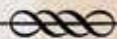


AJAKAJA



ALBERTA ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY
SUMMER 2015 • ISSUE 42



THE 35TH ANNUAL CONSULAR BALL
MAY 23RD, 2015 • EDMONTON, ALTA.

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society 2015

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

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

AEHS Membership Application

Membership applications can be completed on www.aehs.ca website under Menu Option: Membership. Membership queries and written applications can be submitted to Membership Director Lorne Hennel: e-mail: hennell@telus.net

Regular mail: Lorne Hennel
48 Thornlee Cres. N.W.,
Calgary, AB T2K 2W3.

AjaKaja

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

Copies of AjaKaja can be ordered from emcclung@shaw.ca. Non-members may purchase a single issue of AjaKaja for \$5.00 by contacting Eda McClung.

Please submit articles, photographs and heritage-related items to Eda McClung at emcclung@shaw.ca or Dave Kiil at adkiil@shaw.ca

Cover

Cover design by Janet Matiisen. She is a freelance designer and former Design Editor at the Calgary Herald. She is proud of her Estonian family and roots. Front and back cover photography by EpicPhotography.ca.



AjaKaja

Alberta Estonian
Heritage Society

Summer 2015
Issue Number 42

From the Editors

Welcome to our Summer 2015 issue of AjaKaja! A year ago, many of us were in Tallinn for the spectacular Song and Dance Festival. That issue of AjaKaja contained several articles and evocative images contributed by our readers. Afterwards, we wondered could AjaKaja measure up again. We believe it can.

To be sure, nothing compares to the Song Festival. However Alberta's Estonian community can be proud of the role it played in the recent 2015 Edmonton Consular Ball. It is the first time that Estonia was the host country. This issue celebrates the event and acknowledges the important contributions to its success by Alberta's Estonians. Christine Robertson, the Honorary Consul to Estonia in Alberta was the lead organizer and inspiration. Jan Matiisen designed the stylish blue, black and white invitations and the cover for this AjaKaja. Guests enjoyed decor, food and music designed to celebrate and showcase Estonia. The organizing committee included several of our members. Kulliva Kangur, of the Fairmont organization, was our gracious 'grande dame' hostess, as she knew every detail of this historic hotel. Helve Sastok provided accomplished piano accompaniment to flutist Lucas Walden of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. She also accompanied soprano Kristina Agur of Toronto whose bold soprano captivated the room and drew enthusiastic applause. It was an unforgettable moment when her powerful voice began 'Mu Isamaa', Estonia's national anthem. We choked back tears. We were so proud of Estonia and of our community. Others also commended us for a superlative event. Our members supported this event through their attendance and AEHS/Estonian Foundation of Canada provided generous financial support.

Our Society celebrates a significant milestone. It was 10 years ago that AEHS was formed. This issue has wonderful messages from our two past presidents and an informative overview of the past decade. The Society is planning for the future with discussions underway to develop a new website to improve connectivity amongst members. AjaKaja is in transition as the appearance of this issue suggests. We expect the new website to be operational before the end of 2015. It will include key elements of the current AEHS website such as membership, news, links to the Heritage Projects as well as a digitized archive of past issues of AjaKaja. The goal is to enhance internal and external information sharing.

This issue is compiled largely by articles written by our members. As Editors, we say 'thank you!' It is important to have a record of current happenings and upcoming events. However we are also fortunate to have descendants of pioneers who can recall the early days of settlement. Their legacy of century-old homes and 'mail order' houses (available only in the Prairie Provinces), forms a unique chapter in our pioneer history.

Thank you to all who took time to contribute and be involved. There would be no AjaKaja without you. Wishing you an enjoyable and relaxing summer!

Eda McClung and Dave Kiil

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AEHS President's Message Summer 2015

Ave Peetri, Calgary, Alberta

What a wonderful year this is to be an Alberta Estonian! The spotlight was on Estonia at the 35th annual Edmonton Consular Ball. Our very own Honorary Consul, Christine

Robertson, was the host and the organizer of the remarkable evening that will be remembered as one of the social events to attend. There were 25 people of Estonian Heritage and their guests who attended and celebrated in style. The event was supported by Estonian Foundation of Canada and AEHS.

This year also commemorates 10 years of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. We are still going strong and aiming to be relevant to our existing and new members. It is wonderful to see that some founding members still continue to be active today and have made AEHS for what it is today: Eda McClung, Dave Kiil, Jüri Kraav, Helgi Leesment and Toomas Pääsuke have been re-elected as Board members at the AGM in May.

The panels depicting the history of Estonians in Alberta have been travelling around Canada and Estonia – they were displayed in Tallinn Technical University Library, Estonian Literary Museum in Tartu and the Baltic Heritage Network Summer School in Liivistu. All the guests of the 35th Consular Ball in Edmonton were able to familiarize themselves with the exhibit. They were also on display at Stettler Town and Country Museum – one of the first Estonian settlements in Alberta. The display was also viewed by Estonian President Toomas Ilves on Parliament Hill and visitors to Tartu College in Toronto. All of this touring and showcasing of our Heritage has been possible thanks to Dave Kiil, who has been writing proposals and receiving grants on behalf of AEHS from many organisations. They are scheduled to be on



display at West Coast Estonian Days at Whistler, BC in August, 2015.

There has been discussion about the future of AjaKaja and we have asked you to provide input. Thanks for many of you who sent emails or met personally to express your opinion- the paper version of AjaKaja is here to stay! You'll notice that AjaKaja is

printed on thinner paper from this edition onward, this will make it easier to deliver and lessen postage costs. The content is still of the same quality thanks to all of you who have contributed!

We are also looking into renewing our website. It has served us well and thanks must go to Bob Kingsep for all the work that he had put into it. Technology needs to be upgraded on a regular basis and that is what we are planning to do. Thanks to everyone who answered our short survey about how you would like to use the website. It seems most requested information is about upcoming events of AEHS and access to older issues of AjaKaja. The actions you'd like to do on the webpage are: easy renewal of membership, sign in and payment possibility for events, DVD's and other items. We'll take direction from your input and make sure that the renewed website will meet your expectations.

Help is needed from you! In order to keep website relevant and AjaKaja coming out on a regular basis, help is needed in updating the website and also helping Eda McClung and Dave Kiil with the production of AjaKaja. If you are good with today's modern media and have some experience with writing and/or editing or know of someone who is, put your name forward and be part of the team that helps make AEHS a Society that keeps Estonian Heritage going strong in Alberta.

I'd like to wish everyone a happy 10th anniversary and enjoyment in celebrating your heritage!

Consul's Corner

Christine Robertson, Edmonton, Alberta



Epic Photography

As Honorary Consul in Alberta, I have had the privilege of being part of the Edmonton Consular Corps. Out of 65 Honorary Consul's in the province, 24 reside in Edmonton.

Estonia was chosen to host this year's 35th Annual Consular Ball. With the assistance of a committee of nine, we were able to stage an elegant evening at the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald. The gala affair included strolling minstrels, servers in ethnic Estonian dress welcoming guests with Prosecco, a piper to announce honoured guests, RCMP in red tunic and a four course dinner which featured Estonian foods. Appetizers included stuffed mushroom caps, *pirukad* and herring bites. Dinner included salmon cream soup, artisan salad with beets, black currant granite with vodka, beef tenderloin and venison ragout, ending with rhubarb trifle. Before the meal began, guests were asked to rise for a Toast to the Queen, to the Nations and to Estonia, raising a glass of vodka and proclaiming '*Terviseks*'! Lots of laughter ensued when the word was shouted aloud!

