We crawled along for about a half hour. Finally the area around the road widened and the sheep went up the hill, and we got to pass by.



Even the seaweed is dramatic



Ok Jill having fun with little stuff



Jill getting artsy



Lots of photo stops both coming and going. Photo stop to shoot an iceberg.



At the harbor were kayaks for rent. *



The sheep in Iceland have very long and full coats, but really tiny legs.



"Don't go down the cliff! OK, up the hill is alright."



With the harsh environment, all building tend to be very utilitarian w/o style, or it is the style.*

An Even Better Aurora

October 9 in Iceland



We thought the aurora on the 5th was great, but tonight we were blown away. Les started out with the rusty boat in the foreground. Then moved up to the right side of the factory to get the factory and its chimney in the foreground and the aurora screaming in over the cliff above. The top of the cliff began to glow bright green along its length. I was making 15 second exposures when the aurora exploded with activity. The movement went wild, snaking across the sky so quickly and very bright that my image was washed out. Bill, Our leader, actually caught it on video with his cell phone.



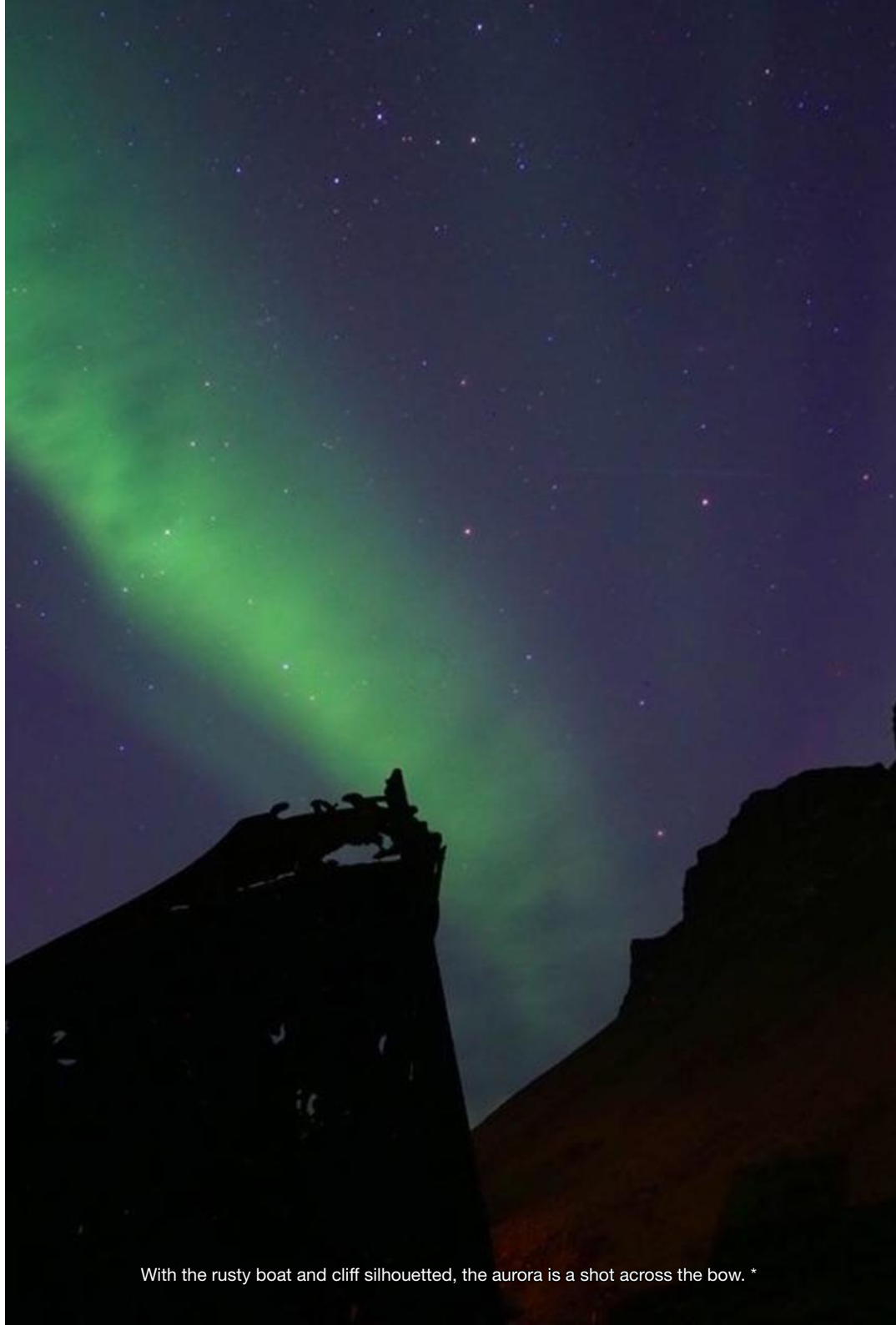
The aurora flows in over the cliff and factory. *



Then the aurora exploded, even lighting up the factory, but moved too fast and bright. *



Turning the my left to see the aurora being spiked by the antennas of a boat. *



With the rusty boat and cliff silhouetted, the aurora is a shot across the bow. *

It's all about the light...

October 10 in Iceland



Today was wonderful. Sunlight and clouds.... great time. We are going two fjords over, but first a stop in the little town of Gjugur which has the local air strip. The light was great. Even Jill had fun taking photos.



Light on cabins



Light, light, light



Boat, and the Fjord

Another factory

October 10 in Iceland, Árneshreppur



This was the coldest place today...so I sketched from the van. Les photographed in the sun, while it lasted, then the factory last.





Farm by factory



Mountain behind the factory



Old factory doors



Stops all the way back

October 10 in Iceland, Árneshreppur



Just a few pics of the stops in the afternoon. At the north end of the point we found a small ranch, Munedanes and photographed alone the shore. Next stop is a pit stop at Krossneslaug, the hot pool.



Steve photographing on the shore too.



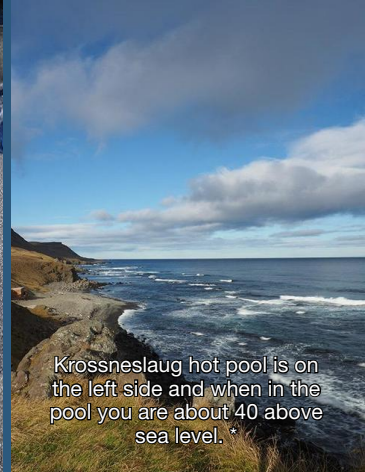
Les photographing on the shore.



