
Finger Lakes Finns

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NEWSLETTER

May/Toukokuu 2006

Violet Paige: A Reminiscence

By *Harvey Paige*

(The following article is from an interview by Jeanne Pakkala Frandsen, 1/30/2003, and subsequent discussions.)

Violet Ingrid Maki was born in Hibbing, Minnesota on November 3, 1910, the oldest of what would eventually be the six children of Emil and Eva Maki. In 1913 the parents and three children left Minnesota by train for upstate New York. They arrived in Newfield Station with \$200 and no set destination. As they walked up the road towards Newfield, Eva heard Finnish being spoken. Tyyne Niemi, a young girl watching the cows in the pasture, saw the family, and her mother called “me olemme Soumalaisia.” That meal was the beginning of a long family friendship and a temporary home for the new family while Mr. Niemi helped Emil find a more permanent home and farm on Seeley Hill. They were apparently helped in this process by a “farm dealer” named Lanteri, who had advertised farms in Michigan and Minnesota, as well as New York, and may have been responsible for the initial move to New York.

The three Maki children who made that trip from Minnesota were Viena, Violet, and Vilma. Late in life, Viena married Tyyne’s brother, Joulu or John. Tyyne became Tyyne Rautio, and she kept in touch with Violet at least until 1993 when she wrote about the day that the Maki family first arrived at Newfield Station. Vilma married Reino Hill and lived in West Danby nearly all of her married life. There were then three more Maki children who were born in Newfield: Eugene, Elmer, and Bertha (Russell). Each of the siblings lived full and interesting lives, whose biographies must be written.

From Seeley Hill, the family moved to Benjamin Hill where there was more good land, with fewer slopes. When Emil agreed to pay \$6,000 for the farm in 1920, friends worried that he would not be able to pay the mortgage. But the farm did have good soil, a pear and apple orchard, and the family worked very hard. Not only was Emil able to pay the mortgage, but he bought one of the first cars in the area. The road was not paved and the engine was not powerful, so the children had to push the car up steep hills. That was not the only work, however, and Viena left school after the eighth grade to help on the farm, and Violet left after the ninth grade.

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A Road Trip Diary: My Finnish Weekend in Our Nation’s Capitol

By *Katrina Mackey*

A week before: I have the opportunity to visit my brother, Kent Washburn, in Washington DC and participate in a variety of Finnish activities on the weekend of February 24-26, 2006, but I’m a bit anxious about making the long drive by myself, particularly the high-elevation, heavy-truck-traffic, Endless Mountains part of Interstate 81 in Pennsylvania. Fortunately, thanks to excellent advice from Jim Loomis, I learn that I can avoid 81 altogether, and travel on rte. 220 through PA to rte. 15, and from there southwards into the greater Washington DC area. Great!

Friday, February 24, 2006, 2:45 pm, Ithaca, NY: Started the car, waved goodbye to my family, drove out of my driveway and tuned the radio to WSKG.

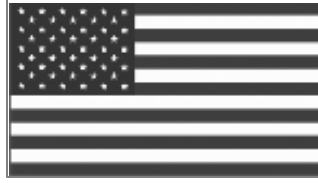
A few seconds later, Friday, February 24, 2006: NPR’s Performance Today on WSKG plays Sibelius’ “Finlandia”, masterfully performed by the Finnish Symphony, conducted by Sakari Oramo in NHK Hall in Tokyo. Finlandia is immediately followed by Sibelius’ “A Lonely Ski Trail” tone poem, orated in Swedish, to honor the in-progress 2006 Winter Olympics. I take this coincidence of musical timing to be an auspicious beginning to a long journey.

Friday, February 24, 2006, approx. 8:00 pm, Gettysburg, PA: Good weather, albeit cold, has held and I’m making good time despite the three car accidents south of Harrisburg, one of which provokes a detour onto one-lane dirt roads, where the only notification of the route is the line of taillights in front of me. I stop to report my updated ETA and get a snack.