The musical performers, all with Estonian heritage, entertained with a spirited and evocative program, a tribute to Estonia's

musical heritage. Pianist Helve Sastok of Edmonton accompanied soprano Kristina Agur of Toronto and flutist Lucas Waldin, Community Ambassador of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. The Expression of Gratitude was delivered by Ave Peetri, president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.

Gift bags at each guest's place setting were specially brought from Estonia.

It was a splendid evening, one to be remembered. Thank you to all who were able to attend. Next year, the Consular Ball will be hosted by Malta.

Although the Ball seemed all consuming, I kept up with consular work involving passports and issuance of ID cards. I was able to sneak in a few trips to Vancouver and Vancouver Island. My son Karl Robertson returned from Eton, Kenya after a six week running camp at 8,500 feet above sea level. He has now returned to Victoria where, on my behalf, he had the pleasure of awarding Bob Kingsep with a letter of recognition from the Estonian government. My youngest son and I were able to do volunteer work in Peru over his Spring Break as well as learn about Inca culture.

Sad my father passed away this April in West Vancouver at the age of 91 years. Together with my siblings, we arranged a Celebration of Life in which many of his family and friends were able to take part. Thank you to those who sent condolences.

Now we are looking forward to LEP-West Coast Estonian Days this August in Whistler BC.

Parimate soovidega.

Wishing you a good summer.

Christine Robertson

AEHS Annual General Meeting held in Edmonton

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

The AGM was held on May 24, 2015 at Whitemud Crossing Branch, Edmonton Public Library. After welcoming all, Ave Peetri presented a review of past year's activities. Rein Paasuke presented the financial statement on behalf of absent Treasurer Toomas Paasuke. The statement was approved with a minor

All past issues of the magazine AjaKaja have been digitized but are not yet available for viewing online. The board will discuss the means by which past issues will be accessed by AEHS members and the general public. This will tie in with changes to the Society website.



Attendees at AEHS AGM in Edmonton, 2015

amendment which will be conveyed to the membership later. Website redevelopment will be a major topic for the Board during the next year. The board adopted formal policies for designating honorary members and for its relationship with Honorary Consul to Estonia in Alberta.

AEHS has 94 member units, single and family memberships denoting two or more people.. The number of individuals is well over 134 as the family membership category indicates two or more people. The Society appreciates donations of \$305. In 2016 memberships will go up \$5.00 to \$25.00 for individuals and \$30.00 for families. This is the first raise in fees in the 10 year history of the AEHS.

There is considerable concern about the future of the magazine AjaKaja as Eda McClung has been editing it for 25 years and will resign by 2016. President Ave Peetri is asking everyone to help find a person or two who would like to handle this very interesting project twice a year. Eda and the co-editor Dave Kiil are willing to assist with all aspects of producing the publication. The Society welcomes material and articles of life in Alberta by people of Estonian descent.

AEHS is communicating with the Stettler Town & Country Museum with regard to the ongoing repairs to the Estonian House. There will likely be a grand reopening either this year or next when the building and interior display is complete.

After nominations and voting, the 2015 / 2016 Board consists of the same 10 individuals as previously except that Juri Kraav resigned as secretary after 10 years in that position, becoming a Director-at-Large. Rein Paasuke is the new secretary.

AEHS Board 2015:

President: Ave Peetri
Vice-Pres.: Helgi Leesment
Secretary: Rein Paasuke
Treasurer: Toomas Paasuke
Membership: Lorne Hennel
Directors-at-Large:
Dave Kiil
Juri Kraav
Martha Munz Gue
Kaidi Phypers
Eda McClung
Past President:
Bob Kingsep



Enn Tiislar cutting 10th anniversary cakes

During the break, all celebrated the 10th anniversary of the AEHS with two fancy cakes bearing a congratulatory message.

The next AGM is planned for Red Deer, May 2016. Members are encouraged to contact the Board with ideas and concerns.

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society - Ten years old!

Overview by Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

In its 10 years, the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society has blended and achieved. Spring, 2015 marks a decade since the inauguration meeting in Red Deer where official government forms were signed to create the AEHS as a registered non-profit organization and set its purpose. The popularity of internet email and websites had reached the point where a society could function in a relatively cohesive manner despite having members located hundreds of kilometers apart. Even when the bylaws were updated eight years later, we retained our basic purpose:

- Provide for the recreation of the members and to promote and afford opportunity for friendly and social activities.
- Promote and preserve Estonian heritage and culture in Alberta
- Facilitate contact and current awareness among persons with an interest in Estonian heritage and culture in Canada, Estonia and elsewhere.

The inaugural meeting saw the coming together of Albertans of Estonian heritage from different backgrounds, ranging from recent arrivals to descendants of Estonians who migrated from their homes over a century ago. That is the 'blending'.

There is a richness in such blending: people bringing stories and ideas from diverse backgrounds further enrich each other's knowledge, understanding and friendship. After all, despite commercial efforts to have us believe that physical possessions equal happiness, it is our relationships with other people that are the basis of happiness and a sense of belonging.

AEHS social functions and major resource achievements have fostered a gentle sense of belonging and perhaps even validated the past where individuals were previously vague in knowledge of their own family history. Albertans of Estonian descent have met others with similar cultural heritage and have become more aware of their own family histories. They were motivated to look for family photos and artifacts and generously provided these to the AEHS, resulting in a wide-ranging history website, a half-hour documentary DVD, a 300-page book, a special collection at the Provincial Archives of Alberta, a six-panel display



*Formative meeting of AEHS, Red Deer, Alberta,
November 6, 2004*

depicting the story of Estonians in Alberta and highly commended issues of *AjaKaja* magazine, published twice annually. *AjaKaja*, in particular, is the unique platform for Alberta stories that do not fit other publications; our editors have honoured this niche well. These remarkable achievements were accomplished in a surprisingly short time span.

But achievements go beyond the electronic, the artifacts and the hardcopy text. Through these means AEHS has enabled people to create or add to their own family trees and to travel to specific villages and farms in Estonia from where their ancestors came, and to Estonian settlements in Crimea. Some have reconnected with long lost relatives. Through various print media, AEHS has informed Estonians throughout the world of Alberta's unique Estonian story, something that was generally not known previously. We are providing genealogists, archivists, librarians and other researchers with rich resources. With additional publicity, Albertans beyond AEHS will become better aware of these resources, adding to information about this province. We know from attending international conferences that Australians, North Americans and Europeans are accessing AEHS materials. Thus AEHS's achievements and blending perfectly complement each other to the benefit of many in Alberta as well as elsewhere.

What is next?

Perhaps if we take a page from our own accomplishments we will see that the answer lies in ourselves. The first generations to Alberta did not set out to make history. But they did. Current generations did not enter this world with a goal to make history, but we are. Enjoying participation in AEHS organized events and recording our personal anecdotes and images, new or old, are some of our options for carrying on the celebration of Estonian culture as we have adapted it in Alberta. To that end, we have adapted to and will continue to adapt to the technology offered by the World Wide Web.

We have the means; we can reach all interests; we can continue to build our heritage.

Happy 10th Birthday AEHS!