Dragon's Teeth *



Triangle rock *



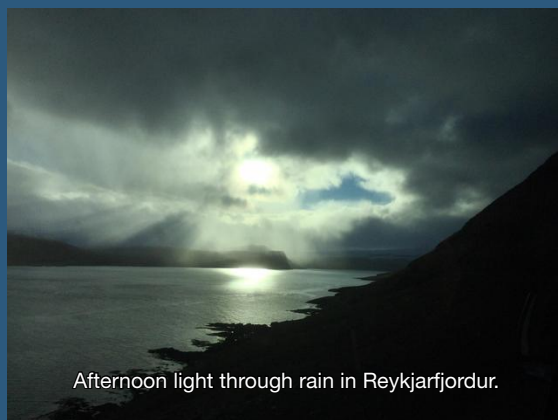
Krossneslaug hot pool is on the left side and when in the pool you are about 40 above sea level. *



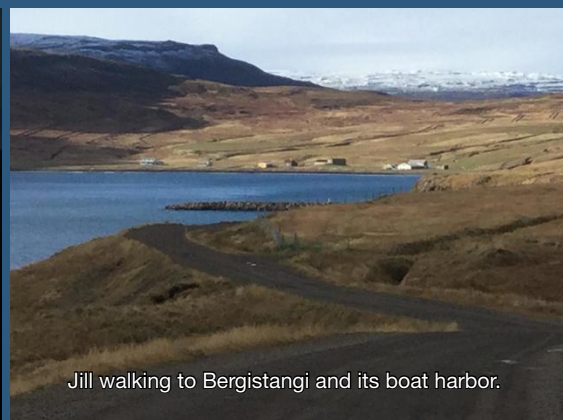
Peak above Bergistangi.



Down the shore from Krossneslaug.



Afternoon light through rain in Reykjarfjordur.



Jill walking to Bergistangi and its boat harbor.

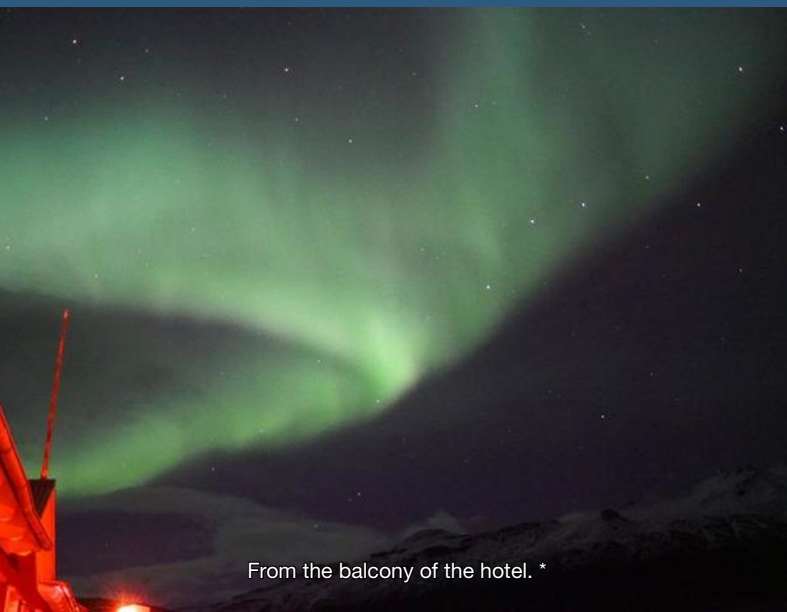
Another Aurora!

October 10 in Iceland



Well it was clearish this evening and the aurora began at dusk, but was very light. Les discovered his digital camera will do time lapse and make a 4K movie out of it. He learned what would work, but the aurora was not inspirational. The clouds moved in and he gave up and went to bed. A few hours later, he was about to turn off the light and go to sleep, when Jill jokingly suggested checking if the aurora had come back. Looking out the window, the clouds had parted and there was a good aurora over the fjord.

So, Les redressed and took the camera out to the balcony of the hotel to set up. The aurora was not as spectacular as last night, but it did yield some good footage. We uploaded a 16 second clip to YouTube and linked to it from our website's Events page (www.QuailRunArt.com).



From the balcony of the hotel. *



Just before the aurora faded out. *



Early on the aurora was off to the north beyond the mountains and under the clouds. *



A quiet day at the hotel.

October 11 in Iceland

A rainy, cold day, so the group is having a “stay day.” Everyone is either working on photographs on their computer, or going back to the factory to do more pictures. That’s what is great about this location there is indoor place to take photos. It is colder than ... but it is dry. We are learning how to use the digital photo processing software called Lightroom. It even has a app for my iPad.

Magnús is the hotel manger and cook. His is getting married in a couple of weeks. He asked me to do a pastel painting for his wedding guest book so I spent the day working on that.

Tonight is another slideshow. Each person puts in 6 pictures to have everyone discuss. I even am putting in my ipad photos. Anyway here are some of Les’s pics of the factory...

Judy Hohman I like your pastel painting and the lighting on the stairs. Bring some rain home with you.



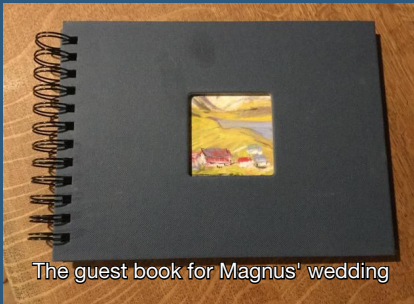
Steam pipe wrapped with insulation hanging from the ceiling.*



Green door on red building next to the factory.*



Farm equipment long unused provides a nesting site.*



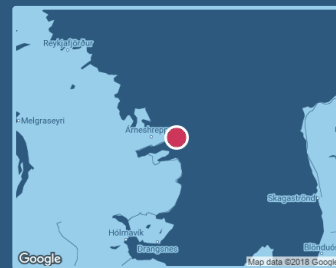
The guest book for Magnus' wedding



Th full pastel painting of Djupavíik



Stairs to the next level up.*



The roar of Iceland sea...

October 12 in Iceland

Last day sunrise is beautiful. The clouds came in as we returned to the little town near the airport. Then we went out to the point beyond the airport. This is the actual sea not the fjord. Roaring and thundering surf against the rocks. You felt the pounding in your feet... what an experience. I tried to capture the wildness, but you really had to been there. Les and I plan to stay at the hotel this afternoon and walk the road. We need time to get ready to leave tomorrow. Best place ever.



