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# Finger Lakes Finns

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Volume 12, Number 1

NEWSLETTER

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## A Car Story

by Bill DeLong ©11/2007

My father, Kenneth DeLong, who is married to Salme Lehtonen DeLong, told this story to me. This story is about my grandfather, Albin Lehtonen, of South Hill Road, Spencer, New York. This story was told to me about 1970.

My father was self-employed as body man / painter and owned Grand Central Body Shop in Horseheads, New York, in 1952. We lived in Elmira at the time.

My father did used car repair work for Bill & Bernie Howland, (Howland Auto Sales). My grandfather requested that my father attempt to find him a good used Chevrolet, as he owned a 30's Chevrolet and wanted to upgrade. My father told Bill and Bernie to find a good used car and take it to my grandfather in Spencer.

About 1 month after my father's request, Bill and Bernie took a car, by tow bar, to my grandfather. Bill and Bernie visited my father at his shop the next day and said that my grandfather wasn't interested in a car. They said he came out and looked at the car for 5 minutes, and went inside the house. Bill and Bernie returned to Horseheads with the car. My father visited the Howlands car lot the next day, and asked to see the car. It was a 1950 Chevrolet 2 door, and my father said it looked a little rough. He told the Howlands to take my grandfather a GOOD car.

About 2 weeks later, the Howlands phoned my father and said that they were taking a Chevrolet to Spencer, but this was the last time they would do this. They arrived at my grandfather's farm about noon. My grandfather came outside and an immediate smile came on his face. There sat a 1951 Chevrolet 4 door, Iceberg Green Metallic, with fender skirts and pinstriped upholstery, with less than 10,000 miles. My grandfather asked the Howlands if he could drive the car, and they agreed. So he invited them inside for coffee and pulla while he test-drove the car.

A note: While drinking coffee, Bernie observed my grandmother pull out the flour drawer. He saw what looked like black specks in the flour and said to my grandmother, that she had mice. She explained to him that it was cardamon seed.

My grandfather first went to the Koski's. They took a ride to Spencer and had coffee. Then he went to the Laitinen's. They took a ride and had coffee. Then he went

to the Niskanen's. They had coffee and took a ride through Halsey Valley. Then he showed the car to the Ashlunds. The time now was about 5:00 PM. The Howlands, who were coffee'd out said between them, "He couldn't have stolen the car because he lives here." As soon as they had that thought, my grandfather drove up with the 1951 Chevrolet.

Bill and Bernie asked him if he liked the car. My grandfather asked them how much the car cost? They told him (I do not remember the price), but they said if he could come up with a deposit, or if he could arrange financing, they would come back after he got a loan. He said, "That won't be necessary", in broken English. About 5 minutes later, he came back into the kitchen and counted out cash money and laid it on the table, and demanded the ownership papers for the car.

The Howlands visited my father at his shop the next day. They said that they had never sold a car in that manner, ever, in their lives.

My grandfather was proud of that 1951 Chevrolet. My grandparents went to the store, usually on Sundays, and as a young boy, I remember how proud he looked when driving that car. That was his last car, as he passed away in 1957. As a matter of fact, when he had his fatal attack, he was attempting to back the car out of the garage, in 1957.

About 1975, my father and I visited Bill Howland, who was then in another job, and I can remember him retelling this story and still shaking his head. He never sold a car to anyone like he sold that Chevrolet to my grandfather.

This is an example of how Finnish people did business in those days, and how they viewed any product that they would consider to purchase.



## Molotov Cocktail: The Winter War, Finland's Pearl Harbor.

A novel by John O. Virtanen

*Reviewed by Jim Loomis*

Although the author, also known as the Finnish Audie Murphy, wrote *Molotov Cocktail* as a novel, it is largely based on his first hand experience, and reads like a first person account of the Karelian front during the Finnish Winter War of 1939-1940. This was John O. Virtanen's first attempt at writing in English and he pulls it off very well.

Virtanen sets the stage with references to his main character and narrator, Otto Arola's memories of the Finnish Civil War and the atrocities of the White Guard. Arola is depicted as a poor farm boy whose father was brutally killed for supposed Red Guard sympathies. His large family becomes even more destitute and leaves the countryside to escape starvation. Despite his lack of formal education and limited skills, Arola learns to work hard and make the most of his situation. He does not want to join the army, associating it with the White Guard, and Virtanen has him profess more allegiance to God than country.

Although Arola, "Had no intentions of being a soldier," he finds himself drafted and in training before the start of the war. Arola's life in Helsinki, his study as a professional violinist, his work at the Akrenius Electric Motor Factory, and his romantic intentions are all interrupted by the army.

With only brief respite, Arola serves on the front from the first shots until he is taken from the field with severe wounds during the last days of the war. Throughout the story, other characters are added to represent all sorts of individuals Virtanen knew, or knew of, during that time. Even the conditions that afflict the civilians and animals in the area are recounted.

The ordinary soldiers on the front lines, according to Virtanen's account, really had little idea of what was going on elsewhere. Information was sketchy at best and slow in coming. They did know that they were facing a highly mechanized force of vast numbers. They also knew that they were well trained to fight in the harsh conditions. They were stubborn and tenacious in battle.