10th Anniversary Congratulations to AEHS

Bob Tipman, Calgary, Alberta

It is hard to believe that it was ten years ago when a small group representing Edmonton and Calgary Estonian societies assembled in Red Deer to join their organizations and form the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. At the time, the memberships in the Edmonton and Calgary societies were small, and joining together as an Alberta society would unite the membership base as well as provide the opportunity to bring in the descendants of the pioneers from Stettler, Eckville and Barons.



Bob in line-up for breakfast at Barons Centennial, 2004.

This all happened at the April, 2005 meeting in Red Deer. Dave Kiil presided over the meeting. Attending for the first time was Allan Posti,



Bob Tipman, first President of AEHS, 2005-2007

representing pioneers who lived in the Eckville area, Deane Kerbes, representing pioneers from the Stettler area and Martha Munz-Gue who represented the pioneers from the Barons area. To recognize these pioneers and the settlements of Estonians in Alberta in the

early 1900's, the new society was named the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society and I was elected President.

What a journey the last ten years have been for AEHS. The documentation of the Estonian settlements in Alberta through a documentary DVD, many AjaKaja issues and the book "Freedom, Land and Legacy" have been outstanding accomplishments mostly spearheaded by Dave Kiil and Eda McClung with lots of help from Helgi Leesment and many others. The bi-annual Jaanipaev celebrations have all been very successful. It takes a lot of hard work by a dedicated group to make these achievements. I was proud to lead this group for the first two years and be a witness to how much more has been achieved under the able leadership of Bob Kingsep. I wish every success to Ave Peetri as she takes on the role of guiding AEHS for the next years.

Past President reflects on 10 years of AEHS accomplishments

Bob Kingsep, Victoria, BC



Bob Kingsep introducing "Alberta's Estonians" DVD in Los Angeles, 2007

It's been nine months since Annette and I left Alberta for Canada's west coast and two years since I concluded my tenure as president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society. Today my balcony overlooks a small shipyard where by coincidence; the HMCS Edmonton is in for refitting. It's a significant contrast to my childhood memory of waves of barley stocks flexing in a summer breeze.

My grandfather, one of the original Alberta homesteaders, was active in the Medicine Valley Estonian community; my parents (of mixed ethnicity) were not. For me, the Estonian connection transpired the day Eda McClung, a childhood schoolmate of mine called me and asked me, along with Bob Tipman, to co-MC the Alberta Estonian Centennial celebrations held in Stettler in 1999. I was enticed by the commitment to working in English and I was convinced by the potential I saw within the organizing group.

The core group grew and morphed into the committed membership that we know today as the AEHS. I am still amazed by the smoothness in which this relatively unstructured network of talented individuals has been able to intuitively find their respective niches. Regardless of the location, event or project, local members took on roles and produced extraordinary results. Details, extra effort and creativity somehow 'just happened'.

Having observed the activities of the AEHS, I could argue that a law of physics should be revised to the following. 'A body in motion tends to gather momentum.' Shortly after the members engaged their inherent creativity, contagious enthusiasm and endless talents, a series of projects rolled out with clockwork precision. It was a cultural production line in which a continuum of projects seamlessly merged the conclusion of one into the beginning of the next.

The AEHS became a significant component of my life and it provided me with a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Equally as rewarding to me has been the opportunity to interact with the host of interesting and talented individuals gleaned from areas across the province. I know my involvement and the memories of my term with the AEHS will fade with time, but I have inherited a battery of unique and fascinating individuals with whom I will be friends for life.

In just ten short years this relatively small organization has developed an impossibly broad footprint spanning borders and nations. Anchored in its pioneer past, powered by prairie growth and re-energized over time, the society reflects a unique cultural perspective. Reflecting on the HMCS Edmonton, I see a parallel. Due diligence and caring mates will keep this proud ship on patrol. The crew has evolved over time but the mission for which it was designed will be pursued with the same pride and vigor that it was on its maiden voyage. Congratulations AEHS on 10 great years! May your gaze hold the horizon and your course run true and tireless for many more years to come.

Former AEHS president receives Estonian government award

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

Some 20 years ago Bob Kingsep was barely aware of his Estonian heritage. On November 26, 2014, Keit Pentus-Rosimannus, Foreign Affairs Minister, awarded him a formal letter of thanks from the Government of Estonia for his work maintaining and promoting Estonian culture in Alberta.



Karl Robertson presenting "Tänukirj" to Bob Kingsep, April 2015

Over the span of those 20 years, Bob not only gained knowledge about part of his ethnic heritage, he also functioned as a valued leader of the new provincial society established to promote and preserve Estonian heritage and culture in Alberta. During his six years as president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society (2007-2013), Bob Kingsep managed the creation and completion of seven major heritage projects. Funding was received from government and private organizations, as well as private donations. The work was directed by Board members with involvement of the membership who supplied invaluable historical materials and records. Bob coordinated the progress of these projects with various product launches and presentations. He developed the original AEHS member website in 2005 and implemented a completely new version in 2011, tasks requiring sophisticated computer

expertise and people skills. He supervised everything with a constant sense of humour.

These highly productive years delivered a bundle of resources about Alberta's Estonian heritage, available globally for those interested in historical, genealogical and other information about Alberta's Estonians. An enduring result has been that people interested in their ethnic and genealogical background have discovered like-minded acquaintances and have a greater awareness of Alberta's Estonian heritage. Further developments are expected under current president Ave Peetri.



Translation of thank you letter: "The Foreign Ministry of The Government of Estonia thanks you, Robert Kingsep, for maintaining and promoting Estonian culture in Alberta."

Bob Kingsep has retired to British Columbia, and therefore it was not possible for Christine Lepik-Robertson, the Honorary Consul for Estonia in Alberta, to make a personal presentation. Her son Karl Robertson, who also lives in BC, had the privilege of presenting Bob Kingsep with the letter of appreciation

Congratulations and sincere best wishes from the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society!

THANK YOU

The fund raising committee for the Estonian Log House would like to thank the following individuals, businesses and corporate citizens for their kind donations of cash money for the restoration of the Estonian Log House at the **Stettler Town & Country Museum**. Your valuable consideration has also made it possible to receive a matching grant from the Provincial Government;

Wilda Gibbon
Harvey & Shirley Kassian
Robert & Kathryn Tipman
Eda McClung
Juri & Helle Kraav
Deane & Irene Kerbes
Robert & June Ekelund
Alberta Estonian Heritage Society
John & Margaret Pelto
Stettler Auction Mart
Susan Hughes
James Kerbes
Superfluity Shop
Virginia Brennen
Ron & Jo Hennel
Ernest & Irene Kerbes
Ron & Elva Medin
Bill Bauer
Enn & Parja Tiislar
Johnson & Connor Agency
Orville Megli
Chapman & Co.
Rushton Agencies
Rodney & Elizabeth Hennel
Woody's Automotive

Peter & Helgi Leesment
Sylvia & John Walters
Jay Tipman
Brent Rosiechuk
Darren & Wanda Niehaus
Gladys & Otto Nicklorn
Leila & Bob Stanich
Evelyn Shursen
Landman Reule Law Office
Aspen Ford
Ramada Inn & Suites
Ferdie & Millie Nicklorn
Doreen Raho
I D Apparel
Edna Leffler
J T Auto Body Ltd.
Ross & Bev Armstrong
Thorogood & Pinches Certified
General Accountants
Les & Ann Muhlback
Margarite Kerbes
ATB Financial
Lorne & Anne Marie Hennel
Alf & Jean Erichsen

