
Finger Lakes Finns

Volume 12, Number 2

NEWSLETTER

May / toukokuu 2008

Return of the Sillanpää Family

This summer, the musical trio from Finland, the Sillanpää Family will be making a US tour with concerts scheduled in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and Duluth at FinnFest, with stops in between, including concerts in the Ithaca area.

The first local performance will be at the Lost Dog Café on Cayuga Street in Ithaca on Saturday evening, July 5. The following evening, July 6, they'll be putting on a show at Felicia's Atomic Café on State Street at 7pm. On Wednesday, July 8, at 7pm they will be at the Pourhouse in downtown Trumansburg. On Saturday evening at 7:30 there will be a special concert presented by the Finger Lakes Finns at the Spencer Grange Hall for the rural community down Spencer way. Sunday evening at 8:30 pm, the Sillanpää Family will be making their third appearance on the Bound For Glory radio program, broadcast live on WVBR 93.5 fm, from the coffeehouse at Anabel Taylor Hall on the Cornell campus. All are invited to attend and be part of the radio audience.

From American bluegrass and country to Finnish folk and heartfelt originals, you won't want to miss a performance by this talented trio with the sweet vocal and fiddle harmonies of Selina and Jemina, accompanied by their father Seppo on guitar.

Sample their music at www.myspace.com/sillanpaas or visit their website at www.sillanpaa.info/.



Jemina, Seppo & Selina Sillanpää © 2007 Band'o



On Saturday, April 26, friends of Toini Kaartinen gathered at her granddaughter's home, to celebrate her 90th birthday. Happy Birthday Toini!



Annual Holiday Shopping Trip November 28 – December 7, 2008

The tour package includes round trip airfare on Finnair from JFK/New York to Helsinki and eight nights at the superior, Helsinki Sokos Hotel Vaakuna. The hotel is located nearby to subway station, central railway station, bus station and airport bus terminal.

Enjoy Christmas/holiday shopping and all the beautiful Christmas decorations, Finnish craft shows, going to hockey games, museums, churches, market places, visiting relatives or shopping for Finnish items. You are on your own to shop or travel at your leisure.

Registration form, available at fingerlakes-finns.org/tours/ and a deposit of \$300 per person is required by June 15, 2008, with final payment due July 15, 2008. For more information call Jean Lindblad at 607-564-7907 or email jelindbl@twcny.rr.com.

Please note that the Finger Lakes Finns Summer Excursion Trip has been cancelled.

A Spencer Co-Op Story

By Bill De Long (November 2007)

The year was 1965. I was offered a summer job at the Spencer Co-op egg room. Oh boy, MONEY!

Ray Wirtanen was manager, Ed Pylkas managed the egg room, Hilda Liatala, Minnie Kauppinen and Virginia Bogart packed eggs, and my mother Salme (Lehtonen) De Long candled the eggs. Rosey Grier packed the eggs. I was hired to unpack eggs and put them on the washer. I had just gotten my junior operator's drivers license, but couldn't drive at night.

The only time I got in trouble at the Co-Op was when Willie Wiggins and two other guys that worked in the feed mill, tied Rosey and me up to a timber at lunch time. Ed found us about 1:30 and untied us and told us to get back to work. Boy, he was hot! I remember he used the same words in Finnish that my grandfather, Albin Lehtonen use to use when he was mad.

About 1 week later, the egg room was under pressure to produce more eggs because of demand. Ed shouted something in Finnish to Hilda & Minnie from the office. Hilda walked to the office and said 1 line in Finnish, and returned packing eggs. Minnie turned around and shouted about three words in Finnish. From that point, to quitting time, not a word was spoken. I asked my mother, what was going on? She said, "It's none of your business". I deducted from that, do not ever make a Finnish woman mad at you!

About 1 week later Ed said he wanted to see my mother and me in the office after work. At that meeting, Ed said that the driver on the Elmira run had given three days notice. He asked me if I could handle it. 120 cases of eggs every three days, on a junior operators license?