The whole group, minus one.



© Jill m-a

Sunrise



Looking across the fjord to the hotel, factory and village.



Swans



Les in his Icelandic sweater..



Morning stop on the toad

Leaving Djupavik

October 13 in Iceland



We awoke to light snow this morning. After a quick breakfast and we all got our luggage into the vans and headed for the pass. The hotel manager, Magnus, led the way to the top in case he had to tow us the top of the pass. Eben brought his rental car and it did need assistance.

Magnus is great, not only does he manage the hotel, but he also is building his house, getting married next week, swims the fjord and cooks great meals and desserts. And on top of all that, he does road service.



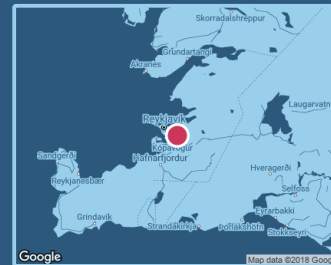
The vans do have studded snow tires.



Heading up the pass

Iceland American style...

October 13 in Iceland, Reykjavik



We decided to rent a car at the airport for our final three days in Iceland. Jill made reservations a couple of days ago with Lagoon Car Rentals online. We thought when the group returned the van we would pick up our car...oops no Lagoon rentals at the drop off place and no one seems to know where they are located. We go into the airport terminal and call them. Please stand by ... the information desk and we will see a man with a card. Finding information desk was easy, it was bright orange, and finally the guy showed up and their shuttle was right-out front. No waiting for the airport shuttle bus. Their office was off campus...but it actually is less hassle, not crowded and way cheaper. Only problem was the gas tank only half full.

On the way into town we saw a Costco! According to the Costco station guy (an American) it is the cheapest gas in Iceland. At just over \$6 per gallon, this is about \$2 per gallon less than the average price.

Our Air BnB is in the suburbs. But it's clean and quiet. I was so tired after we got to the room, I didn't feel like finding our way in the dark around the big city just to eat. So, we went to an Icelandic place just off our highway exit. A combination KFC and Taco Bell, but they didn't have extra crispy.



Gas gauge says we need gas, actually diesel.



What do you know, there is Costco and it has the cheapest gas in Iceland, thus the traffic jam.

We might not get out of the Opera House

October 14 in Iceland, Reykjavik



It's hard to find breakfast places...found one open early, called "Early Morning". It is downtown, Sunday morning, no traffic and free parking. Jill had actual fried eggs and sausage. Then after driving looking for parking closer to the things we wanted to see, we came back to the same parking space and decided to walk.

The sun came out and Les fell in love with their concert hall (Harpa). Luckily it is warm and I can sit. When we rented the car we rented a WiFi unit, which fits in my pocket. So I can navigate and look up places while walking as well as driving. By the time Les finished in the Harpa or concert hall it was lunch time.

After lunch we went to the Settlement Center. While doing a new development, they found the remains of a farm's long house from 871 in downtown. So the center was built around the archaeological dig below street level. The really nice interactive exhibits were in both Icelandic and English.

Next we walked to the Art Museum, but we were just too tired to do six galleries. Both of us are feeling a bit under the weather...so quick walk for fish and chips and back to our room. All the restaurants are downtown and we are in the suburbs. We decided to try the local pool for a warm soak.



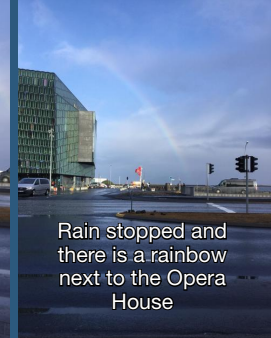
City building up, walls and floors are concrete, pored in place. Cranes are everywhere.



We will be here for a while, he's in the zone.



Les, the street photographer



Rain stopped and there is a rainbow next to the Opera House



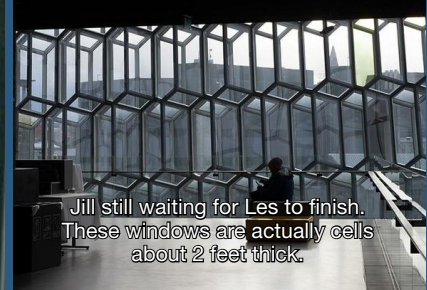
Breakfast Art



The opera house has very unusual glass walls.



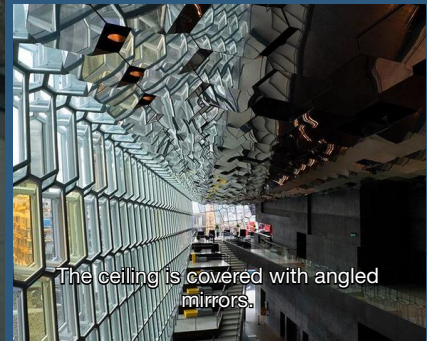
A little abstract



Jill still waiting for Les to finish.
These windows are actually cells
about 2 feet thick.



Individual random windows are
coated differently, showing color.



The ceiling is covered with angled
mirrors.

Horsies Horsies

October 15 in Iceland, Kjalarneshreppur

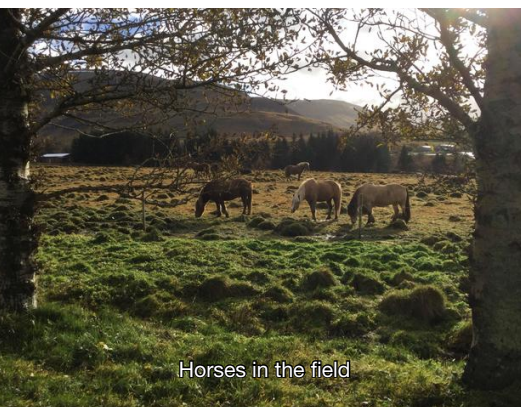


The one thing that I read about before the trip was riding an Icelandic horse. I told Les I want to do that! This morning I awoke late, and with a head cold. We visited a farmasia or pharmacy after having google get us very lost for our breakfast place. Neat thing is we got to see a lot of back streets.

We tried to make a reservations yesterday for a horse ride, but the internet was not helping, so we drove out to the farm about 15 minutes north of where we are staying. After Les talked to the “owner”, we are getting to go for a ride! He just isn’t sure if it’s on a horse... it may van tour. The little girl in me is saying horsies...horsies. As we wait for our ride Les is out taking pictures. I am drinking coffee and relaxing. Les and I are just not city people.



