

AJAKAJA

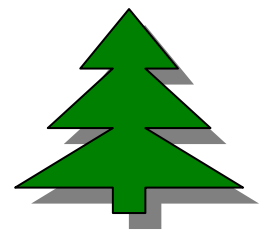
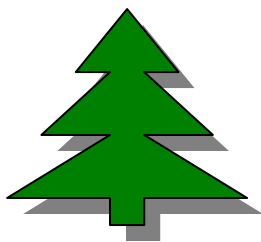
Winter 2008, Volume 29



Alberta Estonian Heritage Society



An Estonian winter scene: Painting by Vitaly Kuprijanow:



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.

BOARD

President -Executive	Bob Kingsep	(403)-949-4249
Vice-President-Executive	Helgi Leesment	(403)-217-0515
Treasurer-Executive.....	Toomas Pääsuke.....	(403)-678-0737
Secretary-Executive	Jüri Kraav	(403)-257-5690
Membership convener.....	Peter Asmus.....	(403)-295-0291
..... e-mail: asmusp@shaw.ca		
Website committee convener	Bob Kingsep	(403)-949-4249
Ajakaja Editor	Eda McClung	(780)-452-2712
Communications	Dave Kiil	(780)-988-0019

DIRECTORS - AT - LARGE:

Edmonton area.....	Eda McClung(403)-742-3527
Calgary area.....	Vacant	
Gilby	Allan Posti	(403)-746-3571
Stettler	Deane Kerbes	(403)-742-3527
Barons/Medicine Hat.....	Martha Munz Gue.....	(403)-526-2226
Barons/Medicine Hat.....	Barbara Gullickson	(403)-757-2229

COMMITTEES

Past President/Nominations	Bob Tipman.....	(403)-263-9447
Membership.....	Helgi leesment	(403)-217-0515
AjaKaja, Calgary area.....	Helgi Leesment.....	(403)-217-0515
AjaKaja, Eckville area.....	Jack Pallo	
AjaKaja, Medicine Hat/Barons.....	Barbara Gullickson	(403)-757-2229
AjaKaja, Stettler area.....	Astrid Ustina	(780)-486-5498
Website committee	Peter Asmus.....	(403)-295-0291
Website committee	Lorne Hennel.....	(403)-274-6583
Website committee	Jüri Kraav	(403)-257-5690
Website committee	Helgi Leesment.....	(403)-217-0515
Chair, Jaanipäev 2009	Ron Hennel.....	(403)-742-3980

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
--

Members and friends are encouraged to submit articles, photographs, heritage-related items and commercial advertising Advertising rates: \$50.00 half - page; \$100.00 full page. Please submit material to Eda McClung at emcclung@shaw.ca

Front Cover: Painting by Vitaly Kuprijanow depicts a winter scene in rural Estonia. The artist is the father of well-known portrait and landscape artist Galina Koddo.



AJAKAJA

Alberta Estonian
Heritage Society

**Winter 2008
Volume 29**

Letter from the Editors

If you're looking for Estonian roots, this is a banner year. Major Estonian cultural celebrations and festivals will take place in Estonia, Germany, the United States and Alberta. As eloquently stated by the organizers of next year's celebration in Tallinn: "In 2009 another Estonian family reunion-our own Song and Dance Celebration-will take place." Held every five years, the upcoming festival will be the 25th time that the nation comes together to celebrate a sense of belonging. Introduced to a global audience in the highly acclaimed film *The Singing Revolution*, the 2009 Festival has shown that a country can sing its way to freedom.

Another major event, the Biannual West Coast Estonian Days (WCED) will be held in Seattle in August, 2009. The Seattle event offers exciting cultural experience in a highly desirable holiday destination.

Closer to home, historic Linda Hall near Stettler, Alberta, will again be the site of our Jaanipäev celebration on June 20, 2009. This is the major cultural and social event on the Society's calendar. It is a great opportunity to celebrate our heritage amongst the many generations who share this ethnic bond, and to meet old and new friends.

With this array of festivals and celebrations in the works, one can see the globalization of the Estonian spirit. It is not farfetched to suggest that interest in our cultural heritage is a hot topic, especially as it relates to the history of the Estonian diaspora.

We are continuing to document the 100 year legacy of Alberta's Estonians. In 2007, the documentary "Alberta's Estonians" DVD received kudos from organizers at the Estdocs Film Festival in Toronto and the West Coast Estonian Days in Los Angeles. "Alberta's Estonian Heritage" website presents the history of Alberta's Estonians on the World Wide Web making our century of history available to a global audience. This material has evoked considerable interest and may be a model for others to follow. In recent months, we've received invitations to present our research approach and findings at conferences in Alberta, USA and Estonia.

AjaKaja is proud to highlight the lives of some of its 'Now Generation', young people who are connected to and interested in their Estonian heritage. Thank you for your interest and willingness to share your fascinating stories. Thank you also to others who contribute to make AjaKaja an enjoyable read! Readers comments and feedback are always welcome.

AjaKaja Editorial staff wish its readers a joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

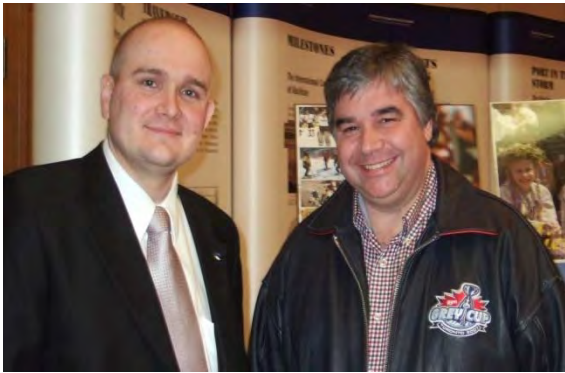
Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

In this issue

Editorial	3
Message from Rasmus Lumi	4
President's message	5
GESE	6
Message from Estonia	9
Jack Pallo	10
Jaanipäev 2009	12
West Coast Esto Days	13
Back to my roots	14
Reconnecting in Alberta	17
Foremost Estonians	18
Anu Tali in Edmonton	20
'Now' Generation	
<i>Alberta Estonians</i>	21
In memory of Doris Hennel	26
Lisa Silberman Legacy	27
The Laaman Story	28
The Singing Revolution	31
Nancy Bush in Alberta	32
Estonian Media Artists	33
Esto 2009	34
Estonian Athletes	36
AEHS Membership List	38

Message from Rasmus Lumi Estonian Chargé d’Affaires, Ottawa

The Republic of Estonia opened an Embassy in Ottawa in 2000 and one of its goals has been to bring Estonia closer to Estonians living in Canada and vice-versa. Given the vast geography of Canada, it has not been an easy task. However, I firmly believe that a lot can be achieved if there is a will to do it. Therefore I, as well as my predecessors, have tried to make every effort to visit other cities in Canada as often as possible.



Rasmus Lumi and Peter Van Loan at the Baltic Film Festival, March, 2008. Mr. Van Loan is the recently-appointed federal Minister of Public Safety and is of Estonian heritage

Estonians in Alberta are unique due to a largely different background and history. While I have been surprised as to how proud Estonians are of their origin, it is especially noteworthy in Alberta where the Estonian roots go back so far.

In order to communicate more closely with Estonians in Alberta, the Embassy in Ottawa has been working on the idea of appointing one or two honorary consuls to Alberta. Honorary consul is a voluntary position that can be assumed by anybody with necessary credentials and the willingness to promote Estonian interests. Needless to say, those interests include close relations with the Estonian community. Finding the right persons can be a somewhat lengthy process. But I assure you that

our goal is to make decisions that are good for both Estonia and Estonians in Alberta.

Turning to the more general issues of Estonians in Canada, I am happy to note that many people whose parents or grandparents were Estonian citizens have shown considerable interest in applying for an Estonian passport. According to my experience, the reasons are largely emotional, but also practical. The passport simplifies traveling, living and working not only in Estonia, but in most of the European Union countries. To be eligible for the Estonian passport, one must present a document or apply to be eligible from the Estonian archives proving that the applicant or his/her parents or grandparents were Estonian citizens before June 16, 1940.

Another important and related topic is relevant for most Estonian communities in Canada and elsewhere. It is the issue of attracting more Estonians to play an active role in their ethnic community. While I acknowledge it is not easy, I must say that Estonians in several places are doing a commendable job along those lines. I’m glad to see similar activity in Alberta and I hope that more and more people will be looking for their Estonian roots. The stronger the Estonian community in Alberta, the stronger it is in Canada and elsewhere.

To conclude, I invite all Estonians who have not yet done so, to visit Estonia and feel being part of that little nation in Europe. For those who would like to learn more, the Embassy in Ottawa is just a phone call away. Obviously we will make every effort to be there anytime someone wants to visit us in Ottawa.

Season’s greetings!

Rasmus Lumi

President's Message

Tere!

Watching the US Presidential race and the election of Barak Obama strikes a chord with Estonians and Estonian descendents. The achievement of a suppressed minority, the breaking of bonds of social restraints and the attainment of power mirrors the struggles for freedom by the small Baltic country of Estonia.

This fall, our global society is taking stock of its resources and setting a new course. As challenging as the financial and social barriers standing in the way of this new leader may be, on a personal level, they are no more daunting than the situations of the early pioneers, or the refugees, who's eyes of disbelief, stared at a future stripped of the familiar, the comfortable and the known. They took the challenge, they went the mile, and set the course for us to follow.

Perhaps our ancestors are once again looking down with that look we recognize. A look somewhere between smugness and bewilderment. For some of us it may be time to roll up the sleeves, tighten the belt, and with neighborly support and encouragement, readjust our aspirations. Fortunately, we as a community have history on our side. We are strong and resilient. We have imagination, creativity and determination. Above all, we are in a country, which, although it cannot escape world trends, is in a far better situation than others. Lets take the liberty of assuming the social influence of our forefathers rippled beyond the local cooperatives.

AEHS is continuously surpassing the mark. Our history website is a superior accomplishment for a few descendants of a small country. We are planning to develop a companion Edukit website as a learning tool for school children and adults alike, accessible globally by virtue of the Internet.

Our Society is in good financial position. Although our operating costs are slightly higher than membership revenues, we have residual cash from the merger of old societies and positive event revenues. We will not need to raise membership fees

in the foreseeable future. We would, however, like to increase our membership. Greater numbers would secure our financial position, and would also enrich our social and cultural bottom line.

We proved this summer that we still retain our basic old-fashioned entrepreneurial and social values. Although this was our 'quiet' year with no province-wide events planned, we were able to respond spontaneously to create an event such as the Great Estonian Stone Exchange. Having relatives from Estonia, previously strangers, take part in one of our historical pioneer



Bob Kingsep watched 6th generation descendants Maddison Smith and Danielle Werenka place apples at his grandfathers headstone

events, was a cultural learning experience for residents on both sides of the Atlantic. It was another example of the overwhelming responsiveness of the Estonian community.

Our next major social event is well into the planning and organizing stage. Jaanipaev 2009 will be at Stettler, and I encourage all to become involved. If you have time and opportunity to contribute that is appreciated. But when all is said and done, your attendance is valued in staging another of our first rate social events.

So, kudos to all. Each of you is part of an organization of which to be proud. It has the foresight, willingness and tenacity to accomplish great things. Each new challenge elicits that uncanny Esto capacity to go further, reach new levels and have more fun in the process!