Thank you so much;
Deane Kerbes & Ron Hennel
Estonian Fund Raising Committee

Published in Stettler Independent, April 22, 2015

AjaKaja is pleased to recognize the individuals and businesses who contributed funds for the restoration of the Estonian Log House at the Stettler Town & Country Museum

AEHS Board visits Barons History Society

Rein Pääsuke, Calgary, Alberta



Front, L-R: Betty Ann Turner, Barbara Gullickson, Al Fraser, Ave Peetri, Martha Munz Gue; Back row, L-R: Rein Pääsuke, Dee Ryrie, Aimee deValois, Helgi Leesment

On 22 April 2015, President Ave Peetri and Board members Helgi Leesment, Martha Munz-Gue and Rein Pääsuke went to Barons, Alberta, to present copies of the AEHS video *Alberta's Estonians* and the book *Freedom, Land & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009* to the Barons History Society. A number of Estonian families first came to Barons in 1904. Their ancestors had initially trekked from Estonia to the Crimea (where some of their descendants still live) in the 1860s, and some of their descendants went first to the Dakotas in the USA before migrating to Alberta. Martha is a descendant of Gus and Mari Erdman, one of the first families. In 2004 Barons celebrated the centennial of the arrival of the Estonian settlers (see *AjaKaja* Fall 2004 for details of that event).

The Barons History Society is very active in preserving the history of their community. They have acquired the small building of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church in Barons and renovated it as a museum. The museum has many displays of Barons history, and is well worth a visit to see how rural southern Alberta was settled and how it has developed over the decades. The day we visited, several people, led by the society president, Al Fraser, were busy compiling lists of former school students of the area. Several members of the Barons 2004 planning committee, Barbara Gullickson (another member of the Erdman clan), Dee Ryrie and Betty Anne Turner, were among them. They greeted us enthusiastically and provided us with refreshments.

AEHS president Ave Peetri presented copies of the video and book to Al Fraser, and in return received the Barons History Society's latest production, a book of photographs of Barons over the last century. The AEHS visitors toured and examined many of the excellent displays the Barons History Society has already prepared. The museum is still a work in progress, and it will become a significant repository of artifacts and archives for the area's history.



Spinning wheel on display at the Barons History Centre. It was hand made in Estonia in the late 1900's and presented to Mrs. Siim Erdman (Alida Kulpas) as a wedding present. It was inherited by Magda Erdman and Ellen Johnson, Barbara Gullickson's mother.

Calgary Herald features Ave Peetri: sought-after business consultant

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

AEHS President Ave Peetri was featured in the Calgary Herald, April 16, 2015 for her business acumen.

The Calgary Herald's Financial Post publishes a biweekly Community Question in its Capital Ideas section. A moderator asks a practical question seeking answers from local member business owners. Typically a dozen selected replies of about 100 words in length are printed, each accompanied by a tiny portrait. In addition, each time a substantial reply is selected for special treatment on this page catering to Capital Ideas tag line "Business owners helping business owners".

Through her business consulting firm Confident Marketing Coach, Ave was prominently featured by a large color photo and bold text. This time the question was "How are you being innovative in your business?" She suggests that innovation should be part of everything the business owner does, maintaining a mindset of constant improvement.

Ave has been a strong and frequent contributor to Community Question, however, this was the first time her business advice was chosen to be the feature entrepreneur. Well done, Ave!

HOW ARE YOU BEING INNOVATIVE IN YOUR BUSINESS?

Entrepreneurs discuss how they shake things up in their companies



Ave Peetri, owner of Confident Marketing Coach (confidentmarketing.com), says that innovation should be part of everything you do. "Innovation comes from the mindset of constant improvement and staying close to your client's wishes. I believe that entrepreneurs should strive for ongoing innovation - it's too late to start brainstorming when the revenues start dwindling."



"I love coming up with new projects and ideas that differentiate my business model from that of others... One of the most innovative components of our business is our involvement with social justice. We work to break language barriers, overcome study struggles and ultimately stop human trafficking in the world. We do this by donating 10 per cent of our profits to International Justice Mission, as well as hosting events and advocating for them throughout the year."



"Constant innovation is crucial to any business's sustainability, but as a marketing company, it's even more important to be dynamic and look for new ideas and approaches. We are always looking for new trends in marketing and social media to help take our clients' exposure to the next level. Technology is another important part, and we always looking for the latest software and apps to help streamline our processes, but also to use as tools for our clients."



"This year, Vital Partners became a separate entity from its affiliated brand, Vital Benefits. Vital Partners arose from a desire to cater to the specific needs of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Not only do we strive to be innovative in our business, but we help others to achieve innovative solutions in their companies as well by helping them compete with the lowest programs offered by large companies, and by finding solutions to help manage costs and use benefits strategically. Being innovative and nimble during these times has helped us quickly shift our focus and communication to help our clients with cost containment, and to make smart, strategic choices."



"It is critical for our business to be innovative. We have been involved with online marketing and analytics for over 10 years now, and must stay up-to-date with this fast-changing digital world. We ensure our team keeps their certifications current, are members and regular contributors to online industry conventions, participate in local expert brain share meetings, and work with dedicated agencies that help us qualify for beta products for our clients. This helps our clients stay ahead of their competition. We assess new products as they become available and match them with the clients that would benefit from them."



"I am being flexible with the requests I am getting in."



Elegant consular Ball held in Edmonton

Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

Estonia was the host country for the 35th Annual Consular Ball, on May 23, 2015, presented by the Edmonton Consular Corps. Christine Lepik-Robertson, the Honorary Consul to Estonia in Alberta, was the lead organizer. Amongst her committee of nine were Eda McClung, Kulliva Kangur and Helve Sastok.



Epic Photography
A young couple in Estonian national costume greeted guests with a glass of champagne

Elegance sparkled everywhere that evening. The Empire Ballroom at the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, with its sculptured high ceiling, spacious foyer, stunning terrace overlooking manicured lawns and an expansive view of the North Saskatchewan River valley, invited guests to walk onto the grounds and enjoy a perfect spring evening. Guests mingled under the sparkling white canopy prior to the program and dinner.

Among the 225 attendees, 25 were guests of Alberta's Estonian community. A total of 15 countries were represented by members of the Edmonton Consular Corps, plus two from Calgary and Vancouver. Morris and Hazel Flewwelling, of Red Deer were honoured guests of AEHS. Additional honoured guests included representatives of the Canadian military and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, all in dress uniform, as well as civic and government representatives.

The glass-walled walkway to the Empire Ballroom displayed six panels depicting the history of Estonians in Alberta. A young couple greeted guests in Estonian national costume with a glass of champagne.

The program began with the singing of O Canada and the Estonian national anthem. The Toast to the Queen, to The Nations and to Estonia were made with a shot glass of vodka, an Estonian

custom. For many this was the first time they toasted with vodka rather than the more customary wine. Angus Watt, Chair of the Edmonton Consular Corps and Honorary Consul to the Netherlands, introduced the honoured guests, Honorary Consuls and the three recipients of this year's Edmonton Consular Corps scholarships. Each year, the patrons,

guests and sponsors, through their attendance at the Ball, support three scholarships to students from the University of Alberta studying international relations and diplomacy. The Estonian ambassador to Canada, Gita Kalmet, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Alberta Lieutenant Governor sent written greetings. Alberta's recent provincial elections brought major changes to the list of regular attendees. A draw was held for the grand prize: tickets for two to any KLM destination. ((KLM has recently started non-stop service between Edmonton and Europe).