I remember riding with Harold Saikonen, a few times the year before, to help him, a run of 200 cases every three days to Ithaca. Harold used to buy me an ice cream cone on our last stop. The cone was 12 inches tall. I really liked Harold. It was Wednesday, and the next run was Friday. I agreed. Ed said under no circumstances, "No late deliveries, no broken eggs, and do not wreck the nearly new International 18 foot van". No Exceptions!

On Friday, I rode with the driver that quit for 11 stops. He said, by the way, the paperwork has to be correct and signed. So after we got back to Spencer,

everybody was gone, except me. Now I understood this was a monumental responsibility. I went back outside to the truck, and started it up, drove around the garage lot a couple of times, and sat in the driver's doorstep. I asked myself, "How do these people think I can do this"? I have to have a commercial license, remember the stops, get the paperwork right, and if the law catches me, the Co-Op and myself will be in big trouble.

About the height of my worry, I heard a big truck pull up to the gate. I watched Herbert (Scoop) Savunen, pull in from his New York City Run. He came over to me with his half grin, and asked what was wrong? I said I was asked to take over the Elmira run. He said he knew! How did he know this because he was gone most of the week? He put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Bill, you need to be able to use your mirrors". If you can park this truck beside mine 12 times, your OK. Scoop left and I started. I missed the first two times, and did 10 times in a row. I thought to myself, if I could back a four-wheel hay wagon full of loose hay in the barn since I was 8 years old, I could surely do this.

I walked through the egg room and into the garage, and Toivo Salmi was working on Charlie Weisman's 1929 Cadillac. I asked Toivo if he knew the story and he said yes. He said at least he knew the truck wouldn't be torn up or wrecked. I got in my car and went home, to chores.

