

AJAKAJA

SUMMER 2008 • VOLUME 28

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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“Alberta's Estonian Heritage” on abestonians. AlbertaSource.ca

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) was formally established on April 23, 2005 to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonian community, and to increase awareness of developments in Estonia.

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Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) Website: www.aehs.ca

AjaKaja Magazine

AjaKaja is published biannually to inform members about Society activities and heritage topics. Publication and distribution costs are covered by membership dues.

Non-members may purchase AjaKaja for \$5.00 per copy by contacting Eda McClung
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Members and friends are encouraged to submit articles, photographs and heritage-related items to Eda McClung at emcclung@shaw.ca



Alberta Estonian Heritage
Society

AJAKAJA

Summer 2008

Volume 28

Letter from the Editors



Recently, the 2006 Canada census provided numbers and trends that speak directly to Alberta's Estonians. It is said that numbers don't lie but perhaps people who use them do. However the 'Albertan's with Estonian Ethnicity' census tables printed on

page 10 are worth a close look. Embedded in the data are possible explanations for the genesis of AEHS and the adaptive ways it has responded to the realities of the Estonian presence in this province.

Overall there are a total of 2160 people in Alberta who identify themselves as having Estonian ethnic ties. This number is surprisingly large. About half of this group resides in the Calgary and Edmonton areas. The remainder is in the central Alberta region, with a smaller groups in Lethbridge and other areas. Separate Estonian Societies in the cities operated by post-war immigrants existed for many decades.

By 2004 it was obvious that to retain viability, other regions of the province needed to be included. It was the non-urban centres that contributed the pioneer and heritage history that makes Alberta Estonian history unique. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society was formed to provide an inclusive organization for those who are interested in their culture and heritage, who want to preserve ties to their ethnic identity, and to share this through social means.

Table 2 highlights the changing demographics amongst successive generations of Estonians in this

province. By 2006, only 20% of individual were born to parents who were both Estonians whereas 80% are born to or are in mixed marriages. In the under 15 year age group, fewer than 100 people have two Estonian parents. The trend toward mixed marriages is clear and so are its implications. Language will likely be lost as we continue adapt to a multi-generational, multi-ethnic reality. AEHS does not rely on the Estonian language because that would exclude the vast majority of its members. The reason for AEHS's existence and its ability to thrive is that it encompasses local history and heritage, and promotes awareness of present-day Estonia, its stunning accomplishments and its changing culture.

AEHS hopes it can meet the needs of both older and younger generations even as our identity is changing. To this end we're including a "Today's Generations" section to showcase some of our accomplished contemporary Alberta Estonians. AEHS has demonstrated that pioneers, immigrants, recent arrivals and those born here can work together. This has been a source of some amazement to non-Albertans who wonder how this was possible. The driving force in the West has traditionally been survival and this has required an emphasis on shared values rather than differences, and inclusiveness rather than exclusivity. With this approach, AEHS is dealing with the reality of its changing demographics and utilizing the advantages of the electronic age to reach the greatest number of people possible.

The World Wide Web is an important engine of the Information Age, accessible to all, and responsive to the needs of present and future generations. By acting locally and thinking globally, we capitalize on the tremendous reach of technology to preserve our heritage and to raise awareness of who we are and what we do.

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

President's Message

Tere!



I found the article from National Post on Toomas Hendrik Ilves, to be fascinating! Born in Sweden to Estonian exile parents he was educated in the

U.S. and worked in Canada. Influenced by Canadian Estonian politics, he moved to Estonia to become involved with Estonia's new freedom and went on to become Estonia's president. Prior to his presidency, Toomas Ilves promoted technology in Estonia. As a result, Estonia is now on the cutting edge of computer technology in education, banking, legislation and voting.

The similarity of President Ilves background to the biography of many of Alberta's Estonians unfolds so typically within our community that it almost slips by as normal. Therein, I suggest, excluding the politics, lays the source of many of our societies' positive attributes. Add the word 'inclusive' and the secret to our success is revealed.

Within the AEHS we have created a social network covering Alberta and beyond, expanded the scope of our membership, established two web sites, produced a quality DVD, enjoyed numerous well-organized events and marked the calendar for more.

It is exciting to see members working towards improving our organization. The minutes of the last two AGM's now reside on site, and further relevant information will follow. Our membership database is being

up-graded, we have a process on the AEHS website for membership application and renewals, and new projects continually come foreword.

Our AGM and the official launch of our AlbertaSource Estonian historical website was our key event since the last issue of AjaKaja. It went very well and provided an opportunity to show our accomplishments to the media and government representatives. It was also a logical time to express our appreciation to those agencies that contributed funds, and to thank our members who worked hard to organize and compile a vast amount of information. That was the completion of phase two and, as I write this, Dave Kiil's email arrived announcing he has submitted an application for phase three! Be sure to check out this informative web site. (abestonians.AlbertaSource.ca).

The producers of AjaKaja continue to do an excellent job and once again we have to acknowledge our good fortune. This issue of AjaKaja contains the beginning of a series of articles featuring our younger Estonian members. It is a great idea and it should bolster the interest of our younger members in the AEHS. I am looking forward to it and I have no doubt that it will raise the level of pride in this organization even further.

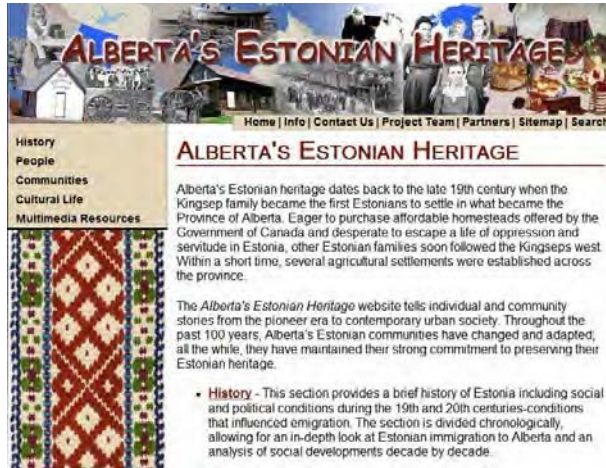
Good reading to all, and I hope to see you during our summer activities. Not sure what and where? Go to aehs.ca regularly and see what's happening.

Tervitades,
Bob Kingsep

Alberta's Estonian Heritage - website

Helgi Leesment

The Alberta Estonian website is available on the internet at abestonians.AlbertaSource.ca.



Home page of Alberta's Estonian Heritage website

It focuses on Alberta Estonian history and is part of the *AlbertaSource / Alberta Online Encyclopedia* complex - an online learning resource - sitting among the websites of Alberta Italians, First Nations people, University of Alberta centennial, the Francophone community, etc. Written in a straightforward, simple style, this website is intended for use by school children as well as adults. Students looking for Estonian-related topics for school assignments may wish to look at the stories, brief biographies, accounts and photos offered. People looking to complete blanks in their family genealogy or those wanting to reconnect with long lost relatives may also find helpful information at this website. All of the information and photos are organized under the headings: History, People, Communities, Cultural Life, and Multimedia Resources (such as photos and video clips). The Search feature enables the finding of specific names and topics. The SiteMap is an excellent detailed guide to the contents.

Created in partnership with AlbertaSource.ca, part of Heritage Community Foundation, and major input from the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS), the site was ceremoniously launched on May 3, 2008 at the Snell Auditorium of the Public Library in Red Deer, generously hosted by the Heritage Community Foundation. A preliminary version of *Alberta's Estonian Heritage* website has been available since the Fall of 2007; however it has been substantially expanded and updated since then. The site was made possible by grants from Alberta's Community Initiatives

Program and Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

The session was graced by a small display of Estonian national costumes, selected by Valerie Miller, Collections Coordinator of the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery, and brought to the launch location by Melanie Berndt who ably guarded the heritage items, providing background information as asked. The girl's outfit had been commissioned from Toronto by Dr. Rita Matiisen and the Museum in the 1980's. The other items are treasures from area Estonian families.

At the May 3 official launch of the Alberta's Estonian Heritage Website, Master of Ceremonies Dr. Adriana Davies, editor-in-chief of AlbertaSource.ca, introduced Bob Kingsep, president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. Both Dr. Davies and Bob Kingsep spoke of the importance of the recognition of the Estonian community within Alberta's ethnic groups and especially the value of family histories.



l to r: Cal Dallas, MLA, Mary Ann Jablonski, MLA, Morris Flewwelling, Mayor of Red Deer, , Blaine Calkins, MP.

Photo: Jüri Kraav

Among the honoured guests invited by Dr. Adriana Davies were Cal Dallas – MLA for Red Deer South; Sonia Bitar – Citizenship Judge for Northern Alberta with Souheil, and speakers Mary Ann Jablonski – Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, Red Deer North; Blaine Calkins – Member of Parliament – Ponoka-Wetaskiwin and Morris Flewwelling, CM, Mayor of Red Deer, Chair of Heritage Community Foundation and his wife Hazel. The speakers brought greetings from the Province of Alberta, the Government of Canada and the host city Red Deer.



Dr. Adriana Davies, Executive Director of the Heritage Community Foundation speaking during the website launch..
Photo: Helgi Leesment

As a thank you to the honoured guests, Bob Kingsep presented each one with a copy of the *Alberta's Estonians* DVD. The National Estonian Foundation of Canada (Eesti Sihtkapital Kanadas), with partial funding from the Community Initiatives Program, funded this half-hour documentary which was released last year.



Bob Kingsep, President of the AEHS, presented Blaine Calkins, MP for Ponoka-Wetaskiwin, and May Ann Jablonski, Alberta Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, with copies of "Alberta's Estonians" DVD.
Photo: Jüri Kraav

Dave Kiil, communications director for the AEHS

heading the historical projects, thanked the many people who gave of their time and family records in order to create this substantial Estonian heritage website.

