
Finger Lakes Finns

Volume 14, Number 1

NEWSLETTER

February / Helmikuu 2010

Reminiscences from WWII

By Wayne Wirtanen

While researching Sulo Anderson's family history I ran across some very interesting stories. Sulo's brother Einar fought in the Spanish Civil War back in the 30's as a member of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade [ALB – Ed.]. He was wounded and imprisoned for a while in a POW [prisoner of war] camp.

The story is that he met Hemingway there (Hemingway was an ambulance driver if you remember), but a photo of them was lost in family moves.

I found Einar's name on an official ALB roster and I have his after the war re-entry papers. He apparently never fully recovered mentally and physically from wartime problems.

According to the ALB history, the 450 American volunteers were all or nearly all members or affiliated with the Communist Party (You knew of course, that the long-time head of the American Communist Party, Gus Hall was a Finn.). During the Great depression lots of Americans saw the Communist system in a positive light.

I read somewhere that when the Russians bought the entire Detroit Ford Model A assembly line, parts, tools and all, more than a few Finn auto workers willingly went along, emigrating to Russia to run the factory.* I also read that after a few years they became disenchanted with Russian life, but were unable to leave Russia with their families, and their children had been born in Russia. I never heard how, if any resolution was accomplished for the Finn workers.

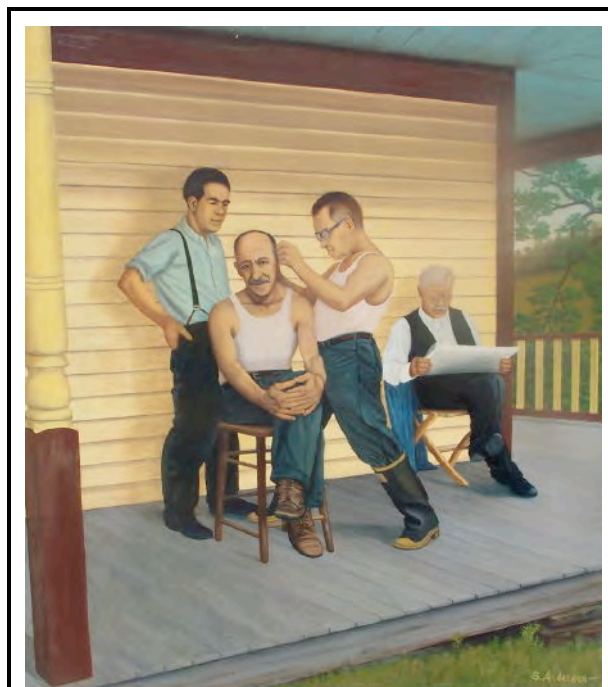
* Ford sold the complete factory in the 1930s when it saw the Model A as obsolete in the US and brought out the new V-8 models ("Bonny and Clyde cars") My Halsey Valley friend Dick Huopana's aunt had a 1934 Ford V-8 sedan that we used often for high school days excursions to Spencer and beyond.

A few years ago I visited an outdoor Russian war museum with quite a few (probably Russian made in the 30s and 40s) Model A trucks modified for wartime use.

There were no Ford emblems on the trucks, only Russian insignia. The young Russian guide proudly claimed that, yes, these were Russian trucks. At the same site I also saw Russian badged, heavier, obviously American-made Dodge and GMC trucks - probably from Lend-Lease shipments. The guide claimed that these were also "Russian-made" trucks.

I have significant information regarding the massive amounts of (no cost) Lend-Lease materials and food that were sent to Russia during the war. The Russians took great pains to hide the fact that so much material was supplied by the USA.

A few years ago in one of my several trips to Russia, I met a woman who had been an interpreter for Stalin during those years - she moved in high-level circles those days. When I supplied her with statistics regarding the massive Lend-Lease shipments, she was very surprised. She was unaware of these facts as are most of today's Russian citizens.



This is a photo of one of Sulo's paintings. Sulo is cutting Einar's hair on the porch of the Halsey Valley Oak Hill Road farmhouse.