Friday, February 24, 2006, 10:01 pm, Centreville, VA: I arrive at Kent’s place. He is out rehearsing his Finnish piano music repertoire (more on that to come), but returns home immediately when his lovely wife Mila rings him to announce my arrival. I enjoy snacking on the delicious Peruvian-style chicken and peruna (potato) she warms for me.

Friday, February 24, 2006, 11:15 pm: Before turning in for the evening, Kent says, “I’ve gotta show you a clip from this Finnish TV series that was broadcast here recently”.

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A Word from Our President

Richard Ahola

Finger Lakes Finns is now a chapter of Finlandia Foundation. I will be attending an all chapter meeting in May in Seattle.

A copy of the history of the Foundation, Black Ties And Miners' Boots, is available for members at our regular meetings. The book, written by Jon Saari, will be mailed to members living outside the immediate area, and to those on our shut-in list.

Several Finger Lakes Finns attended a Meet the Artist reception for and demonstration by Oiva Toika at the Corning Museum of Glass on April 6. Designer Toika is a well-known designer of glass birds for Iittala. His New York State bluebird will be sold for a limited time at the Corning Museum Glass Market.

I have asked Katrina Mackey to be focus person for Project Finland, a website which will expose American children to positive social values from Finland in an informative and entertaining way.

The latest, incredible Finger Lakes Finns quilt is almost complete and raffle tickets will be available for distribution and sale at our meetings and several area venues such as Spencer Picnic and Newfield celebrations. The drawing for the quilt will be on September 16 at our Fall Finn Festival to be held at the Spencer School.



Members of the Finger Lakes Finns working on the quilt at Shirley Barton's house, left to right: Lisa Koski, Barbara Twombly, Nancy Pakkala (behind Barbara), Susan Pakkala, Shirley Barton, Toini Kaartinen, Patty Huttunen, JoAnn Neal.

Quilt Tickets

As mentioned in the President's column, quilt raffle tickets will be available for distribution and sale at our meetings and several area venues. However, if you live outside of the area, and wish to purchase tickets, you may order them from Shirley Barton. If you want to purchase tickets, the price is \$1 each, 6 for \$5, and 15 for \$10. If you would like tickets to sell, Shirley will send you some, and you can send her the money when you sell them. You can contact Shirley by phone at (607) 387 9224, e-mail: sebarton@cpinternet.com, or regular mail: Shirley Barton, PO Box 184, Mecklenburg, NY 14863.

(Violet Paige, continued from Page 1)

Eugene also left school after the tenth grade, but the rest of the children finished high school, and Bertha also went to business school.

Violet often spoke of her beloved Kellogg's Corners School. She talked, but did not complain, about walking the two miles to school. When Emil was not otherwise occupied, he took them by sleigh in the winter, and at other times, Earl Payne, who had a vehicle for his milk route, would provide rides to school. Also, in the cold weather, Violet was responsible for starting the fire in the stove at school. When the teacher, Margaret Payne, was unable to get to school on time, Violet was respon-

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(Road Trip, continued from page 1)

The series in question is called "Raid" and, well, I'll quote from www.yle.fi/raid/raidinenglish.html:

The Raid series was voted the best TV-programme in Finland year 2000. Tapio Piirainen received an award for best script and best direction. The series was also honoured with a prestigious film award and the Finnish Whodunit Society's award. The music from the series sold gold and platinum.

As I understand it, the Raid TV program is based on a series of books by writer Harri Nykänen, who contributed to Piirainen's TV script, and concerns a fellow called "Raid" investigating a series of crimes. Raid-the-character might be described as a sort of a cross between Indiana Jones and the archetypal hard-boiled detective. The clip Kent shows intrigues me and immediately I count myself a member in the unofficial Washington-area Raid fan club.

Saturday, February 25, 2006 9:30 am, Resurrection Lutheran Church, Arlington, VA: Kent and I spend the first morning session of the Finnish Language School in his intermediate-level class, where Kent has been taking Finnish lessons for 1.5 years. I dust off my vocabulary and grammar skills when I introduce myself, and dig through my memory for some vocabulary words during the lesson.

