

AJAKAJA

SUMMER 2013 • ISSUE 38



ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY



“Where Blackberries Hang”

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society 2013

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	Bob Kingsep	(403)-949-4249
Vice-President	Helgi Leesment	(403)-217-0515
Treasurer	Toomas Pääsuke	(403)-678-0737
Secretary	Juri Kraav	(403)-257-5690
Membership Convener	Lorne Hennel	(403)-862-6583
		e-mail: hennel@telus.net
AjaKaja Editor	Eda McClung	(780)-452-2712
Communications	Dave Kiil	(780)-988-0019
DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE:		
Edmonton area	Eda McClung	(780)-452-2712
Calgary area	Rein Pääsuke	(403)-208-1222
Gilby	vacant	
Stettler	Deane Kerbes	(403)-742-3527
Barons/Medicine Hat	Martha Munz Gue	(403)-526-2226
COMMITTEES		
Past President/Nominations	Bob Tipman	(403)-263-9447
AjaKaja		
AjaKaja, Calgary area	Helgi Leesment	(403)-217-0515
AjaKaja, Eckville area	vacant	
AjaKaja, Medicine Hat/Barons	Martha Munz Gue	(403)-526-2226
AjaKaja, Stettler area	vacant	
AEHS Website, Chair	Bob Kingsep	(403)-949-4249
Website	Lorne Hennel	(403)-274-6583
Website	Juri Kraav	(403)-257-5690
Website	Helgi Lcesment	(403)-217-0515

AjaKaja

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

Members and friends are encouraged to submit articles, photographs and heritage-related items
to Eda McClung at emcclung@shaw.ca

Non-members may purchase AjaKaja for \$5.00 by contacting Eda McClung

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

Cover design: Bonnie Moro, daughter of Sophie and Oscar Moro, grew up in the Peace River country. She now lives in Victoria, BC, where she paints botanical subjects in watercolor, carves wood, and writes. A series of her pen-and-ink drawings of native plants will appear in a book by a local poet to be published later this year.



AjaKaja

Alberta Estonian
Heritage Society

Summer 2013
Issue Number 38

From the Editors

Welcome to our latest, biggest and, we believe, best issue of AjaKaja! Our small but energetic Estonian community has had a jam-packed six months of activities. This issue reports the many happenings in our community: prominent visitors, diplomatic appointments, pioneer stories and opportunities to showcase our Heritage Exhibit. Changes at the AEHS Board level are also in the plans. Sadly some stalwart, long-time members have passed away and their support will be missed.

AEHS congratulates Christine Lepik Robertson on her appointment as Estonian Honorary Consul for Alberta. Christine is a long-time, energetic member of the Alberta Estonian community, is Vice-President of Edmonton Shell Aerocentre and a busy mother and wife. She will represent Albertans well in the areas of business, culture and investment. It is interesting to note that Christine had to first travel to Estonia to be accepted by the Estonian Foreign Ministry and then apply for acceptance by the Canadian Foreign Ministry. Best wishes on your appointment, Christine!

We were honoured by a two day visit by Estonia's Ambassador to Canada, USA and Mexico, Marina Kaljurand. The Ambassador and her husband Kalle were greeted by small groups of Estonians in Calgary and Edmonton. She expressed keen interest in the pioneer past and cultural history of our province's Estonian community. The couple also visited Linda Hall and the Estonian Cemetery near Stettler.

The AEHS Heritage Exhibit continues to provide opportunities to showcase our unique pioneer history. The Exhibit was launched in Toronto in January and garnered widespread media coverage on Estonian World Review website as well as print media. The display was also featured at a reception on Parliament Hill in honor of Estonian President Toomas Ilves' state visit. It is evidence of increased awareness at home and abroad of the 114 year history of Alberta's Estonian community. Next, this exhibit will be on display at Stanford University Library during a conference of Estonian archivists, followed by West Coast Estonian Days in San Francisco in late June.

Charge d'Affaires Riho Kruuv is making his final cross-Canada visit here before completing his posting to return to Estonia. AEHS expresses appreciation for his active support and involvement with our community. We say thank you and wish him the best. This fall, we expect to welcome a new diplomatic posting, namely the first Estonian Ambassador to Canada to reside here,

Closer to home, President Bob Kingsep and wife Annette have announced plans to move to Victoria. Bob has provided progressive, balanced and light-hearted leadership during his six years in office. The accomplishments of which AEHS is deservedly proud evolved during his leadership. They are a legacy and we express our deep appreciation to him.

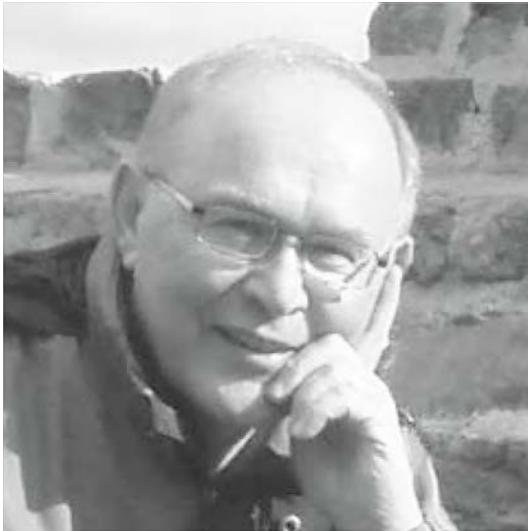
Thank you to all who contributed material for this issue. The wide-ranging content reflects the varied interests of our membership. Wishing everyone a memorable Jaanipäev celebration!

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

In this issue

From the Editors	3
President's Message	4
Honorary Consul for Alberta	7
President Ilves visits Canada	8
Ambassador Kaljurand visit	9
AEHS Exhibit in Toronto	11
Alberta Heritage Project preserved	13
Heritage Book Review	14
Karl Moro: Postimees article	17
Oscar Moro: The Man Who Could!	19
AEHS Exhibit on Parliament Hill	24
AEHS welcomes Ave Peetri	29
Pioneer calendar : Kelly Schuler	30
New Year's Eve at Linda Hall	31
In Memoriam: Alfred Klaus	32
In Memoriam: Ralph Pihooja	34
2013-Year of Cultural Heritage	37
Electric vehicles, clean air	39
In my grandmother's shoes	41
Estonian sauna marathon	44
AEHS Membership list, 2013	46

President's Message



Tere!

No one would argue that our Heritage Project has been a timely and crucial contribution to the history of Alberta's pioneers. Comprehensive and available in multiple mediums, it is a companion and compliment to the road allowances and property boundaries that the prairie surveyors of the late 1800's divided into one-mile by two-mile segments. While this familiar grid work of fence lines stand etched into the landscape today, by the mid- 1950s the cultural evolution within the ethnic communities was quite evident. Herein lies the conscious beginning of my generation and life from our perspective.

You might say that we hit the ground running. Our parent's generation separated us from the pioneering era. They provided us with more than basic needs and expanded the options open to us. The opportunities of a rural setting, our energy, curiosity and creativity provided opportunities for countless adventures. In later years we reminisced, laughed and shared these stories. Perhaps I should say

we shared most of them. Discretion overruled sharing all of them!

The blizzard of 1951 was probably the most influential weather event in my life. It was preceded by my admittance to the Eckville Hospital for an appendix operation. I was only six years old but the doctor performing the operation, using the wisdom of the era, decided that since I was prepped and under anesthesia, it was an opportunity to remove my tonsils and adenoids as well. Tonsils, adenoids and appendix were considered to be redundant and problematic, so whenever the opportunity presented itself, out they came. The weather would not have relevance here except that the hospital was short of room so the doctor drove me home several days sooner than I would normally have been released. The presumption was that I would return within a couple of days to get the support belt, clamps and stitches removed.

No one expected the blizzard. Two days of relentless snow and high winds isolated everyone. Blocked roads forced many motorists to leave their stranded vehicles and walk to shelter. Conventional snowploughs were unable to clear the roads. The drifts were so hard that farm tractors were almost useless, and I recall our neighbor Henry Posti reverted to his old team of horses and a utility sleigh. I watched through our kitchen window as those big draught horses walked on top of the five-foot deep drifts covering the road.

In spite of the soreness from my triple operation, I pleaded with my mother until she relented and allowed me to go outside to view the phenomenal snow deposits up close. Moments after stepping outside I realized the potential of my toboggan on the huge new snow bank dominating our yard. The chance for a second run was cut

short by my mother's hysterical voice demanding I stop where I was and get back inside immediately! Apparently tobogganing was a bad idea. Considering that it required a week for large construction equipment to make the roads driveable, it's little wonder that my mother was horrified to witness me subjecting my new surgery to the whims of a speeding toboggan.

Four years later my introduction to the rest of the world began with the centralization of rural schools and the introduction of the school bus. This was a life changing experience, as there were new faces, new experiences and new opportunities. This reality had hardly been digested when we were exposed to a revolutionary new view of the world. Television. From that point on, as the expression goes, "Life back on the farm would never be the same."

My time warp into the past is relevant to our future. It is my challenge to you to reach back into your collection of personal life experiences. For me, this exercise led to the recall of many specific instances, each of which provides further insight into the era in which we lived. Most of us have contributed to our Heritage Project and many of you have realized that there were numerous questions left unanswered. The sources of the information were deceased and we were left with sporadic facts, many gaps and considerable speculation.

Our personal experiences define the frontier of our generation. We know our experiences better than our descendents will know them. As well as citing facts, we have the advantage of being able to describe the personal impact of these experiences. That will be the basis of a good read down the road. Let's not forget the intriguing diversity within our member's childhoods. Not all of us lived in the countryside, not all of us were born

in Canada. We have lived through comforting parallels and eye-opening diversity, all of it waiting to be exposed. This is the time to become proactive and start recording experiences of our lives events.

I believe we are in an excellent position to capture these stories. Perhaps 'events' should be the focus rather than long personal autobiographies. Not that we should exclude biographies, but writing an event is less onerous, more impulsive and probably more revealing than a formal work. Our collective accumulation of events and life stories can, in the future, be analyzed, organized and implemented as a larger comprehensive work. We who are here today may never see the final result, but we can rest assured that our efforts will be a welcome contribution to whoever takes on the project in the future. To that end, we have set up a framework within the member section of our website. A new door has opened. The signage might read 'Beyond Heritage'.

This is also the time for me to formally thank all of you for providing the opportunity to be your president for the last six years. You are part of a remarkable organization and it has been an unquestionable honor and pleasure for me to be a part of it. The AEHS boasts an exceedingly talented and well-balanced membership, it exudes creativity, and it thrives on determination and dedication. The accomplishments to date have been nothing short of remarkable.

Although Annette and I have plans to move to the west coast and to make a change in life style, I'll always be an Albertan, I'll always be an Estonian, and I'll always be a proud member of the AEHS.

Tervitades,
Bob Kingsep

Bob Kingsep invited to State Dinner in honor of His Excellency Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia

The invitation to Bob Kingsep to attend a State Dinner at Rideau Hall on May 1, 2013, is shown below. Owing to an earlier commitment, Bob had to “regrettably decline.”



“As I’ve indicated earlier, Annette and I are in the process of moving to the West Coast. On April 23, we made reservations and confirmed plans to visit Victoria for a special owners ‘hard-hat’ viewing of our partially completed condo tower. We were very excited to have the opportunity to see our new residence and to meet some of our new neighbors.

Two days after making the commitment, I received an invitation from Governor General Johnston’s office to a State Dinner in Ottawa honouring Estonia’s President Ilves. It was for the following week, on May 1st and presented a timing conflict with our Victoria trip. I was unable to resolve the conflict within the RSVP time, and since the invitation and preamble were marked confidential, tentative, and non-transferrable I had to “regrettably decline” the invitation. Obviously, even Estonians are not immune to ‘Murphy’s Law’.

We’re incredibly fortunate to have assets worthy of review by heads of state, and the special invitation is indeed a significant acknowledgement of the presence of the AEHS.

Congratulations again to Dave Kiil, Eda McClung and the other Heritage Project contributors whose time, effort and professionalism got us to this point.”

Bob Kingsep

Christine Lepik Robertson appointed Honorary Consul of Estonia in Alberta



I am very honoured to have received this posting! As of May 16th, my candidature to the post of Honorary Consul of Estonia in Alberta was fully approved by Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. This comes after extensive interviews in Estonia on March 15th of this year. I met with the External Economic and Development Cooperation Department, Department of Europe and Transatlantic Cooperation, the Consular Department, the Undersecretary of Legal and Consular Affairs and the Public Diplomacy Department. This was followed up with a second day of meetings including a visit to the Office of the Embassy of Canada to Estonia in Tallinn, meeting with the Director of Estonian Investment and Trade Agency, meeting with the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the ICT Cluster. It was a quick visit but I did manage to rent a car and drove to Tartu then over to Narva and back to Tallinn over the weekend. This also allowed me to see the oil shale deposits Estonia has in Ida-Virumaa. Estonia has about a hundred years of production shale reserves or more.

This new position comes with duties and expectations. I will serve as an intermediary between the Estonian Embassy in Ottawa and the Estonians in Alberta, assist Estonians requiring consular assistance, partake in Government Relations with the Government of Alberta and promote partnerships between Canada and Estonia in terms of business, culture and investment. I believe my term as a Public School Board Trustee prepared me for the role to promote Government

Relations. I am an entrepreneur, having been active in the aviation business for 29 years with my husband David. I have a Bachelor of Home Economics degree from University of British Columbia and am fluent in Estonian.

Although the position has just been approved, I am scheduled to participate in several events:

- June 10 and 11th: to accompany Riho Kruuv, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Estonia in Canada in his meetings. He will assist in setting up my office followed by a small reception in his honour.
- June 14th: to attend the annual Alberta Government briefing for Consular and other representatives at Government House in Edmonton.
- June 27th: to attend the Estonian North American Honorary Consuls meeting in San Francisco before LEP-ESTO 2013. The West Coast Estonian Days is celebrating its 60th anniversary June 28-July 1, and for the first time is held in conjunction with the worldwide ESTO festival. I look forward to spending time at this year’s festival.
- Sept 19 and 20th: to accompany a delegation of Estonians from the ICT Cluster who will have various meetings in Alberta.
- early fall (perhaps October), I will hold an official opening of my office in Edmonton. The Embassy of Estonia in Canada will be announcing an Ambassador and it is my hope to have the Ambassador attend the official event.
- July 2014: it is expected that the approximately 130 Estonian Consuls plan to attend a meeting in Tallinn prior to Laulupidu (Song Festival).

These are exciting times in Estonia. I am pleased to be involved in my heritage!