Four a.m. Monday morning, I loaded my first load, and headed for Elmira. I had trouble finding the two last stops, but made it before the manager of the A&P went home, and got back to Spencer as the sun was setting. All summer I drove with the sun visor down and obeyed all traffic laws. I was a toe-headed kid with a lot of windshield glass in front of me, or a sitting duck. I drove about 2 ½ months that summer, with no trouble or complaints. I had good teachers because they were Finns, and they had the same thing I do, as I have realized over the years, SISU!

~~~~~  
Bill De Long played baseball for Spencer in the late 50's. His grandparents are Albin and Ida Lehtonen from South Hill, and his mother is Salme Lehtonen. His sister is Karen De Long who graduated from Spencer in 1961. Bill currently resides at 172 Hurricane Grove Rd., in Shelbyville, Tennessee.

## A Word from Our President *Lisa dC-Koski*

We are happy to welcome spring with birds, greening wheat fields, and our own snowbirds arriving back from Florida. Welcome! Spring seemed slow to arrive in our Finger Lakes region with so many days of low temperatures. Now each week becomes more pleasant. Spring flowers are emerging to cheer us.

In order to maintain our organization in sound financial balance, we have raised our modest dues to \$10 beginning next year. This was discussed, voted on, and approved by the members at the April 20th meeting. We are planning a silent auction at our fall festival. Plan to donate one or two items. Additional suggestions are welcome.

It's very heartening to have such great cooperation from so many members to smoothly accomplish all of our business, meeting tasks, and newsletters.

Congratulations to our former Finger Lakes Finns' President, Richard Ahola, who has been elected to the Board of Directors of Finlandia Foundation for a term of one year.

Mark your calendars for June 21 when Hemmo and Patty Huttunen will once again be hosting Juhannus to celebrate the beginning of summer at their Southview Farm.

Plan on joining in on some aspect of set-up, food, or entertainment.

In the meantime, enjoy spring.



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## Spring Unfolding

Based on sun  
Swallows return  
Adders count the sunny days  
Move, when the sun's enough

A slow succession,  
Light, plants, animals.  
Longer lighter days  
Wild geese depart...

Life giving sun, silently  
Promotes the run, North.

Lisa dC-Koski

## Donations to the Finger Lakes Finns

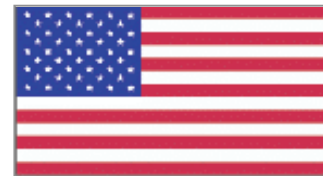
If you would like to make a monetary donation to the Finger Lakes Finns, please indicate whether you want it to go to the scholarship fund or the general fund. If you want the donation to be made in memory of someone, please indicate who it should be in memory of and to which fund it should go.

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.*



## 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.

## A Page From the Neighborhood

*By Leona M. House*

The old man was a gardener, he had two small plots. We exchanged greetings over the line fence for years.

February would roll around and George would be readying his A Frames of old storm windows to plants his seedlings.

I could see him from my kitchen window, tilling the ground with a spade. Then placing each seedling into the ground and placing the frame to make a triangle.

He planted onion sets, peas, string beans and tomato plants, which he had started in the warmth of his house.

George was a fastidious gardener, each fall he raked the plots clean from every last leaf, dug a trench and buried them. His soil was the richest around, having done this for over fifty years.

Late Spring, the weather warmed, his seedlings would come out of the make shift hothouse to be planted in tidy short rows, bordered by the black raspberries on one end of the plot.

Crawling up the old garage wall, the grapevines began leafing out. By mid June they formed an arch over the pathway leading to the garden adjoining the line fence. On both sides of the pathway, spring flowers bloomed, from Daffodils, Tulips, various Clematis vines, blazing glory and shouting their presence of color.

Sunny afternoons I would be on my side of the fence, raking old dead, smelly, Oak leaves, and puttering around in general. If I was out there in the yard and would see George coming down the path, I was careful to let him see me first before I spoke to him. George was nearly blind from cataracts, and I did not want to startle him. There were many times when he did not see me, so we were just two gardeners passing one another by the line fence.

One day, George did see me and acted surprised, he said, "Oh, it's you, someone told me you died." I laughed and responded no, George, not this year.

Last year in February, I began looking for George in the back yard, getting the old storm windows out for the frame.

No George, I looked all summer for some sign of George, nothing. I wondered where is he??

My wonderment was answered when in January I read his obituary in the paper. He had died in Montana.

One of his children lives there and they moved George and his wife out West. His family brought his body back to our town for burial.

It is April now; I still look for George and miss the back yard chatter we had over the years. I miss watching him mow his lawn with a gas fired lawn mower, pruning the grape vines back, tying up his tomato crop and his sharing of his abundant crop of veggies with the neighborhood.

George's home is now occupied with a mom and dad and their four children.

George was ninety-nine years young when he passed on. I hope there is a garden plot for him to putter in, and a neighbor to chat over the line fence with.

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## Sulo Anderson Exhibit

*By Rich Koski*

We recently read in the April 22 Ithaca Journal's Spencer-Van Etten column by Sally Marx that this summer the Spencer Historical Society will exhibit the paintings and woodcarvings of Sulo Anderson. Sulo was a chicken farmer, carpenter, draftsman, mandolin player, and was well known as a talented artist who painted scenes of the places and people around Spencer from the 1940s to the 60s. Many of his paintings are hanging on the walls of people in this area.