Since the Finnish army could not hope to win directly, they fought as winter guerillas, wearing white camouflage, moving quickly in small groups, through the forest, away from roads and settlements. Standard issue hand grenades were fortified with additional explosive charges to make satchel bombs that could disable a tank.

At some point, up and down the line, the Finns discovered that the grease on the tanks would ignite from lighted kerosene poured over them. That discovery

quickly led to putting kerosene, or other liquid fuel, in a glass bottle with a wick. The lighted wick would ignite the fuel when the bottle broke, spilling it over a tank. That would further ignite the grease, fuel, and ammunition of the tank, killing the occupants and disabling the tank. Vyacheslav Molotov was the recalcitrant Soviet politician and diplomat under Stalin, negotiating with the Finns, and this bottle bomb came to be called a cocktail for Molotov or a "Molotov Cocktail".

This book is truly an historical account and I recommend it for insight to those times and as a satisfying story.

(Molotov Cocktail: The Winter War, Finland's Pearl Harbor. ISBN 915002-12-4, Continental, Portland, Oregon: 1979.)

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## Hameenlinna Finns in Owego

*The Finger Lakes Finns recently received the following email:*

I am working on a project at Lockheed Martin in Owego and we are teamed with a company in Hameenlinna, Finland. The team is in Owego on a fairly regular basis and will stay in the area for an extended period of time later this year. I am interested in finding a place where they might be able to use a sauna because this is one thing that they miss when they are here on business. Information on any other activities that might make them feel more at home would also be welcome.

Thanks for your help.

Linda Stay

Lockheed Martin Systems Integration, Owego, NY

Phone: 607-751-5640

Mobile: 607-437-4403

Fax: 607-751-6171

Email: Linda.stay@lmco.com



Donations to the Finger Lakes Finns

**Scholarship Fund:** Doris Corbin, Brenda Koskinen, Jim Loomis, Anonymous, and Judith Maxwell in memory of her mother, Violet Behrens.

**General Fund:** Cherie Wendelken, FLF concert, and Ruth Lampila Gourlay in memory of her parents, Matt and Aili Lampila.

If you would like to make a monetary donation to the Finger Lakes Finns, please indicate whether you want it to go to the scholarship fund or the general fund. If you want the donation to be made in memory of someone, please indicate who it should be in memory of and to which fund it should go.

We would like to acknowledge your gift in our next newsletter. We will not print the dollar amounts of the gifts. *If you wish your donation to be anonymous, let us know and we will not print your name.*

Make checks out to Finger Lakes Finns, and send to our Treasurer, Barbara Twombly, PO Box 435, Spencer, NY 14883.

*Thank you.*

*As a non-profit organization, your contribution to the Finger Lakes Finns is deductible to the full extent of the tax law.*



### A Word from Our President

*Lisa dC-Koski*



Warm greetings to all in cold times! I regret that we were unable to hold our Christmas party in December due to extremely stormy weather. We made up for it in January by having a very enjoyable Christmas lunch of baked ham and a variety of good dishes followed by delicious desserts and coffee.

Decorations included two Christmas trees and colorful figurines on the tables. A gift exchange took place for those interested in participating.

Four talented musicians from our group performed for our enjoyment. We had Katrina Mackey on fiddle accompanied by Jeanne Frandsen on piano, Thomas Connor on fiddle, and Richard Koski on accordion.

The Christmas poinsettias of December were delivered on time to all of our 20 shut-ins with the cooperation of several of our members.

Looking forward to seeing you in February. Keep warm.



### Finger Lakes Finns Officers

**President:** Lisa Koski

**Vice President:** Virpi Loomis

**Treasurer:** Barbara Twombly

**Secretary:** Jeanne Frandsen

### Membership and Change of Address Coupon

Join \_\_\_ Change \_\_\_ Renew \_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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.

## Calendar of Coming Events

### **February 17, Sunday, 1 p.m., Newfield Fire Hall.**

FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program: Two FLF members will talk about their experiences at Salolampi, the Finnish Language Village in Minnesota. The DVD on the Haapala Brothers, postponed from a prior meeting, will be shown.

### **March 16, Sunday 1 p.m., Newfield Fire Hall.**

FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program: Laurie Hart, traditional fiddler from Ithaca, teams up with Steffan Ohlström from Sweden to bring us a program of dance tunes [site: <http://web.mac.com/lauriehart/Ohlstrom-Hart>].

**April 15, Tuesday, newsletter deadline** for submission of articles, poems, photos, and notices for the May 2008 issue. Send to Jim Loomis, editor, 19 Upper Clark Ave., Van Etten, NY 14889 or email [loomis@htva.net](mailto:loomis@htva.net).

### **April 20, Sunday, 1 p.m., Newfield Fire Hall.**

FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program: The ever popular Quiz Show returns.



## 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 please use the form in this issue or at **[www.FingerLakesFinns.org](http://www.FingerLakesFinns.org)**. Mail the form with 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.

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 [Email [loomis@htva.net](mailto:loomis@htva.net)]. The Editorial committee is Jim Loomis, Richard Koski, and Lisa Koski. **Submissions for the newsletter are due on the 15th of the month before publication.**

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