Tervitades,

Bob Kingsep

Alberta's Great Estonian Stone Exchange featuring place name researchers from Estonia

Helgi Leesment

This summer marked another event depicting unity and reconnection between Alberta descendants of Estonian pioneers and relatives in Estonia.

The first known Estonian immigrant to homestead in Canada was Hendrik Kingsep of the Horma estate in Võrumaa, south-east Estonia. He settled in 1899 onto lands in what is now west central Alberta. In 1905 his father Ott Kängsep, also known as Horma Ott, travelled from Estonia to see how his two sons were doing in the wilds of Western Canada, but, after a short illness, died. He was buried in a tiny unofficial graveyard in the Gilby area, kindly donated by the Raabis family. In May of 2007, a piece of stone from Horma Ott's headstone in Alberta was taken to Võrumaa by Bob Kingsep, Hendrik's grandson and current president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS). This tiny item was ceremoniously placed at Horma Ott's memorial stone located on the Horma estate. In turn, a piece was chipped off the Horma Ott memorial in Estonia to be brought to Canada. All this is clearly depicted in the half-hour DVD documentary produced by the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society in 2007.

Note: A chance encounter in early 2007 onto a then unknown relative's website led to reconnection of the extended family. Neither group on either side of the Atlantic was aware of the other stone dedicated to the same ancestor.

This summer, on August 16, 2008, two Estonian descendants of Horma Ott who were visiting Canada for the first time, participated in the event involving the second piece of stone, thus enacting the GESE or the Great Estonian Stone Exchange. AEHS members were invited to attend the ceremony at the Raabis cemetery near Gilby. Among those present were almost all of the people featured in the previously mentioned documentary. Over half of the 50

attendees were members of the extended Kingsep and Saar families.

Bob Kingsep introduced the event with some humorous memories of growing up among the Estonian descendant farms, often playing Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy cowboy games with his best friends in and around the then unfenced and mostly forgotten cemetery. As of the 1999 Centennial of Estonians in Canada, the tiny cemetery has been officially consecrated, re-consecrated and fenced, with metal white crosses added to symbolically mark the final resting places of approximately 14 other Estonians who were buried there before any official cemeteries were established in the area. Horma Ott's stone marker had been covered in moss, all of which was cleaned off for the 1999 celebration, and has been carefully maintained since then.

Now this stone was central to the event of August 16, 2008.



Ceremonial Stone Exchange at Old Gilby Cemetery, 2008. L to R: Jean Maki, Tobi Kingsep, Bob Kingsep, Evo Saar and Evar Saar

Thus, candles were lit to the memory of the others buried in the little hilltop location. Two young seventh generation descendants of Ott Kingsep, Madison Smith and Danielle Werenka, each placed an apple in front Horma Ott's gravestone in tribute to the apples he

brought with him on his trip to Canada - the pioneer family members had not had any apples since leaving Estonia six years earlier, so this fruit was an exceptional taste treat in 1905 as testified in well kept diary records.

Estonian relatives Evar Saar, Evar Saar and his wife Mariko Faster, passed around the rock bit chipped off Horma Ott's memorial stone in Võrumaa the previous year. Each and every person present had the honour of handling this symbol of unity and reconnection. All four briefly jointly held the stone. This was truly a cherished moment of connection. Former cowboy playpals of Estonian descent, Garry Raabis, Allan Posti, Howard Posti and Bob Kingsep now took on a different role, preparing the resting place for the stone of honour on the same hill where they used to playfully track each other down among the bushes.



Mariko Faster and Evar Saar, two place name researchers from Võru, Estonia

Amazingly, Evar Saar had recently stumbled across an 1890 draft of Horma Ott's will and now proceeded to read portions of the Estonian text out loud, standing immediately behind the gravestone of the unexpectedly "unfinished" life of the author. Next, Bob Kingsep's daughter Tobi, representing the Alberta side of

the extended family, began to read the English translation of the unfinished document. Unintentionally yet symbolically, the ceremony itself became "unfinished" as Madison's great grandmother gracefully fainted into the bushes from the heat of the midday sun.

"Evar and Evar Saar then officially handed the little piece of stone from Estonia to same generation Canadian family members Tobi Kingsep and Jean Maki."

By the time the 50 member group re-gathered at the Friendship Centre in the nearby town of Eckville, the fainting Great Grandmother had apologized a thousand times for causing an interruption. Everyone was glad to hear of her quick recovery and continued the celebration in the Estonian way - meaning two buffet tables groaning with food. Some of the pot luck fare was of delicious Canadian variety featuring fresh produce from local farms, some was very Estonian. At first the kilu (small salted fish) and diced egg sandwiches were left almost untouched, however, as the afternoon progressed, the entire large trayful disappeared. Same applied to the Estonian style lightly pickled cucumber, the best "roosa manna" dessert ever and many other dishes.

The visitors from Estonia were particularly interested in the new display created by Dave Kiil, depicting the voyage routes of Alberta's Estonian pioneers and other excellent related graphic information. True to the Estonian penchant for singing at any gathering, Eda McClung accompanied "Perekonna Valss / Family Waltz" on the piano long ago dedicated the memory of Estonian Lenny Kingsep. Garry Raabis and Edna Osborne led the song.

The afternoon concluded with Evar Saar and his wife Mariko Faster presenting their wonderful slide show on Võru County, of which they are very proud. Both are employees of the Võru Institute which propagates the Võru language, very closely related to the standard Estonian language, and other unique aspects of Võru culture. They are on the staff of the võru language weekly newspaper *Uma Leht / Our Own Paper*.

From Alberta, Evar Saar and Mariko Faster proceeded to Toronto to make presentations at the International Congress of Onomastic Science (<http://icos2008.yorku.ca/>) at York University August 17-22. Onomastics is the academic study of place names, personal names, names in literature, and names in relation to such disciplines as geography, linguistics, sociology and history. Interestingly, four others from Estonia also authored research papers there.

Evar Saar is a specialist in place names and family names of Estonia, particularly in the Võrumaa region. He is the main force behind an extremely detailed map of Võrumaa place names, having worked on it for 8 years and interviewed 7000 households in the process. The map is available online and on paper. He states that he would be happy to assist people tracing their Võru region ancestry through confusing old records mentioning manor houses, lakes, villages, etc. differently in the various languages that have been used over past centuries in Estonia on documents. This is very good news for the many Estonian descendants in North America persisting in tracing their ancestry despite considerable difficulties. Contact Evar Saar at evsar@wi.werro.ee or by telephone at 372-7828754 or cell 372-56213177.

Upon leaving, the Saars and Mariko Faster stated, in their Võru language: „Kõigilõ eestäisile ja võrokõisilõ säääl kavvõn Kanadamaal! Hää ja lämmi oll' ti man ollaq. Hää oll' nätäq jupikõist kodomaad nii kavvõl Eestist. Aituma tuu vaimu hoitmisõ iist!”

Translation: „To all Estonians and Võru folks in faraway Canada! Being amongst you was a great and heartwarming experience. It was wonderful to encounter a little bit of our homeland in a place so far from Estonia. Thank you for maintaining that pioneer Estonian spirit.”

President Bob Kingsep followed up the GESE with a letter to AEHS members, in which he states in part:

“I can't emphasize enough the gratitude we feel for the support of all of you who attended our Great Estonian Stone Exchange (GESE). Thank you to those who planned, showed up, pitched in and made a great day for our Esto visitors. I know the Horma people were overwhelmed by the appearance of so many people who came from great distances to be part of the ceremony. It was pretty impressive. It was so rewarding to look around at the group at the cemetery and realize that once again our little organization has recognized an opportunity and rallied to create an impressive event...”



AEHS President Bob Kingsep presenting a plaque at GESE

Horma Ott's magic continues to come through somehow. It appears the more we dig into Ott's gravesite, the more interesting the results! As I said when we were there, I think his story is so symbolic of the Alberta Estonian roots, that we probably have discovered not only a 'headstone' but a 'cornerstone' of our Alberta Esto heritage.”

Message from Estonian Genealogical Society

Are Saarne

I am Are Saarne, president of the Tallinn Branch of the Estonian Genealogical Society, married, 42 years old. Donna Koper of Alberta, Canada has written in this AjaKaja issue of her very recent trip to Estonia and Ukraine. I would like to further add some interesting memories of that same visit from my perspective.

Firstly, meeting Donna Koper and her husband Larry Koper was an experience my family and I will never forget. She is such a positive person; I was immediately delighted to help her attain her goals on this trip. It is impossible to describe all the details (I believe Donna and Larry will do that remarkably well). We simply had not experienced such a heartwarming new acquaintanceship for a long time. This visit by Donna and Larry convinced me to the bottom of my heart that Estonian-mindedness and warm sincerity can and do co-exist very well.

Specifically, Donna Koper came to Estonia and later went to Ukraine in search of her ancestral roots. Her forefathers left the Albu Manor, located in the Järva-Madise parish and Julianeneberg (Sügalepa) village of Estonia, before the beginning of the cultural movement known as the National Awakening. They followed the self-styled 'Prophet Maltsvet' to Ukraine in 1862 and later moved onward to Canada in 1903. From that time forward, none of her family has set foot in Estonia, until this year. Donna wanted to discover and preserve something of her ancestors' original home region for her current extended family in pictures and by filling the blanks in the family tree and family history, as well as about Estonia as a whole.

Through prior contact, I had done some research in preparation for informing Donna and Larry about conditions in Estonia during the 19th Century when her ancestors lived there. Despite the fact that Donna does not speak Estonian and my English is weak, we were able

to communicate quite well - with and without humour.

Being well acquainted with Estonian history, I was particularly pleased to be able to convey to her the essence of the 19th Century lifestyle of Estonians. For me it meant she gained an understanding as to who the Estonians are, because she, through one side of her family ancestry, has Estonian blood flowing in her veins. I sincerely wanted to give Donna and Larry the maximum results I could obtain, and I believe that goal was successfully achieved. I am continuing to help her complete her family tree for both the Reinson and Pertel lineages. This includes forwarding to her various relevant materials about Estonia in general.

'As a representative of the Estonian Genealogical Society, we would be happy to coordinate similar type efforts for other Canadians searching for their Estonian roots.'

The Society itself would like to work with Canadians of Estonian ancestry, as our historians at this end would very much like to find out the ongoing fate of Prophet Maltsvet's followers as well as of the lives led by other Estonian emigres of that period and the beginning of the 20th Century.

I add that our meeting was made possible by Helgi Leesment and Dave Kiil who both put out a great deal of effort to make the Koper Estonian trip a positive experience for us all. I have since had interesting and helpful contact with Helgi Leesment and through her translation services, I send greetings to all the readers of this article!

On behalf of the Estonian Genealogical Society, we extend our best wishes to all of you way over there in Canada!

Saarne's contact info:

Are.saarne@mail.ee tel 372-503-9488

are99@hotmail.com Skype address : are999

There's nothing like old school

Editor's Introduction

Jack Pallo is a 'blueblood' amongst Alberta's pioneer descendants. His mother was Selma

(Kingsep) Pallo, the second oldest daughter of Hendrik and Emilie Kingsep who in 1899 established the first Estonian settlement in Alberta. Also amongst the first pioneer families in the Medicine Valley were August and Miili Posti. Jack's father was Miili's brother, Hendrik Pallo who arrived from Estonia in 1908 to join his sister. The wedding of Selma and Hendrik Pallo in 1922 was a special occasion as it was the first wedding to be celebrated at the recently completed Gilby Hall. Selma Pallo kept a diary and had a gift for expressing herself in recording family and community events. In 1967 she wrote a Kingsep family history for the Red Deer Advocate Centennial series 'pioneers of central Alberta.' Drawn from her diary, she described as seen through the eyes of a child, the moving, simple funeral for her grandfather Horma Ott who passed away in 1905 while visiting from Estonia. This evocative account was read on the recently-produced DVD "Alberta's Estonians." Jack continues the Kingsep family's strong support of reunions and applies his accounting background as keeper of family records. In recognition of his long and accomplished career, the City of Red Deer named a scenic, handsome street in North Red Deer in his honor: 'Pallo Close.'