Parimate tervitustega,

Christine Lepik Robertson
Honorary Consul of the Republic of Estonia
Consulate of the Republic of Estonia
(EV Aukonsul Edmontonis)
3795 – 56 Avenue East
Edmonton International Airport, Alberta
T9E 0V4
Phone: 780-890-1303

Estonian President Ilves visits Canada

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, accompanied by his wife Evelin and an entourage of 28 political and business leaders from Estonia, visited Canada from May 1-5, 2013. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen Canada-Estonia political and business working relationships, culture, technology, science and cyber security, and also to recognize and support Canada's Estonian community. The state visit was organized by Riho Kruuv, Charge d'Affairs, Embassy of the Republic of Estonia.

"We are both, Estonia and Canada, driven by the same ambition expressed in the motto of the Order of Canada – *Desiderantes meliorem patriam* desiring a better country," said President Ilves, the first Estonian head of state to arrive in Canada on an official state visit, the president's chancellery said.

During an interview with Jennifer Campbell, editor, of Diplomat & International Canada, a respected source of information for Canada's International community, President Ilves stated "Personally I have fond memories of Canada, where I have spent time in my youth, where I worked and lived almost four years. We remain grateful to Canada



Photo: President.ee
**Toomas Hendrik Ilves with wife Evelin
in Ottawa**

for offering asylum to many of those Estonian refugees who fled the Soviet regime." Following the state visit in Ottawa, the Estonian delegation left for numerous engagements in Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo as well as participating in a work bee to at the Jõekäär Summer

Camp.



Photo: President.ee
**President Ilves viewing Alberta Estonian
Heritage exhibit on Parliament Hill.**

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's exhibit was on display during the Parliament Hill Reception for President Ilves on May 2, 2013. The exhibit served to inform invited guests - members of the Estonian delegation, Canada's MPs, diplomats from several embassies, press representatives, and members of the Estonian community - about the story and cultural heritage of Albertan's with Estonian ancestry.

Dave Kiil

Estonian Ambassador Marina Kaljurand to the U.S, Mexico and Canada visits Alberta

Marina Kaljurand, Estonian Ambassador to the United States, Canada and Mexico, visited Alberta on March 5 and 6, 2013. Her husband, Kalle Kaljurand, accompanied her during the trip. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society hosted the couple at luncheons in Calgary and Edmonton during their visit as part of a tour of Western Canada.

In Edmonton, the Ambassador met Ministers Cal Dallas, International and Intergovernmental Relations, and Diana McQueen, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, to discuss topics of mutual interest. Christine Robertson toured the Ambassador and her husband to familiarize them with the city and especially the University of Alberta Campus.



Photo: Kalle Kaljurand

Participants at luncheon in Edmonton in honor of Estonian Ambassador, Marina Kaljurand. Left: Nejolla Korris (Honorary Consul of Lithuania in Alberta), Christine Robertson, Jan Urke, Ambassador Marina Kaljurand, Dave Kiil, Külliva Kangur

A handful of AEHS members joined the visitors for a wonderful informal luncheon and exchange of views on topics of

interest. Külliva Kangur, Sales Manager at Fairmont Macdonald Hotel graciously arranged the luncheon. Honorary Consul for Lithuania in Alberta, Nejolla Korris, joined the group.

The Ambassador showed interest in the cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians from pioneer era to present-day activities. Discussion focused on the origins of pioneers and their efforts to establish Estonian settlements, particularly Stettler.

Ambassador Kaljurand and her husband attended a luncheon engagement in Calgary the following day. Enroute they visited Linda Hall and the Estonian Chapel/Cemetery in the Stettler area, settled by Estonian pioneers in 1903. They asked for directions to Linda Hall



Photo: Kalle Kaljurand

Display case at Linda Hall shows photo of Pikk Hermann presented to Linda Hall by Hon. Consul-General of Estonia Ilmar Heinsoo at Centennial 1999.

and local people directed them to the "Estonian thing" on Linda Hall Road. They arrived there during a woman's fitness class. They viewed paintings,

memorial benches, and plaques dedicated to Estonian pioneers.

At a luncheon the following day in Calgary, Bob Kingsep, President of AEHS, introduced Ambassador Kaljurand.

As part of the introduction, Bob quoted from a speech which was delivered in Washington introducing Ambassador Kaljurand to President Obama as the new Estonian Ambassador to the United States. Of note was the apparent emphasis on her ethnic background.

“The first female Estonian ambassador to Washington, Kaljurand, ironically, is not ethnically Estonian, as her father was from Latvia and her mother was an ethnic Russian (although her family had lived three generations in Estonia); Kaljurand grew up speaking Russian at home.”



Bob Kingsep presents a copy of AEHS heritage book to Ambassador Marina Kaljurand during luncheon in Calgary

Bob pointed out an aspect of our Alberta heritage that we share with the Estonian Ambassador. Many of our members are of mixed ancestry and if the criteria within the quote were critical in defining our identity, few of us in it would be considered Canadian. The AEHS preserves and promotes the cultural

heritage of its members, especially their history and the relevance of Estonian immigration in Alberta.

After introducing the Guest of Honor, he presented the Ambassador with copies of the AEHS video "Alberta's Estonians" and heritage book "Freedom, Land, & Legacy, Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009".



Participants at luncheon in Calgary in honor of Marina Kaljurand. Back row, left: Toomas Paasuke, Annette Kingsep, Lorne Hennel, Ave Peetri, Juri Kraav, Peter Asmus; Front row, left: Ambassador Marina Kaljurand, Bob Kingsep, Livia Kivisild

Descendants of the original Estonian settlers in western Canada and Estonians who left their country at the end of World War II were present at the Calgary luncheon. A recent arrival from Estonia attended the special event. As a result of this diverse gathering, a lively discussion and exchange of ideas ensued. While the hosts heard about the activities of diplomats in Ottawa and Washington, D.C., guests were able to learn about the history of western Canada, the development of Estonian settlements and the lives of their countrymen here.

Both Edmonton and Calgary luncheons were a delightful opportunity for mutual exchange.

Dave Kiil

The cultural heritage of Alberta's Estonians displayed in Toronto

Eerik Purje (Translated by Alja Piroso)

The official launch of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's exhibit *Alberta's Estonians 1899 to Present* took place on Saturday, January 19 in the hall at Tartu College (TC). Ain Dave Kiil delivered an introductory presentation, followed by a screening of the 2007 DVD film *Alberta's Estonians*.

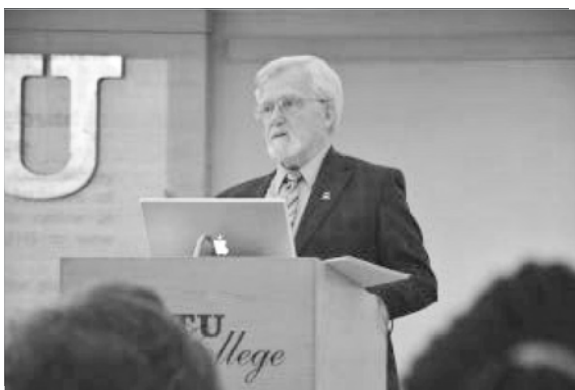


Photo: Taavi Tamtik

Dave Kiil speaking during launch of "Alberta's Estonians 1899 to Present" exhibit at Museum of Estonians Abroad (VEMU) at Tartu College in Toronto

The opening ceremony was ushered in with a brief talk by VEMU's Chief Archivist Piret Noorhani, who emphasized that cultural heritage belongs to future generations. She drew attention to the Estonian National Museum as a site of some contention in the homeland. There are those who consider the expenses involved excessive and frivolous. At the same time, we can see that Alberta's relatively small Estonian community has remained vibrant for over a hundred years. Although its activity is perforce already

mainly in English, the interest in one's roots is as strong as ever, as vividly attested to by the current exhibit. It is apparent that the love for things Estonian there cannot yet be discounted.

In his speech Ain Kiil gave a lively demonstration that there is nothing impossible or odd about a synthesis of the Estonian mind and the English language. He started with his name, explaining how Canadian schoolmates had wrung from the Estonian "Ain" the English "Dave". Ain accepted the new name, but did not wish to forego the old, so he became Ain Dave. Depending on the social group, he uses one or the other first name, officially both. He speaks flawless Estonian but acknowledges that it no longer flows as freely as he would like. He presented his talk in English, which was just as well since that fit better with both the project of the exhibit and the film.

With the aid of slides Ain introduced a five-part project, the final result of which has presently reached the TC lobby and corridor walls. He spoke of Estonianhood in the province of Alberta as one of the oldest and most unique, in that the first residents were true pioneers. The early pioneers came largely from the Võru region and several Estonian settlements in Russia, beginning in 1899. Others had emigrated from Estonia to Crimea, and left there for the United States when the czarist government began to draft youth into the Russian army. From there they migrated on

to Canada, where the government made it possible to purchase uncultivated land on favourable terms, in order to settle the province of Alberta. The Estonians were drawn by the primordial desire to be masters on their own plot of land. After the overthrow of the czarist government a portion of the emigrants made their way to the newly created Soviet Union. About half of them came back disappointed.

After the Second World War Alberta's Estonianhood got replenished by fugitives from soviet power, who arrived from Germany or Sweden. According to the 2006 Canada Census there were about 2,200 people living in Alberta who declared themselves to be of Estonian origin. The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (AEHS) was established in 2005 with the aim of preserving Estonian culture and traditions. This was necessary because after many generations, through the pull of assimilation, the mother tongue had begun to disappear. The Estonian language now predominates in only a few families. The society has about a hundred active members who are scattered across the whole province. Two to three hundred gather for larger events. The periodical *Ajakaja* is published in English. Besides the film, another publication is the attractive and informative book *Freedom, Land & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009*, which has been reviewed in Estonian World Review (see EWR Eestlased Kanadas 05 Jan 2013) and Estonian Life (see EL # 2, January 11 2013).

The film presentation, captivating in its comprehensiveness and professionalism, gives an excellent picture of the early days

of Alberta's Estonian community and of its later development. There are commentaries by leading figures in the society, such as Dave Kiil and Eda McClung (both editors of *Ajakaja*, who grew up in the Second World War exile community); also the



Photo: Taavi Tamtik

Alja Pirosok viewing a display panel during launch of Alberta's Estonian Heritage exhibit at Tartu College.

Society's president Bob Kingsep, who does not himself speak Estonian, but whose grandfather was the first Estonian pioneer to settle in Alberta in 1899. The film ends with a spirited Estonian sing-along, in which everyone takes to the woods, not just you and me, but two "bear hunters" too.

Those present thanked Ain Kiil with a hearty round of applause, to which Piret Noorhane added a plum on her part – the selection of autographs she has compiled from the Estonian Cultural History Archives titled "The Hand that Writes". After that it was on to savouring the traditional coffee and kringel and admiring the displays in the exhibit.

Source: Eerik Purje is reporter-editor, Eesti Elu/Estonian Life.



AEHS Heritage Project is now preserved in perpetuity

The AEHS web page (www.aehs.ca) has been collected by the University of Alberta using Archive-It and is available on this site:

1) tinyurl.com/aehs2013

A longer web address is also available and provides access to both versions

2) http://wayback.archive-it.org/all/*/http://www.aehs.ca/



Alberta Estonian Archival Collection is stored at Provincial Archives of Alberta

All materials used in the AEHS Heritage Project are now stored at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton. The collection includes 4.5 metres of textual records, 2 metres of related files of Edmonton, Calgary and Medicine Valley Estonian Societies, 2,000 photographs, 21 maps, 174 data CD's, and 22 DVD's. This represents a remarkable accomplishment by AEHS.

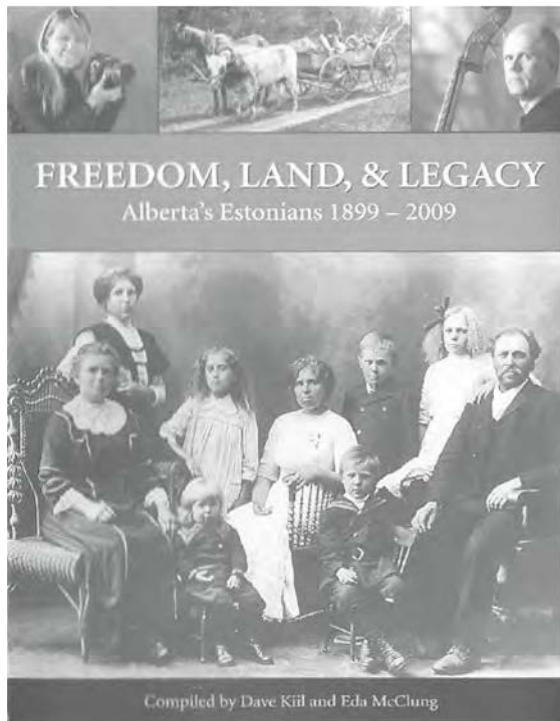
The collection can be accessed online:

www.hermis.alberta.ca/paa, In "Search the Archives" type in AEHS.

File lists and description of materials used in the Heritage Project are available for 213 fonds (files) in the database website. All files are available for review and study onsite.

Book Review
Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians
1899-2009

Reviewed by Alja Pirosok
“A rich and progressive legacy”



Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009 is a valuable publication, and a fascinating read, richly illustrated and annotated. A travelling exhibit by the publisher, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, will open soon in Toronto at Tartu College, in connection with the larger heritage project of which it is a part, and VEMU, the Museum of Estonians Abroad. This review will concentrate on the first part of the book that focuses on the earliest wave of migration to Canada because this material will be less familiar to most Estonian readers than the post Second World War period.

Two events, a decade apart, frame the double epic stories-within-a-story that the book represents. First, as Dr. Tamara Palmer Seiler

states in her vital and comprehensive Introduction, there is the part Alberta Estonians played in “the Estonian people's story of persistence over many centuries and, arguably, of eventual triumph against great odds”. President Lennart Meri's words during his visit to Alberta in 2000, less than a decade after the fall of the Soviet Union and the re-emergence of an independent Estonia, strengthened the value of its heritage focus for the book's compilers and many contributors: “the history of the Alberta Estonian community should encourage historians to look beyond the Second World War in researching the external history of Estonia.”

Moved by the story of the struggle of Alberta's Estonian pioneers to find a new life in harsh conditions, yet not forget their roots, Meri said: “It is for me a very emotional experience to see a road sign say ‘Linda Hall.’ Linda is the mother of an Estonian national hero... we have done very little to try to discover the recorded history of Estonian archives. So with your help and interest... we will move forward”.