Raumars Artist Residency Program

What do beautiful old wooden buildings, a unique dialect, powerful icebreakers, hand-woven lace, immigrants, and art have in common? The Raumars Artist Residency Program in Rauma, Finland! This is where two of our own members, Ron Saunders and Mackenzie Bristow, will be going from April until June 2010. The artist residency is a competitive program (only one in nine are accepted) and requires artists to create a social element in their art making, meaning that they must involve the community of Rauma in some way.

Their ties to Finland go way back. When Mackenzie was sixteen she lived in Finland as an exchange student with three host families and attended Kallion Lukio, an arts high school. Her experience was so positive she still keeps up with her Finnish and can't wait to get back.

Now, with her husband Ron, a Finland first-timer, they will create new memories in Rauma while focusing on the topics of myth and identity and their relationship to nostalgia. They are interested in what stories people remember, the old dialect and its origins, what objects people consider important, and where and how they display these mementos in their homes. To collaborate with the community they will work with Rauma dialect speakers, school aged children, and recent immigrants to Finland. They will use interviews, photography, and possibly film to inspire a new set of drawings, collages, photographs, and new cross-cultural and cross-generational experiences.

Their trip to Finland has already gotten a lot of help. Through the residency they were given a place to live and a small stipend for art materials. However, one thing that is not funded is the book they want to make while there. The book will include images of the art they create and document their activities in Rauma. They also plan to include an audio CD of selected interviews taken in the Rauma Dialect, standard Finnish and English.

In order to produce the book they are using a fundraising platform called Kickstarter, which allows artists to gather funds before a project is completed. Their goal is to reach \$3,500 to cover costs of printing and shipping. If they are unable to raise these funds, the book will not be printed. They hope the book will be an interesting addition to any Finland lover's library.

There are three ways you can help:

1. Go to www.ronlsaunders.com and click the Kickstarter link
2. Purchase an existing art work from www.ronlsaunders.com
3. Tell your friends about our project.

Upon their return they plan on presenting their project to the Finger Lake Finns. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact them at:

ronnielsaunders@yahoo.com

Ron Saunders and Mackenzie Bristow are both members of the Finger Lake Finns. Ron has his MFA and has shown in New York, Los Angeles and Seoul, South Korea. Mackenzie has her Masters in Applied Linguistics and also is heavily involved in the arts. Collaboratively they have created numerous art projects together and hope to continue far into the future.



Cup by Ron Saunders

Finn Funn Weekend 2010

Come experience the charm of a small New England community. Finn Funn Weekend 2010, will be hosted by Troy Historical Society. Finnish roots run deep here in town. Nisu (pulla) is enjoyed at many coffee tables and viili is not unknown. Make southwestern New Hampshire your destination for the weekend of October 29-31, 2010.

The committee is working on making this a truly wonderful experience for young, young at heart and those with many memories. Come enjoy the activities you have come to expect with a Finn Funn Weekend. We will have dances, a tori, movies, optional tour and lectures. The most climbed mountain in the world, Mount Monadnock, is in our backyard and can be seen from most anywhere in town. This year's venue will also allow you to enjoy and remember being on the farm. Bring your children or grandchildren and experience making fresh butter after the cows have been milked and the eggs have been gathered. Registration for the weekend activities and optional tour is not yet available.

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The family resort, The Inn at East Hill Farm (www.east-hill-farm.com), in Troy will be providing housing. The Inn can accommodate 140 people a night. It has a total of 56 accommodations all with private bathrooms. Each unit has its own distinct style and charm. Some units are newer than others being built within the last 10 years. There are rooms for those who enjoy the warmth and feel of an old cozy farmhouse as the Inn itself was built back in 1834.

We have rooms appropriate for couples and families either large or small, from basic to deluxe. Some rooms may contain extra amenities such as refrigerators, air conditioning, hair dryers, ceiling fans, televisions or fireplaces. Only a few of our accommodations allow dogs. All rooms do not have phones and are non-smoking. The Inn does not have a liquor license, please plan on BYOB. To make room reservations only, please contact the Inn at 1-800-242-6495 or send e-mail to info@east-hill-farm.com.