Epic Photography
Honorary Consul Christine Robertson making opening remarks at Consular Ball

Ave Peetri, president of the Alberta Estonian Heritage Society, offered the Expression of Gratitude.

In her speech, Honorary Consul Christine Robertson presented an overview of contemporary Estonia. She also drew attention to the gift bags at all the table settings. Each bag contained products from Estonia: a chocolate bar, a traditional juniper wood butter knife, a bar of organic juniper soap, two cosmetics samples and a brochure introducing the country. Christine thanked all supporters of the event, including the AEHS and the Estonian Foundation in Canada. She finished in Estonian wishing all "Head isu!" or "Bon appetit!".



Left: Helve Sastok and Eda McClung, members of AEHS and the Ball organizing committee

The much anticipated musical program was presented by soprano Kristina Agur from Toronto, Edmonton composer and pianist Helve Sastok and Lucas Waldin – "Enbridge Artist-in-Residence and Community Ambassador of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra" who has conducted the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra numerous times during his five-year tenure. All three are of Estonian heritage. Helve Sastok is a music teacher and adjudicator as well as music director at a church. Her compositions have been played in Canada and Europe. Helve Sastok accompanied Kristina as well as Lucas Waldin's flute solo. Kristina Agur's

confident voice lent operatic depth to three well known Estonian songs: *Tule koju* / Come home, *Ei saa mitte vaiki olla* / I cannot keep silent, *Kuku sa kagu* / Sing, cuckoo bird. She introduced each with informative and humorous commentary. Lucas Waldin's accomplished flute produced a suave sophisticated interpretation of a 1970's Estonian pop song titled *Tallim*. Acoustics in the facility were very good, as was the applause for these three professional musicians. The sparkle of elegance extended to banquet tables where an Estonian flag adorned a perfect arrangement of white peonies. Janet Matisen designed the invitation and the 16 page program using blue, black and white of Estonia's flag and a silhouette of Tallinn's iconic skyline. The design presentation was striking.

An Estonia themed five-course dinner began with salmon cream soup, artisanal green salad with beets and a flaky black currant/vodka granite. The main course was a duo of beef tenderloin and venison ragout with vegetables. Dessert was a summery rhubarb/strawberry trifle. Each dessert was decorated with a tiny Estonian flag. During coffee, the five member band plugged in and the dance began. Long flowing evening gowns of all colours swayed, spun and sparkled across the parquet floor.

The May 23 event was the first time in Canada that Estonia has hosted a Consular Ball. Similar Balls are held across the country however several nations work together to organize the event. In Edmonton, the tradition is for one country to be selected as 'host' and they assume many aspects of organizing the event. In 2015, the honor belonged to Estonia and Alberta's Estonians can be proud of this immensely successful event.



Epic Photography

Standing: L to R: RCMP Officer, Judy, Stephanie, and Astrid Ustina (seated)

Local runner makes headlines in Estonia

“The Unknown Estonian Top Runner”

Tiidrek Nurme, EE

Introduction:

Tiidrek Nurme, Estonian 1500-metre record holder interviewed Alberta runner Karl Robertson in 2014. The following is an excerpt from his blog.

Far, far away, across many countries and seas, mountains and valleys and thousands of kilometres, there lives a man who dreams. He dreams about the Olympic Games, wishing to compete there and represent a nation to which he is related through his blood. However, the nation does not know him. He is an unknown runner. At least to Estonians.

The harsh winds of the previous times

blew his forefathers far away to where he was born. To Canada.

His name is Karl Robertson, aged 23 years, and he is representing the Estonian team for the first time at the European Championship in cross-country running in 2014.



Karl Robertson

Who is he, what is he thinking about and what does he do?

You are an Estonian runner, a good level of runner. Why have Estonians not heard about you?

This will be my first time I have the opportunity to compete as an Estonian runner. Previously, I have only competed as a Canadian athlete, so they likely



L-R: Karl (centre) and his parents Christine and David Robertson

have not heard of me because I have always competed among the hundreds of other Canadians, never representing Estonia.

How long have you been living in Canada?

I have lived in Canada my whole life. I grew up in Leduc, Alberta and for the last 5 years have been living in Victoria, British Columbia, while going to University. I've had a Canadian passport my whole life; it's only this past summer that I acquired an Estonian passport.

How did you get the Estonian nationality?

I have Estonian nationality as my Grandfather was born in Estonia and is now living in Canada; my mom also has Estonian nationality. I personally got it and will keep it as it feels like a part of my identity. It makes me proud to say I'm part Estonian. Also it's very useful for me when traveling throughout Europe as I don't need a Canadian travel or work visa if I want to stay for an extended period of time such as I'm doing now.

Do you have relatives in Estonia?

Yes, I still have a few relatives living in Estonia, such as my mother's cousin and his family who live in Tallinn. My grandfather's side is from Saaremaa and my grandmother's side is from Tartu.

Do you speak the Estonian language?

My grandfather and mother both speak Estonian quite well; however, unfortunately I have not learned to speak Estonian, but it's something I'm interested in learning. All I can say is „kalli ja musi“, which my grandfather always says as I leave his house.

What are your impressions about Estonia?

I enjoyed the small European city feel in Tallinn where everyone was friendly to us. However, if I were to train there full time I would dislike how cold it gets for running in the winter. I moved to the west coast of Canada initially to enjoy a more mild climate for training compared to the rest of Canada.

How did you become a runner?

My parents and older brother's coach thought it would be a good idea if I gave it a shot. I was really against the idea at the time but when they put me in races I was almost always finishing in podium spots, which eventually changed my attitude towards running.

What is your goal in sports?

An ultimate goal would be to compete in Rio 2016, but there is still a lot of work to be done in the interim.

What is your biggest achievement in sport?

Probably being on a national championship winning 4x800m team at a competitive Canadian University Championships event. However, I don't like to focus on my biggest achievements just all the small ones helping me reach my goal.

From where and when did you get the idea to race for Estonia in Bulgaria?

When I came to Slovenia, the coach here said that it would be good for me to compete in the race and have something to work for during the fall season. I thought it would be a great opportunity to represent Estonia.

What is your goal in education?

After this semester I plan to be finished with education. I can't wait to get started in the real world as I am always playing with ideas that I want to execute in the future. The plan is to start a company on an issue that is very close to me, but there is much work that still needs to be completed before launching.

What is your biggest wish for the Estonian people?

That Estonians continue to succeed in athletics on the world stage and continue to prosper as a strong nation.



Karl Robertson during a race.

Memoriam

Villi Lepik

January 23, 1924 – April 27, 2015

A bright new star appears in the skies. Forever in our hearts, 'Villi' passed away peacefully on April 27th with family by his side. Born in Saaremaa, Estonia, Villi was the youngest of 8 children born to Peeter and Tiina Lepik. He is predeceased by his wife of 27 years, Anne (Oyamaa) in 1986, and all of his older siblings.