But the history of Estonians in Alberta is simultaneously part of another story, another history. In 1990 CBC news ran a week-long documentary series for a bewildered Canadian public on issues surrounding the “Oka Crisis”. The story of colonization and displacement of the continent's Indigenous peoples is a dark side, as Palmer notes, of the second epic story of persistence and triumph in which Alberta Estonians played a part, the story of the building of Canada. The “Oka Crisis” was a land dispute between a group of Mohawk people and the town of Oka, Quebec. The town of Oka was making plans to expand a golf course and residential

development onto land which had traditionally been used by the Mohawk. It included pineland and a burial ground, marked by standing tombstones of their ancestors. The dispute over this land was the first well-publicized violent conflict between First Nations and the Canadian government in the late 20th century. Twenty years later former Quebec Native Affairs Minister John Caccia said on CBC news: "The whole crisis could have been avoided with common sense and respect for the native community". The segment of the 1990 CBC backgrounder that specifically focused on Alberta and the other Prairie provinces in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was titled "Legacy: Land, Power, and the First Nations".

Like all the selections of primary and secondary sources compiled in *Freedom, Land & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009*, the book and the film "Legacy: Land, Power, and the First Nations" tell distinct but overlapping stories. Beyond the Introduction, there are six or seven passing references in the book about Alberta's Estonians to Canada's Aboriginal peoples – a Medicine Valley Estonian Society lecture on 'the plight of native Indians in Canada', 'stirring tales of battles between settlers and American Indians' in the Estonian press, a native population guesstimate, trading and trapping in the bush, an Indian trail, and childhood memories of 'Indians' arrowheads left behind at their abandoned camps'. But at their intersections the book and the film illuminate the difficulties, injustice, and aptitudes for success specific to surviving at the edges of a new system for which both the indigenous and immigrant groups lacked language and experience.

Two salient threads in the stories of the Estonian "pioneer" era are the vivid early abundance of nature, which makes survival without cash possible, and the necessity of organizing for social protection. Readers familiar with the trials and tribulations of Tammsaare's *Põrgupõhja Uus Vanapagan* may find parallels. While the Aboriginal peoples were driven to starvation, denied mobility, machinery, licenses and permits, and the legal right to organize, the early

Alberta Estonian settlers endured such widespread practices as the sale of insurance and title to land that did not exist, the sale of machinery vital to increasing the proportion of cultivated land that would, however, not work long enough to pay back the debt allowable with land deeds, and market dumping of products below cost by big companies to drive out small farmers. One old Alberta Estonian settler explains in a letter: "I don't think you know how farmers are cheated here, and how their money is extorted. I personally have lived through three big extortions". Through no small efforts the early Estonian settlers transitioned effectively from a subsistence to a market economy - an intriguing theme - and took a leadership role in Alberta's cooperative and union movements, while Aboriginal peoples persisted in their struggle to claim the right to organize and have emerged as leaders in recent movements to protect and restore the environment, democracy, and sovereignty itself.

Of Alberta's Estonians themselves there are other stories-within-a-story that defy easy categorization. They are reflected in part in the major division of the book: "Alberta's Estonians 1899-1939" and "Alberta's Estonians 1939-2009". Just as the "who" and the "why" of emigration to Canada differ significantly in the two periods, so too does the economic and social landscape of Alberta. For one thing, Alberta's Estonians were not always "encouraged to exercise their own traditions and lifestyles", especially not the "Estonian Pioneers 'who made this land our home'" and to whom the book is dedicated. As Palmer suggests, there are related challenges in telling the story of Estonians in Canada:

There are silences in the historical records themselves, and silences resulting from the distances between people of different cultures, times and places....It is not surprising that the story of the Estonian community, with its range of experiences over time, contains a number of fault lines....Estonians are not unique in experiencing a clash of perspectives within the community defined by various waves of

immigration....This dynamic...is particularly salient among...groups...whose homelands have experienced enormous political and social change over the past century.

The publication of *Freedom, Land, & Legacy* continues, in Palmer's words, the "particularly rich and progressive" legacy in which the descendants of the pioneers and the post-World War II immigrants have found common ground. Drawing on personal diaries, letters, minutes of societies' meetings, religious publications and political leaflets, financial records, interviews, and other primary sources, the book documents the energetic and enthusiastic valuing of the social spaces that "formal societies, coops, community halls, libraries, archival collections, a website" make possible, and an enduring emphasis on "education, technological innovation and cultural expression." Wide-ranging seminar titles reveal a passion for literature and politics, and the development of musical culture spans the decades.

So who exactly, then, came to Alberta in the earlier period at the turn of the century, and why? And how exactly did they survive and thrive? They were a "handful of settlers who had been a beleaguered minority in their homeland and whose language and culture differed markedly from those of Anglo-Canadians." They were "sailors, industrial workers, tradesmen, teachers, and a few peasants". In the first settler, a schoolteacher, Henri Kingsep, readers may recognize a polyglot of the time, whose fear of reprisal for political activity contributed to his dream of a homestead and a fresh start. Some emigrants wished to evade service in the Russian czarist army, and there were hopes of easy wealth among Estonian seamen who had read published reports of gold. But the main attraction, in an aggressive recruitment campaign to draw the largest wave of settlers in Canadian history, was the offer of land.

It is hard to appreciate the undertaking of the Alberta Estonian settlers without some knowledge of the history and geography of Estonia, and the book does not disappoint in this regard. Palmer and Palmer's first chapter,

from *Peoples of Alberta: Portraits in Cultural Diversity*, places the Estonian story within the context of Canadian immigration history, while both the Introduction and the Palmer and Palmer piece also provide useful background on the international context. At the same time, the level of detail of the older historical selections, two of which were first published in *Eestlased Kanadas I* and are now available in English, places the experiences of particular, very resourceful and innovative, some indeed colourful, individuals and families and an evolving network of diverse communities in the foreground.

A chapter on Estonians in Alberta between the two World Wars offers a glimpse of two-way migration between Estonia and Alberta, and of the vicissitudes of the Depression, the tragedy of farms lost, and a few reclaimed when drought ended and the economy improved, owners-become-tenants-become-owners again. The move to cities and anti-"foreigner" sentiment intensified pressures to assimilate.

The second part of the book begins with the arrival of post-WWII refugees who were given entry to a prospering Canada, and ends in our post-Cold War era of pluralism and communication technology, and postcolonial Canada and Estonia.

A final chapter and website tell the story of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and the efforts required to produce this pioneering book. Palmer and Palmer observe that "like other groups from small countries of which Canadians have been barely aware, Estonians have faced an uphill and largely unnoticed struggle for recognition", roadside plaques and rural cemeteries near the sites of early settlements providing silent testimony, until now the only testimony, to their presence. Alive in the memories of their children and grandchildren, their struggles and contributions have now been collected in this publication.

The Reviewer:

Alja Pirosok taught interdisciplinary humanities and ESL courses at York University in Toronto from 1990 to 2008.

Karl Moro writes to *Postimees* in 1935



Front row left: Karl Moro, Otto, mother Mari, Leida; back row left: Oscar, August, George, ca 1917

Eestlased Kanadas.

Asutajad suurtööstusi.

Kanada eestlane, kes seal elanud pikemat aega ja soetanud nimetamisväärtuseid marandusi, on loonud toimetusele kirja, milles ta kõneleb mõndagi, mis võiks huvi pakkuda laiematele ringidele. Sellepärast avaldame mõlmasid loodud kirja. Kanada eestlane kirjutab:

Oleme olnud päris tiimad lobumaa asjades vastu. See on tingitud osaliselt ka sellest, et kiireid eestlasi on aastate jooksul veelud kommunistide läbi viia. Nüüd näib nende töö lõpp olevat ja inimeste harkavad jälle mõtlema lobumaa asjadest. Kuigi põllumajandus ja tööstus elas lahtis teatud kriisi, ei ole olulised muutunud niisuguseks, et inimesed ära elada ei saaks.

1928 a. sügisel asusin Toronto asundusest 500 miili põhja poole Place Rivieri. See oli küll maa-ala. Nüüd tarbimeid tüki osta jada protsenti kõrgema hinnaga kui alustatud lohtades. Mõnda oli kallid. Nüüd lähtele aja lehtel huvi eestlaste mäludus siin läbi küla ja olulised muutus meie lojuts. Tööd oli palju, kuid tagajärjed head. Sinna läbi P. Rosenthal suure oiaari, varustades ümbrust marjade ja loogitaimedega. Georg Moro (Muru) alustas lauavabrikut. Lauavabrik valmistab chitrus- ja laevamaterjali. Lauavabrikist lähedal asub jahuveest, mille omanikud on Ed. Moro (Muru).

Jahuveest on neljalordne chitrus. Meil on lojutada oma taudtee, korrald maan-



Eestlaste jahuveest.

tee ja weete. Nende loudu meetakse wiisi weestisse ja loju tarvitajatele tagasi.

Nüüd, mil loodus hea eduga töötab, imestavad algatajad üksi, kuidas jee loil lorde on loinud, sest algatajatel ei olnud suuri lovitale. Kuud la siin loitis eestlaste mäludus.

Meie lähedal on palju ukrainlasi. Nide on neid Kanadas palju. Rea loil on nad Venemaalt põgenenud. Ukrainlased peavad laevastike, ja harivad põldu ja äritsevad.

Kanadast termitab lobumaale Karl Moro, kelle aadress Peace River, Kanada.

Note: *Postimees*, founded in 1857, was the first permanent Estonian language newspaper in Estonia. Johann Vilhelm Jannson was its editor until 1905. In 1896 it became a daily. It was published in Tartu which is traditionally the town of the national university. This historical location provided *Postimees* with a leading position in Estonia's southern regions. It is still published today. It competes with another daily, *Päevaleht*, originally published in Tallinn. Karl Moro likely wrote this letter to *Postimees* as his home region was Võru in southern Estonia.

Translation overleaf

*Translation of
Karl Moro
letter, March
10, 1935*

Estonians in Canada

Established big industries

A Canadian Estonian, who has lived there for a longer period of time and has accumulated significant wealth, has sent a letter to the Editor where he speaks of things of interest to a wider audience. For that reason, we are publishing excerpts from the letter. The Canadian Estonian writes:



homeland. Even though agriculture and industry went through some crises, conditions haven't changed to the extent that people are not able to make a living.

In the fall of 1928 I left Eckville and settled 500 miles to the north in Peace River. That was an empty territory. All goods were 100% more expensive than in established communities. Transport was expensive. But in a short period of time the tenacity of Estonians succeeded and the conditions turned to our favour. There was lots of

We have been quite numb to happenings in our homeland. This is partly due to local Estonians having been under the influence of communism. There now seems to be an end to their persuasion and people are again starting to think about happenings in their

work, but the results were good. H. Rosenthal established a large gardening business, supplying the neighbourhood with plants of berries and vegetables. Georg Moro (Muru) established a sawmill, supplying building- and shipbuilding materials. A flourmill is nearby, whose owner is Ed Moro (Muru).

The flourmill is a four-story structure. The mill can use their own railway, a good road and waterway. These are used to transport the grain to the mill and the flour back to users.

Now that the industry is working well, even the ones who started it are wondering at how well things have turned out even with little startup capital. But here also the tenacity of Estonians triumphed/persevered.

There are many Ukrainians in our neighbourhood. In general, there are many of them in Canada. Almost all of them have escaped from Russia. The Ukrainians operate ships, and cultivate fields and run businesses.

Karl Moro sends greetings from Canada to his homeland. His address is Peace River, Canada.

Published in *Postimees* newspaper. March 10, 1935.

Translation by Ave Peetri, Calgary, Alberta

Oscar Moro moves "Old Mission" Residence

Major moving project was completed on Tuesday when the huge three-story building, pictured as it was being hauled across the Peace River, was



brought up the east bank where it is ready to be put on a foundation. Formerly a residence at St. Augustine's Mission upstream on the west bank of the river, it is expected the interior of

the structure will be re-modelled to provide apartments for seven families. Moving was done under the direction of **Oscar Moro**, the building placed on a sturdily constructed metal under-structure and pulled and pulled several miles and eventually across the river by "cat" type tractors. Series of unforeseen delays brought the total moving time to more than two weeks.

*The Record-Gazette, Peace River, Alberta
March 20, 1958*

Oscar Moro: The Man Who Could!

Bonnie Moro, Victoria, BC

My father, Oscar Moro, was born in Sõmerpalu-Willemi, Estonia, on October 23rd, 1903. He was the third son of Karl and Mari - then 'Murro' according to some records, but 'Muru' according to my Mom. He was a baby in 1904 when his parents and brothers, George and August, made their way to Canada, drawn like so many other Estonians by the promise of land and freedom from economic and social oppression. They settled in what came to be the Eckville area of Alberta, and by 1906, two more children were born, a daughter, Leida, and another son, Otto.

It is no surprise to be told that building a life in a new country - the New World - in the first part of the twentieth century required an enormous amount of very hard work. The pioneering families that came encountered incredible hardship in their first years. Yet some particular characteristics enabled these homesteaders to succeed: for example, resourcefulness, inventiveness, determination, strength of body and of character, a strong capacity for independent thinking, an ability to solve problems, no matter what, and perhaps above all, courage and a willingness to try anything. A sense of humour did not hurt either.

Every family of homesteaders that came to Alberta must have stories to tell that exemplify these characteristics. I will tell you a few about my family, since it is that story I have at least in part experienced and heard many tales of. My knowledge is partial, but I hope it adds a little to the total that we all share.

Even as a child I could see these 'homesteader characteristics' in my father. How I admired him! He was a bear of a man, of only average height at five foot ten or eleven, but with broad shoulders, the build of an ox. His physical strength was virtually legendary in our family, and he, along with my mother, worked harder, and with less complaint, than anyone I ever met. He pursued several occupations in his life. He was first of all, as a child and then young

man, a homesteader along with the rest of his family, which in itself required one to cut down trees, clear land, grow crops and vegetables, grind grain if at all possible, and make whatever you might need from wood, since that was the only raw material readily at hand. His father, Karl, set the first examples of ingenuity, for he made a wagon from only wood, including wheels and axles, to be drawn by an ox, and of course chairs and tables; he made a wooden turbine which he installed in the dam he had built on

the Medicine River which would power a stone mill for grinding grain. Within half a dozen years of arriving in Canada, he was beginning to acquire mechanical help for some of the onerous tasks of farming which until then had been done by hand. A Democrat wagon was bought, and horses to pull it. Later, when my Dad would have been about thirteen years old, and to the whole family's delight, Karl got a Model T Ford Touring Car. Self-sufficiency was the rule, and I'm sure my father got his first experience at understanding and repairing machinery on the homestead. The skills that Karl and Mari's children were acquiring in this process stood



Oscar Moro, ca 1925

them in good stead. All the sons at one point or another ran sawmills and two of them, August and Oscar, became involved in the business of milling flour. They helped their father build a two-story flourmill in Eckville in 1923. Later, Otto took up farming in the North while August continued milling flour in Eckville. Later still, August had a mill in the vicinity of Prairie Creek which functioned not only as a sawmill and planer, but also ground grain and delivered electricity to the town of Eckville. My father pursued enough occupations in his one very long lifetime to fill the life of several people. He eventually became known as a man who could fix anything; no mechanical device was beyond him, and if he did not have a tool needed to fix it, he might make the tool as well. For a time he ran a sawmill, even cooking for the workers, which I know because

he shared one of his recipes with me for ground meat and grated potato patties (of course, he might have learned this from my Mom, but he claimed it was his invention); he built another flourmill, opened a machine shop, ran Caterpillar tractors in the north for oil companies, was Town Councillor for a few years, got several patents for his inventions of various mechanical devices, dabbled not very successfully in the oil business near Lloydminster, built houses in Peace River, and at the same time, farmed a couple hundred acres of wheat. Later, he and a partner, Mr. Mauer, tried to start a peat-drying business, for he was convinced of the value of peat for gardening. He built the machinery himself, a whole large building full of an impressive array of conveyors and large metal ducts for the drying, and he may well have succeeded except for an unfortunate fire which destroyed building and machinery alike. He was a tireless worker, but also a passionate man of strong opinions and a perceptive curiosity about the world at large. In spite of his constant workload, he managed to find time to hunt wild geese in the fall, and as a family we raised a huge garden of vegetables and picked the wild bounty in the woods, small sweet blueberries by the tubful and 'low-bush cranberries', i.e., lingonberries. Occasionally Dad shot a bear - but Mom utterly refused to eat bear!