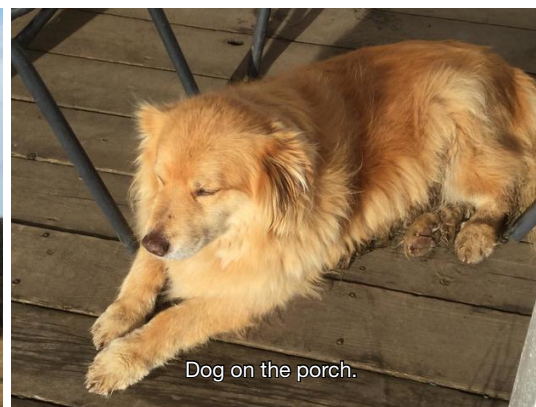
Farm is made for tourist



Horses in the field



Church on the hillside



Dog on the porch.

We did it, we rode ponies...

October 15 in Iceland, Kjalarneshreppur



So this afternoon we did get a 2 hour ride on Icelandic horses. When we started out it was raining so they gave us orange rain pants. But as soon as we got underway the sun came out for most of our ride. Lots of blurry pictures by Les. As short as these horses are, it still took 3 men and a boy, OK only one helper to get me on the horse. We rode long a stream, crossing it couple of times. My horse was called Sol and Les's was Svaki (a horse use in the cable show "Game of Thrones"). Ended at a small waterfall and everyone got off their horse except me...I wasn't going to chance that I would have to walk back. I made my step goal! Well maybe it doesn't count when the horse does the walking. We or the horses went faster back to the barn. Both Les and I were actually galloping at times. It was easier on the bottoms. Fun and just enough of a ride to not be sore.

Anna Lee Chanis I have enjoyed every post! Anna Lee



Jill bringing up the rear at the mid point of the ride.



Les' feet don't quite drag the ground, but they did get wet in a stream crossing.



Jill is 5' 6" (w/ hat) so you can tell these are really small horses.



One of 5 stream crossings.

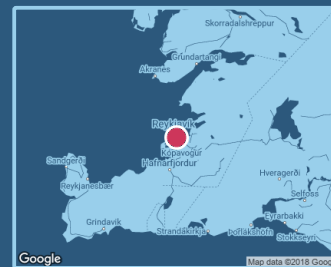


Jill captured a rainbow at the waterfall at the mid point.

Sunsetting on our time in iceland.

October 15 in Iceland, Reykjavik

I was looking for a restaurant to say goodbye to Iceland. Found this one on the top of a museum. it wasn't downtown and has free parking. We get to watch sunset and eat a lamb dinner. Nice way to end our time here.

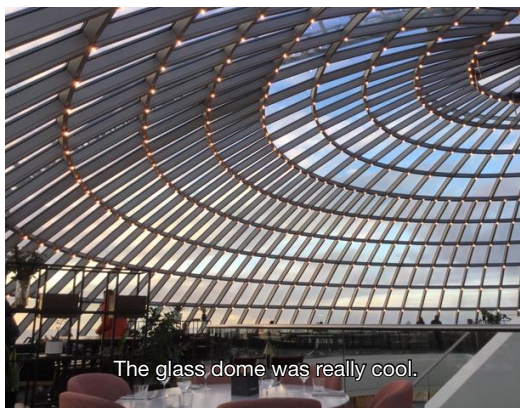




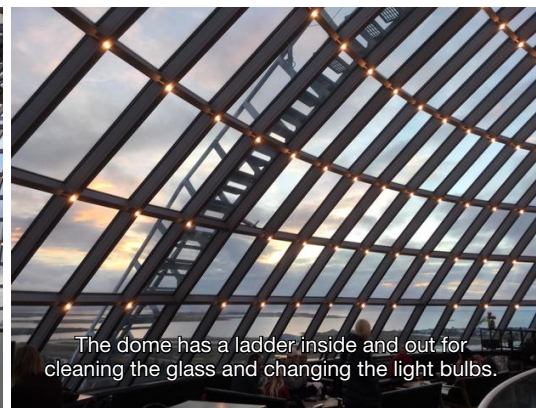
Quiet a sunset over the sea



Les relaxing, waiting for the dinner to arrive.



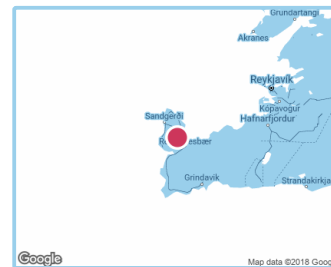
The glass dome was really cool.



The dome has a ladder inside and out for cleaning the glass and changing the light bulbs.

Saying good by to Iceland

October 16 in Iceland, Reykjanesbaer



We woke at 7am today. It was raining, just like when we arrived, but no wind.

We forgot to check in for the flight last night, so we had better do it now. The message on the phone says United does not provide check in services for other carriers and this leg is on Lufthansa.

We finished stuffing our bags, piled into the Kia Rio and headed for the car rental. Check out there went smoothly and they gave us a van ride to the departure gates. We can recommend Lagoon Car Rentals.

The check in is handle at self service terminals and the bag check is also self service. The only snag is that we are too early to check the bags. So we waited at “Joe and a Juice”. When the time came to check the bags, the self service bag check rejected the bags and told me to see a check person for help. That part went smoothly too.

Now for security. This ran pretty much similar to in the States. The bags went through, Les went through and Jill got stopped for a pat down because of her bionics. Gathering the bags, we noticed the laptop, iPad and Jill iPhone are missing. Jill flagged the closest security person to ask and found they were doing a second scan on them, before returning them to us.

After passing through the tax free store and picking up some lunch and coffee, we are now at our gate to wait for the plane. Jill sniffles are worsening to include her usual cough. Les just has minor sniffles.





The plane and more passenger have arrived.

Welcome to Germany

October 16 in Germany, Frankfurt



Just like Toronto, it is dark here. The flight got in just after 8pm local time. The flight attendant said great news, you can deplane in the front or back. The only problem was our overhead stuff was several seats ahead of us and everyone ahead of us exited to the back, so we were the last to leave the plane. Then stepping out of the plane we found a stairway and a bus waiting to take us to the terminal.

The bags were not checked through to Reno, so we had to find baggage claim. We got lost. Finally after asking direction we found baggage claim and still had to wait for the bags to show up.