If you have any questions and/or want to be added to our e-mail updates, do let us know.

Martha Silander - mks_nh@hotmail.com
29 Fitzwilliam Rd, Troy NH 03465.
Phone: (603-242-6402)

Those Dangerous Accordions By Richard Koski

When I went to Finland in 1983, I brought my accordion with me, as I was to perform at the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival. I was traveling through Denmark on the train enjoying the views of the Danish countryside rolling by, when a uniformed customs officer came and asked to see my passport. Everything was in order, but then he asked what was in the black case. When I replied that it was an accordion, he told me to take it out. He picked it up and held it every which way, looking at it very closely. I didn't know what was going through his mind, but he must have thought there was something very dangerous or illegal about this sinister device. When he told me to take it apart, I told him I would need a pair of pliers to pull the bellows pins out. What did he pull out of his pocket but a pair of pliers, and then he watched me take the accordion all apart. After inspecting all the parts, he finally decided that everything was ok, and he moved on, leaving me with all the parts to put back together.

Here's another accordions and customs story that I got from someone named Matthew who wrote it on an accordion internet group that I belong to.

I had this experience in the Helsinki Airport some years ago. Two uniformed and armed customs officers politely pulled me out of the line and asked me to open

my accordion case to show them what was inside. They asked me what it was, as they said they had never seen that kind of accordion before. "Please open and close to make some sounds" they said, presumably so I could demonstrate that it was an actual musical instrument, not some cleverly disguised infernal device. Unable to resist such an invitation, I belted out a couple of choruses of some polka or other. Without exchanging glances, saying anything, or even cracking smiles, they both took off their caps and walked silently along the line of waiting passengers, all of whom dutifully dropped bits of change into the hats, which the customs guys then dumped into my instrument case. Still without expression, they nodded politely, and sent me on my way.

2009 Donations to the Finger Lakes Finns

General Fund: Shirley Snyder, Nancy Quaif; Ruth Gourlay in memory of Matt Lampila and Aili Rantanen Lampila.

Scholarship Fund: Brenda Koskinen, Paul Laven, Eric Efthimiou, Judith Maxwell, Leona House, Barbara Twombly, Eva Poysa, Anonymous; Ellen Storch in memory of Matt and Aili Lampila, Eva Poysa in memory of Art Kahkonen and Paul Beck, Gayle Greuber and Sylvia Maatta in memory of Helen Luoma Hess.

Donations to the Finger Lakes Finns

If you would like to donate 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 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.*

Please make checks payable to Finger Lakes Finns, and send to our Treasurer, Helen Sunderlin, 3065 N. Triphammer Rd., Lansing, NY 14853.

Thank you.

As a non-profit organization, contributions to the Finger Lakes Finns are deductible to the full extent of the tax law.



The Poetry Corner
Both poems by Lisa Koski

The Questionable Time Clock

Are we reassured by a clock
With a constant tick, tock?
An egg timer with sand grains
Drifting evenly, predictably to the lower half?
Or perhaps, interrupting our sleep
after we've counted 999 sheep —
Or, glowing in the dark
Watching, impersonally, in the bedroom
Is it measuring something, or nothing?
An amorphous dimension, a myth?
Does time exist, at all?



The Cardinal Couple

Mr. and Mrs. Cardinal,
Perched on a white pine branch,
I wonder if you know
How much your color and calls
Cheer us, in fog or snow,
How glad we are to see you
When weather brings us low.
You seem to bear all
Without complaint
You seem happy
When we "ain't"!

Scholarship Announcement
Lisa Koski, Scholarship Chairperson

Our annual search for great students will begin soon, when application material goes out to our area high schools. May 20th is the deadline for receiving the completed applications.



Finger Lakes Finns
hard at work on Christmas greenery and
colorful decorations.