If you have a painting, sketch, or woodcarving that you would be willing to lend for the exhibit, please call Patti Huttunen at 589-6620 or Joan Cooke at 589-4941 by May 1. You could also send a photograph of the work for display on a board.

## FinnFest at 25

### INFORMATION ON FINNFEST 2008

FinnFest USA celebrates its 25th such festival this year as FinnFest 2008 takes place in Duluth, MN, July 23-27, 2008. Under the theme "Sharing the Spirit of Finland", the event will honor Finnish culture and heritage and is expected to attract 7,000-10,000 people to its variety of dance performances, concerts, lectures, art exhibitions and tours.

Highlighting the five-day celebration will be a concert by the Minnesota Orchestra, directed by the Finnish Music Director Osmo Vänskä. The President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, has been officially invited to attend the event and the FinnFest 2008 organizing committee is hopeful to host her honor along with other dignitaries from Finland.

According to Jeanne Doty and Diane Fay Skomars, co-chairs of the FinnFest 2008, "We want to welcome everyone to our five-day celebration. It is open to everyone. Our festival will offer a great variety of events for those that have come to know Finland, share the love for it, and those that would like to learn more about it."

Calling all Finns, Finnish Americans and friends of Finnish culture nationwide, the first FinnFest event was organized in 1983 in Minneapolis, and has enjoyed a robust history since.

"The first FinnFest was an innovation. In its successful 25 years, it has become a strong and important cultural tradition," said Marianne Wargelin, President of FinnFest USA. "The past events have been powerful in many ways - changing peoples lives, initiating innovations, and creating a strong network with those that share a love for Finland."

For the past 25 years, FinnFest USA has been the beacon of Finnish- American ethnic identity in the United States. Since the first FinnFest the festival has been hosted in fifteen different states and has joined forces with the Canadian Finnish Grand Fest twice. The FinnFest host sites have brought Finnish culture to the forefront in their respective communities, and the festival continues to bring Finnish-Americans a renewed pride in their colorful past, while bringing Finland closer to America.

With its roots in Minnesota soil, this year's FinnFest will bring the ethnic celebration back to Duluth, where it was also held in 1992. The culture and enthusiasm of northern Minnesota, one of the strongest Finnish-American immigrant locales on the North American continent, is a logical choice for FinnFest USA to celebrate its 25th anniversary. This year's event will be the fourth FinnFest held in Minnesota. It will make great waves on the shore of Lake Superior and in the Duluth community

by involving the heavily Finn-populated community in planning, organizing and participation.

Programming at this year's FinnFest includes later generation Finnish- Americans working with Finns currently living and working in the United States. The schedule of events, performers, and special guests celebrates not only the traditions of our Finnish-American past, but bridges the gap between the immigrants of nearly a century ago with the contemporary culture of Finland today.

Today, FinnFest is international. With greater ease at communication through cell phones, the Internet, and a global market, FinnFest at 25 is more than a Finnish-American Festival. It brings people of Finnish descent and friends of Finnish culture together from around the world to celebrate an abiding identification with a proud, strong and independent nation. From the legend of Kalevala, to the fight for sovereignty in the Winter War, to the swelling of emotion at the playing of Sibelius' Finlandia, FinnFest is a shining example of Finnish culture and traditions.

FinnFest USA was born out of the necessity for many Finnish-Americans to maintain a sense of their heritage. As for so many other ethnic traditions in the United States, first- and second-generation Finnish Americans longed for those who "lived ethnic" daily—bathing in saunas, singing Finnish music, performing Finnish dance, eating Finnish food, and speaking the language. As later-generation Finnish- Americans were assimilated into American life, local Finnish groups struggled to maintain Finnish festivals in their small communities. A sense of community was being lost to offspring of the original immigrants. The success of FinnFest for the past 25 years is a sign that the national festival is doing its job of purveying Finnishness to all who hold their identity dear.

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## Calendar of Coming Events

**May 16:** Friday, 5pm, Toivo performs at Felicia's Atomic Lounge on State Street in Ithaca.

**May 18:** Sunday, 1pm, FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program on Finnish music by Dr. Carl Rahkonen, Newfield Fire Hall.

**May 19:** Monday, 3pm, Program on Finnish culture and music for the residents of Lakeside Nursing Home in Ithaca presented by Lisa and Richard Koski and Judith Maxwell.

**May 27:** Tuesday, 7pm, Toivo performs at the Pourhouse in Trumansburg.

**June 21:** Saturday, 5pm, Juhannus at Huttunen's Southview Farm, 630 South Danby Road, Spencer. Bring a dish to pass and a chair. There will be a kokko, sauna, swimming, and hayrides. Bring an instrument, poem, or juggling chainsaws and be part of the entertainment. Phone 589-6620 for information.

**July 5:** Saturday evening, The Sillanpää Family from Finland kicks off their string of performances in the Ithaca area with a show at the Lost Dog Cafe on Cayuga Street. For a more detailed listing see article inside newsletter.

**July 20:** Sunday, 1pm, FLF dish to pass luncheon, business meeting, and program. Newfield Fire Hall.

**July 23-27:** FinnFest 2008 in Duluth, MN.  
Go to [www.finnfest2008.com](http://www.finnfest2008.com) for information.

## 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.**

Finger Lakes Finns Newsletter  
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