Saturday, February 25, 2006, 11:00 am: Following a school-wide coffee & rye crisp break, which includes introductions and announcements, Kent insists I sit in the advanced class for the second session. There I find the students and teacher discussing a novel they've been reading. I understand most everything, though many of the vocabulary and grammar topics covered are long-lost memories to me. Nonetheless, I enjoy the time there and find myself (again) wishing for organized Finnish language classes here in the Finger Lakes Region.

Saturday, February 25, 2006 6:00 pm – 10:45 pm. Finnish Embassy, Washington, DC: Dressed in our formal-wear, scorning the winter wind, Kent, Mila and I arrive at the Finnish Embassy to attend the Finlandia Foundation National Capital Chapter's (FFNCC) Kalevala Dinner Dance. The embassy building is a gorgeous structure of glass, wood and granite, and the main hall this evening is alive with Finns, friends of Finns, and conversation in both Finnish and English. FFNCC has arranged for a generous amount of delicious food and great entertainment this evening, be-

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(Violet Paige, continued from page 2)

sible for starting the day's class. She was proud of this, and spoke warmly of Margaret who was later Margaret Van Riper, and who died at age 100.

The work was hard and the rewards few, but there were few complaints. The family was self-sufficient in food, with large gardens providing fresh produce in the warm months and canned goods or root cellar treasures in the colder weather. In addition, the cows, along with chickens and hogs, meant that there was all the milk, butter, eggs, and meat that was needed by the family.

Eva also provided the clothes for the girls, sewn from purchased cloth or some more colorful sacks in which flour or animal feed was sometimes purchased. The boys were outfitted with mail order clothes from Sears, perhaps because they rejected the colorful materials used for the dresses.

The Benjamin Hill farmhouse was quite cozy and modern for the day. Water was pumped by a windmill. The house was heated by a furnace in the basement that burned wood or coal, and the rooms were lighted by carbide lamps. They used these until the Rural Electrification Act, a Roosevelt "New Deal" program, provided electricity. Needless to say, there was also a sauna. In fact, even at the original Seeley Hill farm, the sauna was built as soon as they unpacked their trunks. The custom of Saturday night sauna, with pulla and milk or coffee after the bathing ritual, preceded and survived electrification. In the Maki home, sauna was frequently shared with friends, predating the current bumper stickers intoning, "Save water, bathe with a friend." This practice was continued in Violet's family, and surely others as well, and survived well into the 50s.

The siblings remained friends throughout their lives. Only Viena moved more than an hour's drive from the Benjamin Hill Farm. After leaving school, she worked in Ithaca during the winter, cooking for a physician's family. Then, as a result of meeting a Finnish family, Charlie and Martha Morson from Buffalo, she moved to Buffalo, and from there to Detroit where she worked for several years. All of the grandchildren of Emil and Eva remember Viena fondly for her summer visits, with stories, photos, and candy from outside the Finger Lakes area that will always be home to the extended Maki family.



(Road Trip, continued from page 3)

ginning with a cocktail hour violin serenade by local 14-year-old musician Anneli Lambeth.

Following welcoming remarks by Pentti Aro (current president of the FFNCC) and Minister Matti Anttonen (the Ambassador is unavailable this evening), we enjoy a performance by The Kalevala Singers and the Nordic Dancers of Washington, DC, performing songs and dances from Karelia. The music and song have that familiar, wistful Finnish tone. The dancers are colorfully dressed in a wide variety of traditional national costumes, adding a feeling of festivity to the occasion even after their performance is complete.