But how did my parents come to settle in the Peace River country? Most of the Estonians who came to Alberta settled in the central part of the province, for it was there that they could see echoes of the Estonian landscape. At first the Moros were there too. In the nineteen-twenties, things began to change. An unfortunate accident occurred when they were out for a spin in the Model T, and Mari was hurt. She suffered a stroke soon after, and by 1924, had died. In 1925 Karl sold the Eckville flourmill to August and Oscar. He seemed intent on seeking new pastures, and before long Oscar was feeling the same way. In 1927, Oscar, his older brother George, and a neighbour took a trip to the north to see the Peace River country, travelling in their old Model T. They were impressed. The long hours of sunlight in summer at this latitude meant quicker growing and maturing crops.

Years later, Dad told me of their return trip to Eckville. The road was completely impassable near Slave Lake; a muddy slough blocked their way. A crew was working at putting the road through, but it was not yet complete and the town of Slave Lake was still three miles away. The workmen advised them to take an old trail that would eventually get them through. But the three of them noticed that right at

this point in the road, it was crossed by the railway line. The solution to their travel problem leapt to mind; they decided to take a chance. They turned the car on to the railway tracks, knowing that it was a mere three miles to the place where the good road would begin again, and so began their bizarre journey. It was a rough ride, for they had to drive quickly enough to bounce along over the spaces between the railway ties. It was a tense ride as well, for they had no way of knowing if or when a train might come hurtling down the tracks toward them. It seems clear that we must add another item to the list of characteristics needed to make your way successfully in the New World - sheer luck! The line between courage and foolhardiness is small indeed. But they were lucky, coming bumpily, hearts in mouth, to the next crossing of rail and road, and so got safely back on the route south.

Yet, the North beckoned. The following year, 1928, Karl and sons George and Otto, left Eckville to settle in the Peace. Before long George had set up a sawmill, possibly with Otto's help, and Karl had become a market gardener, raising vegetables and even strawberries for the growing population of the town. The chickens he kept provided eggs and valuable manure for the garden. I wonder if he also grew and sold the special potatoes that he had brought to Canada from Estonia. We still grow them in our family, a particularly delicious yellow-fleshed tuber with a reddish skin that I've never seen in any market. After a time, Karl began building 'shacks' at the north end of town which he rented out for extra income.

Meanwhile, Oscar seemed not yet ready to move north. He and August had been working together at the Eckville flourmill, but after August's marriage in 1927, the two of them soon dissolved their partnership. Oscar went to Calgary and worked for the next two years with the Cockshutt Plow company as a service man. I once asked him how he had learned to work so well with machines, and he gave me a grin that can only be called mischievous. He said he had gone to Calgary and seen a sign advertising for someone skilled in repair work. He walked in and claimed that he was such a skilled person, although he admitted to me that he had not before done exactly the sort of work that they required. He was hired, and he must have adapted quickly, for he continued there until 1929. I cannot swear that this story is true, but given my Dad's apparently limitless self-confidence, I would not be in the least surprised if it is. He had a great capacity to teach himself what he needed to know, and as well,

what seemed to be an innate ability to grasp the inner workings of anything mechanical. At that point, he no doubt had a good grasp of machinery from the work required on the homestead and in the flourmills. So far as I could tell, it was characteristic of my father to be daunted by nothing, no matter what the challenge.

By 1929 the economic situation was becoming dire; Oscar was still unsettled, and in the spring of 1930, George, now well settled in the Peace country, suggested that he come up and build a flour mill there. The town offered Oscar a mill-site for a dollar, for they were eager to have new development in town. He then persuaded his cousin, Ed Moro, to join in financing this venture and by May they were building. Wood was supplied by George's sawmill; second-hand equipment acquired from Winnipeg was overhauled and installed by Oscar, and by September, they were able to begin work as the Mid-West Milling Company. But less than six months later, Oscar sold his share to Ed and returned to Eckville to help out August at his flourmill again. The two of them formed an agreement that let Oscar remodel the mill, changing it from a short-system to a long-system of milling. He completed this renewal and then operated the mill on his own for a few years. But change was ahead.



*Oscar and Sophie Moro,
shortly after wedding,
1935*

In July, 1935, he married. He told me he first met my mother, then Sophie Tipman, while he was working at the top of a pole at the side of a road where she was walking home from her day of teaching in a one-room school near Eckville. When he was telling me this, his eyes once again twinkling

with mischief, my mother quickly shushed him. I was not permitted to hear any more "tales out of school".

My mother too was the child of homesteaders who came to Canada in the early 1900s, in her case, Magnus and Viu (Sophia) Tipman. They settled in the Stettler area, and as with the Moro family, their early days were characterized by hardship but also by resourcefulness and the capacity

to make inventive use of whatever means they could to survive and prosper. Magnus too was involved with making a mill to grind flour, and with no source of metal parts, he shaped the gears and working parts out of hardwood. In this case, the grinding stone was powered by wind, with canvas sails to catch this ready source of prairie power. In this family too of five sons and three daughters, there was early tragedy. Magnus was severely injured in a threshing machine accident and died in 1913, when Sophie was six. She was the youngest daughter, with two older sisters and three older brothers. Only Ferdie and yet-to-be-born Edward were younger. Seven years later, Viu became ill and then died, leaving the oldest children, John and Louise, as heads of the family. In spite of this early sorrow, the family was resilient and, with the help of neighbours, came to thrive. Nearly every early photo I have seen of my mother shows a girl of spirit with a great smile on her face. When I was a child, and my family travelled back to central Alberta to visit my mother's brother Ado and family, I sometimes thought I would never stop laughing. Both Ado and Sophie had a wry sense of humour and a rare ability to put a humorous slant on everything that came their way. My mother told jokes, too, which she usually took from a radio program she listened to. They often exasperated me as a child, but when I was older, I could see what strength came from being able to see "the funny side" of almost everything. I'm sure there is a special gene for humour, for this trait carries on through the family, even now to my own daughter! My sister's children as well are tireless jokesters.

After my parents married, the North again called my father. Ed wanted Dad to come back to the flourmill, so in September 1935, Oscar and Sophie came to Peace River. Ed sold the mill to Midland Pacific Grain Company in October, and Dad became the operating manager. At this time he invented a special piece of machinery, which I believe he patented, which enabled him to mix carefully calibrated amounts of additives in with the flour at the appropriate stage in the milling process. These additives were quite likely iron, niacin, thiamine, and/or riboflavin, which in the '30s were being used to enrich flour. Dad also saw the usefulness of flour testing so that the amount of gluten/protein in a batch of grain could be established and the flours from different crops blended, if necessary, to make the final product more consistent. Because of varying weather and soil conditions, some crops had higher levels of protein than others. Thus, the equipment necessary to do this testing was acquired as well. As a child, I was impressed by his ability simply to chew a mouthful of

raw wheat and so judge its quality. I tried it too - but it just tasted like wheat to me!

In 1936, a daughter arrived - my older sister, Marilyn. By summer, 1938, Dad left the flourmill and began a repair shop. Then in the fall of 1939, he travelled to Yellowknife, where I believe he intended to take a job repairing heavy machinery. He left by float plane, along with other passengers, but the flight ran into difficulty because of smoke from forest fires, a not uncommon occurrence in the North. They landed on Hay River but eventually took off again although visibility continued to be poor. They finally came in sight of Great Slave Lake, on whose northern shore Yellowknife is situated, but had to land because the pilot was not sure exactly where they were. He put the plane down on the lake so that he could find his bearings and began to taxi to shore. Then - disaster! While they were still taxiing in what appeared to be deep water, the plane somehow managed to become grounded on a large underwater boulder. They were in an impossible position, with no apparent way to get the plane off the rock. Dad was a practical man, and could assess a situation and see a solution where others could not. He took off his shoes and socks, and balancing on the very rock on which they were grounded, he managed to lift the pontoons off. I can scarcely even imagine the bodily strength and confidence required to attempt such a task. However, they were not free of difficulty yet, for the pilot still couldn't find his bearings. Everyone on board was becoming hungry by this point, but now it was Mom's turn to save the situation, for she had packed an ample lunch for Dad to take with him which he then shared with everyone on board. Eventually, they made their way safely to Yellowknife, Dad found his job and looked for a place for the family to live. This accomplished, he returned to Peace River, and then travelled back to Yellowknife with Sophie and Marilyn as winter came on. My sister remembers travelling by dogsled to the small shack which became their temporary home.

My father was not content with this job, although it probably paid a good wage. Through the bitter northern winter, he and the other workmen had to work in a large hangar-like space with no ventilation at all. Dad knew how unhealthy it was to work in the exhaust of the motors they ran while in this enclosed space. He complained and I think was eventually moved to a better working area, but he was still not entirely happy. I don't know how long he remained in Yellowknife, but it could not have been long before he and his small family had returned to Peace River. At this time he probably started up a

repair business again. Eventually he established a business near the centre of town called the Tractor Repair Shop. His shop was practically a legend in the North for he could fix not just farm machinery, but virtually anything. He eventually had ten men working for him, running the lathes and other equipment. One of Sophie's brothers, Ferdie, worked at the shop for many years. By the time Oscar changed the name of his business to Moro Machine Company, he was able to rebuild motors and do virtually any other sort of mechanical repair that might be needed. I remember someone who even brought in a typewriter - Dad fixed it.

Meanwhile, in 1943, another daughter had arrived: me. Once I was old enough to go to school, my mother resumed her teaching career and taught her favourite grade threes for the rest of her working life. By some time in the early to mid-fifties, a two-hundred-acre farm downriver and just north of the town came up for sale, so my father bought it and began to raise wheat. Although he worked in his shop Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday mornings from 8 to noon, he found the time to tend to the farm. During the growing season, he typically worked there most Saturday afternoons and all of Sunday. He claimed this was his way of relaxing - and he did take special pride in the farm. He did not believe in the promises being made at that time by the makers of commercial fertilizer nor did he think that fields should be burned after harvest; he felt that the best way to ensure the fertility of the soil was to turn under the chaff and wheat straw, so I suppose one could say he was an "organic farmer" decades before it became fashionable. Those few hundred acres of river-bottom soil remained rich and productive for as long as he farmed them. Raising crops within the warming banks of the river valley was a good way to avoid the worst crippling frosts, and the growing season was slightly, but significantly, better and longer in the river valley. Oscar prided himself on producing the best quality wheat that he could; the year's weather did not always cooperate, but he was happy when his wheat was graded No.1. He walked the fields to handpick the wild oats that could ruin the wheat's rating. Thus was the fate of his daughter, and future grand-children, sealed: my sister escaped, for she was off to university, but the rest of us all had our turn, spending many hours walking the beautiful soft green fields of wheat, plucking wild oats and taking them off the field to be destroyed.

Owning the farm gave Dad the opportunity to pursue one of his favourite activities on his own land: hunting wild geese. He hunted every fall. He

would first go 'spotting', checking the fields of the many farms in the vicinity to see where the geese might be landing and where he might be able to get permission to shoot. Even as a small child I loved to accompany him on these outings. Sometimes as we drove around I got him to teach me a little sentence in Estonian, something like, "we saw many geese", so that I could surprise my Mom when we got home. Sadly, I was never exposed to enough of the language to learn it since my parents rarely spoke to each other in Estonian at home.



Bonnie, straining to hold up the goose shot that morning by her Dad. Oscar's shadow looms large in the photo, just as his presence did in her life

Dad was observant and knew something of the habits of geese. He was good at predicting whether or not they would land where he had seen them while out spotting, and so he knew where to put the blinds. He also knew that they favoured coming in just at dawn after having spent the night on a slough or the river, for safety. Blinds must be carefully disguised in order to fool the sharp-eyed and wary geese. Dad would dig holes in the field the night before the hunt, each hole big enough to hold one hunter, taking care not to leave suspicious piles of raw dirt in the field. He made chicken wire covers for each blind in advance and wove wheat straw into the wire to disguise its appearance. You had to arrive well before

dawn and hide yourself in one of these holes, placing the cover carefully above you. Typically, as dawn approached, frost would lightly coat the field - including your blind. If you arrived after this, your footsteps in the frost would be plainly visible to the crafty geese, and they would not land. I went on one of these hunts with my Dad and one of his friends when I was about twelve. Dad had given me a small gauge shotgun of my own and I had previously practiced with him, shooting at clay pigeons, missing every single one so far as I could tell. It was icy cold in the blind, and we had to be completely quiet, for geese have very keen hearing. So we waited, unmoving, as the first mists of the morning drifted in from the river. The crisp smell of fall was in the air. A weak sun began to break over the top of the hills on the east side of the river, a small bird or two called from nearby bushes - and then we heard them. Calling, honking, signalling to each other, a quite large flock by the sound of it, taking off from the river. Then they came, not even first circling carefully as geese often do, but flying directly in over us in perfect formation, aiming to land where my father had predicted they would. You could hear the beat of their wings and clearly see their markings and their small black eyes looking beadily at the field with its promise of scattered wheat. We took aim and fired. But by this point, my heart was not in it. These creatures were so beautiful, the setting so peaceful - it was heart-breaking to intrude with our crude and incredibly loud blasts of noise and buckshot. But we did, and the others shot several geese each. I would have been happy to please my Dad with a lucky shot, but indeed I knew, and was relieved, that I had missed.