Villi immigrated to Canada in 1951 and started Lepik Construction in 1954 with his brother Paul. As a hands-on dad who put his family and friends above all else, Chef Villi was legendary for his famous Sunday morning crepes and weekend BBQs around the pool. His favorite pastimes included boating, fishing, camping, family road trips, music, crosswords and bridge night with the 'boys'. Villi will be remembered for the sparkle in his eyes, kindness and zest for life. Despite battling health issues for nearly 40 years with CIDP, he always maintained his courage, integrity, and his sense of



humor. He is survived by his daughters Christine Robertson (David), Vaike O'Dwyer (Ron) and son Alex Lepik (Susan) and his much loved grandchildren Brendan, Karl, Travis, Sawyer, Hayden, Liam and Jesse.

For the Estonian community, a commemoration was read at the Estonian Lutheran Church on Sunday May 3, 2015. Villi's 'Celebration of Life' was held for all to attend on May 7 at the West Vancouver Yacht Club.

The family would like to thank the incredible staff at the LGH Chemo Clinic for their level of compassion over the past 15 years in their weekly treatment of our dad.

AEHS extends heartfelt condolences to Christine Lepik Robertson and her family in the loss of her father who made an immense contribution to the Estonian community

The following is a quote from Bill Goold's article, August 2014 Special Edition on 2014 Apartment Building Sales Review in which Villi said during the interview:

"We fled the war and occupation in Estonia and came to Canada. We worked hard, but we were lucky too. We made a life in Canada that simply wouldn't have been possible under the communists. Canada is our home." For William and his fellow immigrants, Canada really was the "land of milk and honey", as long as you were willing to persevere and pursue your dream.



Young Villi Lepik

An early community pioneer, Dr. Rita Matiisen

Michael Dawe - Red Deer Express, April 15, 2015

On Friday, April 24th, the Central Alberta Refugee Effort (C.A.R.E.) will be holding its first inaugural 'Around The World' fundraiser at the Holiday Inn on Gasoline Alley in Red Deer.

C.A.R.E. has been helping immigrants who have moved to Red Deer for more than 35 years.

In 1979, Dorothy (Dot) and Les Towns began a 'grass-roots' organization to assist Indo-Chinese refugees who had moved to Canada in the aftermath of the Vietnam War.

This grassroots organization has developed into C.A.R.E., which provides a wide range of services in the community including community outreach, immigrant youth programs child care, English as a second language instruction, community integration support and many other services to assist immigrants and immigrant groups as they settle in Red Deer and area.

There is a long history of refugees and immigrants who have contributed greatly to our community, going back to the very earliest days of Red Deer.

One remarkable individual who contributed a great deal to Central Alberta, and the province as a whole, was Dr. Rita Matiisen.

Dr. Rita Sigrid Matiisen was born on May 25, 1909 in Jogeva, Estonia, in a private hospital operated by her father.

She graduated in Medicine, magna cum laude, at the University of Tartu, Estonia, in 1934.

She then obtained a specialization in dentistry from the University of Vienna in Austria in 1937. She practiced dentistry in Tallinn, Estonia, for more than five years.

Meanwhile in 1932, she married Voldemar Matiisen. They had two sons, Hendo (1938) and Arne (1939), and a daughter Eda (1943). Voldemar got a position as a head of forestry in the Estonian Department of Agriculture.

As Dr. Matiisen developed her dental practice and raised her family, the Second World War raged around them.

In 1940, Estonia was occupied and then annexed by the Soviet Union as part of the pact made between Hitler and Stalin at the start of the War. In 1941, Germany suddenly turned on its ally. It invaded Estonia, the Soviet Union, and other countries under Soviet control.

In 1944, the tide of War turned again. The Soviets reoccupied Estonia. The Matiisens fled to Sweden as refugees. The family became fluent in Swedish.



Dr. Rita Matiisen receives Alberta Achievement Award for Community Service from Premier Peter Lougheed, 1984.

Voldemar got a job in reforestation. Rita was allowed to restart a dental practice.

However, times remained tough in post-war Europe. The Matiisens decided to emigrate to Alberta. Voldemar's two brothers had settled in the Eckville area in the 1930s. Voldemar and Rita were able to purchase a small farm in the Gilby area after their arrival in 1948. The family now had to master English – their fifth language.

Rita worked with her husband on the farm, became very active in community affairs, and took correspondence courses to improve her Canadian education.

In 1965, she was able to enroll in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta where she secured a teaching certificate. She then taught at the Eckville High School for many years and worked as the school librarian.

Rita became an active member of the Medicine Valley Estonian Society, an executive member of the Eckville Home and School Association, provincial president of the Alberta Federation of Homes and School Associations and vice chair of the Parkland Regional Library Board.

She was a Board member of the Central and East European Studies Society of Alberta, an executive member of the Red Deer International Folk Festival Society, a member of the Parkland Weavers' Guild, and a board member for the Red Deer and District Museum Society.

After her husband died in 1980, Dr. Matiisen moved into Red Deer. In 1984, she was honored with an Alberta Achievement Award for Community Service. On Nov. 26th, 1998, she passed away in Red Deer at the age of 89.

Growing up on the Farm

Evelyn Erdman, Calgary, Alberta

I have so many memories about this time of my life and would like to share them with you who may not have lived them. My early days on the farm near Barons were the 1930's and 1940's when life was much simpler. We had no computers or television. Radio was our main contact with the outside world. We had no rural mail delivery so went to the town post office for mail and the newspaper which was delivered with the mail. I can still remember that our post office box number was 16.



Evelyn Erdman, 1986

A typical day would start with a hearty breakfast of cooked porridge (usually oatmeal but Cream of Wheat or Red River Cereal was also served), bacon and eggs and toast made from home baked bread. Having our own milk cows, the cereal was made with milk rather than water. (Try it sometimes, it tastes much better!). For a treat on Sunday, we would have cold cereal and pancakes. Lunch was usually the heaviest meal of the day consisting of soup, meat, potatoes, vegetables and dessert. Supper was usually meat and potatoes, again with home canned fruit for dessert. There was always cake or cookies served with the fruit. We all, including the hired man, would sit around the kitchen table, and food was passed around family style. The table was set ahead of time so that when the men came in to eat, everything was ready and little time was lost. To speed up washing, wash basins, soap and towels were set up ahead of time on a bench outside and hot water from the stove reservoir was brought out in a gallon pitcher. There was always a pail of cold water nearby in case the water was too hot. A pitcher of milk and a bowl of butter were always on the table together with a plate of sliced home-made bread. The rest of the food was passed around in bowls. To cut down on dishwashing, soup plates were used so that the whole meal could be eaten from the same plate.

Sunday dinner usually centered around chicken which was home raised. Most often this chicken was an older hen (about one year old). To ensure its tenderness, it was cut up and simmered until tender. The simmering water was seasoned and used as base for soup. To take away the boiled taste to the meat, it was then fried to crisp up the skin. And did you know there was edible meat on chicken feet? Yes. Mom would blanch and skin them (the outer skin and nails would peel off just like a glove). When peeled, the feet were simmered for stock and we were given the bones to chew on.