Next up: Tule syömään! (Come eat!) Dinner is an enormous seisovapöytä (buffet) of Finnish foods including salmon, pickled herring, riisi piirakka, porkkanalaatikko (carrot casserole), perunalaatikko (potato casserole) and of course plenty of Finnish juusto (cheese) and puolukka (lingonberry) preserves to accompany. An hour-and-a-half of dinner music is provided by none other than Kent on the Embassy's grand piano. (How did it come about that Kent is part of the program this evening? Following the piano music program he gave at last September's FLF meeting, he indicated an interest in playing more events like ours. I encouraged him to arrange to play some of his pieces for the students at the Finnish Language School, because "surely someone there will be connected to other Finnish events in the Washington area." Indeed he did make these arrangements, and one of the people listening was none other than Anna Barrineau, the nominated next president of the FFNCC. She quickly extended the invitation to him for the Kalevala Dinner Dance. For some reason, he's been calling me "his agent" ever since.)

Kent's selection of pieces includes many well-known traditional folk songs, as well as Lampaan Polska and his own transcription of the music from the Raid TV series.

I seem to recall that he received lasting applause after that piece . . . must be other unofficial Raid fan-club members are attending this evening.

The Entertainment continues after dinner with a wonderful performance by the Washington Revels (www.revelsdc.org), during which Kent is able to enjoy the buffet plate (now lukewarm) that we've carefully guarded for him. They perform a selection of Finnish/Nordic pieces from their 2005 Christmas Revels production, "Journey to the Northlands", including a story from the Kalevala about the birth of the world and the first man, Väinämöinen. The Guldhornene Brass accompanies beautifully, and we attendees happily accept the invitation to join in on some songs.

The evening concludes with a raffle, coffee and



Kent Washburn at the keyboard

täyttekakku (layer cake), and dancing to Maryland-based Vic Aijala's accordion music. Regretfully, no one in our group wins the round-trip tickets to Finland on Iceland Air, nor the Nokia internet tablet, nor the Finlandia cheese, j.n.e. (etc.)...but we return to Kent's place in high spirits, discussing the evening as we drive.

Sunday, February 26, 2006, approx. 8:15am, Centreville, VA: Kent heads out to warm up the organ for the morning's church service. I take the opportunity to rest and watch the Finland vs. Sweden Olympic gold-medal hockey game in its entirety. Despite their loss to the Swedes, I think the Finns play a great game, following an amazing run at these Winter Olympics. The players appear utterly exhausted during the awards ceremony and I can see in their expressions tremendous relief at finishing the game mixed with regrets of not winning.

Sunday, February 26, 2006, approx. 11:00am: The hockey game and resultant coverage is over in good time for me to get to church, where I am delighted to hear Kent play his own organ variation of "Taivas on Sininen" for the prelude.

Sunday, February 26, 2006, approx. 2:30pm: Time for goodbyes and the long drive home, but first Kent and I exchange gifts. He lends me his copies of the entire "Raid" series (12 episodes!) and the feature-length "Raid" movie, and gives me a t-shirt of his own design featuring Raid in silhouette. (Look for it at a future meeting.)

Sunday, February 26, 2006, 4:30pm, somewhere in Pennsylvania: The ancient sycamores lining the shores of the Susquehanna show an impressive array of yellow, white and gray tones in the setting late-winter sun. Traffic is almost non-existent and my Agatha Christie book-on-tape is getting exciting. I've timed this return journey well.

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Finnish Concert in Newfield

On July 8, Saturday evening at 7:30 pm, the Finger Lakes Finns are presenting a concert at the Newfield High School auditorium. Featured performers will be the Sillanpää family from Finland.



We have enjoyed their many performances here beginning in 1995 with the father, Seppo, and daughters Jemina and Selina, who were only 13 and 11 years old at the time. Other concerts on their 2006 U.S. tour are at the Finger Lakes Grassroots Music Festival in Trumansburg from July 20-23 and at Finn Fest in Astoria, Oregon at the end of July.



Photo by Aija Sillanpää

Also on the program of the Newfield concert, is our own local Finnish-American band, Toivo, featuring Richard Koski on button accordion, Jason Koski on mandolin, Jim Reidy on guitar, and Harley and Annie Campbell on upright bass and snare drum.

There will be Coffee and refreshments available after the concert. For more information phone 387-4854.