Jack Pallo

He began his program of studies immediately upon retirement and says he has thoroughly enjoyed the process.

He did the entire program by correspondence he says, completing an average of a little more than one course annually.

Pallo, by the way, does not own a computer.

"Asked if he has any advice for other seniors who may be contemplating higher education, Pallo is quick to respond"

"You're never too old"

Pallo pays tribute to two friends for their part in his success. One acted as proctor for the exams required and the other faithfully typed up his essays and submissions and also helped with research.

"The course work I enjoyed very much, because I can take my time and put in, hopefully, a lot of thought," he says. Exams, however, were another matter as they are for many. They seem to conjure up a fear that knows no age limit.

During his 43 years working for the City of Red Deer — a record that still stands 12 years after his retirement — Jack Pallo constantly improved his qualifications.

It seems some habits are hard to quit.

At 77, Pallo recently earned his Associate in Arts in General Studies degree from Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills.

“The exam is a pressure situation I don’t respond to very well,” says Pallo.

On top of that, Pallo can only write slowly, so would often find himself simply writing answers in point form just to show he knew his stuff within the time allotted.

The exam portion of a course is only part of the final mark, and clearly between all the components, Pallo had the right stuff.

Taking the program by correspondence was an obvious choice for Pallo, who stands about a metre tall.

He has mobility issues and while he can and does walk, he says, though as he ages balance is increasingly becoming a problem. He has a car but in recent months has used a combination of the Action Bus and a wheelchair to get around.

As to why he embarked on the degree, Pallo says he can trace that back a long way, to when he had a very hard time landing a job after graduating from high school in Red Deer. He found many employers didn’t think that was enough.

Of course, he eventually went to work for the City of Red Deer as a utility clerk. He had been earning 41 cents an hour before that, but the city job paid a handsome 85 cents an hour.

“I was on easy street,” says Pallo, with a smile.

When he retired, after working in such positions as accountant and internal auditor, he was the city’s grants administrator.

The several accounting designations that he earned during his career are framed and displayed with pride on the wall of his office at his sunny south Red Deer apartment.

But even those concrete symbols of his academic achievements weren’t enough for Pallo. Even before he retired, he planned to pursue higher learning once he’d finished work.

Deeply religious and with an abiding interest in theology, Prairie Bible Institute’s courses filled the bill.

“It keeps me off the street at night,” he jokes, about the benefits of studying.

On a more serious vein, he says the course work has been good mental exercise.

Pallo recently got an affirmation right out of the blue that he’s doing the right thing.

He is of Estonian descent, and over the years his family has kept in touch with relatives in the old country.

Recently, two Estonian cousins came to visit and brought with them a framed copy of his great-grandfather’s will, translated into English.

One portion of it caught Pallo’s eye.



Pioneer descendants at Gilby Centennial, Old Gilby Cemetery, 2001. L to R: Shirley (Raabis) Moos, Garry Raabis, Waldo Raabis, Jack Pallo

“He gives a charge to his children to keep their minds active, and get an education, because nobody can rob you of those things.”

Besides pursuing his education, Pallo attends church regularly, for which he uses the Action Bus, and thoroughly appreciates and he also enjoys attending concerts.

He also has season tickets to Rosebud Theatre and gets there along with friends by renting the Action Bus.

During his lifetime, Pallo has undertaken dozens of volunteer roles, often ones that made use of his accounting background.

But for the foreseeable future he is going to be busy.

Pallo has already enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts in Ministry degree, again with the Prairie Bible Institute. He is a little unsure as to whether he will be able to fulfill the practicum portions of the program because of his physical limitations, but not too worried.

“I think by the time I finish the course I have enrolled in I will either be dead or senile,” he says, with typical mischievous humor.

“My goal is to become an enlightened layman,” he says, on a more serious note.

Asked if he has any advice for other seniors who may be contemplating higher education, Pallo is quick to respond.

“You’re never too old,” he says.

Source: Penny Caster, Red Deer Advocate, October 15, 2008.



J AANIPÄEV 2009

Saturday, June 20, 2009

Linda Hall near Stettler, Alberta

**CELEBRATE ALBERTA'S
ESTONIAN HERITAGE**

Superb food

Dinner theatre with Estonian content!

Major lottery prizes

Attend this major event with family and friends

EVERYONE WELCOME

Program details will be available in early Spring, 2009



*It is with great pleasure
and anticipation that I
invite everyone to the 29th
West Coast Estonian Days
to be held in Seattle from
August 26-29, 2009.*

*Please read more on our
web site and make
plans to join us at this
summer's festival.*

*Tom Napa
President*

www.lep2009.com

Announcing LEP 2009! XXIX West Coast Estonian Days August 26-29, 2009

'Eesti Keel - Eesti Meel'

'Estonian Language, Estonian Spirit'

XXIX West Coast Estonian Days are guided by the motto *'Estonian language, Estonian Spirit'*. The motto will unite the Estonian festival and the 15th anniversary of Estonian studies at the University of Washington.

We invite everyone to celebrate the Estonian language in song, the Estonian spirit in dance, and to share our culture with one another and our guests at our festival in Seattle.

*"Can the language of this land,
carried by the wind of song,
rise up to the heaven and search
for its place in eternity?"*

These lines, written by Kristjan Jaak Peterson during the Estonian Awakening period in the 19th century, still inspire us today.

by the wind of song,



My Journey to the Past

Donna Koper

About the author: Donna Koper grew up with a family of eight children in farming communities of southern Saskatchewan. She landed in the big city of Calgary in 1960 where she worked, married and raised four children. Donna is now retired and lives on a working farm near Cochrane, Alberta. In the summer her passion is gardening; in the winter, the never-ending task of genealogy. She is compiling her family history for publication and she says that life is good!



Donna Koper by Statue of Gustav Ernesaks, Estonian composer, Tallinn Songfestival Grounds, Tallinn

My lifelong dream of going to Estonia to learn of the land, its people and their culture began September 23, 2008 for three weeks. In my journey to uncover my family history I had the privilege of meeting many wonderful individuals who showed me just how warm and friendly my ancestral home of Estonia truly is. I would like to share a few highlights of my experiences with you.

Together with my husband Larry, who accompanied me on this trip of a lifetime, we

gained new insight and an understanding of my family's history. I am grateful to Dave Kiil for the online introduction to Are Saarne, Chief Genealogist of the Tallinn Chapter of the Estonian Genealogical Society who resides in Tallinn. The day after our arrival Are began our immersion experience with a trip to Albu Manor (it is now a school) where my ancestors lived and toiled under the power of the manor - much to my surprise I learned that one of my forefathers was Taskmaster. Are had arranged a private tour for us with two of the schools most knowledgeable guides-teacher Enda Trubok and the Librarian. Historical records for Albu date back to 1282 and it was once the largest manor in Järvamaa. I could only wonder what part my ancestors played in its construction.



Are Saarne, the author's guide in Estonia

Day two Are whisked us off first to Paide to join the town's Genealogical Society meeting - they say Tere to all AEHS members and gave me their Estonian Newsletter to present to you. One of the elders then took us on a tour to Türi to see the different sights that were bombed and destroyed during the Russian occupation and German invasion of WWII. He himself was sent off to Siberia for the then unlawful act of owning a house. From there we headed to explore the historic Järva-Madise Church for another private tour. Hard to believe I was at the place of worship that my relatives attended as far back as

the 16th century- many of whom would have found their final resting place in the vast cemetery. As a note of interest during invasion years, peasants put in a false ceiling in the upper tower where they hid and lived to escape their enemies. People sheltering them would raise food and water via ropes lowered from holes cut out in the tower. The War of Independence Memorial now majestically stands at the gates entrance.

Are took us on numerous excursions of which each and everyone was memorable but too many to mention at this time. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention the awesome sight of Old Town in Tallinn! Are gave us a tour of the numerous wondrous medieval sights to explore, one of which was the Estonian Museum. When my Great Grandfather and his sons immigrated to Saskatchewan in 1903, they constructed "teepee" style shelters on their homesteads as temporary dwellings until their houses were built. Imagine my surprise upon entering the Museum the first thing I saw was a replica of one of those shelters! We were fortunate in spending several days wondering about the cobblestone streets and exploring the numerous shops. Heh, I even convinced Larry to go to McDonald's with me.

Are, his wife Meeli and their adorable son, Marken, won our hearts immediately and shall ever remain in our minds as part of our new family. But now we are off to Simferopol, Crimea for the remaining ten days and a place I had little knowledge of. Wow! Not quite the affluent Canadian comfort we are accustomed to. Nadiya Gladzin was our knowledgeable guide and Urri our most skilled driver for the duration of our stay. We quickly became aware of the vast Estonian network in the Crimea, it seemed like everyone knew we were coming and were welcomed with open arms and



Donna Koper and Leongard Salman in Crimea, 2008

hearts and treated like royalty! Our first hosts were "shirt-tail" relatives of my Grandmother- and they invited us to their flat for a scrumptious Estonian feast complete with champagne and caviar. Next day Nadiya had made arrangements to Konchi Saava where my ancestors settled after the trek of 1862 from Estonia. We were invited to the home of more "shirttail" relatives where about a dozen of the villagers gathered and showered us with flowers and gifts. After a long discussion (thanks to Nadiya's interpreting) of the Village history, its people and pouring over pictures, we were able to gain a greater understanding of my family's hardships and struggles that they endured before crossing the Big Pond.

Like magic, a HUGE Estonian feast was set before us – the presentation was something right out of a gourmet cookbook. All this from someone who has only the barest essentials in their kitchen let alone running water! Outhouses are the norm for this part of the world. Anyway, served along with this feast is of course, champagne, caviar and the infamous Vodka.

Next we all had to pay a mandatory visit down the street where the Village's eldest citizen, Anna Papelbeu -she was absolutely adorable and had quite the sense of humour. Waiting for us was a table spread with caviar, "appetizers" and what else-Vodka! Crammed in her extremely TINY kitchen, they serenaded us with many old Estonian songs which seemed to transport us to another time and place - Unforgettable!! Needless to say it was a heart-warming adventure for me with a lot of happy tears. My heartfelt thanks go to Nadiya for making all the prior arrangements to Konchi Saava which made for so many fond memories.

Another special time for me was meeting Leongard Salman, the most knowledgeable man in all of Crimea for genealogical information- he has been

helping me for the past year. Then there was Meeri Nikolskaja - the dearest soft-spoken lady who has spent her lifetime compiling old photographs of every Estonian village and town in Crimea. Not only did she accompany us on many of our excursions, she even met us at Simferopol Airport. That was rather humorous as she does not speak one word of English! Meeri loves to sing and has the voice of an angel - I recorded several songs that she sang for me and have put it on a disc which I have now listened to over and over.

Again, we did not spend time at the tourist hangouts but chose to follow the paths of my ancestors which gave me a whole new understanding of why they left Crimea for Canada. For this reason we saw how the majority of Crimean Estonians live - there is no middle class and for the most part they are stuck in past centuries with little or no chance of change.