When Mom made bread (usually weekly), it was usually seven loaves at a time. She had two bread pans, one held four loaves and the other three. At the same time, some of the dough was set aside for cinnamon buns. I can remember when I was still a little child, the yeast was in the form of dry cakes, about 3 cm. cubes, which had to be softened and started to ferment overnight. Mother always saved the water in which the potatoes had been boiled for starting the yeast. The ideal

place for this was in a bowl at the far end of the warming chamber on the range located above the range surface. There was always a filled coal scuttle beside the stove and it was up to the boys to keep it filled. The ashes from the fire would be shaken down into the bin below and when full, taken out to the ash pile.

There was no central heating in the house. Most of the heat came from the kitchen stove. The kitchen was part of the new addition to the original house which was built in the early 1900's. The brick chimney went up from what had become the dining room so the stove was connected to it with a long stove pipe. This pipe provided a little extra heat to the room. Its disadvantage was that soot collected in it and the pipe had to be disconnected and cleaned out periodically (a messy business if one wasn't careful). In winter, a special coal fired heater was moved into the living room to heat this part of the house. Heat to the upstairs bedrooms went up the stairs so these rooms were not that warm. I slept on a feather tick under an eiderdown quilt in the winter.

We had neither running water nor water heater as such. Everyday washing was in a wash basin with hot water coming from the reservoir of the stove. Bath day was Saturday night, when a big boiler filled with water was on the stove. This was kept filled with water while the whole family, each



The way water was brought from the well to the house

in turn, had their bath in a portable bathtub in front of the stove in the kitchen. (The tub was the same size and shape as those installed now). Used bath water had to be carried out in pails.

We had electric lights but they were 32 volt, not 110 volt, because we were too far from the high power lines. Our power was generated at home, at first by a gasoline engine and stored in a bank of batteries in the cellar. During WWII, we switched to wind generation because of gas rationing. The wind charger was located close to the house. It was drummed into us to turn off lights whenever we left a room to conserve power. Needless to say, we had no small electric appliances. Clothes were ironed with what we called "sad irons". These were of cast iron and heated on the range. The handle was detachable and moved from iron to iron as they were changed for a hot one. You tested their heat with a wet finger tapped on the bottom of the iron. The only advantage of these irons was that they were pointed at both ends. We would iron on the kitchen table. This had two advantages: the padding consisted of an old heavy blanket covered by one of the freshly washed bed sheets in turn covered by a worn sheet to protect the usable one from being burned. This way the washed sheets got ironed as well. The second advantage was the speed of ironing. Flat pieces such as pillow cases didn't even need to be shifted, just flipped over.

Cows were milked twice a day. Instead of letting the milk stand for the cream to rise to the top, a cream separator was used. Centrifugal force separated the milk from the cream so you had to know the right speed to turn the crank: too slow and the two wouldn't separate or too fast and too much milk was removed from the cream. The separated cream was put in containers into cold water to chill quickly, and then put onto ice in the ice house. When sufficient cream was collected, it was put into special cream cans and taken to the creamery. Needless to say, a certain amount of cream was allowed to sour to make our own butter in a manufactured urn which came in different sizes and shapes. We looked forward to fresh buttermilk and the special banana buttermilk pie Mom used to make. Extra milk was allowed to sour in large ceramic crocks made by Medalta in Medicine Hat from their special clays. This souring formed curds

and whey. The curd was used for cottage cheese. The whey made a thirst quenching drink in the summer. Excess curd was mixed with ground wheat to make a mash for chickens.

We had no pasture land near the farmstead. It was one mile away along the bank of the irrigation canal that channelled water from the Old Man River to Keho Lake through our property. The cattle were driven out of the pasture onto the road (really only two tracks in the roadway) and directed toward home. We knew just about how long it would take them to feed their way home so would be ready to make sure they turned into the yard. The process was reversed in the morning.

It was my chore to gather the eggs in the evening. This was not as simple as just getting them from the nests in the chicken coop. The chickens were free range, in other words allowed to come out of the coop into the barnyard during the day. This resulted in the eggs being laid in all sorts of places which I would have to find (in caragana hedges, the barn, etc.). The worst place was under the hay feeder, a V-shaped rack with a flat trough below, about 10 feet long. Cattle had access to both sides so when they pulled hay out onto the ground, it piled up on either side. The hens found this an ideal place for nests and I'd have to crawl underneath to get the eggs. Not too much fun!



L to R: Ilmar, Evelyn, father Gus (G.J.), mother Linda and Karl Erdman

Play was improvised. A swing consisted of an old tire suspended by a rope from a sturdy tree branch; a teeter-totter or see-saw was 2"x12" plank over a gas barrel turned on its side. The teeter-totter was adjustable depending on the weight of those using it, as it could be moved off center to better balance the children's weights.

I mentioned the ice house. This was a structure built over a deep pit in which blocks of ice were stored in sawdust for summer use. The ice was cut under contract from Keho Lake. Any food that required refrigeration could be stored on this ice. Of course until we got a kerosene fridge, we would bring a smaller chunk of ice into an ice box stored in the back pantry.

We grew enough vegetables to last pretty well all winter. Peas and beans were canned in jars. Carrots and parsnips were stored in sand, and potatoes in a

bin in the cellar. Toward spring, the potatoes would begin to sprout and I can remember mother spending time removing the spouts while moving them from one bin to another. Cabbage was stored as sauerkraut and cucumbers were made into dill pickles, stored in the cellar as well. We grew our own strawberries, gooseberries and currants (both black and white). The berries were also made into jelly. Strawberries were made into jam, with the jars sealed with paraffin. During the summer, we children would love to eat peas right off the vine and pull carrots to eat them fresh. You never bothered to wash them; we just used the tops to wipe off the soil.

Mother loved flowers so we had many flower beds around the house and bordering the driveway to the road. Perennials were predominant. Tulips were followed by irises, then peonies, then dahlias close to the house. I can remember as I grew older, mother digging up tulips every three to four years to remove the small bulbs. One year I counted 500 bulbs being planted. With this number of beds, mother would send a bouquet of flowers home with any visitors we had.

Our well water was not suitable for drinking as it had a high soda content but this made it excellent for washing clothes. It was deemed "hard" so for washing hands we used a soap made especially for this: 'Kirk's Castile'. The well was located some distance from the house so we would haul the water up to the house in a big wooden barrel mounted on a special two wheeled cart, pushed by one person who also balanced the barrel, and pulled by another. Once at the house the barrel was unloaded onto the back step, a large concrete slab. Drinking water was hauled from the irrigation canal in a large wooden tank. Because there was evaporation from the wood, the water was always pleasantly cool. We would drink right from the tank through a tap fastened to the lower edge, the same tap used to fill the bucket brought into the house.

We attended school in the village of Barons in a two story brick building, the Barons Consolidated School, made up of all the small rural schools in the area. Each room in the school contained two grades except for the high school. There were four grade school teachers and three

high school teachers. The rural students were bussed to school in four large buses, one for each quadrant of the district. Everyone brought their lunch. Since there was no lunchroom, lunch was eaten either in the classroom or outside if the weather was warm. School playgrounds were divided into boys and girls with the same equipment for both: a slide, handle bars, two teeter-totters and hand swings. Because we were so close to town, we were one of the last to be picked up in the morning and the first off after school. As part of the school program, two concerts were given each year, one before Christmas and the other at the end of the school year. These included plays, recitations and choral singing. My family took piano lessons in Lethbridge on Saturdays. To encourage practice, we were subjected to exams every year. These were conducted by examiners from England as our teacher was a member of the London Royal Conservatory of Music.