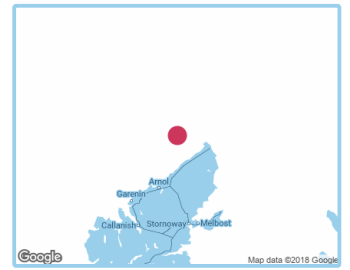
Next we needed to check in for our flight in the morning. Had to ask direction again and finally checked in at a terminal.

Finally, where is the Sheraton Hotel? Asked for directions again and after walking at least a KM we ended up across the street from the airport at the hotel w/o going outside.

We got to our too about 9:30 and I set my alarm for 5am and went to bed.

Coming to America on a 777

October 17, North Atlantic Ocean



The title is from a Mark Knopfler song. We are in the air over Scotland, perhaps our next trip out of the country. Checking the bags, going through security and boarding the plane took a half dozen passport checks. This is our first time on a wide body jet. It has 9 seats across with 2 isles and we are one row behind the bathrooms. We were not sure if we would be fed breakfast, so we ate at the airport and the had a berry pudding and fruit on the plane too.



Scotland below



About half way to Chicago, Greenland below.

Chicago

October 17 in the United States, Cook County



We successfully crossed the Atlantic Ocean, another first for us. And while Les lived in Illinois for three years, he never ventured to Chicago.

We had to go through customs and immigration, pick up our checked bags and recheck them. All-in-all, it went smoothly. Our Icelandic sweaters and caps were under the \$800 limit so there was no Trump Charge.

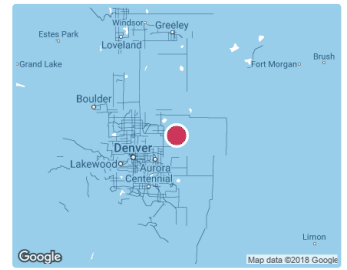
Now we waited for 3 hours and 45 minutes. We could have had a shorter layover, but we didn't know how long customs would take. They did not even look in any of bags. They were interested in the fact that we rode Icelandic Horses two days ago, but Hoof and Mouth Disease does not seem to be a problem in Iceland.

Jill had to buy a Chicago hot dog but that's the only Midwest culture we are seeing this time.

Riley Heron Welcome back to 'Merica!! Your posts and photos of your Icelandic adventure are wonderful. Thanks for sharing the experience, Ri & Di



Chicago Waterfront.



Denver / Reno / Home to Woodfords

October 17 in the United States, Denver County

Tightest leg room so far and the seats were not reclinable. Les' knees were crammed up to the seat ahead and he tried to sleep and failed. We have been up for 19 hours so far. We have learned a lot about air travel. In Denver we got a couple of burgers at Mc Donald's

Les got maybe an hour of sleep on the floor at the gate waiting for the flight for Reno. The plane was late getting in, so we were later leaving Denver. Our arrival at Reno went normally, but the shuttle the Atlantis Resort waits at the side door by baggage claim instead of front door where we were waiting. As Jill watched the shuttle bus for the Peppermill drove by and over to the side door, we realized our mistake. Jill flagged down our shuttle bus down as it was leaving empty. So we got our ride to pick up our car at the Atlantis.

We drove home arriving about 10:30 pm, 27 1/2 hours after waking up in Frankfurt Germany. Glad to be home, but the kids are still vacationing and we miss them. Overall, the trip to Iceland was great, we may return there some day.

Angela Gatto Welcome home, it's been fun tagging along- thanks!

Adding photos not seen before

October 26 in the United States, Douglas County



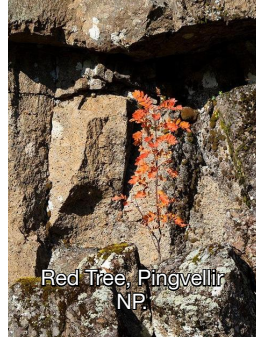
We came home with 128 gb of images and video and had to go through it all. By adding these, they will also appear in the book we will have published by FindPenguins.



Icelandic Horse



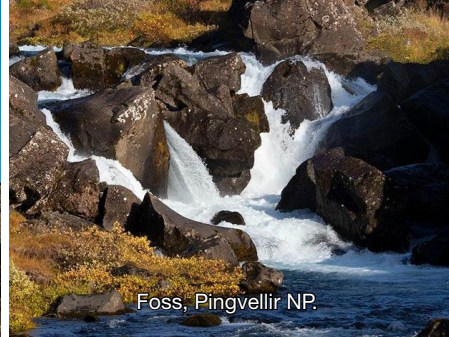
Plant and moss, Þingvellir National Park



Red Tree, Þingvellir NP.



Holding the Gap, Þingvellir NP.



Foss, Þingvellir NP.