Donna Koper with friends

It was a wonderful feeling to connect with my Estonian identity and come away knowing that to be an Estonian feels

proud and good!! Aitäh to all my new friends.

Author's acknowledgement

Huge bouquets of thanks to the following members of the AEHS who helped me prepare for my Estonian adventure: Helgi Leesment, Lillian Munz, Martha Munz Gue; to Bob Kingsep for posting my Help! notice on the AEHS website and to Dave Kiil for responding.

Tänan one and all!

Donna (Reinson) Koper

How you can support AEHS projects with a tax-deductable donation

Members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society can make tax-deductable donations by visiting the National Estonian Foundation of Canada website at www.estonianfoundation.ca and choosing "Donation" in the menu bar near the top of the screen. Fill out the online donation form, including the optional field at the bottom, to direct your gift to a specific AEHS project.

Donations can also be made by mailing a completed donation form and cheque to the NEFC, indicating that the donation is intended to support an AEHS project.

NEFC financial support for the production of 'Alberta's Estonians' DVD is acknowledged.

NATIONAL ESTONIAN FOUNDATION OF CANADA



"Alberta's Estonians" DVD

Make the Foundation your charity of choice!

Charitable gifts (including securities, stocks), bequests and memorial funds are tax deductible.

Donations can also be made by credit card on the Foundation website or by contacting the office.

National Estonian Foundation of Canada
 956 Broadview Ave, Toronto, ON, Canada M4K 2R4
 tel. 416-465-5600; info@estonianfoundation.ca
www.estonianfoundation.ca
 Reg # 891452575RR0001

Reconnecting in Alberta

In the summer and fall of 2008, some former Barons schoolmates and relatives held two fun gatherings in Calgary where they explored their common Estonian heritage. Some had not seen each other since childhood.



L-R: Evelyn Erdman, Wilma Pertel-Costello, Donna Reinson-Koper, Lillian Munz

Donna Reinson-Koper's and Wilma Pertel-Costello's parents came from Crimea as did Anita Linderman-Madill's mother. Members of Evelyn Erdman's family came directly from Estonia in 1910 and 1921. Lillian (Erdman family) Munz's great grandparents did the 2000 km trek from Estonia to Crimea in the 1860's, as did the ancestors of three of the others. One way or another, the ladies on these two photos are either descendants or relatives of Crimea Estonians and all their families farmed in the Barons or Foremost area at some point in time. Three of the five were students at Barons Consolidated School. Anita Madill attended school in Foremost, south-east Alberta. Donna Koper's roots are with the Reinson family in Saskatchewan where she received her schooling; however her father and various aunts and uncles

attended Barons Consolidated School. The five have been pleasantly surprised to discover how much they have in common among themselves, among their friends and among their parents' family friends; something they had never discussed previously. According to Lillian Munz "We had quite the afternoon talking about international work... about the old times in Barons when Anita's family who lived in Foremost, east of Lethbridge, used to visit the Erdmans, etc."



L-R: Wilma Pertel-Costello, Lillian Munz, Evelyn Erdman, Anita Linderman-Madill

Evelyn Erdman's recent translation of Otto Laaman's account of the Foremost Estonians was pivotal in getting these ladies together. They also credit the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society for enabling them to reconnect.

Helgi Leesment



Foremost Estonian Establishment

Otto Laaman

Forty miles south of Lethbridge is the village of Warner, just a few tens of miles from the US border. The Warner and Foremost Estonian settlers arrived from the other side of that border, specifically from the Koidu Estonian settlement of South Dakota. Even though they were formerly from Crimean settlements and accustomed to heat, and although South Dakota lands were good for raising cattle, there was such a shortage of water here, that in the summer they had to drive their herds 8 miles to the shores of the Missouri river.

One of the first to cross the border was Hans Meer (Määr) who was the first Crimean Estonian settler to travel overseas. He arrived in South Dakota as a bachelor in 1892 and moved to Alberta in the spring of 1906. He and his family stayed in Lethbridge until August 31, 1907 when he moved with his family to an area about 35 miles north of Warner where he purchased 160 acres of land and immediately proceeded to establish a farmstead. A month later his father, brothers, sister and brother-in-law joined him. The brothers also quickly purchased land and built homes, waiting for homestead allotments which were established May 10, 1910 when each person requesting it obtained a quarter-section which was 160 acres. By 1910 this settlement, which was located close to the present-day Foremost, had seven Estonian families and two bachelors. But even in the Foremost area they had to contend with a water shortage. In this region farmers raised field crops, mostly wheat, meaning they endured hardships due to the dry climate and rocky soil.

The life of the poor, cashless pioneers was no better even 10 years after the first Estonians came to Alberta. To them were left comforting words of a Canadian poet (Isabella V. Crawford "Malcom's Katie: A Love Story" 1884):

"My axe and I - we do immortal tasks - ",
at a time when the rich in Alberta were already speeding around in their cars (at 25 miles an hour), living comfortably with central heating and had electric lights in their houses, chattered on the telephone, attended movies, theatre and balls. The rich were constantly in touch with their own kind, while the settler and his family were separated even from their neighbours by long walking distances.

Mihkel and Helena Krasman together with their three children came to Alberta in 1909 and their homestead was granted according to their application sequence 45 miles from Warner on unsettled land where the nearest neighbor was 35 miles away. Krasman's daughter Leena wrote about their new life and incredible hardships in her memoirs:



Mihkel Krasman and sons Rudolph, Albert and Juhan leaving for school,, Foremost, 1924

"In the fall, father bought 2 horses, a wagon and a load of lumber from Warner and built a hut the size of a garage, whose walls were covered on the outside by tar pitch. The only furniture on dirt floors was a home-made bed for my parents and a bench which was also used as a table. Three children slept on the floor.

Before winter, as much hay as possible was cut and carefully stored in such a way that wild horses would not eat it during the winter. When we got new closer neighbors, this English family slept in our haystack until they could build themselves a shelter. Wherever you looked was empty land, rocks jutting up through the grass and these all had to be pried up before you could till the land. We gathered cow and buffalo manure for heat in the bitter winter. We didn't have milk or eggs, we ate gruel, beans, salt herring and bread. We rode to town maybe once a month and this took two days and nights.

Our sister Linda was born in the spring. When she was a few months old, she was accidentally burned with boiling water over half her body. Father was on a trip to town

at that time. We had no medicine and only thing that mother could do was to carry the crying baby around all night. In the early morning she sent my brother and me to the neighbor (2 miles) so that he could fetch the doctor (9 miles). Fortunately the neighbor's boy had a bicycle. The doctor arrived in the evening and mother was still pacing the floor from one corner to the other. The baby was only whimpering now and - miraculously - she survived!

In the spring father broke more land. The new grain was thrashed under horses' hooves and then father threw the straw in the wind to remove the chaff. Our greatest worry was water; we dug many wells but got no water and in the summer we had to haul water 5 miles. Of course, in the winter we melted snow.

After the first harvest we barely survived another prairie disaster. Fortunately father had plowed two well-spaced furrows around our house and this spared our home and haystack from the sea of prairie fire which raged around us. Not all our neighbors were so fortunate.

Father built a barn from field rocks, filling the spaces with mud. With our help he finally got the roof boards on. Some time later a whirlwind carried the roof a quarter mile away in shreds. At the time, father was in Barons visiting his uncle who had promised us a cow, chickens, and food to ease our hardship. This trip lasted 2 weeks and we often wondered whether we would see him again. But he finally arrived with the cow, chickens and food. The milk and eggs tasted out of this world. But the barn roof was gone and in the late fall with no money it was impossible to replace it. The cow had to exist in the roofless building all winter and became ill. We wrapped her in blankets but even this did not help. We all cried when she died. In the same winter mother contracted pneumonia and the baby became ill. Father tended to them both and didn't dare leave them long enough to get a doctor. But we children played with old arrowheads around abandoned Indian fire pits. The first school house was 5 miles

away. My brother and I together with another 5 children all attended but not regularly because of distance. We learned to read and write Estonian at home. When a new school was built 3 miles away we started taking two grades a year but we needed to stay home to help during sowing and harvest times.



Foremost Railroad Station, 1916

Years passed. Our family grew with three more boys. Things improved for father when he drilled a well deep enough to get water. The older children went to work and sent their monies home. This went toward the purchase of machinery and seed. Life also improved with the extension of the rail line to Foremost and two good crop years (1915 & 1916). We were all optimistic especially when a new house and barn were built, but then came dry years—soil blew in the wind and the crops failed. Bills were left unpaid and there was no cash to be had. Father decided to abandon the farm and we moved to Barons. From there we moved on to Innisfail near Red Deer. Both dad and mother are buried there.

At Foremost's 50th anniversary my two brothers and I went to see the old farm but all we found were some ruined stone walls in the middle of a grain field."

Krasman's experience was typical of all the Foremost Estonians. For the same reasons as they had, over the years almost all the families left and by the 1960s there was only one farm left that was still operated by a descendant of the original family but none of these people spoke any Estonian.

Translation by Evelyn Erdman

ESO Midweek Classics

Mozart and Mendelssohn

Wednesday, January 14, 2009 at 7:30 PM.

Conductor: Anu Tali

Nordic Symphony Orchestra, Tallinn, Estonia

There is hardly a more recognizable piece of music than Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*. ESO favorite James Campbell returns to the Winspear stage in a concert featuring Brahms' *Clarinet Sonata no. 1* and Mendelssohn's *Symphony no. 3* ("Scottish").



Come to enjoy an evening of captivating music!

Star conductor, Anu Tali, is one of only a handful of female conductors in the world. She founded the Nordic Symphony Orchestra, Tallinn, in 1997 with her twin sister Kadri. She is one of the most intriguing young conductors on the scene today. She belongs to a new generation of artists searching for fresh ideas in the classical musical field.

To order tickets:

Call (780) 428-1414 or Toll free 1-800-563-5081

Online: www.edmontonsymphony.com



Jan Urke, Principal Bass, of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra is looking forward to the ESO concert premiere of Anu Tali, Estonian conductor of "critical acclaim worldwide."

‘Now’ Generation of Alberta Estonians

Leah Hennel

My first big trip abroad was to Estonia to visit the homeland of my family, but since then, thanks to my job as a Calgary Herald photographer, I’ve seen many other corners of the world.



Leah Hennel, photographer

But, of all the places I’ve visited, Estonia is the one that holds a special place in my heart. Maybe it’s because I walked on the same cobbled streets as my great grandmother Ida Hennel did. Or maybe it’s because it is where I took some of my best travel photos. Someday I hope to take my son there and show him where his ancestors came from.

While still in high school I picked up my first

camera and was hooked. I started working at the Calgary Sun after high school while attending the photojournalism course at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). I did my practicum for two weeks in Jacksonville, Fla., assisting Sports Illustrated photographer Bill Frakes.

Upon returning from my practicum I went back to work at the Sun part time doing whatever I could in the photo department.

I graduated from SAIT in 1998 and since then, with a camera always in reach, I’ve documented many lives and events. In 2000 I started working at the Herald and have been lucky enough to be sent on assignment to Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Guatemala and New York, to name a few of my favourites.



Leah Hennel with a group of kids in Ethiopia, May, 2008

Just last year I was nominated for a National Press Photographers Association award. What made this recognition so special was it was for a portrait I took of my four-year-old son, Hunter. Having been nominated for a picture I took of my boy made all the moments I’ve missed with him because I was away on assignment that much easier to swallow.