Despite Dave's modesty, all present were well aware of the tremendous volunteer work done by him organizing and documenting mountains of submitted materials for the Heritage Community Foundation who in turn edited these and created the Estonian website. In recognition, AEHS president Bob Kingsep awarded Dave Kiil a framed certificate of thanks. Dave's colleagues Eda McClung and Helgi Leesment also received similar framed citations detailing their particular contributions to the project.



Ivar Ruus and Livia Kivisild during a break in the proceedings.

The May 3rd launch event was made even more interesting by the concurrent demonstration of the website during the verbal presentations. Clifford Barnett, senior programmer of the Heritage Community Foundation, clicked on appropriate webpages illustrating families, individuals, places and other aspects as these were mentioned by the various speakers. The photos and stories showed on a large screen beside the podium, making for an interesting multi-tasking multi-media afternoon followed by a light lunch and opportunity to chat.

The news media was also present and interviews were held before and after the launch ceremony. The event was recorded in the Red Deer Advocate and briefly shown on television.

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society Annual General Meeting, 2008

Helgi Leesment

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society held its annual general meeting on May 3, 2008 at the Snell Auditorium of the Red Deer Public Library. It had been preceded by the official launch ceremony of the *Alberta's Estonian Heritage* website.

President Bob Kingsep's understated humorous style kept the meeting going at a speedy pace. The majority of the past Board agreed to retain their positions. Peter Asmus replaces Anne Cowick as Membership Convener. The AEHS thanks Anne for two years of volunteer service in the position she inherited at a time when the membership list grew complicated and was starting the conversion to a different software program. The current Board members list appears on the inside front cover of this issue of AjaKaja.

Members heard the review of an intensely busy past year:

An AEHS logo and pin were adopted. Major funding had been obtained from three sources to result in a professionally produced half-hour documentary film and a quality historical website, thanks to financing applications skillfully submitted by Dave Kiil. Treasurer Toomas Pääsuke made sense of the complicated finances, duly audited by Enn and Pärja Tiislar. The AEHS responded to an invitation by the West Coast Estonian Days committee in Los Angeles with the debut of the documentary DVD *Alberta's Estonians* and a



View of attendees at the AEHS Annual General Meeting in Red Deer, May 3, 2008.



AEHS Board Members: standing, l to r: Allan Posti, Deane Kerbes, Dave Kiil, Barbara Gullickson, Eda McClung, Helgi Leesment, Toomas Pääsuke. Sitting, l to r: Bob Kingsep, Jüri Kraav.

Readers' Theatre production highlighting the pioneering tales of an Alberta family. Both were well received by the Estonian crowd in California. The DVD received excellent reviews at the EstDocs film festival in Toronto.



Planning Committee for 2009 Jaanipäev at Linda Hall. L to r: Evelyn Shursen, Irene Kerbes, Deane Kerbes, Roy Klaus, Astrid Ustina. Sitting: AEHS President Bob Kingsep.

The Alberta debuts were hosted in turn by Calgary, Red Deer and Edmonton AEHS groups with Estonian Chargé d'Affaires Rasmus Lumi in



Eda McClung with her "Oscar" in recognition of many contributions to "Alberta's Estonians" DVD

with the organizing committee already making arrangements.

honourary attendance at each. Jaanipäev attracted a wide range of ages to Lincoln Hall. The first two Board meetings under new President Bob Kingsep were held in Tallinn (May 7, 2007) and Los Angeles (August 10, 2007), finally reverting to Alberta in the Fall - secretary Jüri Kraav dutifully attended and recorded all. Future plans include Jaanipäev celebration at Linda Hall in 2009,



Dave Kiil with the "Award of Appreciation" for his work with historical projects

To the sincere applause of AEHS members, Dave Kiil and Eda McClung were each awarded an AEHS "Oscar" as a token of recognition for their outstanding volunteer work in coordinating the two historical projects: the well-acclaimed documentary film and the newly-launched major website featuring Alberta's Estonians.

All members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage

Society were thanked for their input of family photos and biographies for these two projects. Without that interest and effort, neither project would have come to be.

AEHS members are rightfully proud of their organization's achievements in the brief three years since its inception.



Helgi Leesment receives a framed citation from Bob Kingsep for her contributions to "Alberta's Estonian Heritage" website



L to r: Martha Munz Gue and Lea Ruus socializing during a break in the proceedings.

Photo credits on this page: Helgi Leesment, Martha Munz Gue

Calgary Estonians celebrate Estonia's 90th birthday

Helgi Leesment

On Sunday morning February 24, 2008, twenty-nine Calgarians gathered beside the huge fireplace at Nick's Restaurant to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Estonian Independence and to enjoy a pleasant brunch.



AEHS members at the 90th at Anniversary Celebration of Estonian Independence in Calgary, February 24, 2008.

L to r: Annette and Bob Kingsep, Helgi leesment, Helle Kraav, Peeter Leesment, Jüri Kraav. Seated in front: Willy Kalvee.

Photo: Helgi Leesment

Helgi Leesment welcomed all to the informal event. Bob Kingsep, President of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and grandson of the first



Peeter Leesment

known Estonian pioneer in Canada (arrived in 1899), spoke appreciatingly from the point of view of someone who is of Estonian heritage but has not suffered political persecution, political terrorism nor the need to suddenly leave one's life behind and venture reluctantly into the unknown as has been the case with many of

those present. Peeter Leesment presented the Estonian language speech honoring this special anniversary. Facing the Canadian and Estonian flags on either side of the fireplace, the entire group sang the national anthem of Canada. Written lyrics were provided in both languages, so that people not familiar with the Estonian language joined in the singing of the Estonian anthem.



Attendees listening to speech by Bob Kingsep



*The next generation of AEHS members at work!
L to r: Mitch, Jasmine and Steve Fodor*

The event was also a successful social occasion, resulting in many people exchanging contact information upon their departure after the brunch.

2006 Canada Census: Albertans with Estonian Ethnicity

Tables 1 and 2 were assembled from information published by Statistics Canada and are based on a 20% sample of all private households. The replies are based on the question: "What were the ethnic or cultural origins of this person's ancestors?"

A single ethnic origin response occurs when a respondent provides one ethnic origin only. A multiple ethnic origin response occurs when a respondent provides two or more ethnic origins.

TABLE 1. Albertans with Estonian Ethnicity

Location	Total	Single	Multiple
Calgary	750	115	630
Edmonton	500	115	390
Red Deer	110	10	100
Stettler County	100	15	100
Lacombe County	60	10	50
Lethbridge	60	30	30
St. Albert	50	0	35
Canmore	35	15	20
Others	495	50	460
TOTALS	2160	360	1800

Note: Of the total population of 2160, 17% of Alberta Estonians claimed single ethnicity in the 2006 Canada Census. A total of 470 of 2160 Albertans with Estonian ethnicity, or 22%, are younger than 15.

TABLE 2. Albertans with Estonian Ethnicity: Pop. 15 years & older

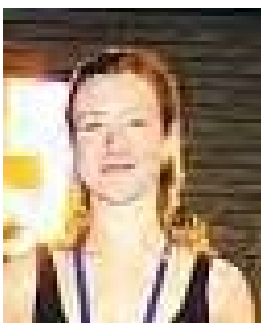
Location	Total	1 st Generation	2 nd Generation	3 rd Generation & higher
Calgary	580	75	225	285
Edmonton	430	110	165	155
Red Deer	100	15	10	80
Lethbridge	45	20	15	15
Others	535	45	545	340
TOTALS	1,690	265	545	875

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents reside in the communities/areas listed in Tables 1 and 2

AjaKaja introduces a new showcase of Alberta's contemporary Estonians

Music

Julia Saar



In 2000 mezzo-soprano Julia Saar won the Silver Medal for Grade 7 Voice exams, achieving the highest mark with the Royal Conservatory of Music in Alberta

that year. She achieved a number of first place standings in various solo voice categories at the Calgary Kiwanis Festival over the years. In 2008 she was awarded first place standing in the Solo Opera Aria category in competition. As of 2008, Julia continues to study voice at the Mount Royal Conservatory of Music while in her third year

of Chemical Engineering at the University of Calgary.

Julia's grandparents were born in Estonia but had to escape from their homeland when it came under attack for the third time at the end of WWII. The grandparents first met each other in Australia and later immigrated to Canada where they participated in the Toronto area Estonian community until moving to Calgary near the beginning of the 21st Century. Julia attended Calgary's Estonian supplementary school where her father volunteered as a guest teacher occasionally. Although Julia does not speak Estonian, she has learned to sing in that language. Guests at the 1999 Stettler Centennial were treated to a duet, sung in Estonian by Julia and a friend.

Jeffrey White



Jeffrey White became a permanent member of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) in the bass section in 2006. He has a Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University. He chose Estonian as an optional course while studying music there. In addition he studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. Jeff was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada 2000-2003 and played on a temporary basis with the Calgary

Philharmonic Orchestra in 2003 after which he spent a year as head of the bass section at the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra before returning to the CPO.

Jeff's mother is of Estonian extraction and ensured that both Jeff and his younger brother Josh attended Calgary's Estonian Supplementary School. Jeff was invited to play several solos at a musical interdenominational church service as part of the 1997 West Coast Estonian Days festival in Vancouver. He also played to very appreciative audiences at several functions of the Calgary Estonian Society both during and after the years he attended the supplementary school.

JAN URKE



Jan Urke started his musical studies on the piano with respected Toronto Estonian piano teacher, Talvi Jaldre. He also spent five years studying the violin in the Toronto school system. Upon starting high school at North Toronto Collegiate, he decided to take up the double bass. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Music Degree in Performance.

Further studies were taken at the Banff Centre for the Arts with Stuart Knussen. Jan's career started by freelancing with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Ballet Orchestra, the Canadian Opera Company Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. He moved to Edmonton in 1980, where he has been Principal Double Bass of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra to the present day. He has appeared as a soloist with the Edmonton Symphony and Pro Coro Canada and freelanced extensively in Edmonton.

Jan is visiting Assistant Professor of Double Bass at the Music Department of the University of Alberta. He has also served as resource artist with the Banff Centre for the Arts.



