

# Finger Lakes Finns

Volume 11, Number 1

NEWSLETTER

February / helmikuu 2007

## Collecting Finnish Design By Tuomi Forrest

The phrase “*Sauna, Sisä, Sibelius*” is often used to sum up the essence of Finnish culture and identity. To those three s-words, I might venture to add some others -- such as “Saarinen”, “Sarpaneva” or “Salmenhaara.” Though perhaps not as well known as Johan Sibelius, Eliel Saarinen, Timo Sarpaneva and Kylikki Salmenhaara all represent Finland’s incredible legacy of 20th century architecture, design and craft – one of the country’s greatest gifts to the world.



A wood plaque with leaf design  
by Tapio Wirkkala

Many people that have an opportunity to travel to Finland realize the design heritage, and often come back laden with souvenirs from the Iittala or Arabia glass and porcelain factories, such as Alvar Aalto’s famous Savoy vase whose contours mimic the curving shore lines of the Finnish lakes.

That was how it was for me. Growing up in the Ithaca area, I was not aware of the design legacy of the Finns, though certainly had the opportunity to enjoy the sauna at my dad’s Finnish cousins’ (who live near Candor). It wasn’t until later, studying architecture and design, that I grew interested in this aspect of Finnish culture. Visiting relatives in Finland a couple years ago, it was thrilling to see up close much of the design and architecture, and the land that helped inspire it.

Now I am fully immersed, having begun a collection of some of the best ceramic, glass, metal, and

wood pieces produced from the 1930s through the 1970s. I am especially interested in ceramicists such as **Toni Muona, Rut Bryk, Birger Kaipianen, and Salmenhaara,** as well as the glass artists **Tapio Wirkkala** (Finland’s most famous mid-century designer), **Sarpaneva, and Oiva Toikka.** These artists all have their own unique styles, though several are innovators of organic modernism, drawing inspiration for their designs from nature.

My hope is to continue to build the collection, and eventually to create a body that would be museum-worthy. Although design is increasingly popular in many US art museums, Finnish design is still hard to see in the US. Of course, much of the fun is to learn more about this history and share it. To that end, I would be interested in hearing from others who might have old pieces tucked away, or from those who are also collectors. [The author may be contacted by postal mail at [1004 South 45th St. Philadelphia, PA 19104](mailto:1004_South_45th_St_Philadelphia_PA_19104), or by e-mail at [tuomiforrest@hotmail.com](mailto:tuomiforrest@hotmail.com)]



A Charger  
by Birger Kaipianen



A bottle/vase  
by Kylikki  
Salmenhaara



Glass sculpture  
by Oiva Toikka

## 2006 Donations to the Finger Lakes Finns

Scholarship Fund: Brenda Koskinen, FLF Fall Festival. In memory of Violet Malen Behrens (1912-2006), mother of Judith B. Maxwell: Charles Ivey, Richard and Corrine Larson, Carol VandeBerg, Dr. Lisa VandeBerg, Anonymous, Judith B. Maxwell, Richard and Lisa Koski, Barbara Twombly, Kristine Miller.

General Fund: none

Poetry Corner  
**The One Room School**

Plain wooden, windowed building  
Slateboards, real chalk  
Work time, no talk.  
Penmanship practice, "Slant to the right,  
Now write *Aviators Fly Like Birds.*"  
Hearing all the lessons  
As each grade, up front passed,  
Large or small.  
Spelling bees, mythology, Mark Twain,  
Shared by all.

One large stove kept us warm  
One busy school "marm".  
The recess bell! Kick the can,  
Hide and seek! Fox and geese.  
On we go!  
Impoverished? No!  
We were the fortunate few  
Reminded of the Golden Rule  
Encompassed by  
The unique one room school!

*Lisa daCunha-Koski*



From Grand Duchy to a Modern State  
*A book review by Jim Loomis*

**From Grand Duchy to a Modern State, a political history of Finland since 1809** is a scholarly work by three authors, Osmo Jussila, Seppo Hentilä, and Jukka Nevakivi (Werner Söderström, Helsinki, 1995). It was translated to English by David and Eva-Kaisa Arter (Hurst & Co., London, 1999, ISBN: 0-8093-9112-0).

Rather than literally collaborating on the entire book, each author is credited for three respective parts: Osmo Jussila for Part I, "Finland as a Grand Duchy, 1809-1917"; Seppo Hentilä for Part II, "From Independence to the End of the Continuation War, 1917-1944"; and, Jukka Nevakivi, for "From the Continuation War to the Present, 1944-1999".

Despite the complexity of this period in Finnish history and the scholarly style, this book should be on the 'must read' list for Finnish-Americans and anyone else who would like to make sense of the developing years of the modern Finnish nation.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has helped bring some of the history into the open. During the Soviet years, Finland was cautious not to needlessly offend the Russians, but to the great credit of historians in Finland, they did not rewrite history, but merely kept quiet about some of it. We learn, for example, the clear distinction between the Finnish Red Party and the Russian Bolsheviks. We also learn that while the White Party won the conflict, many of the Social Democrat ideas championed by the Red Party ended up guiding the formation of the new nation.