Life as third generation Estonians:

Brendan, Karl and Travis Robertson

Our parents Christine and David: Our mother Christine is Canadian with Estonian parents and was born in Vancouver, BC. Our father, David, is Canadian, with Scottish parents and was born in Winnipeg, MB. Our mother speaks fluent Estonian and attended evening Estonian school in Vancouver. Our parents met in Swan River, Manitoba, and we now live in Leduc, Alberta, the five of us, and a chocolate lab named Mocha.

Our maternal grandparents are from Saaremaa. Christine's father, Villi Lepik, escaped to Finland in 1943 and later joined fellow Estonians in Vancouver in 1951. Villi with his brother Paul built their first house in 1954, their first low-rise apartment in 1956 and Lepik Construction built their first concrete high-rise in 1961. Villi married our grandmother Anne Ojamaa in 1958. Christine mothers family was from Tartu.

Our parents started Alta Flights (Charters) which is now going into its 23rd year of operation. At its peak, they operated 53 airplanes in Edmonton, Calgary and leased aircraft around the world. Dad is president of Alta Flights and spends most of his time buying and selling aircraft. They're down to about 30 aircraft and the business involves flying crews up north to work on oil rigs, aerial pipeline patrol, cargo, hot shot, and executive flights. For fun, people charter planes to go golfing, fishing and wine touring. Dad also likes to fly for QJets, a private company in which people have bought time shares. Alta Flights flew Estonian President Meri and his entourage during his visit to Alberta in 2000. Mom is no longer active in the day to day operation of Alta Flights. She is now in her second year of office with the Black Gold Regional School's Board of Education which involves education and setting policy.

So what's it like being a third-generation Estonian?

Brendan: I was born in 1989 and I just turned 19. We've lived in Leduc all our lives, attended a few Estonian functions (Midsummer Night - Jaanipäev,

Independence Day) and got to know some other Estonians in Edmonton.

When I was in Grade 11, I applied to do my Grade 12 on the High Seas. I was accepted to a private-school program called Class Afloat, offered through West Island College, Calgary. The school is a 188 foot tall ship and the college accepts 48 students per year. Besides sailing around the world, we studied the grade 12 curriculum, watched out for pirates (one of our regular duties), along with scraping rust, painting, and raising and lowering the huge, billowing sails.



L to r: Christine, Brendan and David Robertson at Brendan's Grade 12 graduation in Poland

We started off in Vancouver, BC, sailed to Hawaii, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Oman, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Spain, Copenhagen, Belgium and Poland to name a few. We interacted with local schools in every port and had an amazing experience! We arrived in Poland in June 2007 and had our graduation ceremony at Gydinia, on the northern coast. My family came out to the grad after which we travelled to Estonia for a quick visit.

It was my first visit to Estonia and we spent time touring Tallinn, Saaremaa and Parnu with my cousins. It was very beautiful but I was surprised at

how few people spoke English. The old town in Tallinn was great with all its shops and cafes. We visited family in Kuressaare and saw where grandpa was born. Remnants of the past are still on the farm and my cousins have a herd of sheep. Swimming in Parnu was the greatest. We couldn't believe how warm it was and how far out you can walk before it gets deep.

My first year at university was in Victoria where I studied Fine Arts. I have always enjoyed film making, but you don't specialize in that until much later. University of Victoria was OK. During my year I got to do a lot of rock climbing and road racing (biking). However, I missed Edmonton and my family. So for my second year, which is this year, I am at Grant MacEwan College in International Business. I love the business courses and I'm studying Chinese as my second language. I'm not sure what my goal is, but I've decided a degree in business will be an asset no matter what.

Karl: Besides school, my life tends to revolve around track and field. I am in grade 12 at Leduc Composite High School and seem to be doing alright. In December I will be writing my SAT's – a mandatory exam if you want to study in the



Karl Robertson - Alberta Provincial Junior 800 and 1,500 metre champion in 2007

Leduc Track and Field honoured at awards ceremony

Local athlete on track for huge success

Karl Robertson makes headlines in the Leduc Representative following his success in the 800 m and 1,500 m distance events in 2007 and 2008

United States. I have already applied to a few universities in the United States who are ranked as a Division 1 track school. My first choice is to go to High Point University in North Carolina. I have another friend who is already going to school there, and says it is awesome! I hope to get a track scholarship which will help pay for schooling. I want to major in Business.

I usually run every day, even when we travel. Two summers ago when we were in Poland and Estonia, I found 400 m tracks and carried on with my workout (there is a nice one in Tallinn and one right beside the Kuressaare Castle). If there are no tracks, then I usually run 10 km. I also like to kite-board and snow-board.

Travis: Travis is in grade 5 and enjoying school. He got to travel to Orlando with his mom and dad this October. Dad attended a big aviation conference called the NBAA while mom and Travis got to spend time with Mickey Mouse in Disneyworld, had a chance to swim with a dolphin in Discovery Cove, saw Shamu in Seaworld, and enjoyed an air-boat ride on the swamps looking for alligators. Travis is very friendly and we think he'd make a great greeter at Wal-Mart!



Travis Robertson with Mickey Mouse in Disneyworld

‘Now’ Generation of Alberta Estonians

Janet Matiisen

I’ve said many times that I was born under a lucky star.

My dad, Arne Matiisen, may not have felt the same way when he was a young man. He was born during the glory days before WWII in Tallinn, though his family followed a familiar path of rebuilding their lives in another country. First, in Sweden, and eventually in the Eckville area of Alberta - it was not an easy life. My mom, Carolyn Wilfley Matiisen, has traced her family roots back to the 1800s in America and were true homesteaders in the States, and in Alberta. They prove, in many ways, that opposites attract; they met at U of A and married in Red Deer and I came along some time later.



Janet and her dad, Arne Matiisen, in Tallinn’s Town Square, 2007

My parents instilled a sense of curiosity and a desire to explore, discover and see. We moved to Germany and then London, England for my first few years. We travelled all over Europe and other parts of the world before finally settling in Calgary while I was in elementary school. I’ve been here ever

since. My sister, Melanie, arrived when I was almost 10 years old, we have been best friends for about 20 years and counting.

I am a proud native Calgarian, though I cling strongly to my roots in Estonia. One of the highlights of my life was the time I spent in Estonia in 2007 with my dad and my aunt, Eda McClung. Words cannot describe the emotions when I first saw Pikk Hermann and our flag flying above - I was excited and awestruck and overwhelmed with emotion, covered in goose bumps. We explored our roots and discovered so much about our history, met family and friends all over the country . . . I can’t believe we did all that in 10 days.

Now, I continue to explore the world, but I do it mostly from my desk. I work at the Calgary Herald, where I am Assistant News Editor/Graphics and Design. When people ask me what I do, I tell them that I make the paper look good, I make them WANT to read it, I’m a visual journalist. It’s an exciting way to make a living, you never know what is going to happen on any given day, but you can count on us to tell you about it.

I always crave knowledge and am always curious. I love to explore the world - in journalism and in a more traditional sense, too. In the last few years I’ve been to Australia, Costa Rica, Spain, Mexico and various ports of call in the U.S.A. Some day, I will return to Estonia, a proud ex-pat, showing off the country of my roots to my partner and basking in the glow and history of a resilient and progressive people that will never say die, never quit, never give up their birthright. My lucky star will lead me there.

‘Now’ Generation of Alberta Estonians

Judy Ustina

Introduction: *Judy Ustina, an Edmonton psychiatrist, is the daughter of Astrid (Oro) Ustina, whose family roots are in the Stettler Estonian pioneer community.*

Inspired by the movie “The Bucket List” my friends insisted that I join them cycling the Andes and hiking up to Macchu Pichu this summer. Without forethought or common sense I agreed to join them. Of note three of my fellow travelers competed in triathlon for Canada in the World Masters Games in July and were still in peak form. It is also important to note that cycling the Andes is not like cycling in Saskatchewan in any respect. Our route would take us over two passes greater than 4,500 meters and one of 5,000 meters.



Our brightly colored outfits made us instant celebrities with the locals (Judy Ustina is 3rd from left with dark sunglasses)

This translates into rarefied air, cold temperatures and hills that never seem to end. Being of Estonian decent, with ancestors who had not ventured far from sea level I should have been concerned about how my physiology would adapt to these harsh conditions.

On our first day of serious altitude one of our team was brought down by a severe case of gastro. Dehydrated and oxygen deprived he developed cortical blindness. 24 hours in

hospital, poked and prodded by a nurse he swears “was trained by the Spanish Inquisition”, pumped full of antibiotics and he was ready to ride with the now altitude seasoned herd again.

Over the next 10 days our bikes took us up up to great heights and extraordinary vistas, only to speed down break neck hills into the next valley. We stayed in humble family lodging and ate the local food of chicken and chips. In one desolate small town the sound of a band drew me into a dirt floored “concert hall”. One young Peruvian woman offered me a jug full of frothy green liquid to drink and join in the celebration. When she wouldn’t take no for an answer I pursed my lips and feigned a couple of gulps. It is hard to turn down such generosity in the face of stark adversity.



One mile vertical elevation over 36 kms, final elevation 4,600 metres

In time I learned to trust that my Estonian heritage had put me in good stead to weather high altitude, ride with respected athletes and appreciate another culture working hard to eek out a living under very difficult conditions. Perhaps next year we will check Tibet and base camp Everest off our Bucket List.

In Memory of Doris Hennel, 1928-2008



Doris was born in Alsask, Saskatchewan on February 15, 1928 and passed away in Stettler on October 23, 2008. Her family moved to the Linda Hall area south of Stettler in 1939. Doris married Rudolph Hennel in 1945 at the age of 17. They had three children Bunny (Manley), Allan (Rita), and Ron (Jo). Through the years the family grew to include in-laws, 8 grand children and 15 great grand-children

In 1952 Doris, along with four other community members, formed the present Linda Hall Ladies Club of which she was a honorary member. She was also a member of the Agriculture Society and Board member

for the Stettler Coop. She had a keen interest in politics.

Doris loved cooking, baking, playing horseshoes and cards, especially 500 and crib. She learned to make the traditional Estonian rukkileib (rye bread) and Jõuluvorst (barley sausage). She thought nothing of cooking for a house full at Christmas, New Years, and other events. You never left her home hungry. Doris was always seen working beside her husband, milking cows, haying, packing food out to the field, taking cream and eggs to town or running for machine parts. It was not uncommon in the summer months to host horseshoe tournaments with 75 to 100 people attending. Camping, fishing, rodeos and travelling in her motor home were also a joy. Doris and Rudolph traveled by motor home to Las Vegas, BC, Alaska and Yellowknife just to name a few places.

Doris' life was her home, husband, children, grand children and great grand children who called her GG. Doris was predeceased by her husband Rudolph of 60 years on Oct.2, 2005.

After the funeral service at Stettler United Church and the burial at Lake View Cemetery, family and friends gathered for fellowship at Linda Hall. Linda Hall Ladies provided the lunch. Doris will be missed by all.

Contributor: Astrid Ustina

Members of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society extend their sympathy to the family and friends of Doris Hennel, and for their unfailing support and leadership in the Estonian community.

Learn Estonian Online from Home

You can learn Estonian from a real, live teacher and from anywhere in the world - like your home or work office. The courses fit easily into your busy schedule and are very affordable.

Using Estonian inventions such as Skype and a real Estonian teacher who is also fluent in English, virtual classes are held from beginner level to advanced. Class schedules can be flexible and costs are based on the number of students in each session.