In 1958, Dad undertook an unusual project. A couple of miles upstream from the town and on the opposite, west side of the river was the old St. Augustine Mission. It was a three-storey building, and it was thought that it would make a good apartment building with some remodelling of the inside. But could it be brought to the town? It was March, and the quarter-mile-wide river was of course frozen solid and covered with a thick layer of snow. Dad first constructed a large, metal under-structure; then with the help of a Caterpillar tractor, the building was pushed on to this 'sled'. Under Dad's direction, the slow passage down and across the river began. The Cat pushed and nudged this huge structure, bit by bit, until finally, two weeks later on March 18th, the building was coaxed up the east bank and into town.

Continued on page 26...

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society exhibit on display during President Ilves's visit to Ottawa



Photograph by Ülle Baum



Photograph by Ülle Baum

The Alberta Estonian Heritage Society's six-panel exhibit was on display at the Parliament Hill reception during the state visit by Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of Estonia, May 2, 2013



Photo: Ülle Baum
Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper and President of the Republic of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves on Parliament Hill.
The Alberta exhibit was very well received by over 100 guests at the reception.



Photo: Ülle Baum
Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia and Peter Van Loan, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill. *Mr. Van Loan hosted and welcomed President Ilves on behalf of the Canadian Government, May 2, 2013.*



Photo: Ülle Baum
His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, The Governor General of Canada welcomes his Excellency Toomas Hendrik Ilves, the President of the Republic of Estonia at Rideau Hall, May 1, 2013.
L to R: Sharon Johnston, Evelin Ilves, Mr. Ilves, Mr. Johnston



Photo: Ülle Baum
Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of Estonia, speaking at a reception in his honor on Parliament Hill.
During his speech the President referred to Alberta Estonians in particular. Alberta's Estonians and their historical roots inspired lively discussions amongst the guests.



People lined the river bank to watch the progress of the slowly creeping building, full of opinions on how the work should be done. But would anyone else even have attempted such a feat? I doubt it. My father was either crazy or a genius - or both - I was never quite sure.



Mom (Sophie) and Kiiri, 1984

Although we never lived on our farm, we had a large vegetable garden there, planted in the rich soil next to a great row of chokecherry bushes. Mom and I would go there on a Sunday afternoon, taking my already hard-at-work (or should I say, hard-at-relaxing) father a good lunch, and we would weed and tend the garden. Mom was very afraid of the black bears which were attracted by the wheat and the garden, and so was likely to work with frequent glances over her shoulder - just in case. My father was not bothered by the presence of bears in the slightest; whenever he met one on the road between his fields, even if he had no gun he would face it down and talk it into running away. One Sunday when my mother and I were weeding, we heard a strange noise that seemed close at hand, a sort of 'whuffing' sound. We looked up, and there in the middle of the chokecherry bushes was a fine black bear, huffing and blowing to get rid of the leaves in its mouth. We ran! The car was near at hand, and truly, the bear was not in the least interested in us. When we later told Dad of our adventure, he sniffed at us, unimpressed. What cowards...

Meanwhile, Dad continued with his many ventures. He and another brother-in-law, Edward Tipman, invented a paper air filter for automobiles and patented it. They were unable to find a company willing to market it, but it was not long after that a very similar product appeared for sale. The booming oil business north of Peace River kept Dad's fleet of Caterpillar tractors busy cutting seismic lines through the bush. Once, as spring neared, one of the Cats was

being driven by a good operator over a frozen lake. The ice gave way and the Cat plunged deep into the icy water. The operator had great presence of mind, for he grasped the exhaust pipe which typically extended up near the seat, and so was able to follow it up until he found the hole through which the Cat had plunged. A happy outcome - and later Dad was able to pull the submerged Cat out of the water and repair it.

In 1958, Dad and a partner, Mr. Gliege, took out options on twenty-seven lots in the northern part of the town to build new houses. Once again, Dad's activities mirrored those of his father, who had so much earlier also constructed living accommodations in Peace River. One of those houses became our home, and my sister and her family soon came to Peace River and moved into a new house down the street. The houses were new and modern and the two partners had no trouble selling them. By this time Grandfather Karl was living with us, for he had been in failing health and was not really able to manage on his own any more. In 1960, he passed away.

Eventually, Dad began to think of slowing down. My sister and her husband, Jim Hood, had come to Peace River so that Dad could relinquish the ownership and management of Moro Machine to them. Unfortunately, some years later Jim suffered a stroke, and Dad had to take over the shop again. But he was determined to retire, and did finally find a buyer for the business.

My husband, John Michelsen, and I were then living in Victoria, British Columbia, and around 1979, Mom and Dad came to visit. On the ferry on the way to Vancouver Island, Dad began a conversation with a stranger who knew a near-by island, Salt Spring, very well. This man painted an attractive picture for my Dad's receptive ears: a small but vibrant community, wonderful winter weather, good growing conditions - and Dad was hooked. Within a day or so of their arrival, we were taking the ferry to Salt Spring. Dad liked the look of the place, so we looked in the window of a real estate office and then went in to speak with an agent. My father was not one to dither. We were quickly shown a few promising acreages, Dad began negotiations with the owner of ten acres just north of the island's golf course, and within days, the bargain was sealed. So my parents came to retire on Salt Spring Island.

Part of the land was cleared, which opened up a small field by the house. There were fruit trees as well, several varieties of apple and a cherry, kinds that could not have been raised in the far north. A well

supplied water but this was not enough to satisfy Dad's intentions, so he dammed a stream that ran through the property to make a pond from which he could pump water for a garden. He built a substantial root cellar in the side of small hill in preparation for the crops he would raise. Soon my parents had planted a large vegetable garden, raspberry bushes, and enough strawberry plants to feed a village, it seemed. Then Dad began making the field into a more tillable area. He picked out stones by hand, wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow after wheelbarrowful, and began to pull up and burn the wild Broom plants that had taken over the field. He was at this time renting the field to a neighbour who wanted the pasturage for a few ewes and a ram. The ram liked to think that this was his territory, so Dad had to keep an eye out for him. But one day, when he turned to add another batch of Broom to the pile - wham! The ram butted him into the pile. Dad was furious, but there was not much he could do about the triumphant ram. I think the small flock did not remain in residence much longer.

Dad wanted the field for the growing of alfalfa; he was interested in composting to improve the soil's fertility and had an array of compost bins in which to compost the nitrogen-rich alfalfa. My mother loved flowers, and since varieties can be grown on the West Coast that would die elsewhere, she was in gardener's heaven. She planted roses and anything else that took her fancy. I too love gardening, and so provided her with an endless supply of 'extra' plants. Dad was intrigued by the thought of the kinds of plants that can thrive in this climate and began to grow many things he had never grown before. He loved to eat figs, so naturally a fig tree was planted. However, he was not very patient, and also not inclined to listen to a daughter who had been gardening in this climate for years. He gave the poor tree a year, and when it did not produce figs he took it out and planted another. He planted a walnut tree too, but he knew this one would take years to produce nuts so he allowed it to grow at its own pace.



Oscar Moro pulling tree stump to clear land for gardening, 1985

At this time, my husband and I were planning on building a house. We had acquired a wooded acre and a half not far from the city, and had been saving money for several years to be able to afford to build. We had designed the house ourselves, planning a post and beam construction. Dad came over to help us clear the land. However, instead of simply sawing the trees down and digging out the roots, he had a novel suggestion: we should let the trees themselves pull the roots out. And how would we do this? We would take them out with dynamite. My husband had a regular and demanding job teaching at the university and thus was not able to help at all stages of our project, so the task of dynamiting fell to my Dad and me. We needed a specialized hand tool in order to drill into the bases of the trees, so Dad welded a handle to a dynamite-sized drill in readiness for the task.

We each had a role to play in the process. I was in charge of getting the dynamite. At the explosives shop, I couldn't tell what surprised the burly-looking salesmen the most, the fact that a young blonde was buying dynamite or that we were going to use it to take down huge fir trees! Having assembled our supplies, we were

ready to begin. We attached a cable high on the first tree so that John could partially guide it as it fell. Dad drilled the hole, we packed in our first stick of dynamite, lit the fuse, and ran back out of danger. All that happened was that the dynamite blew itself out of the hole. It took us several tries before the technique was perfected - and many more trips back to the dynamite shop, where the interested fellows soon inquired if I might not like 'something stronger'!

Eventually, we had taken down all the trees we needed, roots intact. Next they were chain-sawed into appropriate lengths to be milled. Dad had purchased an old circular saw up north, rebuilt it, and had asked - who else - his older brother, George, to come and help us saw lumber. Their collaboration was hilarious. The two aging brothers acted as if they were teenagers, squabbling about the best way to use a circular saw. Uncle George was a witty man, so there

was a lot of laughter as the two exchanged good-natured insults. It was as if they were reliving their youth, both in the arguing and in the joking. In the end, we successfully obtained some of the heavy timbers that now support the house. We did not have enough trees to cut all the lumber needed, and in any case, in spite of the attentions of these two old sawmill men, those timbers were not always entirely uniformly cut from end to end!

We had hired a competent and resourceful man, Lloyd Boehmer, as contractor to help us put the house up, since he had experience building log and post and beam houses. He also knew the operator of a small mill not far from Victoria who cut beautiful Douglas fir beams for us. We used our own trees for the posts that would be visible inside the house when we were done. We moved the heavy logs with peaveys and began the peeling process with 'peeling spuds', long metal rods with a sharp, flat blade at the end. My daughter,

Kiiri, who was then scarcely a toddler, kept me company while I sat and 'fine-tuned' the peeling job so that the logs, when erected to be posts supporting the beams, would look as good as possible.

When it came time to erect the structure, there was a serious discussion about how we could possibly do this, for the posts and beams were very heavy and we did not have access to a crane. Lloyd suggested that we hire a helicopter, for though it would cost \$500 an hour, he thought we could do the job quickly enough to make the expenditure worthwhile. My Dad scoffed in amazement. Five hundred dollars an hour! No, that was not the way to do things. This old homesteader, this man who was used to doing things using his own hands and by his own means, had another solution. We would use a lighter, longer log as gin pole to support a chain block. And so we did, with these three men, Dad, Lloyd, and John, managing to lift into place the structural backbone of our house. My father's sheer physical strength, even at this point in his late

seventies, amazed our workman. Lloyd himself was a strong man, but he could not lift what Dad could lift. It was an amazing demonstration of what a homesteader was capable of! When the structure was in place, on a wonderful sunny day with a clear blue sky, it looked like a Greek temple. It seemed a shame to close in the walls. By January 1984, we moved in.

My parents continued on Salt Spring for close to another decade, but by some time in 1993, they decided to sell their place and move to the Victoria area, where I would be better able to help them. They had been having some health problems, and it was apparent that the property on Salt Spring was too much for them now. The following spring Mom fell very ill and passed away on July 1st at the age of 87. Dad was in the process of selling the property already and by November, he left Salt Spring and came to live with Kiiri and me. He began failing in many ways, and by the age of 97, in late December, 2000, he too was gone. They had led long lives, my dear parents, starting in hardship but ending I think with the satisfaction of knowing they had

lived full and fruitful lives. I remember them as the best of parents, full of generosity of heart and always willing to try whatever needed to be done. It was the end of an era.



Bonnie , Kiiri and Dad, 1983



L to R: Bonnie Moro, nephew Terry Hood, Kiiri Moro, Christmas 2012. "The family carries on with strong bonds of love and friendship"

Discovering Alberta

Ave Peetri, Calgary, AB

I moved to Alberta with my husband on December 30th, 2012 from Tallinn. He had a job offer from a leading cost consulting company in Canada and I had the possibility of developing my coaching business here.

We had visited Canada only once before - a vacation on Vancouver Island and also stayed in Vancouver and Toronto for a couple of days. I knew of Calgary because I had watched Allar Levandi fight for a medal in biathlon in 1988 and came third. Never did it occur to me back then that I will move to live in Calgary and be able to ski on the same tracks as he had.

Before making the big decisions to move, we had done a lot of research on-line and all pointed towards a great place to live and work. We would miss the sea, fresh fish from the Fishmarket and black bread, but have the mountains and juicy steaks. It would be as cold as in Estonia, but there will be more sunshine. We'd leave our friends and family behind, but will have the opportunity to meet new friends and explore a new country. The existence of Skype is great, my Mom says that I talk to her more often now than when living in Estonia.

One of our goals upon arrival was to build a network of like-minded people. First thing we did was to search for Estonians in Calgary and we found the AEHS website. The President himself answered very quickly, but since Bob Kingsep lives far away from downtown he passed us on to Helle and Jüri Kraav, who have been very kind and helpful and have made our settling into Calgary a much more pleasant experience. They even showed us where to find Estonian black bread and fresh fish in Calgary-things that we'd missed.

My husband has met people through work and we also met a really good guy-an oil company executive, in our local pub in Calgary.

I needed to establish a network for my coaching business and also find people who would be on the same path as me—small business owners. Calgary is full of entrepreneurs and there are plenty of places to meet up with them. People are also open to go for coffee and share information with a complete stranger, something that is not so easily done in Estonia. I have met with more than 20 business owners by now and am beginning to understand the challenges and how business is done here. It seems that in this case, Alberta (Calgary) is similar to Estonia—business is referred to the people that are known and trusted. A good recommendation goes a long way here as well and the good thing is that you don't need to go to the same school or be friends for ages to earn a referral - proving yourself trustworthy is good enough.

Another great resource besides friendly people is definitely nature—the awe-inspiring mountains, beautiful lakes and meadows and now the blossoming spring. We have been to Canmore a few times, Banff National Park and even Waterton National Park. We love the skiing, cycling and hiking possibilities and try to get out as often as possible. Now we are looking forward to the Calgary Stampede—we already have the boots and hats to fit in.



Ave Peetri was born in Pärnu, Estonia and has lived and worked in Oslo, Norway, Atlanta, USA, London, UK among other places, mainly in leading Marketing positions. Now she helps small business owners win new business by developing their own confident marketing style. Ave is married to Kevin Ellis from Hartlepool, England.

www.facebook.com/CoachingByAvePeetriInc

Alberta's Estonian Pioneers featured on 2013 calendar

From Crimean farms to homesteads in southern Alberta

By 1908 twenty-six Estonian families had found land near Barons

The history of Estonians in Alberta dates back to 1889 and the arrival of two brothers looking for a better life. It's the story of pioneers and refugees, adventurers and scholars, a story of courage, renewal and hope.

... freedom, fertile land and a new life ...

In 1861, a group of Estonian farming families, seeking independence, left their homeland to relocate in the Crimea where they became well established as farmers, orchardists, and in various professions. By 1903, as political unrest arose in the Crimea, members of the group migrated to Alberta.



The horse was used for transport.

Jacob and Mari Erdman and their young children lived and farmed in the Crimea until, at the age of 50, they came to Alberta to homestead new land near Barons, north of Lethbridge. They were well established as farmers. They had horses, built a house, and had a comfortable but basic shelter in the harsh Alberta climate.