To get the most from this book requires some basic knowledge of government and geography, particularly of Finland and its neighbors. This reader wished for more maps and illustrations. The small book, **Find Out About Finland** (Otava, Helsinki, 2001) is a handy companion, and partial solution to this problem, widely available from among our membership.

**From Grand Duchy to a Modern State** is just one of the excellent books in our **Finger Lakes Finns Lending Library**, and available at every meeting. If you haven't looked over the selection, please take a moment to do so. Some selections are only in Finnish language, but many are in English and some other languages.

## A Word from Our President

*Richard Ahola*



In a letter dated December 30, 2006, the Internal Revenue Service notified me that the Finger Lakes Finns are exempt from federal tax under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to the organization are deductible under Section 170 of the Code. Finger Lakes Finns, as an organization, is also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devices, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code.

Organizations exempt under Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either a public charity (preferred tax status) or a private foundation. Under an advanced ruling ending December 31, 2010, the IRS is treating us as a public charity. A final determination will be made at that time after filing the appropriate paperwork.

Since we distribute funds to individuals i.e. scholarships, we will need to keep case histories. Details will be distributed to committee chairs, trustees and officers. Also I will transmit information on filing requirements to our treasurer.

I have invited John Laine, President of Finlandia Foundation, to join us at our Juhannus celebration on June 23, 2007. He is planning to attend.

The November 29, 2006 issue of Education Week contained an article highlighting Principal Maarit Rossi's eighth graders who ranked first in Finland and the world on the 2005 International Student Assessment Math Test. Ms. Rossi is on sabbatical studying in the United States. Maybe American educators need to go to Finland to improve our math scores. Maarit does point out that our math textbooks are much thicker and more cluttered than the ones her students use. She says that it is "impossible when you have eleven hundred pages of math that you get the message."

The 25th Finn Fest will be held on the Lake Erie campus of Kent State University on July 26-28, 2007 in Ashtabula County, Ohio. Music and presentations, as well as a perch fry, will be highlights of the festivities on the shore of Lake Erie. Make plans to attend this festival of art, music, and our Finnish roots. Ashtabula is a short drive or ride from the Finger Lakes.



### **Finger Lakes Finns Officers**

**President:** Richard Ahola

**Vice President:** Lisa Koski

**Treasurer:** Barbara Twombly

**Secretary:** Shirley Barton

### **Membership and Change of Address Coupon**

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E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

To join/renew Finger Lakes Finns membership, please send \$5 per person, payable to **Finger Lakes Finns**, c/o the Membership Chair:

**Jeanne Frandsen**

**502 Donalds Dr.**

**Ithaca, NY 14850**

Please send address changes to the same address.

**Please remember to renew your membership in Finger Lakes Finns for 2007. This will insure that you receive all four of the newsletters.**

## *FINGER LAKES FINNS*

**2007 TOUR**

**CANCELLED**

**June 26 – July 6**

**New York to Helsinki, Finland**

**\$2,975 (based on double occupancy)**

(plus applicable airport taxes)

(Deposit due February 15, 2007)

For more information contact: Jean Lindblad

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Visit our website for updates:  
[www.fingerlakesfinns.org](http://www.fingerlakesfinns.org).

## Calendar of Coming Events

**February 18** – Sunday, 1 p.m. - FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program (Annual Quiz Show), Newfield Fire Hall.

**March 18** – Sunday, 1 p.m. - FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program (TBA), Newfield Fire Hall.

**March 25** – Sunday, 4-6 p.m. - The Toivo band plays Finnish, American, French, Irish, and Mexican music at the Americana Winery, 4367 East Covert Road, Interlaken, NY. Admission is free. More at [www.americanavineyards.com](http://www.americanavineyards.com).

**April 15** – Deadline for submission of articles, poems, photos, and notices for the May 2007 issue of the FLF newsletter. Send to Jim Loomis, editor, at Upper Clark Ave., Van Etten, NY 14889 or email: [loomis@htva.net](mailto:loomis@htva.net).

**April 15** – Sunday, 1 p.m. - FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program (TBA), Newfield Fire Hall.

## 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.

For membership or donations, please use the form in this issue or at [www.FingerLakesFinns.org](http://www.FingerLakesFinns.org). Mail your check or money order, payable to Finger Lakes Finns, c/o **Jeanne Frandsen, 502 Donald's Drive, Ithaca NY 14850**, or you may use a credit card at our web site. Thank you for your support.

The Newsletter is produced four times each year. We welcome members to contribute content sent to: FLF Newsletter, c/o Jim Loomis, 19 Upper Clark Ave., Van Etten, NY 14889 or Email [loomis@htva.net](mailto:loomis@htva.net)

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

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c/o Jim Loomis, Editor  
19 Upper Clark Avenue  
Van Etten, NY 14889