Mists of Gullfoss



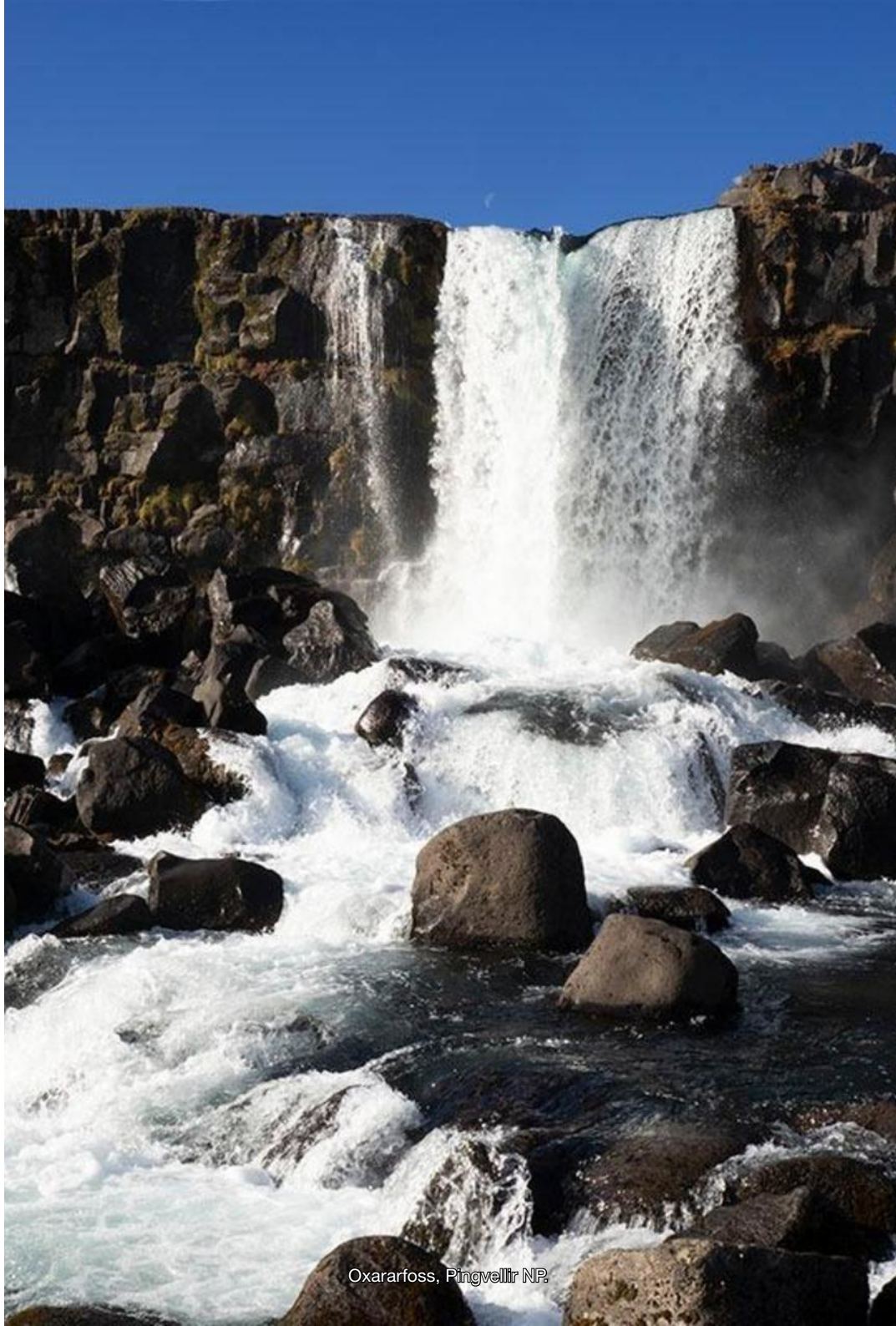
Reconstructed building at Skalholt.



Back Window, Skalholt.



Well worn stairway at Hotel Djupavik.



Oxarfoss, Þingvellir NP.

And more photos

October 26 in the United States, Douglas County

Photos from the workshop.



Rock on the shore of Reykjarfjord with Djupavik on the distant shore to right of the rock.



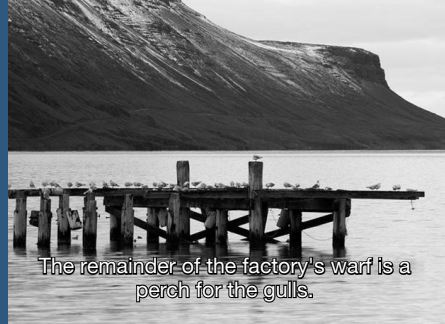
Sliver moon at sunrise, Djupavik.



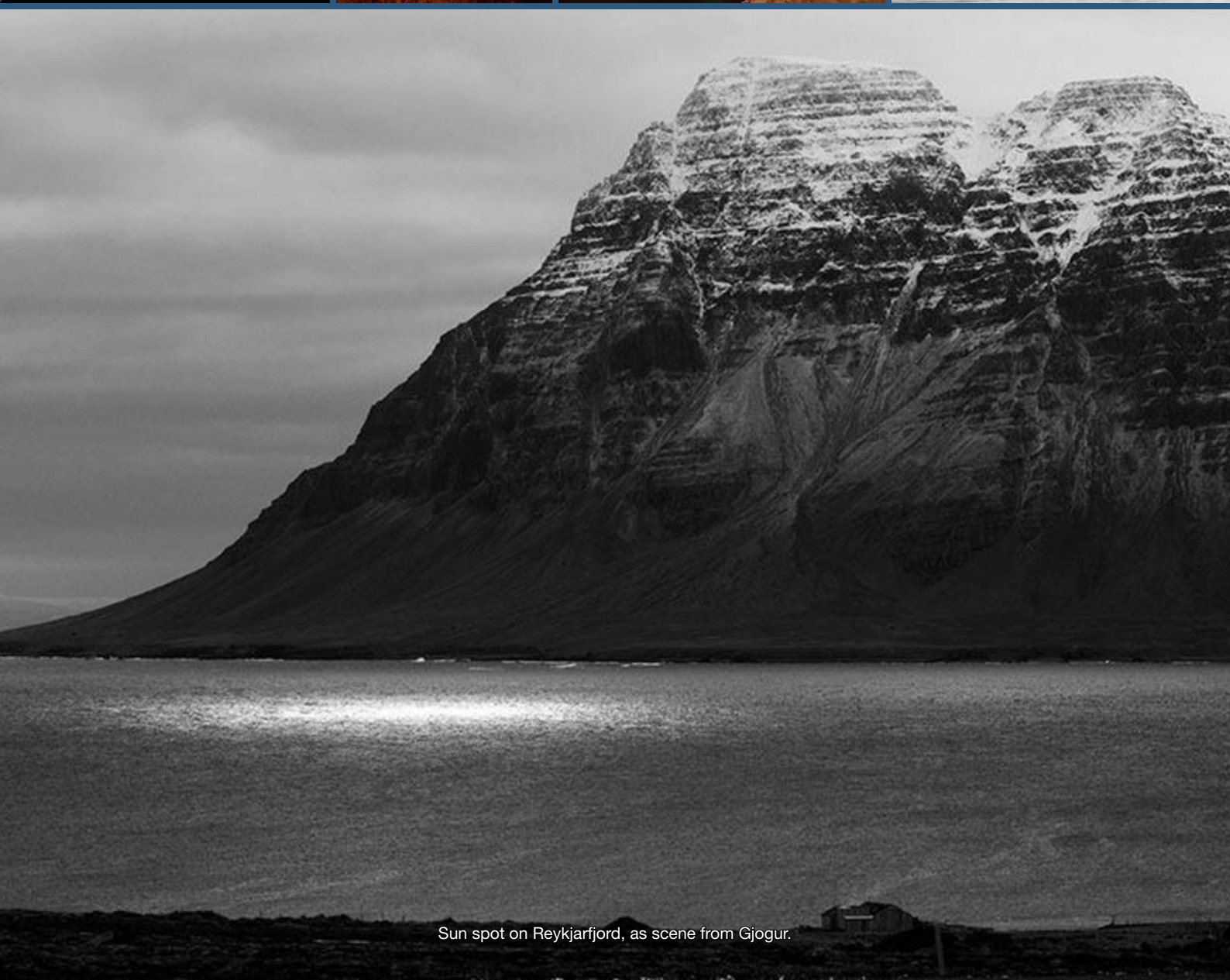
House on the hill with aurora., Djupavik.