Their permanent house was made of wood purchased from one of the three lumber yards near the old station of Barons. The lumber yard owner, Dr. J. J. Johnson, had a sign on one wall inside the house indicating that it had been built in 1906, the year when the group of all who helped build it were written under the word "Built". A fourth generation Erdman descendant now owns the house.

The house was damaged by fire in 1908. The house was rebuilt in 1909 and the house was moved to its present location in 1910.

As Ellen Erdman Johnson recorded:

"Wheat and other grain was hauled to Lethbridge 30 miles away in the early days. Gus, their son, would get up at two or three a.m., deliver the grain and return home very late the same day. It was expensive to stay overnight in the city, especially with a four-horse team, and cash was in short supply."

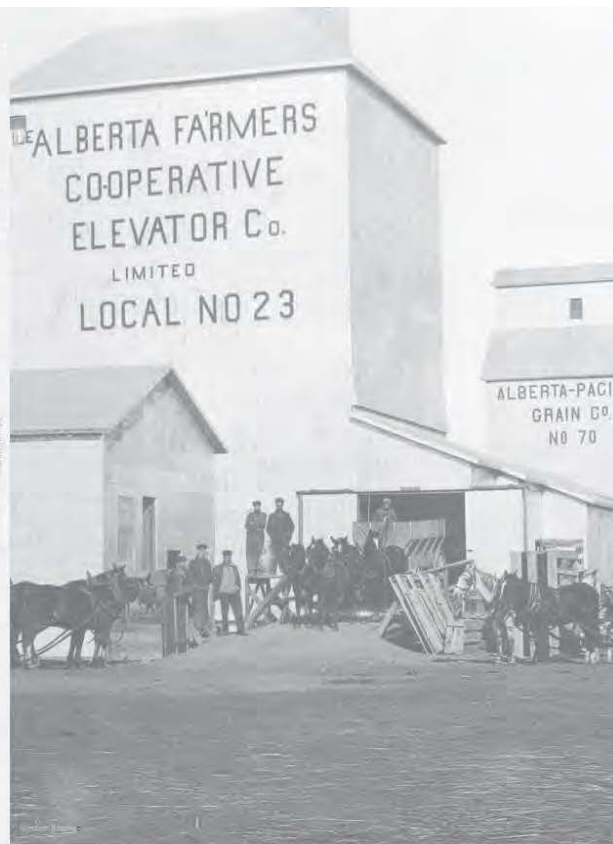
... a tightly knit community ... connected by family ties

At one time, Gus Erdman owned 180 horses, including registered Belgians, used for both farming and for pleasure. He was renowned for his prize-winning Palominos and Appaloosas.



A horse saving hay overstacker was used on the Erdman farm. Gus and Mari Erdman had two sons, Victor and Elmer, and a daughter, Ellen. The house was built in 1906 and the house was moved to its present location in 1910.

The Estonians were always conscious of their family, community and religious ties, with music and education a valued part of their lives. As farmers, they were very capable, adapting well to new technologies in agriculture and supportive of the cooperative movement (Howard and Tamara Palmer, 1985).



March 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 Easter Sunday	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Jacob and Mari Erdman's homestead house photo, 1906, daughter Charlotte in the garden. This house was built in the same architectural style and roof line as the original house in Estonia and it was insulated with sod. The gardens were extensive with berries, trees and shrubs imported from other countries. It incorporated a grass tennis court, the only one in the area.



Alberta's Estonian pioneers receive recognition in a historical calendar.

The calendars, produced by Soul of Canada, highlight the stories and events at the roots of Canada's social and industrial heritage. Quoting from the firm's website: "While major milestones and events are highlighted, these calendars celebrate the role that working people had in building these industries, their communities and the country". Randal Kabatoff, creative director, further states "We believe that an essential part of our nation's multicultural identity is an awareness of the roots that are connected to our diverse population."

So Soul of Canada has followed through in its 2013 History Showcase Calendar where 44 pages focus on Canada's Western Pioneers. Calendar month of March features Gus Erdman family. Gus Erdman is shown with his horse and Charlotte Erdman is shown standing in front of the family homestead house in 1906.

It is significant that the Estonian pioneer farmers are included amongst other major pioneer groups.

Marketer/promoter Kelly Schuler, a member of the Erdman clan, participated in planning and research for the calendar.

Helgi Leesment

New Year's Eve Family Dance at Linda Hall

The Linda Ladies Club (LLC) and Linda Men's Society hosted a Family Dance on New Year's Eve, 2012, at Linda Hall. The Hall was gaily decorated, including a Christmas Tree (Jõulupuu). LLC members served Beef on a Bun before families rang in the New Year complete with noisemakers and party hats. A disc jockey provided music for over 100 attendees.



Deane and Irene Kerbes dancing



L to R: Madison LaFournie, Jordan Campbell, Grace Campbell, Reese LaFournie and Holly Tanton. The girls are Allan and Rita Hennel's grand-daughters.

Estonian bread is available in Calgary and Edmonton

Authentic Estonian bread is available in Calgary and Edmonton! The bread is baked by Eesti Pagar (Estonian Bakery) and shipped frozen to two stores in Alberta:

- 1) Kalinka European Food Market, Suite 43
11440 Braeside Drive SW,
Calgary, Alberta, T2W 3N4
Tel. 403-457-0990
- 2) European Deli and Russian Books
8432 182 Street NW
Edmonton, Alberta, T5T 1Y7
Tel. 780-443-0305

The two stores carry a variety of Estonian bread, including: must leib (black bread), seemne bread (seed bread) and peenleib (medium rye).

Remembering Geneva (Kerbes) Parker 1926-2013



Geneva Parker passed away peacefully in Calgary at the age of 84 years. She was born on the Ernie Kerbes farm near Stettler and was remembered at a private family memorial at Linda Hall.

Geneva was a lifelong humanitarian who worked for nonprofit organizations. In 1990, she was presented with an award by the Chilean government in recognition of her contribution to the restoration of democracy in that country.

Playing the violin was a family tradition for descendants of pioneer John Kerbes. In that spirit, her brothers Ernie (age 88 years) and Jim (age 83 years) played for those gathered. Geneva will be interred in the Estonian Cemetery in Stettler, Alberta.

In Memoriam

Alfred Klaus (1920-2013)

Bob Tipman



Alfred Klaus at Christmas party, ca 2010

Alfred Klaus, a long time resident of Stettler, passed away on March 5, 2013 at the age of 92 years. He was born in Simbirsk, Russia on November 14, 1920 of Estonian parents, Olga and Otto Klaus. After the end of the Russian Revolution in 1919, Otto and Olga along with their two children Aletha and newborn Alfred left Russia. They moved to Estonia to arrange passage to Canada to join Otto's brothers, Eduard, George, William and Alex who had immigrated in the early 1900's to the Stettler area to set up homesteads. When they arrived in 1922, they also claimed their own homestead near Otto's brother Eduard's farm and began farming.

As he was growing up, he went to a rural school, Vimy Hill up to Grade 9 and later to the Big Valley High School. He continued to work on the farm and increasingly became a partner with his father in the farming operation. He was outgoing and fun to be with and was regular company with Bert and Elmer Kerbes when the 4K's band was playing in country community halls, including Linda Hall. Alfred enjoyed the party and dancing and at one of those country dances met Irma Nitschke. After they were married in 1949, Alfred built a

second home in the farmyard and Alfred and Irma had two children, Audrey and Ron.

When Irma's illness with asthma grew increasingly serious, in 1969 he sold the farm and moved into Stettler where he embarked on a new career working for the County of Stettler. His job was a weed inspector looking at farmer's fields to find noxious weeds and then recommending how to eradicate them. This may have been a testy job, dealing with farmers who may not want to know their fields have unwanted growth. Alfred's easy conversation and friendly style soon made this job a pleasant experience and he grew to have a large number of friends in the farming community. He travelled a lot with this job and knew something interesting about every little town in central and eastern Alberta.

After Irma passed away in 1980, Alfred married Joyce Wilson who survives him. He continued working at the County of Stettler until his retirement in 1985. Alfred picked up woodworking as a hobby to keep busy after retirement and built many pieces for his home and his family. When the Lutheran church he belonged to asked if he could make a small announcement board for the sermons, he obliged. Then followed a collection box, stools, an altar table and as the pastor said during his funeral, "In every direction you look in this church, Alfred has left some evidence of his craftsmanship".

Alfred was one of the last survivors from the first generation pioneer families that settled in the Stettler area. He was interested in his Estonian heritage and for many years took on the job of looking after the Estonian Cemetery near Linda Hall. He could be

counted on to help organize and work with Estonian events when they were held at Linda Hall.

Whenever we would go to visit him in his later years in life, we would ask him “Alfred, how are you doing?” He would always reply, “Well, so far, I am on the right side of the grass”. He just can’t say that any more.

He is survived by his wife Joyce, his children Audrey and Ron from Edmonton, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.



L to R: Carol, Ron, Alfred and Charlie Klaus at Jaanipäev 2005 in Stettler

Estonian Gathering in Arizona, February 24, 2013



Photo: Peter Vaga Feldman

The Phoenix Estonian Society’s (PES) gathering to commemorate Estonian Independence attracted 56 participants in Mesa, Arizona. Members of the PES, vacationers in Arizona, a family from Estonia, Honorary Consul of Estonia in Arizona, and others were present. Helgi (left, second row, seated) and Peter Leesment (left, third row, standing) represented AEHS at the gathering.

In Memoriam

Ralph Pihooja: Pioneer son, soldier, family man with Estonian roots

Liz (Pihooja) Tardie, Edmonton, AB

Eight years ago I had the thrill of seeing, in the summer issue of AjaKaja, a little article I had written about the world travels and adventures of my grandfather John Pihooja after he left Estonia in the early 1900s. I mentioned to my father, Ralph Pihooja, that he should write his own life story. He declined, citing a lack of "anything interesting". But the idea was planted, and in 2011 through a series of e-mails, I patched together Dad's reminiscences into a personal life story for his children and grandchildren. Dad passed away in February, 2013, just two months before his 90th birthday. As a tribute to my father I'd like to share with you excerpts from his reminiscences. Hopefully his sense of humour and optimism will show through:

"I entered this world on April 29, 1923 on a sunny day. I was born to John and Wanda Pihooja, who emigrated from Võru, Estonia in 1922 to join an established Estonian community in the Eckville-Gilby area. My parents took up residence in the old John Koots farmhouse north of Eckville. I was born in this house. Then the next year we moved to Karl Langer's house where we lived for two years. My parents then bought a quarter section of land beside Wood Lake, with ample water and rich soil for grain farming and lots of grassland for raising cattle. This location was the scene of some Jaanipäev celebrations and many "fish soup" gatherings. Nets would be cast, a massive fire built and the famous Fish Stew (pike, potatoes, onions and milk) started. During the day they would play horseshoes, tug-of-war, and baseball. During the evening there would be singing and indulging in homemade beer. Of course there was some real stuff that someone would bring in. A few acres would be cleared every year. At times young immigrants from Estonia would come and help. They would have a comfortable bed and enjoy my mother's famous cooking.

The fall harvest was a big job. There were about eight to twelve farmers who would work

together to harvest their crops. Usually there were six teams of horses with hayrack and they would go from one farm to another to help thresh the crop. When I was old enough to begin helping I always had to tend to the blisters on my hands.



Ralph Pihooja on horseback, with his uncle Karl Pihooja, ca 1925

At the age of seven I decided to get some education. The nearest school was Wolfe School, three miles to the west. I did not know a word of English so I had quite a challenge. The first three years I boarded with the Oscar Mottus family since their farm was less than a mile's walk to school. The school was one room with a huge wood stove at one end, so one side of the room was hot and the other a bit on the cool side. The janitor would start the stove early and it would be ready by school opening. During the day we would take turns to stoke the heater.

After three years of boarding I started to walk the three miles to school from our farm, uphill "all one way"! I missed very few days, even in minus 40 degree weather. For a few years the teacher had to contend with mischievous boys and their pranks. One boy switched the strap with a garter snake, which caused quite a stir. Another time he put little mice under the desk bell. There was a loud scream and we heard a bit of a no-no word. But when a six-foot male teacher arrived, there were no more pranks.

In the late 1930's Dad bought a 1923 Whippet sedan. It was beautiful. Now we did not have to make the hour-long trip to town with the horses. The only drawback was the country roads. They were muddy in the spring and fall. At times in the winter, we would have to dig out from a snowdrift. And tires would have to be patched on the spot.

Grade Eight was the final year at Wolfe School so higher grades would have to be taken at another school. I left school then, as did a lot of farm boys of those years. For a while I helped my parents on the farm but I soon

grew restless so went to work for Elmer Matthews, a fellow Estonian-Canadian from Eckville, living in Red Deer. Elmer was very inventive and had many projects, including the Gasoline Torch. This was a small compact welder that you could take to the field and do repairs on site. I would work on the metal lathe and make the parts. Other times I helped in another Estonian-Canadian, Tim Enno's radiator and battery repair shop next door, repairing radiators using Elmer's gas torch.

When I was in Red Deer I came to know Sgt. Major Daines who was with the Army Corps in charge of the maintenance shops for the A40 Group. With Sgt. Major Daines' help, in late 1940 I enlisted in the R.A.S.C. in the A40 Group. I was issued a uniform, boots, and a rifle and assigned to my training group in the Red Deer army camp."

* * *

In Halifax we boarded the Queen Mary. I had never seen a ship that size before. It was unbelievable how many men and ladies boarded the ship. The ladies, who were mostly nurses, took their place on the top deck. We were to have a bunk available every third day but the weather was so nice we declined and slept on the deck. Setting sail though was a bit different. There were very many green faces and the decks got very slippery. I was fortunate that I did not

have that problem - I guess my dad's sea blood was with me.

* * *

While still in army training in England I got a job driving an officer around the countryside and made trips into London. I met up with my longtime friend Edward Mottus, who

was with the Air Force and was a navigator with the large B27s. We had many good times in London. It was nice to chum with someone from home.

* * *

Trun was where my friend Gen. "Shrimp" Ernst and myself tried to play a joke

on the boys back at camp. We put on fancy tuxedos and felt hats from a deserted upper-class clothing store and almost made it back to camp until Polish guards hustled us to their HQ for questioning. From there we were escorted to our own RHQ. I guess they thought we were infiltrating, which was attempted often.