Young songbirds at Estonian Song Celebration

SANDRA ERDMAN



Sandra Erdman was born in Lethbridge, Alberta on February 3, 1947. She attended school in Barons, but for grades 11 and 12 she attended Mount Royal College in Calgary. Mount Royal College gave Sandra an opportunity to develop her musical talents with the guidance of Mrs. Egbert, the school's piano teacher.

In Grade 11, Sandra was awarded the 1963 Kiwanis Grand Award for her exceptional piano skills. The following year she graduated as the valedictorian of her high school class. During her time spent as a student in Barons, Sandra was an active member of Christian Girl in Training and often played the organ for the local church.

Aside from winning numerous awards in piano she received a scholarship from the Banff School of Fine Arts. In 1970 she graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto. Two years later Sandra obtained a Master of Music degree from the University of Alberta. In 1972 she studied the harpsichord in Siena, Italy and then travelled to Antwerp, Belgium to pursue her music studies further.

Upon her return to Canada, Sandra taught music in Edmonton for two years before she accepted a job at the Lethbridge Public Library in the Audio-Visual Department. She currently lives in Lethbridge.



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Artist Biography 2008

Helve Sastok



Helve Sastok is a creative and innovative published and performed composer, educator and pianist who can perform and teach at an advanced and specialized level. She is highly adaptable and able to share and instill a passion and love for music of all styles in others.

Sastok also works as a clinician, adjudicator, the composer and graphic artist of a series of children's piano books, and is the sole proprietor of Music Everywhere! She currently lives and works in Calgary.

Sastok has a Master of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree (with distinction) in composition as well as two piano performance diplomas. She is an Associate Composer of the Canadian Music Center, a member of the Canadian League of Composers, and the Association of Canadian Women Composers. Since 1994, Sastok has been involved as a composer and educator with The Artist in Schools Residency Program throughout Alberta. She has worked as an Artist for the Learning Through The Arts program since 2007. Workshops given in various centers on composition, improvisation, piano pedagogy, Canadian music and twentieth century music have been well received.

Sastok's compositions have been performed across Canada and in Europe. Two of her pieces have been released on CD: 'Duologue' on Brief Confessions (1997), and 'Elegy' on Glossa (1999). Her electro-acoustic composition 'Sailing the High 'C'' is being released on CD in 2008. Her piano trio, 'Misty Mountain Morning' was performed in a New Works Calgary concert in March, 2008.

Rein Sastok wins Scholarship!

On March 15, 2008, one day before his 18th birthday, Rein Sastok attended the Outstanding Speech Performers Showcase in Calgary. At the Showcase, he received the Dorothy W. Gregory Speech Arts Scholarship and its accompanying plaque. Rein is also a back-up contestant for the Speech Arts provincial Festival.

In his thank you letter to the Calgary Kiwanis Musical Festival, Rein indicated that he plans on using the \$1,000 Gregory Scholarship to further his university education. He will be attending the University of Calgary, where he'll study Linguistics, whilst pursuing both Performance and Teachers Speech Arts with his Speech teacher, Susan Duska. Ultimately, Rein plans to teach Speech Arts or to become a Speech Pathologist.

Well done, Rein, and continued success in the future!

Mellisa Hollingsworth visits Ghana Matthew Smith



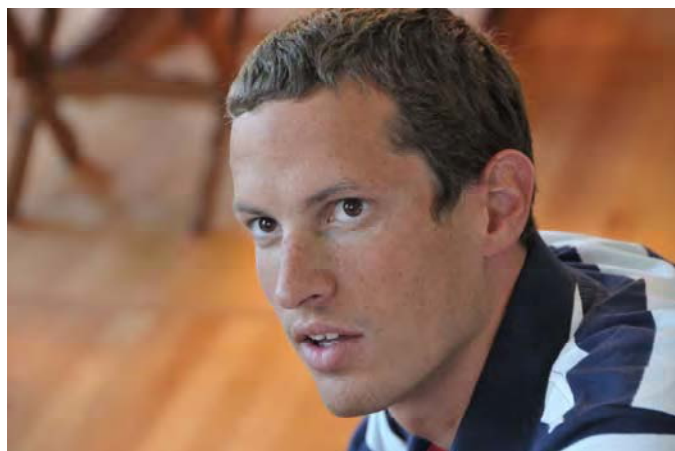
Fifth-generation descendant of Estonian pioneers Mellisa Hollingsworth was a member of a Canadian Right to Play Athlete Ambassadors group visiting Ghana in April, 2008. Other members of the

delegation, all outstanding winter athletes, included Clara Hughes (long track speed skating), Emily Brydon (alpine skiing) and Steve Omischl (freestyle skiing-aerials). Reader's will recall that Mellisa won a Bronze Medal in Skeleton at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Italy.

Right To Play is an athlete-driven international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in the most disadvantaged areas of the world. The purpose of the trip was to address a number of key educational challenges in Ghana, including school retention, quality of learning resources, and effective HIV and AIDS preventive education.

Following her return from Ghana Mellisa made the following observation: "Right To Play provides an extremely powerful mechanism that gives people the learning tools to make a difference in their lives and their community. This was an extremely emotional and inspiring experience, and I am looking forward to join my fellow Olympians at Silvertip Resort (Canmore) so we can continue to make a significant difference for children in the areas of the world where Right To Play operates."

A recent article in the Estonian newspaper Eesti Päevaleht featured a story about Matthew Smith, a descendant of Estonian grandparents Hans (deceased) and Livia Kivisild of Calgary.



Matthew was born in Montreal and now lives in California. He has met the B-level qualification for the 2008 Olympics and, having acquired Estonian citizenship, may represent Estonia in Beijing. His specialty is the 100-metre breaststroke event, with a qualifying time of 1.03.29 minutes. Estonia's representative will be decided by mid-July.

Matthew has visited Estonia with his parents and grandparents, but his Estonian vocabulary is quite limited. According to the article, he feels that his grandmother Livia would be very proud should he qualify for the Olympics. It would also be an opportunity to remember his recently-deceased grandfather Hans.



50th anniversary of Alberta Estonian tennis champion Gert Lukk

Helgi Leesment

The summer of 2008 marks 50 years since Estonian Gert (Gerhard) Lukk earned the 1958 title of Alberta men's singles tennis champion. This is likely the highest level achieved by any Estonian tennis player in Canada. He was also the Alberta provincial men's doubles champion four times: in 1958, 1960, 1962 and 1963, with different partners.

Gert's tennis career began in Estonia when his parents gave him a tennis racquet for his tenth birthday. It was a tradition in the Lukk family that all the children receive a tennis racquet on their tenth birthday. Pre-teen Gert's great admiration for the famous Kristjan Lasn, eight-time tennis champion of Estonia in 1939, motivated him to pursue tennis seriously even at a young age.

The dangers and disruptions of WWII propelled Gert to Germany, then briefly to England before immigrating to Canada in 1948. Despite hardships, he enrolled in the engineering physics program at the University of Toronto where he was able to play tennis again after a gap of seven years. There, in singles matches he played against Calgarian Ken Lawson, and in doubles matches played with him as partner. Gert took the intercollegiate men's singles

in 1951 and 1953. In 1952 Ken Lawson earned that title. Also in 1953 the two became the intercollegiate doubles champions. As fate would have it, eventually both worked in Calgary where that same tennis rivalry/partnership continued for many years.



Gert Lukk, 1958

Beyond university, Gert captured the South Western Ontario singles and doubles titles in 1951. Gert Lukk and Ken Lawson defeated the Canadian Davis Cup doubles pair of Jim Macken and Jerry La Fortune to win the 1962 Alberta provincial men's doubles championship. Nevertheless, Gert counts the win over his brother George in the 1951 South Western Ontario final as one of the highlights of his tennis career; and he was pleased to win the doubles title with brother George.

Gert's early career as a geophysicist/seismologist at various oil fields prevented

him from wielding the racquet on a regular basis for several years. However, upon settling into Calgary, he became a long term Calgary city champion, winning first place five years in a row 1959 to 1964. He and his wife Greta won many local mixed doubles tournaments in addition to his victories in men's doubles. They were members of both the Calgary Tennis Club and Glencoe Club tennis teams.



Gert and Greta Lukk, 2008

In the mid 1960's the couple moved to Australia, partly to benefit from the longer tennis season afforded by the favourable climate there as Calgary had no indoor tennis facilities at that time.

Naturally, tennis match wins continued as a major part of the couple's lives in the Southern Hemisphere. Retiring after a long geophysics/seismologist career in Australia, Gert and Greta Lukk now reside in Calgary.

Midsummer Day Celebration on Saaremaa!

Irene and Deane Kerbes

The Midsummer Solstice, or Jaanipäev, celebration dates back to the pre-Christian era and has continued from generation to generation. On the Island of Saaremaa, the second-largest island in the Baltic Sea, Jaanipäeva celebrations continued unabated during the Soviet occupation and preserved important cultural traditions. With the arrival of Estonian Independence in 1991, Midsummer Eve, with bonfires in public places and in private backyards, coupled with Independence Day celebrations, continue to attract locals and tourists from the mainland of Estonia and abroad.



L to r: Irene and Deane Kerbes on Saaremaa, 2007

Poetess Debora Vaarandi made Saaremaa's Midsummer Days famous with her poem "Saaremaa Waltz" which was later melodized by composer Raimond Valgre. The lyrics of this song are well known especially for Estonians and Finns, and George Ots's rendition is very popular. The song tells a story about a wonderful Midsummer Day on Saaremaa.

Midsummer Day as an enduring Estonian custom is of course much older than the song. On June 23, St John's Eve or Midsummer Eve, bonfires have always been lit. In coastal areas old boats or hulks were burnt in bonfires. It is popular custom to look for a "fern flower" at Midsummer Night. The finder will become rich and happy, and will know the languages of birds, animals and people. People have sometimes called glittering glow-worms the "fern-flowers". And they were looked for in the same way as fern-flowers were. It was believed that anyone who brings a glow-worm home will be happy, but someone who kills the worm will find his house on fire. Near Kaarma, Saaremaa, it was believed that if you find a horse-shoe before Midsummer Day and throw it over your head, you will be happy. Diligent farmers wanted to get most of



L to r: Irene Kerbes and Margaret (Kerbes) Pelto

their hay made and under shelter before Midsummer Day, as before that day the hay has honey in it, afterwards it has water. A Midsummer involves merry-making with homemade beer, accompanied by the traditional accordion and singing.