Headlight under the aurora, Djupavik.



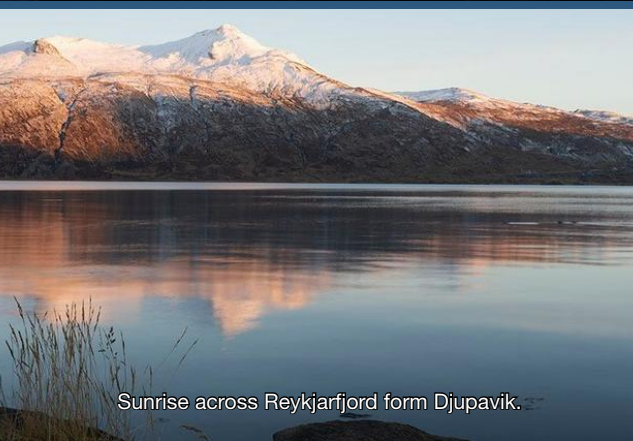
The remainder of the factory's warf is a perch for the gulls.



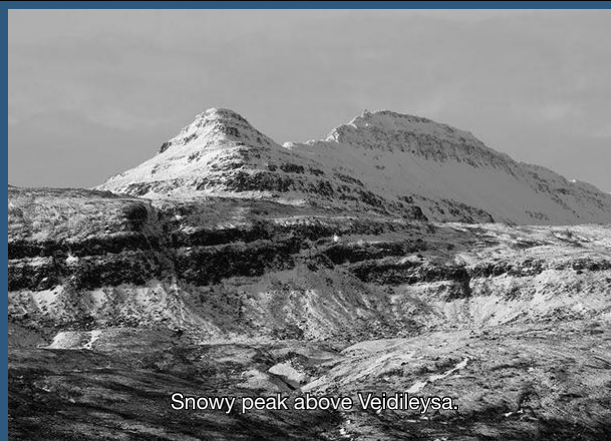
Sun spot on Reykjarfjord, as scene from Gjogur.



Sunrise on Reykjarfjord, Djupavik.



Sunrise across Reykjarfjord from Djupavik.



Snowy peak above Veidileysa.



Rocks overlooking Reykjarfjord.

Still more photos

October 26 in the United States, Douglas County

Still more.



Rollers in Djupavik Herring Factory.



Craggy Peak, Veidileysa.



Bill and his drone, Veidileysa.



Stream and snowy ridge,
Veidileysa.



Sun lit snowy peak and the road to
Djupavik, Veidileysa.



Inside one of three Herring Oil Tanks, Djupavik. A music video was recorded here by a European band



Sun lit ridge behind shadowed ridge, Veidileysa.



Cloudy sky blocks much of the aurora, Djupavik.



Aurora over the Djupavik Herring Factory.



Church on the hill, Holmavik.

And even more photos

October 26 in the United States, Douglas County

More?



Braided sand, Munadarnes.



Shoreline at the fish factory at Eyri



Rocker Arms of an old diesel motor, Eyri.



Early evening aurora, Djupavik.



Fancy trailhead sign for Djupavikuringur 5 km, Djupavik.



Not a Sierra Wave, but an Icelandic Wave over Gjogur.



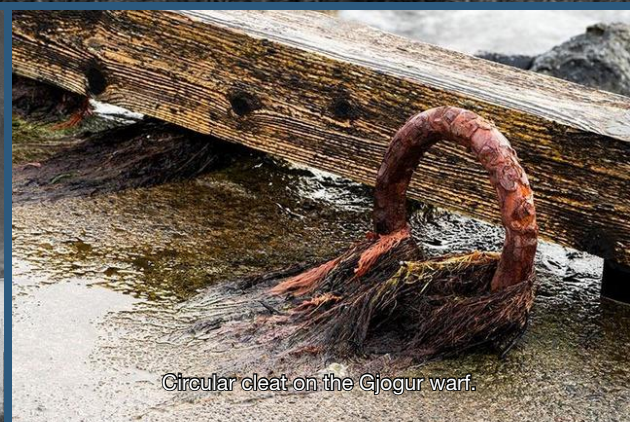
Old row boat in black & white, Gjogur.



Rope, Gjogur.



Shark Vane, Gjogur.

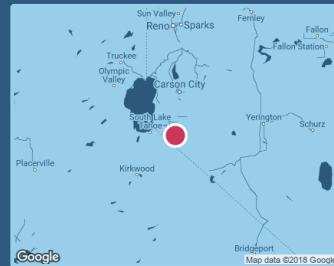


Circular cleat on the Gjogur wharf.

Finally, the last of the photos.

October 26 in the United States, Douglas County

Whee!



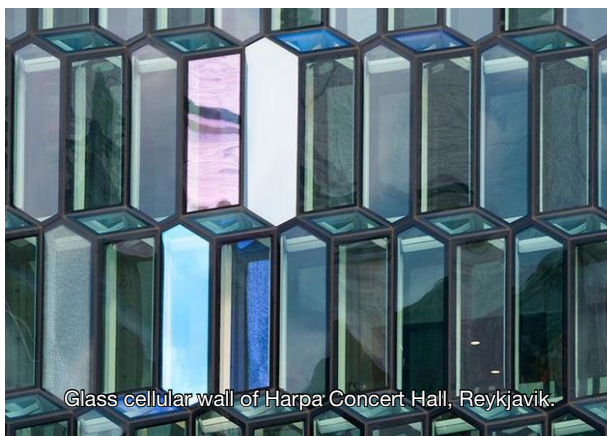
Red rock in sheep pen wall, Djupavik.



Djúpavík, Hotel(red building on right), Factory & ship(left) and Djúpavíkurfoss (falls).



Tethered Twins, Reykjavík.



Glass cellular wall of Harpa Concert Hall, Reykjavík.