(Road Trip, continued from page 4)

Sunday, February 26, 2006, 9:00pm, Ithaca, NY: I'm grateful for an entirely uneventful return trip, filled with clear skies, and cold air. Once inside my home, I discover that my beloved husband and daughter managed famously while I was away. I give my weekend road trip a "täysi kymppi" (a Perfect 10).

See the calendar in this issue, page 6, for the schedule of Kent's upcoming organ concert of Finnish music and hymns at the Spencer Lutheran church.

A Tribute to Mother's and Father's Day By Shirley Barton

Building a house this past eighteen months has been fraught with interminable decisions. Am I choosing the best windows, floors, doorknobs, paint; as if one wrong decision would cause the house to fall to rubble. My mind often drifted to the decisions our ancestors made. But decisions about house building pale in comparison to the decision to leave the home country and travel to a foreign country where people speak an unknown language. Was life in Finland so ghastly that the fear of the unknown was the lesser of two evils? Recently I heard a song which spoke to this question.

*Up the rocky roads of trouble,
down the twisted paths of pain,
sometimes it is a struggle.
Sometimes we come up lame.
But with children on our shoulders,
we face another day,
and through their shining eyes of innocence
I can feel the children say:
"Oh, Father, don't you weep.
Oh, Father, don't you weep no more.
The sun is going to shine on a golden shore.
Oh, Father, don't you weep.
"Oh, Mother, don't you weep.
Oh, Mother, don't you weep no more.
The sun is going to shine on a golden shore.
Oh, Mother, don't you weep.*

-Bill Staines

So, whether our forebear Mothers and Fathers stayed in Finland, or emigrated, how they struggled or came up lame, their actions were for each and every one of us - their children. So, here's to our Mothers and Fathers!

Calendar of Coming Events

May 20: Saturday, 4pm, Organ Concert by Kent Washburn, at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Spencer.

May 21: Sunday, 1pm, FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program, Newfield Fire Hall.

May 30: Tuesday, 6:30–9:30pm, Toivo plays Finnish and Tex-Mex music at the Pourhouse, Trumansburg.

June 24: Saturday, 5pm, Juhannus celebration at Hut-tunen's Southview Farm, 630 South Danby Road, Spencer. Bring a dish to pass and a chair. There will be Kokko, hayrides, and entertainment in the evening. Phone 589 6620 for information.

July 8: Saturday, 7:30 pm, Concert by the Sillanpää family and Toivo – Newfield High School Auditorium. Refreshments to follow in the cafeteria. Phone 387 4854 for information.

July 16: Sunday, 8:30–11pm, Concert by the Sillanpää family on live radio program Bound for Glory on WVBR fm 93.5. Attend the show at Anabel Taylor Hall on the Cornell Campus. Free admission.

June and July: No regular FLF meetings. Summer vacation.

August 20: Sunday, 1pm - FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program.

Mission and Membership

Membership in Finger Lakes Finns is open to anyone of Finnish origin or with an interest in Finnish culture. Dues are \$5 per person per calendar year. Payment may be made at any time during the year, but only covers membership for the remainder of that calendar year.

Help us provide information and activities for Finns and Finn friends to enjoy. Although you do not need to be a member to attend our meetings and activities, your dues entitle you to continue receiving this newsletter and to vote on all FLF business at our meetings.

Please mail your check or money order, payable to Finger Lakes Finns, to: Jeanne Frandsen, 502 Donald's Dr., Ithaca, NY 14850. You may wish to use the form on page three. Thank you for your support.

The Finger Lakes Finns web site, may be found at www.FingerLakesFinns.org

The Newsletter is produced four times each year. We welcome contributions sent to: FLF Newsletter, c/o Jim Loomis, 19 Upper Clark Ave., Van Etten, NY 14889 or Email loomis@htva.net

The Editorial committee is Jim Loomis, Richard Koski, and Richard Ahola.

Finger Lakes Finns Newsletter
c/o Jim Loomis, Editor
19 Upper Clark Avenue
Van Etten, NY 14889