It was in Belgium in the battle for Antwerp that I lived through a day that most people said was a miracle that I survived. There were many events that were just blacked out of my mind. Evidently I was to check on an area towards the east, and from then on I cannot recall what happened. The first thing I remember is lying on a fracture bed as faces looked down on me. Then I was transported by truck on a very rough road to a hospital. I could not get any details as to what happened except that they thought my vehicle crossed a bridge that was booby-trapped and I was thrown clear. I was confined to bed for a few days, then talked them into letting me return to my unit. That was a bad situation. I found out later that I damaged five lumbar vertebrae as well as one in mid-spine part. These did not trouble me until much later. The middle vertebra was fixed with a metal pin and the others were fused together various ways with bones from my hip. Surgery was done after the war at Col. Belcher Hospital in Calgary. While I was recuperating the actor Gregory Peck



*Pihooja family's "Fish Stew" gathering, ca 1926.
L to R: Ralph's Mother Wanda, Ralph, other family members.*

visited the men in the hospital. I thought he was a very genuine and nice person.

* * *

Around January 1945 I was given a pass and was able to visit London again. Our most popular spot was the Maple Leaf Club, where we would have a nice bed to sleep in, good meals and we would write letters home. There would be entertainment. After a few conversations with a very shy girl named Peggy who was a volunteer at the club and, as shy as I was, I finally got the courage to ask her for a date. We were to meet the next evening at Russell Square but unfortunately there was a blackout so it took a while for us to find each other. That was the start of a new life for me. We would take in picture shows, walk in parks, and visit museums.

* * *

The war over and back home, I had to set about working to make enough money to send for Peggy. One of the more adventurous jobs that I had was running the bar at the Elnora Hotel. Elnora, a small hamlet about sixty kilometers southeast of Red Deer, was home to the Lauders, the elder Lauder and six sons. They were on the chuck wagon circuit during the summer and would spend winter on their ranch. On weekends the seven of them would roll in to town and proceed to drink beer. For years they had the run of the bar but I was not aware of that practice. So one day the youngest one had a few too many and got a little bit out of hand, using bad language. I asked him if he could tone it down and he very impolitely told me to move off. So I took him by the back of his belt and nudged him outside, where unfortunately he slipped amongst the horses. He was one mean cowboy until the elder Lauder stepped in, gave me a wink and a chuckle. I was the first and only to stand up to any of the gang. That was the topic for weeks.

* * *

Married in 1949, and after trying farming for a while, I contracted a rural mail route in Eckville. It was an interesting job and customers were always helpful, pulling me out of muddy roads with their tractors. The mail route lasted about four hours so I also took the job of delivering milk. The milk run only took one and half-hours so I still had some leisure time. So then I also started to deliver groceries for the Co-op and Sestrap's stores. After some time there was an opening in the Alpha Creamery for a butter maker. I wrote for my cream grading papers and learned how to grade

cream and make first class butter. Entered into exhibitions, I was able to win many Red Ribbons at the Toronto Fair and Exhibition.



Ralph Pihooja shown accepting Homestead Certificate from Hon. Consul-General of Estonia in Canada, Ilmar Heinsoo, Linda Hall, 1999

I was always interested in photography. From my first Brownie to my present Canon I've always enjoyed creating images. I enjoyed the short stint that I had with photography work for the Eckville Examiner. I covered the opening of the Secondary High School in Eckville in the mid fifties.

In spring with my farm equipment, including my Uncle Karl Pihooja's tractor, I prepared garden plots for many people. I also did a bit of landscaping work. Local Dr. Gibson and I brought in rocks from riverbeds and other areas to build very colorful rock gardens.

Peggy and I joyously welcomed three children into our world – Elizabeth, John, and Helen – and there has not been a dull moment since.

* * *

There has been fun and sadness throughout my eighty-eight years. However, if I had my life to live over I would choose to live it the same way. My wife Peggy came from the city life to the wilderness of the country and did a great job of raising a wonderful family. Our children all have families of their own and have given me wonderful grandchildren. And great-grandchildren! The family continues on.

Ralph Pihooja was a longtime supporter of Alberta's Estonian community. Though born in Alberta, he had a deep connection to his Estonian family. AEHS extends condolences to his family and is appreciative of daughter Liz Tardie's contributions to Ajakaja.

Announcing the VEMU/Estonian Studies Centre archival contest

“Preserving our history”

2013 is the year of cultural heritage in Estonia. The goal of this year's theme is to promote cultural issues to the general public—to recognize that culture concerns, in one way or another affects each of us, and that it is worthy of appreciation and preservation. Throughout the year of cultural heritage many events will take place to explain what cultural heritage is, introduce its importance and, broaden its understanding. You can read more about the year of cultural heritage at: www.parandiaasta.ee.



In honour of the year of cultural heritage, VEMU/The Estonian Studies Centre is organizing the archival contest "Preserving our history." In keeping with the motto "No heritage without heir," we are looking for contributions from Canadian Estonians, but in particular from children and young people, as they inherit Estonian culture from the previous generation. The contest aims to consider the daily lives of Canadian Estonians over the decades, like food and daily chores, Estonian grocery stores in Canada. Estonian culture is not only preserved in fighting for Estonian freedom, singing and dancing, reading Estonian literature, and teaching children the Estonian language. Culture grows

while eating sauerkraut and blood sausage, baking kringel and pirukad, and decorating your home with Estonian handicrafts. It grows while following and understanding the culinary traditions and consumer culture of our homeland.

WHAT TO RESEARCH

You can choose one of the following topics below, or combine a few of them.

Food

Describe your family's food habits over the decades. What is a typical family meal today? Where did your family buy their food in the past and where do they buy it now? Do you have any family traditions associated with food? What were/are typical festive meals? What are the traditions associated with them? Have they changed? Does your family have different dishes, pots, pans, ladles, and cutlery that are associated with your family's history? Write these down! What recipes or cookbooks have been used? Does your family follow any customs associated with food? (e.g. kissing your bread, don't talk with your mouth full, don't waste food, and so on)?

House & Home

What were your family's living conditions in Estonia, in displaced persons camps, their new life in Sweden, Germany, and Canada? How were/are these places furnished? Where did they buy their furnishings? Describe the home and garden. How did daily life, practices and habits change? How are daily chores divided? Is there a difference between men and women's work? When were household chores performed? Why? What rules have been established in your home (e.g.

taking your shoes off at the door, no whistling inside)? Are any special days celebrated in your home? How?

Estonian Grocery Stores

Which Canadian Estonian restaurants or cafés have your family members visited? Describe changes in restaurant and café culture over the years. Which Estonian grocery stores do/have you shop/shopped at? Where was the grocery store? When was it in business? Describe the neighbourhood in which the store was situated. What is there now? Who were/are the owners? Describe them. Describe what the store sold and how that has changed over time: its size, rooms and merchandise, what, how and who was it marketed to, who were the clients, who were the employees/partners. Think of some colourful stories. Apart from Estonian grocery stores, where have you bought Estonian food? What other cuisines does your family enjoy? Why?

HOW TO RESEARCH

Entries can be submitted as written pieces (in Estonian or English), audio or film. You can also create a website/virtual exhibit, or how about a documentary film. Parents and grandparents can write down their memories. Younger persons could interview their family members (mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, aunt, uncle, sister, brother), and transcribe the interviews, or record them as audio or film files.

Be sure to look through your family photo albums. Many times you will find pictures of the places mentioned above. Describe the photos; write down stories that go together with the photographs. Analyze the photographs: what does the photo say about its time, what is no longer there today, what has changed, what remains. Compare photographs of the same location taken at different times.

Look at your family archives. Often you can find memories, journals, letters, handwritten

recipe books, household management books and so on. Maybe you have something at home that is tied to this theme: cookery books, household management and design books, café menus, grocery stores advertisements, receipts, newspaper/magazine clippings etc.

You can copy these materials, digitize them and add them to your research. We are looking for original archival materials in particular, like photos, recordings, films, printed materials, and other similar things. Collected materials will be preserved at VEMU and will be used in an upcoming VEMU exhibit.

The deadline is November 1, 2013. Please send entries to: VEMU/Estonian Studies Centre, 310 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON M5S 1W4. To keep all entries anonymous we ask that you choose a keyword by which to name your entry, for example "Home." Do not put your name on your entry, but rather your keyword. Include a separate envelope labelled with your keyword and inside please include the following information: name, age, address, telephone number, and email.

Winning entries will be announced November 17, 2013. Cash and book prizes will be awarded to the best entries! Info: Piret Noorhane, piret.noorhane@vemu.ca, t. 416 925 9405

Welcome to the 26th Estonian Song Celebration and 19th Dance Celebration

**“Touched by Time. The Time to Touch”
Tallinn 4-6 July 2014**

**This is the story of time manifesting itself
in our ancestors’ heritage, and us shaping
our time through our own touches, contacts,
caresses and impacts.**

**More information: www.laulupidu.ee
e-mail: laulupidu2014@gmail.com**

Estonia becomes the first in the world to open a nationwide electric vehicle fast-charging network

Estonian World in Technology, February 20, 2013

A fast-charging network makes Estonia the first country in the world where you can easily drive your EV around in towns or in the countryside without worrying about the driving range or pollution.



Photo: Visit Estonia-Technology

The network, consisting of 165 fast chargers, was officially opened for use today; a single operator is responsible for the administration of all stations and the clients can use the same payment solution and technical support across the country.

Each Estonian town, as well as bigger villages now have their own fast chargers; the stations installed along highways maintain a minimum distance of 40 to 60 km.

The EV users have three service packages to choose from. The cost of one charging is between 2.5 and 5 euros. However, you can also choose paying a 30 euro fee for a monthly package and charge your EV as often as you want with no extra cost. The car's battery can be charged up to 90% in less than 30 minutes and—depending on the model—you will be able to drive for up to 140 km. The installation of fast chargers

started in summer 2012 and they have been used 8,300 times so far.

According to the head of the Estonia's EV programme, Mr. Jarmo Tuisk, it was the lack of a proper fast charging infrastructure that hindered a more widespread use of electric vehicles until now.

“What makes the Estonian fast charging network unique is the fact that it uses a uniform payment solution and you can either use an authorization card or your mobile phone for making the payment. We believe, that a nationwide grid of quick chargers encourages growth in the number of EV users, since the drivers no longer need to worry about a somewhat shorter driving range of their electric vehicles,” said Jarmo Tuisk.

The EV fast-charging network is operated by a national foundation KredEx, the chargers were produced and installed by a technology company ABB, the innovative payment solution was designed by NOW Innovations! and customer support is provided by a security company G4S. Tallinn University of Technology adds a research dimension to the project by analyzing the use of battery-powered cars and the charging network itself. That sets good preconditions for bringing electromobility R&D know-how together in Estonia.

The construction of the fast-charging network was financed by using the funds received pursuant to a CO2 emission quota sales agreement entered into between the Republic of Estonia and Mitsubishi

Corporation. Besides having a public fast-charging network, Estonia promotes a quicker deployment of EVs by providing direct support to both private persons and companies, with the amount reaching up to 18,000 euros of the all-electric car's purchasing price. Also, new EV owners can apply for a support of 1,000 euros for setting up a charging system at their home.

According to CHAdeMO, an organisation supporting the fast-charging standard, by January 2013 more than 1,900 fast chargers have been installed in the world, 521 of them outside Japan. Estonia with its 165 fast chargers now has the world's largest operational public fast-charging network providing a universal nationwide service.

There are 619 all-electric cars registered in the Estonian traffic register, whereas about 500 of these are used by several state authorities. Over a short time, Estonia has become the second country after Norway in the world in terms of the share of EVs. While there is one electric car registered per each 1,000 cars in Estonia, the respective figure for Norway is four. Estonia is followed by the Netherlands with 0.6 electric cars registered per 1,000 cars.

Please visit <http://elmo.ee/charging-network/> to find additional information about the Estonia's EV programme and the locations of the fast chargers.

Source: KredEx

Estonian World is a London-based online magazine founded in 2012 to write about cosmopolitan Estonians and their views, ideas, experiences and achievements. EW also writes about Estonia's global success stories in technology, business and arts.

Countries with the cleanest air the world

In recent days, Beijing, Hebei, Shandong, Henan and Jiangxi have suffered very serious air pollution and Beijing is choked in the densest smog ever. Many residents have closed windows and doors to avoid breathing the polluted air. The government also asks the citizens to stay home and wear masks when going out. In 2012, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a global air quality ranking and Estonia, Mauritius and Canada rank in the top three. According to statistics, these countries are benefiting from their low population density, superior climate conditions and strict control measures on air pollution.

Top 1 Estonia. Estonia lies on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea. It's capital is Tallinn. According to the global air quality ranking issued by the WHO, Estonia enjoys the cleanest air in the world. Estonia, with 47 percent of its territory covered by forests, has numerous fantastic gulfs, straits, islands, lakes and marshes. Because of its outstanding air quality, Estonia attracts many health-minded tourists from all over the world.

Excerpt of an article, edited and translated by Yao Chun, People's Daily Online, January 15, 2013



Photo by Xinhua

My Grandmother's Shoes, My Grandfather's Hat: My Rediscovery of Tartu

Krista Kais-Prial



Photo: Estonia/University of Tartu

My grandparents grew up in Tartu, leaving after WWII to escape the Soviet Occupation. This is a little story of how I rediscovered Estonian intellectual capital.

I was shocked when my Canadian university approved my visiting student application to Tartu. Really? Many Canadians couldn't even point to Estonia on a map. I've also been asked whether a lot of stoners live in Estonia – what can you even say to a question like that? I still recall one of my less educated fellow citizens accusing me of 'making the place up'. And now I would be studying in the magical, mystical land of Eesti, where people live in mushroom houses, and dragons roam the hillsides, and fairy choirs hold song festivals in the forest!

In fact, Tartu was my third choice of exchange location—I had put other places first, new places I had never been to before. Tartu was an old place for me. I suppose I had unintentionally written a pretty convincing motivation letter, which the hip young advisor at the Student Affairs Office had been

really into. Plus, anyone with basic google research skills can quickly discover that Tartu is a damn fine university. But as the words "VISITING STATUS APPROVED" glared at me with finality from my computer screen, I had these thoughts: "Did I really want to go back there again? Did Estonia want *me* to come back again?"

My grandparents grew up in Tartu, leaving after WWII to escape the Soviet Occupation. I still have family here, and I was brought here several times as a child. Hazy memories from 1995: grumpy jet lag, gallivanting with cousins in wheat fields, devouring "kohuke" (Latvian-Estonian curd snack – Editor), roasting wieners on the fire. Again in 1998: memories of bopping up and down in the back of my relative's seat-less farming van, surprising myself when random Estonian sentences popped out of my mouth, fully formed. At 17, I came here to take a summer language course for beginners, having forgotten much of the Estonian of my childhood. Memories of that trip are of a different kind: Jägermeister shots at the Gunpowder Cellar, destroying brain cells, schlepping to class in the morning with my first ever 'I'll never drink again' hangover.

Now, in my mid-twenties with only one semester of university left (knock on wood), here I am again.