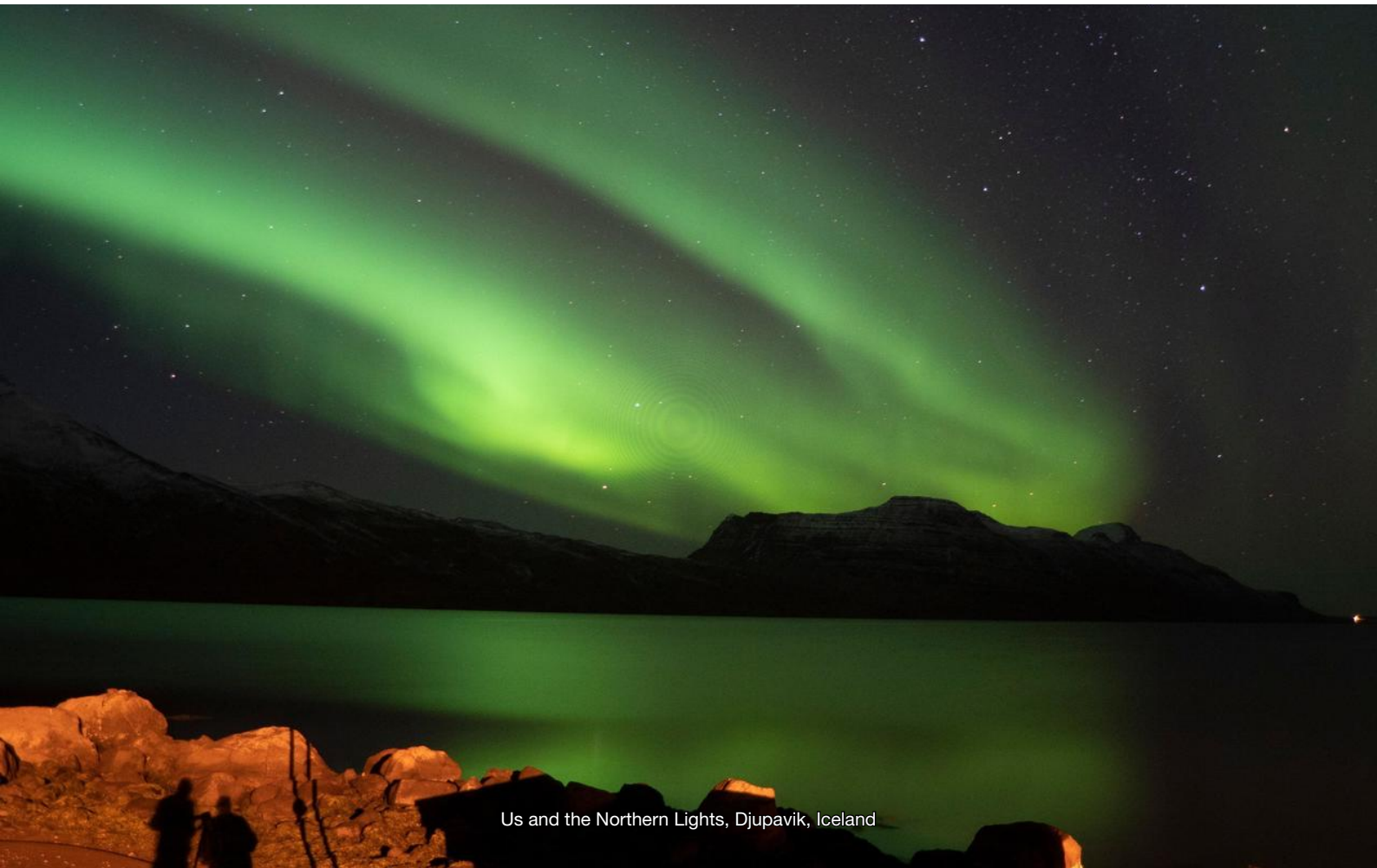


Harpa's Crown, Reykjavík.

Cover photo for travel book

November 6 in the United States, Alpine County

Cover Photo

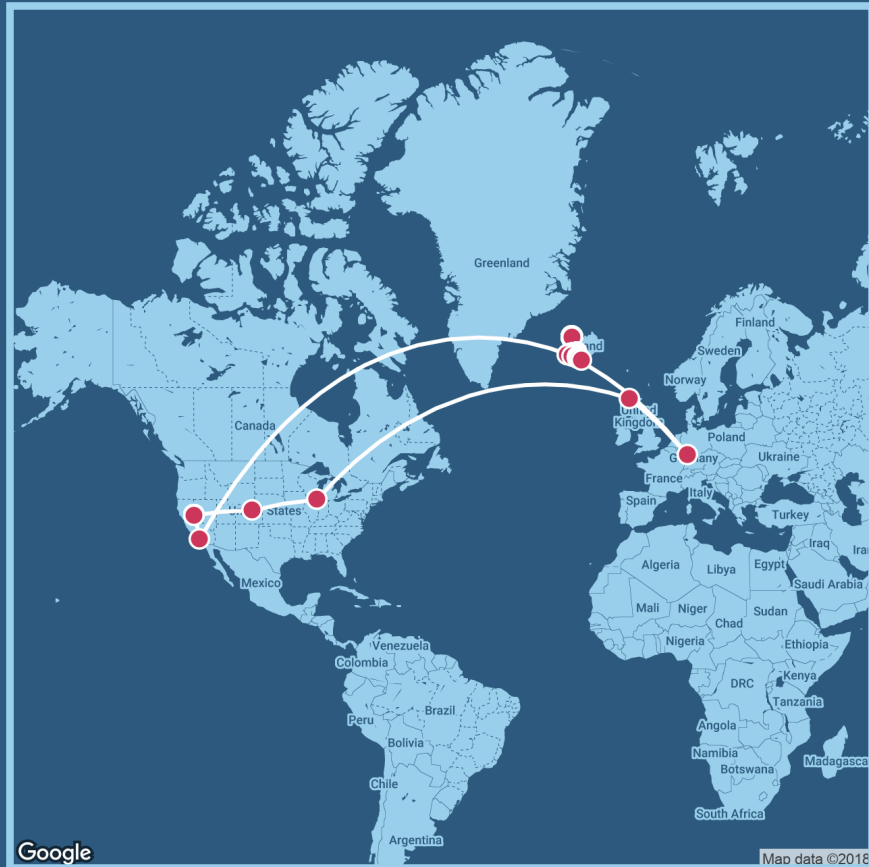


Us and the Northern Lights, Djupavik, Iceland



Seeking Northern Lights

September 27 – October 17, 2018



Your FindPenguins Travels in a book.