Waiting for Jaanipäev! Back row, L to r: Deane Kerbes, Margaret (Kerbes) Pelto, Irene Kerbes, Eldon Kerbes

Bonfires and Summer Solstice celebrations go hand in hand. It is the ideal time to gather for dancing and singing around bonfires together with good friends and relatives, and to sip the strong homemade beer of Saaremaa.

The Kerbes's, Deane, Irene, Margaret Pelto, and Eldon Kerbes saw the preparations on Saaremaa, but had previous plans to celebrate Midsummer Day in Tallinn with the Anstal family at Rocca La Mare near Tallinn. There were three parties on at one go!

I Remember

Jack A. Kulpas, Calgary, 1970

Jack Kulpas was born in 1901 in Pierre, South Dakota. The Erdman and Kulpas families moved to Barons in 1904. He owned the Ford Garage in Champion from 1928-1938 before moving to Lethbridge to work for Pyramid Motors. Jack and his wife Phyllis moved to Calgary in the mid-50s and retired in 1969. He died in 1981.



The Kulpas family: l to r: Mina, Robert, Anton and John (called Jack)

In 1904 and '05, the Barons district, which at that time was called Blayney, was homesteaded by the United Nations. There were Norwegians, Swedes, Finns, Estonians, Germans, 2 Swiss bachelors, and at least 1 Englishman. To my knowledge, there were 3 families from Eastern Canada and about 3 families who called themselves American.

This created a language problem as there were many who could only speak their native tongue, but in about 3 years almost everyone was able to swear in about 4 languages and speak a few words in 3.

The ability to swear in several languages helped a lot and you could get rid of frustrations much faster, but it sometimes could be embarrassing.

Just lately I was in a corner store which was operated by a very nice young Chinese lady whom I know very well. The price of some article had gone up and I swore at it in Chinese. I didn't know what the words meant, but I thought they were on the mild side,

as I had heard Chinese use them often.

She said, "You must not say that." So I asked her what it meant and she replied, "Oh, it's velly bad." It must have been very bad because she always spoke perfect English and never substituted 'I' for 'f'.

It was very necessary for people to be able to converse with one another for several reasons. The nearest doctor was 30 miles away, and with no cars or phones, we had to depend on Mr. Books and do-it-yourself doctors. However, there was very little sickness; probably due to the fact that people ate good food, drank pure water, had plenty of exercise, and kept regular hours.

I only know of one death in the first 5 years. He was a middle aged bachelor, and when we went to the funeral services held at his house, mother spotted a pile of cans and exclaimed, "No wonder he died. Look at all the tin cans!" Mother never owned a can opener and never served us anything out of a can.

There were babies born, and quite often my Grandma was asked to bring one of them into the world. In one case, neither of the parents-to-be could speak English and Grandma could only speak Estonian. I don't know what nationality they were, so we'll call them Swedes for short. There was no one around who could speak both Swedish and Estonian, so Grandma had to have 2 interpreters: one of my aunts translated from Estonian to English and another girl translated from English to Swedish - and vice-versa. Everything went fine and the new baby and mother came through as healthy as could be.

No one could rely on their own resources and no one tried except the Englishman who, at first, had a holier-than-thou attitude, until necessity broke down the barrier.

One day, he came over and asked Dad if he were going to Claresholm soon. Dad said he wasn't and asked why. The Englishman said he had bought a set of 'arness for the 'orse, but the collar didn't fit the 'orse's neck and he wanted to take it back and exchange it for the right one. Dad got curious and said he'd like to go over and see if he could do something about it.

The Englishman reluctantly accepted the favour, and Dad went with him. Dad asked him to put the collar on, which he did, but he put it on upside down. That way it didn't fit anything. Dad showed him how to harness a horse. The Englishman insisted that in England they put the buckle on the bottom, but Dad figured that he had never seen a horse until he came to Canada. The Englishman didn't take to pioneering and left after the first winter.

There was a Lutheran minister, who came occasionally from Medicine Hat, Reverend Sillak, who could speak about every language going. He always held his sermons at Erdman's. On one occasion, he preached a sermon in Estonian at 11:00 o'clock and immediately afterwards, he held one in German.

Mr. & Mrs. Allen, who couldn't speak a word in either language, sat through both sermons. When asked why, he said he liked to spend his Sunday in a house where God lived and he liked to hear the choir sing.

As far as the sermon went, he didn't miss anything anyway, as the minister always preached in the same pattern. He would read a line from the Bible, and then repeat it over and over for an hour. Every time he repeated it, he raised his voice a little and hit the pulpit a little harder. Toward the end of the sermon, he would be actually roaring and pounding the pulpit.

The law also moved in and we now had an R.C.M.P. and a magistrate. Some of the sentences handed out by the early magistrates were rather amusing. There was one case in a neighbouring town where a proprietor of a Chinese restaurant was charged with bootlegging. The court found him guilty and fined him \$200. Louie said, "It's too much, Mr. A __, and I won't pay it". So Mr. A __ said, after some consideration, "I still find you guilty but reduce the fine to \$100." Louie said, "A hundred dollars is still too much and I won't pay!" So the magistrate asked him what he considered a fair fine, and Louie said, "I'll pay \$50 cash and that is all."

So the magistrate said, "After duly considering all aspects of the case and the extenuating circumstances, I find you guilty and fine you \$50!" I don't know what happened, but that was the last case Mr. A __ tried. I guess he was too much of a horse trader to suit the establishment.

In the spring, things began to happen. Dad seeded his cultivated plot into wheat, potatoes, and all kinds of vegetables. Kirkendahls moved in and built their home across the road from us. And the best part was that they had a son, just my age, a playmate for me. August had 2 sisters and Lentsmans, who built just west of us, had 3 girls about the same age. We soon made friends and got together almost every day.

There were 7 of us, ranging from 5 to 7 years of age. Our favourite playground was at the small lake which was on Mr. Allen's place about a half mile from our respective homes. It was here, one day, that we got our first sex lesson. We watched a horse and a mare who had picked this lake for their mating spot and we got an idea for a new game. We called it 'playing horse'. Now horses didn't wear clothes so the

first thing to do was strip. So we went around on all fours, ate hay and drank slough water. Then occasionally we would chase the mares and climb on their backs, but after that we were lost because we didn't know what to do.

When I first saw August's sister in the nude, I thought she had been in a terrible accident and I asked August about it. He knew all about these things having had 2 sisters, and he explained that girls were made that way.

The very next day, this pastime came to an abrupt end. One of my peeping-Tom aunts decided to come and see what we were doing, and literally caught us with our pants down. She ordered us to dress ourselves and sent the girls home, and hinted that our parents were going to be told all about it Sunday after church.

The next day was Sunday, and as usual, the community met at Erdman's. The men always gathered outside and the women stayed in and drank tea. The children were put out to play.

August and I knew our horse game would be discussed so we stayed close to an open window and sure enough, my mean old aunt brought up the subject. Much of it was whispered and we could only make out that they were talking about us. Then they laughed and laughed, and then laughed some more. We were quite relieved, but not for long. My parents did not say anything to me about it, but the next morning I was told to go and see Grandma Erdman (Mari Erdman).¹

Grandma was the three star general in our family war department. I had only attended her Kangaroo court martial once before and the procedure was the same this time. First you had to sit in a chair while she got ready for the trial. In about what seemed to be an hour, she would appear carrying her large bible. Then she would sit directly in front of you, thumb through her bible and give you a stem look occasionally. Finally, after you got so uncomfortable that you were ready to cry, she would start her lecture. She always read appropriate passages from her big book, and ended by a veiled threat of fire and brimstone, forever here after. I was always allowed 2 words, namely "Yes, Grandma," or "I'm sorry." I would be too embarrassed to visit her for a week or so, but then the thought of her home-made fresh bread and donuts, etc. would win out and some afternoon I would wander over. She always treated me like nothing had happened and was her own friendly self again. The other kids got off easy: some got spanked and the girls were grounded indefinitely. This episode broke up our little gang and August and I began to pal together.

August and I wondered around and looked for wildlife. There was quite a variety; badgers, skunks, porcupines, gophers, rabbits, etc. I got too close to a porcupine once and discovered that the quills hurt more when they were being pulled out than they did going in. Bob (Robert) Erdman showed us how to make and use snares and immediately we started to snare every thing that went into a hole.

One day we saw a pretty black animal with a white stripe and a bushy tail. We thought that maybe we could catch him and take him home and make a pet out of it. We chased it until it disappeared into the badger hole. This hole wasn't very deep and we could hear him scratching just a little ways down. We decided to drown him out. I set my snare and August went for a pail of water.

August came back, set his own snare, also, and poured the water in. This monster came out immediately and sprayed both of us with something that smelled just awful. The house became out of bounds for me and after taking a bath (outside) and burying my clothes, I was instructed to get the saddle blanket and sleep in the haystack. August got the same treatment. After the first night, August joined me in the haystack and things didn't go too badly. I guess it was at least a week before I was allowed in the house again.

I had my sixth birthday about this time, and when the weather got cold enough to curtail outdoor activities, the Establishment decided I should start my education. As there was no school and no known prospects of one, there was only one answer. Mother became the school marm with the first lessons being reading and writing in Estonian. As soon as August's parents heard about this, they asked my mother if August could join me. We learned fast and soon mother decided to have us read while she did the chores, so we were put to reading the Bible; for 2 reasons. One was because that was the only Estonian book we had and the other reason was that we needed the religious education as someday we would be confirmed into the Lutheran Church. I eventually read the Bible from cover to cover.