The next session for beginners is scheduled to start on January 11, 2009. Contact Piret Vaher at piret_vaher@hotmail.com or walter.johanson@eelk.ee.

Lisa Silbermann's legacy

Lillian Munz

Lisa Erdman was about 20 years old when she and her family left Crimea, first settling in South Dakota and then homesteading in Barons, in 1904. Lisa worked as a housemaid in Lethbridge and in Medicine Hat where Reverend Sillak had encouraged many Estonians to settle. It was there that Lisa first met her future husband, Martin Silbermann, who stopped off the train there in 1905 on his way from Estonia. After Martin earned some money working for a year as a blacksmith at the Exshaw cement factory, he was able to marry Lisa in 1907 and settle on CPR land 3 miles south of Barons.

After first living in a sod house, they eventually built a large two storey house which was sent out in sections from Winnipeg. A daughter and twin boys were born. Lisa was busy as a pioneer farm wife, cooking for threshing crews, raising vegetables, chickens and pigs. When the children were approaching high school age, the Silbermanns rented out their farm and moved to Estonia for over 10 years. This was Lisa's first experience with the homeland of her parents. The family lived in Tartu so the children could attend university there.

In the early thirties, the Silbermanns returned to the Barons farm. Over the next 17 years, Lisa and Martin had eight grandchildren, among whom are Martha Munz-Gue, Albert Munz and Lillian Munz, children of Helmi. The three Silvertons (Mae, Silvia and Ernie) are children of Lea Weiler and Walter Silverton who farmed in Barons and retired to Victoria.

Lisa was very creative and enjoyed writing, gardening, painting and needlework whenever she had spare time. While she was in Estonia she hand knotted a Persian style carpet measuring 8 feet by 10 feet. Like many immigrants she was hard working, community minded, and proud to be a Canadian. She often reminisced about her semi-tropical birth place, Crimea, quite a contrast from the dry flat prairies of southern Alberta.



Three Silbermann children, 1912:
l to r: Walter, Ernest, Helmi

Lisa Silbermann wins Calgary Herald contest for Seniors, 1973

People over 65 years of age were invited to write about our new Canadian flag. At age 91, Lisa Silbermann, who was living at the Bowview Lodge in Calgary, won first price, a huge Canadian flag about five feet across.

Lisa Silbermann's winning entry:

We all should be glad to think that our ships sail the world waterways with Canadian cargoes of coal, lumber and wheat and our own Canadian flag fluttering from the masts. Before the new flag was issued, we had a borrowed flag. Our flag is beautiful in both color and design.

It is a flag of peace as it has not been splattered with blood of our young men.

So let's keep it clean!

Ottomar Laaman, Crimea Estonian and 25-year president of the Calgary Estonian Society

Helgi Leesment

The year 2008 marks 30 years since Ottomar Laaman, former president of the Calgary Estonian Society resigned his position, and 20 years since his passing. He lived through a major revolution, two world wars, two escapes, a divorce and two new starts in life, maintaining a passion for reading and literature throughout.

Ottomar Laaman was born on February 27, 1900 in the village of Samruk (now Beregovoye) on the western shores of the Crimean peninsula which at that time was part of Russia (currently Crimea is part of Ukraine). At the turn of the 20th Century, approximately 2200 Estonians



Ottomar Laaman in Crimea, 1919. (Photo: Laaman family private collection)

lived on that well known peninsula in the Black Sea; they were many of the original trekkers who made the 2000 km journey on foot or by a series of riverboat and horse cart trips, and their descendants. Ottomar's grandfather came from Tiskre, a village west of Tallinn. They arrived at Samruk in 1861 after a trying journey where many fellow travelers perished enroute from disease and abhorrent

conditions. Upon reaching the abandoned Tatar farm that was to be their home, they discovered a Greek sheep herder was using it. There were many other initial setbacks to be overcome.

The house was of the standard Tatar design: an entry way with a kitchen behind it and a single room to each side. Otto's grandparents lived in one end and Otto with his five siblings and both parents lived in the room at the other end. After considerable initial effort, the Estonians grew various grain crops including wheat, barley and oats, also grapes and apricots. A dairy herd provided supplementary income as did the small general store operated by the Laaman family. Theirs was the only store in Samruk village. Horses and oxen worked their farm, although camels and a type of buffalo could be seen labouring on other farms. Father died when Otto was only 15, creating a very heavy workload for the mother and for Otto as the eldest child. Otto himself was saved from certain death by a cousin who happened to be nearby and dragged the youngster out of a gasoline barrel into which he had fallen. Later at hospital little Otto's stomach was pumped to get rid of all the gasoline he had swallowed.

The value of education was well understood by Estonians. There were elementary schools in all the Estonian villages where all subjects were taught in Russian except for Estonian language courses, Bible study, catechism and music (singing) classes. Most often the school building had the same design as homes, with the classroom at one end, entry way and kitchen in between, and the teacher's residence at the other end. For decades the Crimean schools doubled as churches. Although Otto had a school in his own village, he later travelled to another Estonian village, Utš-Kuju-Tarhan (now Kolodeznoje), to attend confirmation classes as the Estonian Lutheran tradition held that the rite of confirmation was a major life-step for youths approaching adulthood, around ages 15 to 20. Mostly the school teachers were ethnic Estonian, so, naturally, they formed choirs and orchestras. On November 10, 1911, the Samruk choir participated in the 50 year jubilee of the settlement of this village by Estonians. One of the difficulties of maintaining a choir was that customarily, when the Estonian women married, they resigned from their choir. Despite that, the Crimean Estonian Song Festival was held in 1914.

“Often the entire Estonian family moved off the farm into a town just so the children could obtain post-elementary education.”

For high school, the students went to a larger centre. Often the entire Estonian family moved off the farm into a town just so the children could obtain post- elementary education. Otto was fortunate to be able to attend high

school in the town of Eupatoria (now Yevpatoria, Jevpatoria or Evpatoria), north of Samruk. But he was not accepted the first year he tried to gain admission, at age 11. He remained in Eupatoria at his aunt's place, studied determinedly on his own all winter, and next year was accepted into the second year of studies at the boys' school there. Girls attended a different school. Eventually many other Estonian boys and girls boarded at his aunt's home, including the parents of some current and past Alberta residents. Life was fun in Eupatoria with relatives and



L-R: Mr. Todler, Otto Laaman, Pauline Snieckus, August Holtswell; centre front: Rosalie Linderman, 1920s. Decades later Snieckus, Holtswell and Linderman served on the executive of the Calgary Estonian Society. (Photo: Linderman family private collection)

friends, swimming in the Black Sea, going on frequent rowboat excursions and seeing the occasional silent movie. The 48 km shoreline route between Samruk and Eupatoria was a muddy grain transportation road. Otto traversed it on horse cart, or sometimes hiked the entire distance during the school years so he could help out at the farm from time to time after father's death.

A steady stream of letters, newspapers, magazines and books flowed between Crimea and Estonia. All printed material was shared among villages so everyone could keep up with matters at home. Otto read it all voraciously. Interest was especially high in Eduard Vilde's writings as he had visited many of the Crimean Estonian settlements in 1904 as well as those in the Caucasus; he even lived in Crimea for a time researching the life of Johan Leinberg, better known as Prophet Maltsvet. Crimean Estonians admired Vilde's writing skills but cursed at some of the content, complaining that he had deliberately been given misinformation. This was apparent to them both in Vilde's historical novel *Prohvet Maltsvet* = *Prophet Maltsvet* and in the series of newspaper columns about his southern travels, later combined into book form. The arrival of the Russian Revolution and WWI cut off all communication

with Estonia as of 1917. After that, the Crimean residents had no idea what was going on in their original homeland.

The warring brought horrors. The peninsula was occupied or attacked at various times by the Russian Red forces, the Russian White forces, the Ukrainian forces and German forces. These each were usually followed by various wandering adventurers, including many criminals. There was complete breakdown of law and order, streets became dangerous. There was terrorism, bombing, frequent arrests, hunger, a freeze on all imports and exports regarding Crimea. Governments changed frequently; Estonian organizations were forbidden to function. Nature added to the woes by bringing drought in 1918. Despite such conditions, school graduation took place for Otto Laaman in 1919, albeit in a restricted manner.

The fact of Estonia's 1918 independence was generally known even though there was no communication at that time between Crimea and Estonia. By 1920, two years after Estonia's independence, the southern Russian government formally recognized the new nation. This meant that Estonia could send an official government representative, a Consul, to Crimea. Through his office, the mail began to flow again. Also, the Consul was able to issue Estonian passports to those wishing to have one; a requirement if one wanted to go live in the newly created country. These passports also excused the holder from military service in the Russian forces. Naturally, the young men especially sought passports, including Otto Laaman. At age 20, along with a group of friends, he decided to move to Estonia.

Travelling through Russia was out of the question, so they decided to take a ship to Constantinople/Istanbul and continue north through war torn Europe by train. It was a muddy sad day in October 1920 when Otto said goodbye to his family in Samruk and travelled to the port city of Sevastopol. On board the ship, a fellow passenger warned the Estonian youths that before arrival at Constantinople they would have to go to a steam bath where they would be scrubbed by staff who would charge a fee based on how dirty their client was! As it happened, the ship moored at Tuzla on Turkey's Asian shore where the Estonians had to give all their clothes to be "disinfected" but thankfully showered on their own. They took advantage of their opportunity to do a little sightseeing in the fabled ancient city of Constantinople.

During the trip on various trains northward, Otto's group met several other similar groups of Crimean Estonians and Latvians, all heading towards their ancestral lands to start new lives. Eventually a ship took the group from the south Baltic shore to Paldiski on Estonia's north coast and yet another train from there brought them to their final destination, Tallinn.

At that point Otto Laaman's adventures in his book *Mälestused Krimmist* = *Memories from Crimea* come to

an end. All of the above, and much more, is described in that book.

Had he lived a great deal longer, Ottomar Laaman would have been amazed to learn that in September of 2001, his home village of Samruk, now called Beregovoye, hosted the celebration of 140 years of Estonians in Crimea. It was a huge event with choirs, soloists and folk dance groups from Estonia and the Ukraine, commemoration services, parties, speeches and a conference where academic papers were presented. One family from Alberta, descendants of Crimea residents, was also among the participants, the only Canadians present. In 2004 a conference was held in the Crimean city of Simferopol in honour of the 100th anniversary of Eduard Vilde's trip to Crimea.



Otto Laaman, President of Calgary Estonian Society, 1969 (Photo: Laaman family private collection)

Upon settling into a new life in Estonia, Otto studied agriculture and law intermittently at Tartu University from 1922 to 1926. He landed a management position in the government cadastral unit which compiled detailed maps for taxation and other legal purposes. In 1938, the Estonian government awarded him the Order of the White Star Class V medal, presumably for excellence in carrying out his civil service duties; archive records of the award in the Estonian National Archive of Tallinn lack supporting information to determine the exact reason.

Otto married Pauline Elfriede Puusepp in 1929 and they had three children: one son and twin daughters. The marriage dissolved in divorce in 1941. Thus, when WWII brought a second Soviet Russian invasion to Estonia in September 1944, Otto escaped along with approximately 70,000 fellow countrymen, but without any members of his family. He lived in a refugee camp in Germany before

working briefly as a surveyor in Scotland. He immigrated to Canada in 1948, heading straight to Calgary where a close relative, also from Crimea, was already settled.