The seasonal decorations were taking shape
and soon were delivered to Finger Lakes Finns'
shut-in members in the area.



A Word from Our President
Shirley Barton



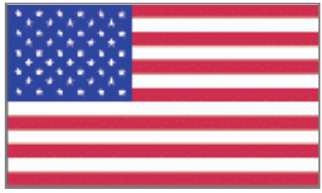
The snowshoes and skis are at the door. The weather forecasts are, more often than not, for snow and freezing temperatures, but the seed catalogs have arrived, as will the warmer weather. For now, the camaraderie, sharing, good cheer and good food predominate at the Finger Lakes Finns meetings making this winter a little warmer and brighter.

Highlights of the Christmas season included the annual Christmas centerpiece workshop. The centerpieces were delivered to about twenty Finger Lakes Finns by several volunteers. And thanks go to Richard and Janet Ahola for decorating the Christmas tree at the Roberson Museum in Binghamton. At the December meeting the group enjoyed a Santa Lucia performance by the Scandinavian Club of Cornell, as well as music by Judith Maxwell, Jeanne Frandsen, Sharon Kahkonen and Thomas Connor.

I am looking forward to the many programs arranged by Virpi Loomis, including the February meeting on genealogy and discovering your roots. Long-term plans include the annual Juhannus in June and a Fall Festival in September.

Remember that your 2010 membership dues of \$10 per person are due and can be sent to Jeanne Frandsen. →

Be of good cheer! Please join us at the next meeting on February 21st and bring a friend!



Finger Lakes Finns Officers
President: Shirley Barton
Vice President: Virpi Loomis
Treasurer: Helen Sunderlin
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 \$10 per person, payable to **Finger Lakes Finns, c/o the Treasurer, Jeanne Frandsen, 502 Donald's Drive, Ithaca NY 14850**

Please send address changes to the same address.

**Mission Statement
of the
Finger Lakes Finns**

The Finger Lakes Finns is organized to promote cultural and educational appreciation of Finnish heritage and customs, to provide a social setting for enjoying old and new friendships in the Finnish tradition, and to pursue charitable community activities.

Membership shall consist of persons of Finnish descent, those married to persons of Finnish descent, and any other persons interested in the work and activities of the society.



**Finger Lakes Finns
Officers for 2010
(left to right)
Shirley Barton, President
Virpi Loomis, Vice-president
Jeanne Frandsen, Secretary
Helen Sunderlin, Treasurer
[Jean Lindblad photo]**

Calendar of Coming Events

February 3, Wednesday 7-10 p.m., Toivo performs Finnish, Tex-Mex, and Cajun music at the Pourhouse on Main Street in Trumansburg. Also, February 19, 5-8 p.m. at Felicia's Atomic Lounge on State St. in Ithaca; February 23, 6-10 p.m. at Maxie's Supper Club and Oyster Bar, State St. Ithaca.

February 21, Sunday, 1 p.m., dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program on genealogy: Rosemary Rowland of Newfield. Newfield Fire Hall.

March 21, Sunday, 1 p.m., FLF monthly meeting, dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program: the annual quiz show. Newfield Fire Hall.

April 15, Newsletter deadline for submission of articles, poems, photos, and notices for the May 2010 issue. Send to Jim Loomis, Editor, 19 Upper Clark Ave., Van Etten, NY 14889 or email loomis@htva.net.

April 18, Sunday, 1 p.m., will be the FLF monthly meeting, dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and the program. Newfield Fire Hall.

Membership

For membership please use the form in this issue or at 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**. Membership in Finger Lakes Finns is open to anyone of Finnish origin or with an interest in Finnish culture. **Dues are \$10 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 Finnish friends to enjoy. You do not need to be a member to attend our meetings and activities, but your dues entitle you to continue receiving this newsletter and to vote on all FLF business at our meetings.

* Published February, May, August, and November. 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]. Newsletter Editorial Committee is Jim Loomis, Richard Koski, and Shirley Barton. **Submissions for the newsletter are due on the 15th of the month before publication.**

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