Jack Kulpas in his Calgary garden, 1981

Dad became our English professor and Mother became a student. We also added arithmetic and geography. The education carried on for 2 years and then Wheatland Centre School was opened up. I must have had good teaching because I covered 3 grades in the first year, and started my second year in grade 4.

When I first started school, I ran into trouble. I had to walk 2 and half miles to school and there was a family of 5 kids who lived about a mile from the school who used the same road I had to take for the last mile. They decided it was fun to beat me up on my way home. I used to get out of school as fast as I could and get out of range, but they usually caught me, roughed me up and then went home. Then August started school and I told him what was going on and we mapped out our plan of action. We were on our way home when those same 2 kids took after us. We ran our best for a ways, just to draw them a safe distance from their big brothers, and then let them catch us. We turned and gave them a real good beating. I guess they hadn't realized that the odds had changed. We were never bothered after that.

At school, there was a little fat girl who sat in the desk in front of me. She had a habit of throwing her head back and her long straggly, unkept hair would fall on my desk, depositing white specks and sometimes little ugly grey varmint who slowly crawled about until I swept them off.

I didn't know what they were, but finally my head became itchy and my mother noticed me continually scratching. She investigated and I was pronounced lousy. The treatment was combing with a fine tooth comb and frequent washing. This was not successful in getting rid of the lice and mother started shampooing my hair with kerosene. This worked, but nearly burnt my scalp off. The culprit and her sister were finally found out and expelled from school. That summer they moved away, so we never saw them again.

Sometime later, August and I followed a load of lumber on our way home, when a package of what we thought was candy fell off the top of the wagon. The label said MacDonalds Cut Plug and there were 6 bars of it, which we started to eat immediately. This was chewing tobacco and a regular user would take an occasional chew, chew it to a pulp and spit it out. It had quite a sweet molasses taste with a tang to it. We managed 2 bars apiece before we became deathly sick. I managed to make it home, laid down in front of the house, vomited, and thought I was going to die. To make matters worse, I didn't tell my mother the cause of my sickness at first, but when I became sure I was going to die, I broke down and told her. This eased her mind somewhat and by next morning, I was back to normal. Mother said it was God's way of punishing me for not returning the tobacco to the man when I saw it fall off the wagon. I was wondering how the other kids got away with some of the bad things they did and I came to the conclusion that God had a full time job watching me and the only time He caught anyone else was when He was moonlighting.

Along with the rest of the community, we were evolving out of the dark ages. We were now cooking with wood and coal. Kerosene lamps took the place of home-made candles, and we had added some modern appliances such as a deluxe wash board that had a neat little gadget on it where Mother could keep her home-made bar of laundry soap. Dad bought a half section from the Hudson's Bay Co. for \$8.00 per acre. This was adjacent to the east side of the homestead. It was on

this property that we built our new house.

Our new house was as good as any in the neighbourhood: 2-story, 3-bedroom, with a full basement. The living room and kitchen were very large rooms. Everybody built big living rooms, as we and everyone else had a lot of company in those days. No radio, no cinema, no telephone, or TV; people got acquainted with their neighbours. Sing-along singing was a favourite pastime.

Bill Alexander built a barn with full-sized hayloft and started holding barn dances on Friday nights and sometimes oftener. On those occasions, everybody went and the music was supplied from the local amateur talent. There was always an abundance of this, which varied in quality, but was always loud. There was an assortment of instruments; violins, a banjo, a couple of trumpets and a few which I had never seen before and haven't seen since. Even our washboard was put to use. There were always such small instruments as harmonicas and Jews harps and some of the boys were very good on these. There was one man who was a first class square dance caller.

Then one night, when the whole community was gathered for the usual barn dance, Bill Alexander proudly displayed the eighth wonder of the world.

It was a little box with a handle on the side and a great big horn on it. He inserted a black tube on top of it and turned the handle for a while. While everyone listened in awed silence, the thing started emitting sounds that sounded like it was trying to say something about his master's voice, and then went into screeching sort of a tune that faintly resembled the current hits of the times. First it sounded like Pop Goes the Weasel, and then finished up with Pony Boy. The phonograph wasn't loud enough for dancing, and anyway, who wanted to dance when there was this novelty to listen to.

We were very busy that summer. We moved into the new house. Then one day, about 10 men with their families came over and fenced in about 10 acres and built a hen house. These work bees happened quite often in the early days. They made an outing out of it. The women cooked up a real feast and the keg of beer always helped.

The next step was to dig a well. Dad was the big chief of all water witchers. He used a forked willow branch and I never saw him fail. He could tell you where and how deep the water was and, in most cases, the volume.

He couldn't find water close to the house. He estimated the underground stream which he located about 100 yards from the house to be 60' to 70' below the surface, but about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the house, he found a place where he estimated the water to be

about 20' down., so we started to dig there. One good thing about digging on the prairie was that the sub-soil was clay and there was no danger of cave-ins.

After 3 days of work, we hit water at 18', and it came within 10 feet of the top. And it was good water. The only thing wrong was that it was too far from the house.

We didn't have to use the well for a fridge any more because Dad built a dumb waiter, which took care of such things as butter, milk, etc. We also boasted a new kitchen range with a high warming oven and everything. The dirt basement was as good as a root cellar, and vegetables of all sorts kept from one crop to the next, and we always had a barrel of dill pickles. Dill included cukes, cauliflowers, green tomatoes, and small carrots. Peas, beans, and beets were preserved in jars, as were saskatoons and chokecherry jam. There was lots of sauerkraut. We ate well in those days, as we had our own milk, eggs, meat, etc.

The next stupendous event was the advent of the telephone. At first there were only 5 on this party line. Everybody had their own signal; ours was 2 long rings. There was no reason for these signals because it didn't matter what the signal was, everybody ran for the phone and listened in anyway.



Jack Kulpas, Calgary, 1981

Note: "The Kulpas family (except Jack) changed their name to NewDay. Mom (Ellen Johnson) thought it was in 1901, when they came to North America, but Betty says in her story that it was in 1929 when Anton became a citizen of the United States."

Barbara Gullickson

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Rhubarb: a perennial spring favorite

Spring has officially arrived when a thick patch of rhubarb returns to the back garden. The rosy red stalks with their large, bright green leaves can be seen everywhere in yards, alleys and farmer's markets. Rhubarb is a perennial plant, thought to originate from the Volga River region more than 2000 years ago. Initially it was harvested and cultivated as an ornamental plant and for its medicinal qualities. Although a vegetable from the buckwheat family, it is most often prepared as fruit in desserts, cakes and jams. Rhubarb is used in numerous Estonian recipes because it grows in yards throughout the country and is one of the first garden plants to ripen in the spring. And it is delicious!

Strawberry-Rhubarb Layer Cake

This layer cake filled with strawberry-rhubarb compote and whipped cream makes an elegant springtime dessert. Because of the tartness of the rhubarb and the small amount of sugar in the cake, it's not overly sweet.

10 to 12 servings

Layer Cake:

16 tbsp. (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 c. granulated sugar

4 eggs

1 tbsp. vanilla extract

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. all-purpose flour

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ c. milk

Compote:

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds rhubarb, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. granulated sugar

2 lbs. fresh strawberries, sliced (about 4 cups), plus additional for garnish

1 tsp. fresh lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground nutmeg

Whipped Cream:

2 c. heavy cream

6 tbsp. confectioners' sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease two 9-inch round pans and line with parchment paper. To make the cake, using an electric mixer cream the butter until light. Beat in the sugar until the mixture is fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time and add the vanilla. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. On low speed, slowly add the flour mixture to the batter. Mix in the

milk. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared pans. Bake for 30 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Cool the cakes in the pans on racks for about 20 minutes. Turn out the cakes onto the racks and cool completely.

To make the compote, combine the rhubarb, sugar, and 1 tbsp. of water in a medium-size saucepan. Bring to boil. Reduce the heat, cover and cook for approximately 2 minutes. Add the strawberries and lemon juice and cook for 2 to 3 more minutes or until the rhubarb is tender. Stir in the vanilla and nutmeg. Chill.

To make the whipped cream, beat the cream, sugar, and vanilla until stiff peaks form.

To assemble the cake, carefully slice each cake into two layers. Put one layer on a serving plate. Top with one-third of the compote, then one-quarter of the whipped cream. Top with a layer of cake, more compote and cream. Repeat. Top with the last cake layer, cut side down. Cover the cake and chill for at least 1 hour, or up to 1 day.

To serve, top the cake with the remaining whipped cream. Add sliced strawberries for garnish.

* NOTE: This cake keeps very well for up to 4 days.

The Arctic Adventures of August Masik

Dave Küll

“There is no man who has been with me in my Arctic work in a non-scientific capacity whom I would rather have with me again” (excerpt of a formal letter of discharge from Vilhjamur Stefansson, Commander, Canadian Arctic Expedition, 1919.



August (Gus) Masik with his dog team

Who was August Maasik (Masik) you may ask?

August (Gus) was born in Torma County, Estonia in 1888. His father was an overseer of about 3000 acres of farmland and forest to a Baltic Baron near the Russian border.

As a youngster, he had a fight with his sister Anna, causing her to fall on a samovar and capsizing it. His father told him to go outside to gather some birch branches for a good thrashing. On the way, he divulged his predicament to a cowherd friend who told him to take dry branches from an old tree so they wouldn't last long. When he got home with the branches his father stuck them in hot water for five minutes to get them really supple. Having told his son to take down his trousers, the father just gave one stroke and was left with a stump in his hand!

At 15 years of age he graduated from school and decided that he didn't want to further his education. His father sent him to Courland to become a cheese-maker at a big dairy farm. The work was hard and he became very strong. To add to August's problems, a married

woman on the farm, about twice his age, tried to seduce him.

A short time later, at the tender age of 17, Gus left his family and started a life of adventure, initially in Riga, Latvia at a time of the 1905 revolution involving strikes and much unrest between workers and owners. Wanting to escape the turmoil, he journeyed to England, Holland and eventually ended up in Nassau, Florida, New Orleans, New York, Texas, San Francisco, Seattle and finally, Ketchikan, Alaska.