By 1953 Otto Laaman was elected president of the Calgary Estonian Society whose entire budget of \$40 for that year was kept in a shoebox. As was the common experience of many immigrants, Otto's education and qualifications were not recognized here, so he initially worked as a kitchen aid at a sanatorium/hospital along with several other newly arrived Estonians.

Remaining true to his deep interest in reading, he became a local agent for various exile Estonian publishers of books and magazines. He also wrote two chapters about Alberta Estonians for the compilation *Eestlased Kanadas: ajalooline koguteos / Estonians in Canada: a historical account* published in Toronto in 1975.

Two long term former colleague executive members of the Calgary Estonian Society characterize Otto Laaman as being serious, honest and a man of his word; adding that he performed his leadership duties in a competent professional manner, being neither talkative nor a dazzling socializer. In 1978 when a new president was elected for the first time in 25 years, the Society held a reception in honour of Otto Laaman's quarter century of volunteer service to the community.

By 1979 the ex-president re-settled into rural life on an Estonian society vacation property called Seedrioru, near Kitchener, Ontario. One of his daughters from Estonia visited him shortly after he moved to Ontario. This was not an easy feat to arrange, considering that travel permission was needed from the Soviet Russian bureaucracy in Moscow.

Surrounded by the lush greenery of southern Ontario nature and the fellowship of countrymen also residing at the same property, Otto compiled his book *Mälestused Krimmist = Memories from Crimea*, self-publishing it in Toronto in 1981.

Twenty years ago, in 1988, the other daughter came to Canada for an elongated visit of several months. Unfortunately, during that time, Otto became ill and died in hospital on October 10th.

One of Otto Laaman's granddaughters tells us of her grandparents' personal lives "because it seems so romantic. Ottomar divorced from the mother of his children. Then came the war and escape, etc. but he never did find another mate. When my aunt visited him in Canada, she saw he kept lovely pictures of his former wife. Grandmother remarried, however that match also ended in divorce. Grandmother and grandfather did not correspond with each other at all, but on what would have been their 50th wedding anniversary, both sent each other a card to mark the occasion."

The Singing Revolution relived twice

Helgi Leesment

In the final four years of the evolution of Estonia's regained independence, one of the major events was the gathering of one third of the nation's population at Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds in September 1988. It was a heady show combining the best choirs, soloists, pop bands and speakers talking publicly for the first time in 50 years about the social and political situation as it truly was then, not toeing the then standard politically forced lies. For the first time in 50 years, the forbidden blue-black-white flags were waving by the hundreds in a statement of unity and deeply felt aspiration. There was no attempt by the Soviet Communist government to cut it short nor to arrest anyone. That raised the spirit of hope among the 300,000 individuals present. They enthusiastically joined in some of the singing, holding hands and making human waves such as had never been experienced previously in Estonia.

This event gave the whole independence movement the name "Singing Revolution".

The past year marks two observances of that major gathering.

Jim Tusty, an American of Estonian descent, and his wife Maureen Castle Tusty co-directed and co-produced a documentary titled *The Singing Revolution*. First shown in New York in the fall of 2007, it gained the status of 'New York Times Critics' Pick' and played for 4 weeks. The critic compared this documentary to a famous scene of defiance in the movie *Casablanca*. Quoting from one of dozens of positive reviews on the internet, Mark Leeper¹ writes "This is a powerful and emotional account of 71 years of the history of Estonia and especially how the Estonian spirit freed the country from the leash of the Soviet Union. The film combines beautiful choral music with the dramatic story of the country's fight for independence. Directors Maureen and James Tusty and narrator Linda Hunt bring a dramatic tension unusual in pure documentaries rising to a climax with the account of the 1991 Soviet coup... Rating: high 8/10"



Calgary Estonians on Opening Night

By now, the film has played in most major North American cities and hundreds of smaller places such as Pender Island and Oliver, BC often being held over for a week or two, or later returning to several places. The Tustys are receiving thousands of letters from impressed viewers.

The Singing Revolution documentary arrived in Edmonton and Calgary in June, 2008. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society went all out to give it as much publicity as possible, thanks to special donations from enthusiastic members. Some Albertans travelled hundreds of kilometers to see this film. Sufficient numbers of admission tickets were bought in the first week, that it was held over in both cities for a second week. About a dozen few Edmontonians combined the screening with a gala dinner. Calgary organized a pre-event gathering in the lobby of the theatre to celebrate opening night.

The second 'reliving' occurred in August of this year. With a few additions, the same choirs, soloists, pop bands and speakers as had been previously featured, gathered at Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds this August to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 1988 event and to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Estonia's independence, first declared on February 24, 1918. The specific day was chosen to coincide with the date, August 20, when Estonia regained its independence in 1991. So, a three-way celebration.



Edmonton Estonians enjoyed a gala dinner before the movie

This time it was scheduled for the evening and billed as the Night-Song event. Once again, it attracted hundreds of thousands. For the younger crowd, it was an opportunity to experience first hand an event similar to the legendary original; for older spectators, it was an opportunity to relive some of the magic of 20 years ago. In current times of increasing uncertainties, the Night-Song festival of 2008 was a morale and spirit booster, just as the daytime concert had been 20 years ago. This time, the entire event could be watched live on the internet, making distant observers feel as though they were present in Tallinn.

Note: *The Singing Revolution* DVD for home use is now available on www.thesingingrevolution.com

Knitter extraordinaire in Estonian styles, Nancy Bush visits Alberta

Nancy Bush, introduced to AjaKaja readers in the Summer 2007 issue, was in Alberta November 7-10, teaching Canadians about Estonian style knitting. A resident of Salt Lake City, Utah, Nancy became enamoured of Estonian folk designs in 1993 and first visited Estonia in 1995. Since then, she has toured her 'adopted' country 14 more times. She counts dozens of Estonians both inside and beyond Estonia among her friends. She has studied the designs, history and culture to such an extent that she is now a sought after instructor in Europe and North America, including at the Tartu University Cultural Academy in Viljandi, Estonia. She is the author of several books on Estonian knitting.

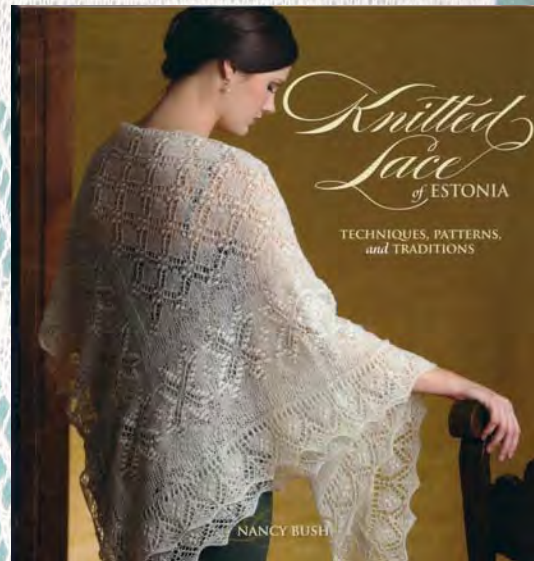


Nancy Bush and Helgi Leesment

In Alberta, Nancy was the guest of the Make One Yarn Studio, who organized a two-day retreat in Kananaskis November 7 & 8, attended by 92 advanced knitters and 5 well known instructors. Among other items, the knitters delicate lace Haapsalu shawls. On November 10, Nancy taught the knitting of Kihnu Island mittens in Calgary at the Yarn

Studio to approximately a dozen participants, most of whom were introduced to Estonia and its culture for the first time.

At both places, she introduced her recently published book Knitted Lace of Estonia: Techniques, Patterns and Traditions, 157 p. Interweave Press, Loveland CO, 2008, available at her web shop Woolly West www.woolywest.com. Her earlier publications featuring Estonian knitting, are Folk Knitting in Estonia and Folk Socks.



Cover of Nancy Bush's new book: Knitted Lace of Estonia....

Nancy Bush's teaching schedule, as displayed on her website, is amazing. There are sessions in Utah, Wisconsin, California, Indiana, Maryland and Washing State. There is also a knitting cruise in the Baltic late summer 2009. At all of her classes, Estonian knitting is the topic of the course.

Helgi Leesment

Estonian Media Artists featured at Edmonton's "The Works Art & Design Festival".

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

Estonia regained her independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then the nation has embraced new technologies, reflecting and affecting rapid cultural changes.

Their fascination with new technologies was demonstrated by five members of the Estonian Media Artists' Union in Edmonton for the Works Festival last summer. They participated in several media events, including a panel discussion, an exhibit reception, CBC interviews, as well as being the focus of articles in the Edmonton Journal.

We caught up with two of the Estonian multimedia artists-Eve Arpo and Riin Kranna-Rõõs- in the Works Festival Big Tent in Churchill Square to find out more about their 'A day without a Mobile Phone' presentation. Interested cell-phone owners were asked to surrender their phones for 24 hours and used to present a sound-and-light show.

The Edmonton installation attracted about 25 cell-phones, somewhat below the expectations of the two artists. The phones were suspended from a spider-like construction of pipes and wires in a corner of the Big Tent. In part at least, the modest response answers the question: What does the cell-phone mean to you? It means that Edmontonians think twice about surrendering their cell-phones, even for 24 hours.

The two media artists explained that Estonians are very attached to their cell-phones; in many households, mobile phones have replaced the traditional desk phones. This attachment to cell-phones led Eve and Riin to think about what it would be like to spend 24 hours without them. To find out, they hung 40 borrowed phones from a tree in Tallinn's Freedom Square. The artists and participants alike discovered how much they depended on their cell-phones. While Estonians use more cell-phones per capita than Albertans, both groups consider them important for work and perhaps even more for sending and receiving text messages or for making calls; in other words, it's like a wallet for many people.

During the Soviet era, Estonians often had to wait for years to get a regular phone line installed. As a result, they have embraced cell-phone technology with a passion, and enjoy seamless coverage of wireless service throughout the country. The project is one way of doing this in a playful fashion.



Riin Kranna-Rõõs (left) and Eve Arpo at the Works Festival, Edmonton, 2008

Biographical sketches of the artists: Eve Arpo: Architect; member of the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. Riin Kranna-Rõõs: Master of Arts in Interactive New Media, Estonian Academy of Arts.

Early Estonian settlements in Crimea: A booklet for sale

Lillian Munz's cousin, Leongard Salman, lives in Simferopol, Crimea. As a descendant of the original "trekkers" from Estonia to Crimea in 1861, Leongard has done some very detailed research about the Crimea Estonians. He has produced a booklet "The Early Estonian Settlements in Crimea." It has about 65 pages, costs \$15.00, and is available from Lillian Munz at: lilmunz@hotmail.com

ESTO 2009

TERE TULEMAST SAKSAMAALE! HERZLICH WILLKOMMEN IN MÜNSTER!
WELCOME TO GERMANY!