My first day I arrived in the rain,

underslept from an overnight flight, feeling cranky, not a happy camper. Good Lord, the weather is crappy, I thought. What the eff am I doing here? Why Estonia? Why do I keep coming back – what do I really love so much about this place? Do I even have a place here, or am I some kind of cheesy fraud, grasping at spectres of cultural self-identity?

After ditching my massive suitcases at my new flat, I decided that the only thing to do when delirious with exhaustion is, of course, to go for a ridiculously long walk.

I started by weaving my way down the Emajõgi, the Mother River. At first, against the cloudy sky it seemed cold and grey to me. But as the river wound toward Supilinn, I recalled the stories my grandmother used to tell me, about the power and beauty of this river, the story of the animals who dug the riverbed to satisfy the pagan god Vanemuine, who poured the water down from the sky. I noticed how beautifully the river flowed under the looming clouds.

I wound my way up and down the streets of Supilinn, a neighbourhood wrapped in mossy silence, the air filled with a heady mixture of stone, leaf, firewood and diesel. The gardens glistened with the freshness of the rain, against the vividly painted wooden houses and the ramshackle garden huts. I strolled around in a peaceful daze, with what must have been a creepy-looking strange half-smile on my face, judging by the wary looks of the residents I passed by. I imagined

my grandfather walking along these streets and I wondered which house was his favourite, or whether the colours had changed much.



University of Tartu

Walking back into the centre of town, toward the main building of the University, I saw a young man in a crisp suit jacket and a university hat walking towards me from the misty distance. I recalled the picture of my grandfather in his fraternity hat, and I remember being shown his hat as a child, being told to handle it with care. I imagined that it was him walking down that street, young and proud.

Passing by Werners café, I peeped into the foggy window. It looked cosy and warm inside, and there were lots of cute old ladies, dressed to the nines, sipping lattes and enjoying what must have been a devilishly good piece of cake. My grandmother told me once that she had worked there as a young woman. I pictured her there, neatly organizing the cake on the shelves, chatting to the regular customers, offering up her dazzling smile, pouring cream into coffee. I imagined her leaving work, walking down Ülikooli street towards home, her dainty 1930s heels klip-

klopping along the cobblestones.

The cheerful vision of Werners through the window lent me strength, and I decided to take the plunge and hike up Riia street towards the Karlova neighbourhood. I arrived in Karlova, huffing and puffing, to my embarrassment. No wonder people in Tartu are so fit, I thought—they spend all their time walking up and down hills. I wandered around the grand-looking streets of Karlova, quiet and imposing in the soft rain. I struggled to remember where my great-aunt had lived, but could only remember her stoic silence, her strong arms hugging me, her soft-hearted eyes. As the rain started to come down harder, I felt my tired legs turning around and directing me back down the hill.

After what felt like both an eternity and an instant, I arrived back home, my heart racing with excitement. I was *here*. Tartu!

I had seen the city through adult eyes, and had felt the fabled Tartu spirit for the first time. The city was now new to me. I thought of my grandmother's shoes, and my grandfather's hat. I

realized as I flopped down into bed that this place will always be both separate from me and a part of me, both old and new. I will belong and not belong, all at once, as the city changes yet remains the same, and I get older yet remain the same, always thinking of my grandmother's shoes, my grandfather's hat.

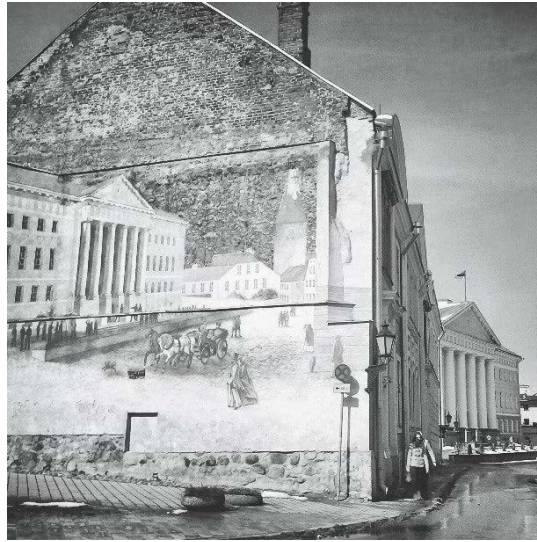


Photo: Kristina Koppel

Mural on a building in Tartu

Krista Kais-Prial's story was first published by The University of Tartu blog: <http://blog.ut.ee/>

IN LIFE, December 6, 2012

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: KRISTA KAIS-PRIAL



Krista has studied law in Montreal and is lawyer-in-training in Toronto. This fall, Krista became a visiting student at the University of Tartu Faculty of Law, where her grandfather once studied. She is retracing her roots, re-learning the language, and studying the development of EU law in post-Soviet Europe.

In Estonia, a 'Scavenger Hunt' for People Who Love Saunas

Racing in groups of four, dressed or not, they try to win more time in the hot seat

Liis Kangsepp

OTEPAA, Estonia—Winter is a busy time here for sports as competitors come to this usually sleepy town on Estonia's southern tip. Sometimes, the scene is exactly what you would expect, like 8,500 bundled-up skiers sliding through town on a cross-country ski trek one weekend last month.

Other times, though, you might see a different breed of competitors, one decked out in skimpy bathing suits—or simply in their birthday suits. That's because Otepaa is home to the European Sauna Marathon.



A mobile sauna in Otepaa

"It is a real Estonian smoke sauna with a sweet and juicy steam," boasted local businessman Tarmo Tamm, who owns one of the sweltering saunas that dot the unusual competition and are a source of national pride.

For the past four years, Otepaa has played host to the sauna marathon, where hundreds of competitors sweat to visit as many of the outposts as possible in the shortest time. The contest has been good for business at Mr. Tamm's Sokka Holiday Resort, with its cavernous sauna about five miles out of town. He was beaming with pride on a recent Sunday afternoon when the marathon took place. "We finished taking a steam in this sauna last night at half past midnight to have a proper warm-up for today," he said.

The outdoor temperature had fallen below freezing, but Mr. Tamm was dressed in just a pair of shorts and a white floppy hat with the

words "Sauna Boss" embroidered across the front. He recently used an ax to cut through the ice in the pond next to the sauna, making a hole so that "saunalised" competitors could jump into the icy water after their time in the hot room, to win extra points. One sauna tradition is to take the heat then run outdoors and roll around in the snow or take a dip in a pool of ice water.

The sauna marathon should not be confused with the sauna world championships that took place in Finland from 1999 through 2010 and were discontinued after a competitor died and another became sick after sitting too long in extremely hot saunas. The sauna marathon isn't really an endurance sport.

Estonia's competition is a race similar to a scavenger hunt in which small groups of contestants race to sit through three-minute stints in a number of saunas—ranging from traditional Finnish saunas to barrel saunas to saunas on wheels—that are scattered about the countryside. Required tools: an orienteering map and an automobile that can accommodate a team of four. Bathing suits are optional.

The event began among friends four years ago and now involves 600 entrants and 20 saunas. The marathon is promoted as a major attraction on Estonia's official tourism website. Winners win sauna visits.

As the contest has ballooned in size, it has also attracted its share of moneymaking opportunities. For instance, a massive truck made decades ago by a Russian company called ZIL has been converted into a mobile sauna carrying a banner for a company called Lumeabi 24/7, which specializes in shoveling snow and chipping icicles off roofs and eaves.

Ulvi Voomets, a 49-year-old information media consultant from the southern town of Antsla, was a member of a squad called Laemma Naaso (which means "Hot Women" in English), four women wearing bathing suits, shower caps and rollers in their hair. They took the crown this year, she says, because of valuable lessons they

learned in 2012. "We have drafted a system," she said, just before jumping into her first sauna of the event.

The team has a designated driver and determines the best route beforehand so members can jump out of the car and run to the saunas, usually not far from the designated parking area. This year, the women wore flip-flops. Last year, they tackled the competition in slippers that became so cold and wet the contestants shed them and ran barefoot.

Not everyone was as prepared as Ms. Voomets this year. A photography student joined three male friends in Otepää for what she expected to be a cozy, traditional Estonian sauna party among close friends. Which is to say: They were naked.



A sauna-bound couple

"Who on earth wears clothes to a sauna?" the woman, not wanting to give her name, said as she climbed from a barrel of water heated by burning wood and ran back to a steamy sauna.

In Estonia, the sauna has spiritual roots, having been the place where brides ceremonially washed and women gave birth. It has served as a deathbed for the terminally ill or a healing agent for patients hoping to live.

Estonia's national love affair with the sauna is rivaled only by neighboring Finland, where "taking a sauna" is like going to lunch or playing a round of golf with business associates.

The sauna has been a gathering place for meetings between power brokers wishing to wheel and deal in an informal and relaxed setting. In 1978, Finnish leaders met in a sauna with Soviet defense officials who wanted to conduct joint military exercises. The Finns used the intimacy of a sauna as a nonthreatening backdrop for deflecting the Soviet proposals.

In 1995, the charismatic Finnish politician Timo Soini met at a lakeside sauna with three colleagues after a thumping defeat in

parliamentary elections. "We bathed in the sauna, drank some beer, ate and talked," Mr. Soini recalled in an interview. The daylong bull session led to the creation of a new party, the nationalistic euroskeptical Finns Party, which has gained considerable popularity in recent years.

Last summer, the 13 men and women who composed the party's executive committee went back to that retreat, but enjoyed the sauna in separate groups as is typical when an event is arranged by an employer. "You could say we're conservative on this score," he said, chuckling.

This collegial atmosphere lives on in the sauna marathon.

During the competition, Mr. Tamm was selected for the second straight year as having the best sauna. As hundreds flooded in and out of the sauna, two women played accordions in the dressing room and a man offered garlic-bread and smoked-ham snacks.

His icy swimming hole was the biggest hit. "Cold water against my skin in the winter is something I have never experienced before," Hector Otero, a Spanish architect living in Estonia, said while warming himself in a bath robe and slipping his feet into rubber sandals. "I would do it again...every winter."

Juhana Rossi in Helsinki contributed to this article.

Liis Kangsepp is a freelance journalist, editor, translator, reporter, coordinator for international volunteers, reporter and stringer at Dow Jones Newswires.

Speak Esto

Read about neat Estonian people, places and music!

This website (speakesto.blogspot.ca) presents significant illustrated timelines, videos, about Estonian history from the Teutonic Order (1200) to the second Estonian Independence (1991), and beyond. Other essential Estonian facts, including national symbols, Estonian Parliament Buildings on Toompea Hill, and cultural topics, are covered. The stories about important dates in Estonian history are presented in Estonian and English.

In addition, the site provides many interesting Estonian and Canadian- Estonian community links.

Editor's Note: "Speak Esto" is the Toronto Estonian Schools and Kindergarten Blog.

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society

List of members, May, 2013

Allen	Dianne	Spruce Grove	AB
Boehrnsen	Sylvia	Calgary	AB
de Launay	David	Peterborough	ON
de Launay	Geoff	Kanata	ON
Clark	John	Denver	Col
Derksen	Colin & Linda	Edmonton	AB
Dinning	Shirley & Leonard	Edmonton	AB
Erdman	Thomas	Barons	AB
Franchini	Karen	Burnaby	BC
Gue	Anita	Yellowknife	NWT
Gue	Brian	Edmonton	AB
Gue	Kevin	Hornby Isl.	BC
Gue	Lisa	Ottawa	ON
Gullickson	Barbara	Barons	AB
Hall	Gwen	Ashmont	AB
Hempstead	Shelly	Wadmalaw	SC
Hennel	Daryl & Gloria	Myrnham	AB
Hennel	Lorne & Anne Marie	Calgary	AB
Hennel	Rodney & Liz	Stettler	AB
Hennel	Ron W. F.	Stettler	AB
Jaako	Harry	Vancouver	BC
Kalev	Tiiu	Eckville	AB
Kaljuste	Truuta Kai	Calgary	AB
Kalvee	Willy G.	Calgary	AB
Kenzle	Alice	Creston	BC
Kerbes	Deane & Irene	Stettler	AB
Kiil	Dave & Betty Ann	Edmonton	AB
Kingsep	Bob & Annette	Redwood Mdws	AB
Kivisild	Livia	Calgary	AB
Kraav	Jüri & Helle	Calgary	AB
Krasman	Leslie	Champion	AB
Kruuv	Riho	Ottawa	ON
Kuester	Matt F.	Edmonton	AB
Kuutan	Marlene	Toronto	ON
Leesment	Peeter & Helgi	Calgary	AB
Leilop	Aino	St. Albert	AB

Leffler	Edna	Manson	WA
Maddison	Anneliese	Edmonton	AB
Madill	Anita & Wallace	Calgary	AB
Matiisen	Arne	Calgary	AB
Marshall	Silvia	Vancouver	BC
McClung	Eda	Edmonton	AB
McElroy	Elve	Camrose	AB
Moro	Bonnie	Victoria	BC
Mottus	Brian	Whitehorse	YT
Munz Gue	Martha	Medicine Hat	AB
Nicklom	Otto & Gladys	Stettler	AB
Ojamaa	Peter & Tina	Calgary	AB
Pääsuke	Elizabeth	Edmonton	AB
Pääsuke	Mark	Vancouver	BC
Pääsuke	Rein & Janice	Calgary	AB
Pääsuke	Toomas	Canmore	AB
Pallo	Jack Henry	Red Deer	AB
Pastewka	Astrid	Calgary	AB
Peet	Ethel	Edmonton	AB
Peetri	Ave	Calgary	AB
Pihooja	Ralph & Nella	Whitecourt	AB
Pilt	Shirley	Edmonton	AB
Robertson	David & Christine	Leduc	AB
Ruus	Ivar & Lea	Calgary	AB
Saar	Rein & Patricia	Calgary	AB
Shongrunden	Astrid	Penticton	BC
Silverton	Ernest	St.Albert	AB
Songster	Dr. Giuliana	Sierra Madre	CA
Tiislar	Enn & Pärja	Canmore	AB
Timma	Olev	Calgary	AB
Tipman	Bob & Kathy	Calgary	AB
Ustina	Astrid	Edmonton	AB
Ustina	Judy K	Edmonton	AB
Visser	Mari & Igor	Cochrane	AB
Vollman	Karl & Sharon	Calgary	AB
Wartnow	Floyd C	Delta	BC
Watson	Maret	Spruce Grove	AB
Zach	Inge	Calgary	AB
Zielinski	Michel & Kristine	Spruce Grove	AB



Iris douglasiana - "Pacific Coast Iris"



Helleborus orientalis - "Lenten Rose"



Lewisia rediviva - "Bitterroot"



Iris - "Harmony"

BOTANICAL ART

by Estonian-Canadian artist, Bonnie Moro

Artwork © 2013 Bonnie Moro • Digital imaging and design by Art Ink Print, Victoria, BC, Canada



ALBERTA ESTONIAN
HERITAGE SOCIETY