A few days after arriving in Ketchikan, Gus volunteered to fight a local wrestling hero whose opponent didn't arrive for the match. The hero of Ketchikan, a fellow by the name of Myers, boasted that if Gus lasted against him for ten minutes in a "catch as catch can" wrestling match he would give him 100 dollars. Gus, wrestling in borrowed tights, managed to have Myers's shoulders flat on the mat in no time at all!

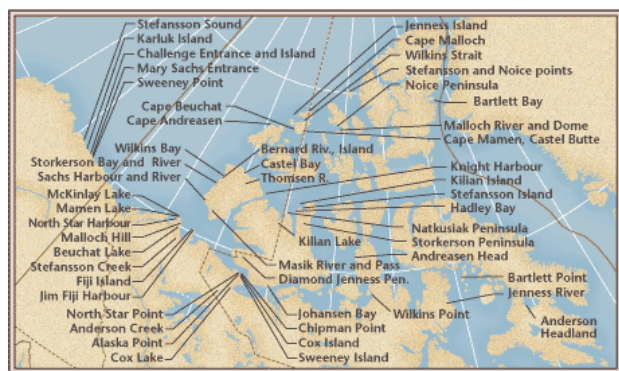
In 1912, Gus took the White Pass Railroad to Whitehorse, Yukon. From there he walked 250 miles in -35 degree weather to Dawson. Even with road-houses about 20 miles apart, this was a challenging journey. Gus made the trip with two Scots who did not much like each other. One of them stopped after reaching half-way to the first roadhouse and rescued a whisky bottle from his pack! The threesome had a little of the spirit, after which Gus smashed the bottle against a tree. North of Carmacks and only thirty miles from their destination, the men ran out of funds, except for a few dollars saved for a warm bunk-bed at the end of their long walk. When Gus informed the land-lady at the last roadhouse about the lack of funds to pay for their overnight stay, she turned around and said: "No man leaves this house without breakfast, money or no money." After breakfast, Gus paid the landlady from the last few dollars he had saved for Dawson, leaving him without funds for their arrival at the end of a difficult trip. Gus stayed in the Dawson area and worked on several gold-mining operations at Gold

Creek and claimed he “was making money so fast he didn’t know what to do with it.”

At the start of WWI Gus ventured to Old Crow in northern Yukon near the State of Alaska. By this time, he had tried his hand at being a fisherman, miner, sailor, prospector, trapper and trader. He was well known throughout the Arctic and highly respected.

In 1917, he joined the Canadian Arctic Expedition (CAE), (1913-1918) under Commander Vilhjalmur Stefansson. He served as a 2nd Officer of the Canadian Government research ship Polar Bear, and as First Mate on another ship Challenge, two of the four vessels attached to the Expedition. He was a member of a party that accomplished the longest trip over the ocean-ice made by the Canadian Arctic Expedition. The CAE discovered four new islands and re-mapped several others, including Banks and Victoria Islands.

An important role of the Expedition was to establish Canadian sovereignty over these Arctic lands. The attached map shows all place names created by the CAE, and features names in honor of Expedition members during and after the expedition. Masik River and Pass bear his name on the map of the western Arctic, indicating that he was the first man to trek through the area.



Map of the Canadian Arctic. “Masik River and Pass” on Banks Island – shown near the middle and one-third from the bottom of the map.

As a trader, Masik ventured on an extended trip to the Kamchatka Peninsula and Karaginski Island in Russia. The latter place was reputed to have populations of blue and black foxes but they appeared to have died of starvation the previous year. A local church, with open doors, was full of fox manure as the starving animals had eaten everything edible, “even the cover of the Holy Bible had teeth marks on it!” It was a time when

the Reds and the Whites were still battling for supremacy in the Anadyr and Vladivostok regions, although the Reds were pretty much in control. Some traders in the area “were Red when the Reds were in, and White when the Whites were in.”

Masik also joined a group of traders who wanted to salvage the Polar Bear stranded at the mouth of the Kolyma River in Siberia. He wintered there in 1921-22, doing some repair work on the schooner and running a trap-line under permit from the Communists. Even so, there were incidents between the Reds and Whites at various locations, with arrests, overthrow of local governments, and frontier-type shootings.

In the mid-20s, Gus “fell in” with a lady dentist who wanted to make a trip from Nome to Nenana “practising on the way”. With dental equipment, the sled weighed in well over 1,000 pounds! Along the route, the lady got quite a bit of dental work done. She didn’t have a dental chair so Gus had to hold the heads of her patients and she called it his “the magic touch!” He even learned how to make crowns during this medical expedition.



Gus Masik and his dog team

A Miss Hutchison, a Scottish botanist, ventured on a decade-long journey from Norway to the Aleutian Islands between 1927-1936. In 1933, she reached Alaska to make collections of wild flowers for the Kew Herbarium in London, England.

She arrived in Nome, Alaska in late summer and wanted to proceed eastward. At the time only one trader, Gus Masik and his fifteen-ton schooner, Hazel, was still proceeding in an eastwardly direction to Martin Point, about 120 miles from Hershel Island, where he had a trading station. Having agreed to take her to his cabin, Gus declared that “It’s rough, but I can promise you that you’ll be treated like a lady....” Having arrived at the trading post, Miss Hutchinson suggested that she set up her camp-bed in the canvas-roofed entry with the dogs didn’t sit well with Gus. So her camp bed was set up in the corner opposite his own home-made wooden bunk in the cabin’s single room, with only a curtain of Miss Hutchison’s travelling tent making a kind of a cubicle!

It was in this single-room trading post that Miss Hutchinson reproduced Gus’s stories just as she received them, save the amendments to his American - English with a foreign accent, and the softened expletives!

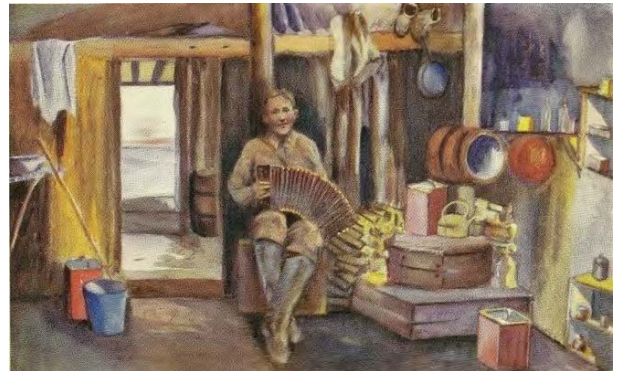


Gus Masik's Cabin at Martin Point

Isobel spent the Arctic Night of 1933-34 in Gus Masik's cabin near Martin Point. They travelled extensively throughout the region, and Gus's four fine dogs, Joe, Billy, Whitie, and Dick reportedly logged 5,000 miles during a four-year period, Gus was one of the most travelled “dog-mushers” in Alaska-probably the most travelled north of the Arctic Circle-with more than 25,000 miles by dog-team.

Gus, or Kasaluk (Big Fellow) as he was called by the natives, told his story reclining on his bed with his hands clasped behind his head. After a night of

storytelling, Gus would launch into a “merry jig of



Gus Masik in his cabin

concertina sounds out over the snows” or pick upon “some old Estonian dance or song from the land of his birth.”



Miss Isobel Hutchinson with “Whitie”, ca 1934

Source material and photo credits: Arctic Nights' Entertainments by August Masik and Isobel W. Hutchison. Blackie and Son Limited, London and Glasgow, 1935

Saaga: how to grow your family tree

Dave Kiil

Sagas are medieval Nordic stories of battles, social customs, family histories and legends. Thus the selection of the word Saaga as a name of the Estonian family history website is appropriate.

My interest in family history research blossomed in the 1990s following several trips to Estonia. Having found the headstones of early ancestors in the Kihelkonna Cemetery on Saaremaa, I returned home and visited the Family History Centre of the Mormon Church in Edmonton. Unexpectedly, I discovered that

records of the Lutheran Church and other information about my ancestors was stored on microfilm in Salt Lake City and available for viewing. Over a few years and many hours in front of a microfilm reader, a computer monitor and personal contact with many relatives and researchers, I have accumulated valuable information about my ancestors.

A new era for genealogists opened up during the first few years of the 21st Century with the launch of the Saaga website by the Estonian Historical Archives (EHA). The first digital records, based on material stored at the EHA in Tartu, became available in 2004, and the data base continues to grow.

This research can now be done in the comfort of one's home by logging on to www.eha.ee/saaga/. Before gaining access to the parish registries, census records (hinge loengud), and other related information, the user must complete a straightforward registration procedure with User Name and Password. Once you've gained access to the searchable database, you can familiarize yourself with the website Content, the Saaga Project, Source Categories and Search procedures in Estonian and/or help-text in English. The Source Categories section provides a list of record titles in both Estonian and English.

The same page lists the three primary categories of information by source



categories, namely:

- 1) Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church (EELK),
- 2) Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (EAÕK),
- 3) Wacka-books

By clicking on any of these categories, new pages will open to reveal lists of over 120 Parishes under each of the first two Categories. The Parishes are listed in numerical order, followed by the name of the congregation.

Selected Congregation listings:

236 Tallinna Oleviste kogudus
1253 EELK Tartu Jaani kogudus
1270 EELK Urvaste kogudus
3134 EELK Kihelkonna kogudus

Examples of Congregation listings

Search aides can help you find the name of a Parish provided you know the name of the municipality where your ancestors lived. Once the user opens the information page for a specific Parish, it is possible to click on numerous options, usually listed by the type of archival record and the period covered by each. The resulting pages of images can also be viewed in PDF format and printed for your records. The downloading of each page is slow but doable from the comfort of your home or library.

Familiarization with website contents, the terminology used, and appreciation of basic

research techniques will prove helpful in navigating the searchable data base. In some instances a rudimentary knowledge of Gothic Script, Russian and Estonian would be an asset. The layout and format of the basic records and forms are quite similar, and most search-related difficulties can be overcome with dedication and recognition of recurring headings.