X ülemaailmsed Eesti Päevad

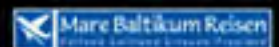
X. Kulturfestival der Esten aus aller Welt
X. estonian world festival

26. – 30.06.2009
Münster/ Westfalen
in Münster/ Westphalia

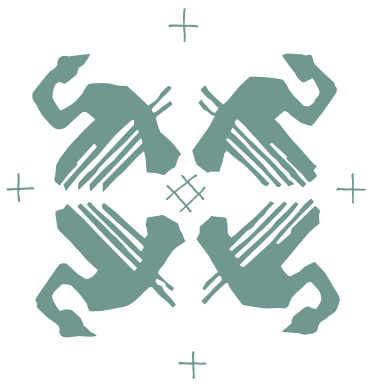
rahvapidu - valguspidu - näitused - kontserdid -
konverentsid ja palju palju muud

Sängerfest - Volkstanz - Lichterfest -
Ausstellungen - Konzerte - und vieles mehr

song festival - folkdance - festival of lights -
exhibitions - music and much more



www.esto2009.de



ÜhesHingamine

XXV Laulupidu

XVIII Tantsupidu

2-5 juuli 2009

To Breathe as One

It is not a coincidence that in the Estonian language the words "soul" and "breathing" come from the same stem. One word developed from the other, because breathing and soul are connected. Even so closely connected that if you breathe in the same rhythm with someone, with a little luck it is possible to see his soul. The same magic works when tens and thousands breathe as one. They look for the right place in a hurry, gasping for breath. They hold their breath in anticipation. They rejoice from their heart and soul. This is when the souls of one nation meet. It is breathtakingly beautiful. By breathing as one, history can be changed. The vibrations of the soul create a resonance that has broken iron and brought down political regimes. But it is not the only aim of breathing as one. This celebration unites us with those who sang and danced before us, as well as with our contemporaries whose soul may go unnoticed in the everyday rat race. When people breathe as one, it does not matter whether you face the audience or the performers or whether you are somewhere else instead. When you breathe with others as one, your soul is there.

It is time for a nation to breathe as one again.

Welcome to the Song and Dance Celebration To Breathe as One!

In 2009 another Estonian family reunion - our very own Song and Dance Celebration - will take place. This Celebration is marked by significant anniversaries - it is already the 25th time that a nation comes together to celebrate the sense of belonging. 140 years ago the first Song Celebration took place in Estonia. Also Dance Celebrations have impressive history going back to 1934, when the gymnastics festival took place in the frame of the first Estonian Games. The upcoming Song Celebration will follow the tradition that started in 1999, namely that the Song Celebration consists of two concerts of different types. The programme of the first day concert is more demanding, including the Estonian, Western and vocal symphonic repertoire. All Estonian professional choirs and Estonian National Symphony Orchestra will be participating. The second day concert is more traditional, performing only pieces by Estonian composers. The artistic director of the Song Celebration is Ants Soots. The Dance Celebration concert will be centred around the theme of the sea. There will be three concerts on the Kalev Stadium. Henn Tiivel is the author of the idea of the upcoming Dance Celebration, the artistic director is Ülo Luht. The Song and Dance Celebration will be preceded by Folk Music Celebration with about 200 folk musicians from folk music groups to individual players.

To Breathe as One | Programme

2 July, Thursday

Folk Music Celebration on Town Hall Square

3 July, Friday

at 19 on Kalev Stadium - First Concert of Dance Celebration

4 July, Saturday

at 11 on Kalev Stadium - Second Concert of Dance Celebration

at 14 Festive Parade of Song and Dance Celebration

at 19 on Song Celebration Grounds - First Concert of Song Celebration

5 July, Sunday

at 11 on Kalev Stadium - Third Concert of Dance Celebration

at 14 on Song Celebration Grounds - Second Concert of Song Celebration

7-Day Alaska Cruise

On Board ms Westerdam

ITINERARY

7 Day Alaskan Explorer Cruise
August 30, 2009 – Round Trip Seattle

Day	Port	Arrive	Depart
0	SEATTLE, Washington		400pm
1	At Sea		
2	Scenic cruising Glacier Bay National Park	1000am	700pm
3	Juneau, Alaska	700am	800pm
4	Sitka, Alaska	800am	500pm
5	Ketchikan, Alaska	700am	100pm
6	Scenic cruising Vancouver Island , Victoria	600pm	midnight
7	Seattle, Washington	700am	

SOODSAM HIND GRUPI SOIDUKS!

Inside Staterooms from US \$ 949.00
Outside Stateroom from US \$1,149.00

Verandah Staterooms from US \$1,599.00

Suite from US \$1,849.00

Prices per person, based on two sharing. \$190.00
tax not included

EMAIL: urveh@live.ca voi: eva@tripzter.com



Kolmas Kord Peale LEP!

Escorted with extras.

Join Estos for a memorable experience.

Book early for discount!

Call Urve 604-538-9200 or Eva 604-699-8754

Adam Kreek, Gold Medalist



Adam Kreek, a member of Canada's eight-man rowing gold-medalists in Beijing, was born in London, Ontario to an Estonian father and Canadian mother.

Adam's singing of O Canada at the gold medal ceremony was cited "as an inspiration" by Simon Whitfield, another outstanding Olympian. He actually wrote 'sing like Adam Kreek' on the handlebars of his bicycle as he sprinted for a silver medal.

His grandfather, Aleksander Kreek, was European and World University Games shotput champion in the 1930s. Adam visited the family's abandoned farm in Estonia in 2003 but his efforts to find the medals his grandfather had buried there before escaping to Sweden proved unsuccessful.

Kreek will visit Estonia again in 2009, equipped with a metal detector and a film crew to record the story and to broadcast it on television.

At a recent fundraising event for Olympians in Edmonton, Kreek spoke to an audience of 700 about his commitment to the sport. He worked on Alberta's oilrigs from the fall of 1999 to the fall of 2000, and again during the winter of 2000-2001.

Dave Kiil



Visit your roots....
Meie Räägime eestikeelt



**Best rates on airfare and
car rentals - Guaranteed!**

Valhalla Travel & Tours

Maimu Schaer

245 Pefferlaw Rd.

Pefferlaw, ON, L0E 1N0

Toll-free: 1-800-265-0459

E-mail: maimu@valhallatravel.com

website: www.valhallatravel.com

Estonian athletes excel at Beijing Olympics and European Championships

Estonian athletes earned Olympic medals, gold and silver, at the Beijing Games. At the European Championships in Greece, the Estonian quadruple sculls team won gold.

Gord Kanter won gold in Men's discus throw, tossing the 2 kg weight apparatus a distance of 68 meters. The men's double sculls team of

Jüri Jaanson and Tõnu Endrekson won silver on the water.

The Estonian quadruple sculls team of Jüri Jaanson, Tõnu Endrekson, Andrei Jamsa and Allar Raja triumphed at the European Championships. The surprising tandem of Vladimir Latin and Kaspar Taimsoo took a silver medal in the men's doubles event.



Photo, left to right: Tõnu Endrekson, Jüri Jaanson, President Toomas Ilves and Gerd Kanter during a reception party for the Olympic heroes in Tallinn.

ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Membership List, November 2008

Annist, Pille, Alar, Sven - Nanaimo, BC
 Ansley, Imbi, Andrea A, Gary & I, SV Birchcliff
 Asmus, Peter, Jeanette – Calgary
 Brennen, Virginia-Stettler
 Brewer, Elsie-White Rock, BC
 Clark, John - Denver, Colorado
 Collin, Marion, Glen, Cameron, Gary, Julia - Airdrie
 Costello, Wilma - Calgary
 Cowick, Anne-Liis - Red Deer
 Cowick, Kathleen - Calgary
 Derksen, Linda, Colin, Jack, Jamie – Edmonton
 Dinning, Shirley, Leonard – Edmonton
 Doherty, Linda K - Big Sandy, TN
 Engler, Faye – St. Albert
 Erdman, Evelyn – Calgary
 Erdman, Ken & Kelly Ann - Calgary
 Erdman, Oscar & Sally - Calgary
 Fodor, Steve & Evelin - Calgary
 Graham, Judy, Bruce– Surrey, BC
 Gullickson, Barbara – Barons
 Hall, Gwen, Ernest - Boyle
 Helenurm, Kalju, Margot – Calgary
 Hennel, Lorne - Calgary
 Hennel, Rodney, Elizabeth - Stettler
 Hennel, Ron W.F & Jolena - Stettler
 Herman, Liia, Derrill, Liisa & Alex Tamme –
 Innisfail
 Holukoff, Bob – Calgary
 Jaako, Harry-Vancouver, BC
 Kaert, Mati & Linda- Edmonton
 Kalev, Tiiu - Eckville
 Kalvee, Willy G- Calgary
 Kerbes, Deane, Irene - Stettler
 Kerbes, Marguerite – Stettler
 Kerbes, Richard - Saskatoon
 Kiil, Dave, Betty Ann - Edmonton
 Kiil, Glenn, Ingrid, Ranek, Kalev - Edmonton
 Kiil, Lisa, Diana - Edmonton
 Kingsep, Bob, Annette & Tobi Telford –
 Redwood Meadows
 Kivisild, Livia - Calgary
 Klaus, Alfred, Joyce - Stettler
 Klaus, Larry, Kathy – Sherwood Park
 Klaus, Roy - Stettler
 Koper, Donna - Cochrane
 Kraav, Jüri, Helle - Calgary
 Kuester, Matt F- Edmonton
 Langeste, Helmut, Airi – Edmonton
 Leesment, Helgi, Peeter - Calgary
 Leilop, Aino – St. Albert
 Letourneau, Loree – Eckville
 Luik, c/o Renate, Avo – Edmonton
 Lumi, Rasmus - Ottawa
 Maddison, Anneliese - Edmonton
 Madill, Anita, Wallace - Calgary
 Magi, Enzo, Maimu - Calgary
 Maki, Jean & Joe- Eckville
 McClung, Eda - Edmonton
 McElroy, Elve & W.L-- Camrose
 Metsar, Gerli – Calgary
 Mottus, Arnold, Vera, Catherine - Red Deer
 Munz, Lillian – Calgary
 Munz Gue, Martha, David, Lisa, Anita - Medicine Hat
 Nicklom, Otto, Gladys – Stettler
 Paasuke, Elizabeth - Edmonton
 Paasuke, Rein, Jan - Calgary
 Paasuke, Toomas - Canmore
 Pallas, Andi, Liz - Calmar
 Pallo, Jack Henry – Red Deer
 Pastewka, Astrid - Calgary
 Payson, Tiina, Paul - Edmonton
 Peet, Ethel - Edmonton
 Peet, Linda - Edmonton
 Pelto, Margaret, John– Sherwood Park
 Pihooja, Ralph, Nella Collins - Edmonton
 Pilt, Shirley - Edmonton
 Põhjakas, Kaljo, Lillian – Lethbridge
 Poldas, Karin - Calgary
 Posti, Allan, Maria, Ryan - Eckville
 Ruus, Ivar, Lea - Calgary
 Ruusauk, Siim, Lamour – Sherwood Park
 Saar, Lembit & Iris - Calgary
 Saar, Rein, Patricia - Calgary
 Sandre, Ülo - Calgary
 Sastok, Laine – Edmonton
 Schuler, Kelly - Calgary
 Shafer, Nancy-Blue Island, IL
 Shongrunden, Astrid - Penticton, BC
 Shursen, Evelyn – Stettler
 Sparrow, Lori - Eckville
 Stanich, Robert, Leila-Calgary
 Szady, Caroline, Linda-Edmonton
 Tiislar, Enn, Pärja - Canmore
 Timma, Olev – Calgary
 Tipman, Bob, Kathy-Calgary
 Urke, Jan - Edmonton
 Ustina, Astrid - Edmonton
 Ustina, Judy K – Edmonton
 Varney, Sharon-Edmonton
 Ward, Allan,E, Geraldine - Surrey, BC
 Wartnow, Floyd C– Delta, BC
 Zach, Inge - Calgary
 Zielinski, Kristine, Michel – Spruce Grove
 Zoumer, Anne - Calgary



*Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year!*