The following list under Source Categories in the “Sitemap” gives some basic English titles and their corresponding meaning in Estonian.

List of Record Titles

Parish register of births - Sünnimetrika

Parish register. Births, engagements, banns, marriages, deaths, communicants, confirmands-
Kirikuraamat. Sünnid, kihlad, mahakuulutused, abiellumised, surmad, armulaualised, leerilapsed.

List of confirmands-Leerilaste nimekiri

Parish register of marriages-
Abielumetrika

Parish register of deaths-Surmameetrika

Parish member list, German
congregation-Personaalraamat, Saksa
pihtkond pihtkond

Parish member list, Estonian
congregation-Personaalraamat, Eesti
Pihtkond

Selected list of bilingual record titles

KUMU Elected European Museum of the Year

Estonian KUMU Art Museum given title European Museum of the Year.



KUMU Art Museum, Tallinn

According to the European Museum Forum the jury made the decision due to its role in the creation of Estonia's national identity.

There are nearly 60 museums taking part in the contest every year.



Another view of KUMU Art Museum

KUMU, which has a total floor area of 23,910 square meters and was designed by the Finnish architect Pekka Vapaavuori, was opened to the public on February 18, 2006.

Source of Kumu images: website

Estonian 15-year-olds score high in learning skills

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an internationally standardized assessment that was jointly developed by participating countries and administered to 15-year-olds in schools.



The survey was implemented in 43 countries in the 1st assessment in 2000, in 41 countries in the second assessment in 2003 and in 57 countries in the 3rd assessment in 2006. Sixty-two countries have signed up to participate in the 4th assessment in 2009.

Tests are typically administered to between 4,500 and 10,000 students in each country. Besides reading, math and science skills, the test also assesses beliefs and attitudes towards learning.

The top performer in science in PISA 2006 was Finland, followed by Hong Kong-China, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Estonia, Japan and New Zealand. Finland and Estonia were the two top performers in Europe!

Source : Economic News

Public WiFi-covered areas number 1151 in Estonia.

There are currently 1,151 WiFi wireless Internet-covered areas meant for public use in Estonia, data available from the wifi.ee portal shows. Harju County, which includes the capital Tallinn, has 418 wifi –covered areas cleared as public by the portal, 365 of which are situated in Tallinn.

The first public WiFi-covered area was opened in Estonia in May 2001. WiFi (Wireless Fidelity) is the only standard of wireless data communication that has integrated into the Linux., Windows and Apple operating systems.

Editors note: as of May 10, 2008, there are 1162 wifi portals in Estonia.

From Estonian Review Dec. 9, 2007.

NATO creates cyber- defense team

Largely because of unprecedented cyberattacks on Estonia during the Spring of 2007, NATO has now created a Cyber Defense Management Authority in order to help the 26 member states during future cyber attacks. Further, NATO has established a cybercenter of excellence in Estonia as another part of its cybersecurity program.

Submitted by Helgi Leesment

Estonian Ambassador to Canada Presents Credentials

Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia to Canada Väino Reinert presented his credentials to Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean on Wednesday, 21 May, 2008.

The Ambassadors office is located in Washington, DC and his geographical areas of responsibility extend to the United States, Canada and Mexico. Over the past few years, Albertans have met in turn the three Estonian Charge d’Affaires based in

Ottawa: Sulev Roostar, Argo Kiiinemäe and Rasmus Lumi. The position of Charge d’Affaires in Canada reports to the Estonian Ambassador in the United States, currently the newly-appointed Väino Reinart.

In discussion following the credentials presentation ceremony, Reinart and Jean discussed the state of Estonia-Canada bilateral relations, including opportunities for co-operation within international organizations, as well as European Union-Canada relations.



***Governor General Michaëlle Jean and
Ambassador Väino Reinert.***

Governor General Jean and Ambassador Reinert acknowledged that Estonia-Canada relations have been good throughout history. Over the years Canada became home for many Estonians that were forced to leave Estonia following World War II. Canada and Estonia participate in many joint international operations, including in the southern part of Afghanistan.

Before assuming his position in Washington, Reinert was Estonia’s Ambassador to the European Union.

Ambassador Väino Reinart was presented with a copy of “Alberta’s Estonians” DVD during a reception for Estonian President Toomas Ilves at Toronto’s Estonian House, May 27, 2008.

Estonia Opens Embassy in Virtual World

Estonia opened an embassy in the internet-based virtual world Second Life on Tuesday, 4 December, 2007. Estonia is the third country to open an embassy in Second Life.

According to Foreign Minister Urmas Paet, more and more of communication goes on internet, and Estonia must keep up with the trend. "Second Life's popularity as an alternative environment for interaction has grown rapidly, which is why we decided to establish an embassy there," Paet added.

Art exhibits, concerts, lectures and other events will be organised in the embassy. The first lecture, entitled "Back to the future," will be given in January by Estonian Ambassador to Great Britain Margus Laidre.

According to Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry Matti Maasikas, several other countries are planning to open virtual embassies in Second Life, which means that the prominence of Second Life is growing in diplomatic circles. "We expect people interested in Estonia, as well as people interested in foreign relations and foreign policy, to participate in events at the embassy," said Maasikas.

The virtual embassy has a conference room, exhibition room, reception hall and a technology room, where Estonia as an e-nation is introduced. Visitors to the Estonian embassy will hear current news read by an Estonian hound.

In honour of the 90th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia, the embassy will display the exhibit "Blue-black-white in Estonian painting". There will

also be other materials dedicated to the anniversary on display.

The virtual representation was born under the leadership of the Foreign Ministry. The State Chancellery and the Estonian Informatics Centre made significant contributions, and there were many volunteer helpers as well. The project is being implemented by consultation firm Hill & Knowlton.

*Source: Spokesman's Office
pressitalitus@mfa.ee
Submitted by Helgi Leesment*

Schengen Visa Space

The land and maritime borders of nine countries-Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia opened on 21 December, 2007, as they acceded to the Schengen visa space.

The events to mark the Schengen enlargement took place at Port of Tallinn's D-Terminal with the presence of Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen and other representatives of the Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic governments.

*Estonian Review
December 21, 2007*



Future Events: 2009

Anu Tali Coming to Edmonton

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, as part of it's Midweek Classics, will feature Estonian conductor Anu Tali on Wednesday, April 14, 2009.

The concert will include: Mozart-Eine kleine Nachtmusik and Mendelssohn-Symphony no. 3 "Scottish."



"One of the most intriguing young conductors on the scene today, Anu Tali belongs to a new generation of artists who are searching for fresh musical ideas in the classical music world" (HarrisonParrott).

Anu Tali possesses an amazing combination of talent and beauty. She is in full command of her own orchestra, the Nordic Symphony Orchestra. "Today, the NSO has members from 15 countries, bringing together musicians from the world's leading orchestras." She has guest conducted orchestras in Finland, Sweden, Germany, Russia, Japan and the United States, to name a few.

Estonian Song and Dance Celebration

The next Estonia-wide Song and Dance Celebration is in Tallinn from July 2-5, 2009.

"The Estonian Song and Dance Celebration is a true Estonian holiday, the Holy Day of the Heart"



The Celebration's a great spiritual feast, a tradition not to be missed. It is a "mythical ship of joy and hope, a ship that has proved to be capable of carrying one nation over the most dangerous, most difficult rocks of time."

West Coast Estonian Days

The West Coast Estonian Days will be held in Seattle, Washington State from August 26-30, 2009, hosted by the University of Washington.



Toronto based rock band with Estonian members Jaan Kittask and Markus Saks gets cool reviews on its first CD

The I Spies

Band Members: Johnny Kay (Jaan Kittask), James Robertson, Markus Saks, Steve Payne



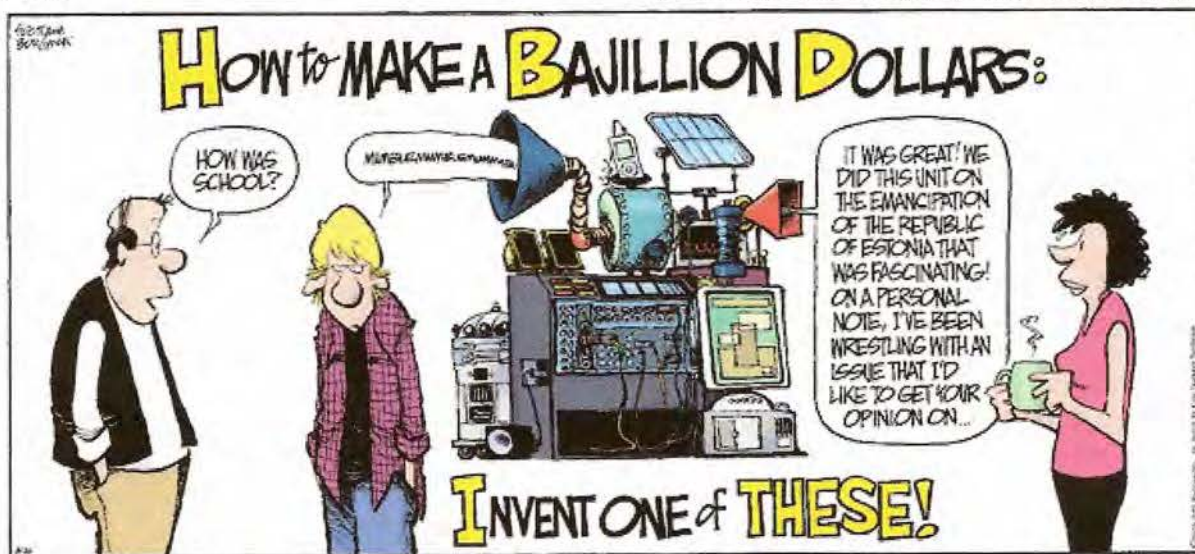
The I Spies began in 2003 as four young musicians experimenting with angular riffs and new wave hooks, inspired by the likes of The Police and Elvis Costello and by the attitudes of bands like The Clash and XTC. Recently, The I Spies have gelled. They are more than the sum of their influences. Their energetic and fiery pop songs translate flawlessly into high energy live performances.

Released independently and distributed nationwide by Fontana North, 'In the Night' is The I Spies' full-length debut. The I Spies breed an imposing sound. Robertson's layered guitar grit scuzzes-up Kay's strong pop rants, while Payne's infectious bass melodies race alongside Saks' machine gun percussion. Organs and synths pulse in and out. The music is urgent and abrasive; big and fresh; hook-laden and filler-free. Armed with a clear agenda and a stunning record, The I Spies are ready to infiltrate.

More information: <http://theispies.com> or <http://myspace.com/theispies>

ZITS

BY JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



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A translation machine!!

Film reveals how Estonians sang to achieve freedom

Kate Blain

“What role can singing play when a nation is faced with annihilation by its neighbours?”

According to filmmakers James and Maureen Tusty, singing saved the country of Estonia from extinction. The above question begins their new documentary about the history of that Baltic nation, titled “The Singing Revolution.”

The film has opened to positive reviews at independent theatres in both New York City and Los Angeles. Reviewer Matt Zoller Seitz of the New York Times advised readers to “Imagine the scene in ‘Casablanca’ in which French patrons sang ‘La Marseillaise’ in defiance of the Germans, then multiply its power by a factor of thousands, and you’ve only begun to imagine the force of “The Singing Revolution.”

Inspiration

The Tustys have been making commercials, educational programs and corporate films since 1981 through their company, Mountain View Productions. “The Singing Revolution” is their first documentary.

The subject matter inspired them because of their own history: Mr. Tusty’s father, a Lutheran minister, immigrated to the U.S. from Estonia in 1924. Through that connection, the couple got the chance to teach summer filmmaking courses in Estonia in 1999 and 2001—during which they learned the tumultuous story of Estonia’s fight for independence.

Folk singing is an intrinsic part of Estonia’s history; Mrs. Tusty, a native of Wynantskill who was raised in St. Jude’s parish there, asserted that the tradition even pre-dates the country’s introduction to Christianity.



Song festivals have been such popular events that Estonians from the 19th century onward would practice songs all winter, then gather by the tens of thousands to sing together at the festivals.

Silenced songs

One such festival, “Laulupidu,” was founded in 1869,

drawing upwards of 30,000 singers at a time to the stage. Held every five years, the festival—and Estonia—flourished until 1939.

Then Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin signed the Molotov/Rippentrop Pact, dividing Eastern Europe into “spheres of influence.” Soon, the Soviets marched into Estonia, executing thousands of Estonians and sending 10,000 more to slave labor camps in Siberia.

The Nazis took their turn in 1941, occupying Estonia for several years and imposing their own brand of suffering until they were ousted by Stalin once more.

Communist rule

Under the renewed Soviet rule, anything originally Estonian was destroyed—even the country’s flag was banned.

Soviet propaganda infiltrated even the song festivals, where traditional folk songs were replaced by songs honouring Stalin and Lenin. But, in 1969, a new song slipped by the censors: “Land of my Fathers, Land that I Love,” by composer Gustav Ernesaks.

It was the 100th anniversary of the major song festival, and 30,000 people sang it together as a protest of the Soviets, drowning out all attempts to stop them.

“Land of my Fathers” became Estonia’s unofficial national anthem—and the theme song of a revolution that would eventually lead to the country’s independence in 1991.

Getting word out

The rest of the story awaits movie-goers, who can sign up at the film’s website to ask that it be shown in their areas. Mrs. Tusty noted that theatre owners take such lists seriously in choosing which films to screen.

Having spent several years making the film, she said, the coming year will be focussed on distribution.

The Tustys filmed the modern footage for “The Singing Revolution” in 2004 during two trips to Estonia, one of them during the song festival. Having heard the personal stories of those whose families lived through the Soviet and Nazi occupations during previous visits, the couple had made it a goal to spread the story beyond the Baltic nation’s borders.

Repression

“During Soviet times, people weren’t allowed to express their religion. You couldn’t even have a Christmas tree,” said Mrs. Tusty.

Although Estonia’s true history was taught at home, she continued, children were also taught never to share what they had learned with others. At school, children might be convinced to repeat things their parents had said, resulting in their parent’s arrest for anti-Soviet remarks.

The Tusty’s own daughter, Skyler, was born during the years in which they were editing the film footage. Looking at the sleeping infant as she worked, Mrs. Tusty said she was appalled at the “evilness [of] using children in that way.”

Courage

On the other hand, the couple were inspired by the courage of Estonians who continued to sing forbidden songs as a step toward independence.

The same population came together to form political alliances—some radical groups, others middle-of-the-

road—that created a new government for Estonia and overthrew the occupiers.

Mrs. Tusty still seems amazed as she describes the country’s history: “They did it. They took the actions, and they stood in the fields, not knowing what was going to happen—100,000 people in a field, singing illegal songs.”

Estonia today

Mrs. Tusty said that, when she and her husband have attended screenings and offered to answer questions afterward, movie-goers have much to ask about Estonia. Most of all, people want to know what the country is like today.

“Estonia is a vibrant and dynamic country now. Its nickname is “the Baltic Tiger,” Mrs. Tusty declared. “It’s a beautiful place to visit. The people are embracing their freedom.”

She added that seeing faith of those who fought Soviet oppression caused her and her husband to evaluate their own faith.

“I would sit across from someone, interviewing them about being deported to Siberia,” she recalled. “The opportunity to even meet these people and be given this perspective made me think, “What do I believe? What would I have clung to? Would I even have survived?”

“These people held onto their core and never, ever lost sight of that. It forces you to look at your own faith and recommit.”

(Mrs. Tusty hopes “The Singing Revolution” will be screened in Albany in the spring. When it finishes its theatrical run, the movie will be available for purchase on DVD. Learn more at www.singingrevolution.com. Mountain View Productions website is www.mvgt.com.)

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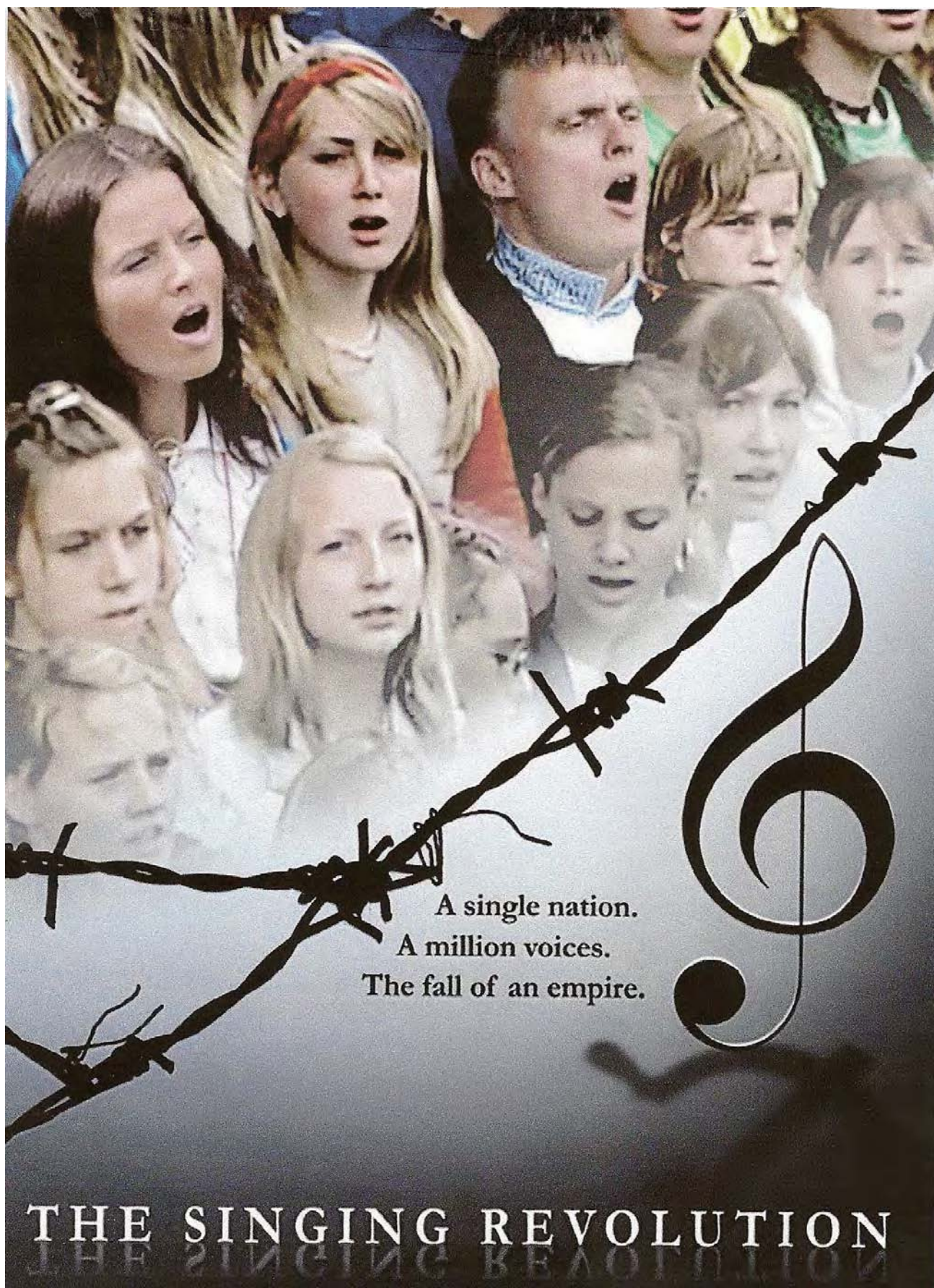
Editor’s Note: At the time of writing, The Singing Revolution was scheduled for screening at the Princess Theatre in Edmonton and the Globe Theatre in Calgary, June 20-26, 2008.

Photo credit: Estonian Song Festival website

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

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A single nation.
A million voices.
The fall of an empire.

THE SINGING REVOLUTION