Without television we provided our own style of amusement. My brothers and I together with cousin Dorothy would play in Uncle Kulpas's barn hay-loft. It was large. Another type of play was the treasure hunt which would cover an area of a mile, with clues left in such places as under a special rock in a certain location in the yard, in a piece of equipment, in a building. This necessitated imagination on the part of the planter and the searchers and could take up to several hours.

To keep dirt from being carried into the house, mother always had rugs at the doorways. The front door had a hand hooked rug and the kitchen door (which we called the back door) a woven one. These were both rag rugs, the rags coming from our own worn clothing, some of which were dyed to add interest to the rug. I still have a couple of these. I often helped mother cut the clothes into one-inch wide strips to be used for either kind.



*Evelyn Erdman 1940.
Gunny sack school project*

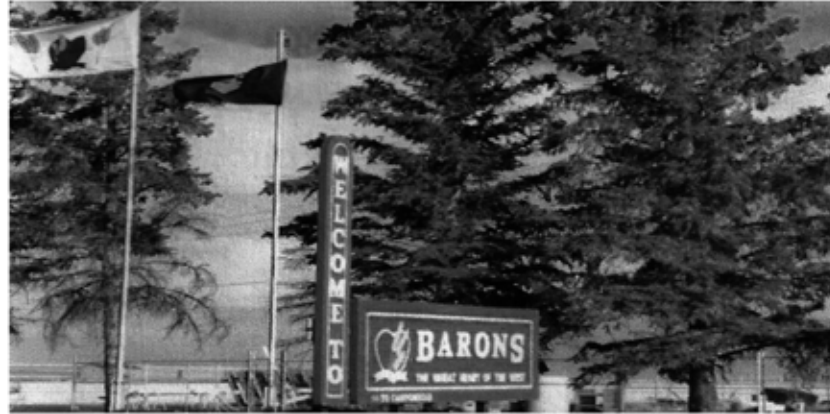
From what I have related here, you can see there was never any time to say you were bored. If nothing else was up, you could always go for a bicycle ride just for the fun of it, no particular destination in mind. All in all, our days were full.

Century-old homes of Estonian pioneers still stand in the Barons area.

Martha Munz Gue, Medicine Hat, Alberta

On April 22, 2015, a delegation from the AEHS Board visited the Barons History Center, lingered in the village and countryside to take pictures of century-old houses where live and have lived people of Estonian origin. Century old houses have a place of honor in this province.

In 1904, when the first settlers arrived in the Barons area, among them was a group of people who had left Estonia in 1860s and traveled by foot to Crimea. They left Crimea in 1901 for South Dakota, where, a decade earlier, friends from their Crimean village had



Welcome to Barons

settled. Seeking better land to farm, a delegation of men traveled across the continent to see where they could stake a homestead. These included Anton Kulpas, John Kewe (the only one who spoke English), Jacob and Mari (Tint) Erdman with grown children Gus, Lisa, Robert, Helena and her family, and school children Natalie and Charlotte. There being no trees in the Barons area, the first dwellings were tents and wagons, while they dug enough sod to build the sod houses. My mother was born in a sod house, as were Rudy and Louise Kotkas (my grandmother Lisa was midwife for her sister Helena, as their homesteads were near enough to get there quickly by horse).



Homestead House of Jacob and Mari Erdman was built in 1907. The house (pictured) was relocated to a site nearby and placed on a foundation. The 8-year-old girl in the doorway is Glenda Erdman.

Footnote: Detailed information about the Erdman and Kotkas Homestead Houses and other dwellings was provided by Carole (Erdman) Grant, Glenda (Erdman) Barnhart, Kaaren (Kotkas) Finlay, Perry Kotkas and Helgi Leesment. At both locations, the Erdman Homestead House was not painted, presumably because of poor harvests and high cost of paint.

Shortly after they arrived in 1904, Jacob and Mari built a sod house. In 1907, together with their grown sons (and likely others who traveled with them), they built a house for their large family. It still stands today. Comparison of photos of Jacob's house in Estonia and in Alberta reveals the same style of rooflines.

In the 1930s rural electrification came to South Alberta. In 1943, Victor moved the Erdman house across the road and half a mile east in order to bring electricity to the house. (It was financially easier to move the house with free labor, than to pay for two or three power poles and power lines to the original location!) At the new location Victor and Hilda Erdman raised their children, Alvin, Glenda, Carole and David. Later, when the family moved to Lethbridge to be closer to Victor's farm implement factory, the hired man lived in the homestead house. Denny Johnson, great grandson of Jacob & Mari now owns the house and land. He reports having found that the walls are insulated with straw stuffed between the widely spaced walls. Removal of the wallpaper in the living room also revealed the names of all the people who helped build the house. Victor's daughter, Glenda, who is talented at creating miniature cottages, has made a miniature of this homestead house in which she spent her early years.

A lumberyard was established in Barons soon after the CPR railway came through in 1909 connecting Lethbridge to Vulcan and all the hamlets in between. Every 10 miles the steam locomotives needed to take on more water so the villages were established at 10 -mile intervals. Hauling grain to elevators by horse-drawn wagon was a full days work even with the close spacing of elevators. Vulcan was closer to the forested areas in the foothills. The train delivered lumber to all the little villages along the way. Thus with lumber imported from the foothills, the second stage of houses to be built were clapboard houses. Additions appeared as new babies required more room. So the first "born in Canada" Canadians of Estonian origin were born in sod houses and a little later, in wood plank houses. For the Crimean born homesteaders, both types of houses were considerably different from their Crimean houses of stone.

In 1916 the price of grain was favourable and there was a bumper crop. So those who had "proved up" and turned the prairie sod into cash crops had more income than ever before. They were able to improve their housing by ordering a house from Eaton's, a Canadian national department store. Those catalogue houses are now 100 years old. A few are occupied by the families of the original owners. I had fun taking pictures of them after the AEHS Board social at the Barons History Centre.

Eaton's Houses.

1. The **Gus Erdman House** is now owned by the of Jaan and Helena Kotkas's, granddaughter Peggy. She has renewed it inside and out, and lives there in alternate seasons between Nevada and Canada. Across a temporary lake (it's only there in wet seasons), one can see the farmstead of Ellen



(Erdman) and Roy Johnson where they raised their family of Barbara, Gerry, Laurie, Denny, and Marilyn. In their early family life, Ellen & Roy lived in the small wood house on Ellen father's farmstead, after the Eaton's house had been built for Gus and Magda.

2. **The Martin and Lisa Silberman House**

is where their three children grew up until their early teens.

Helmi Charlotte was born in the sod house in 1908. The next year the twin boys, Walter Frederick and Ernest Gustav were born in the wood house (whose inner walls were of tentst).



Lisa's mother, Mari, was midwife for birth of the twins, as she had been visiting that day, and her horse refused to take her back. In 1916 the Eaton's house was ordered and built. In 1918, Martin moved his family to Lethbridge while he returned to Estonia to help with the independence movement. He came back to Barons in 1921 with Linda Jurima (his niece) and then returned to Estonia with his wife and three children where they completed high school and attended university in Tartu. Martin's nephew, Olaf Silberman, arrived here after the war. He didn't stay long as he went to University of Alberta to become a doctor. His last place of work was at two hospitals in Saskatchewan: Etonia and Eston!

While the Silberman family was in Estonia, the Big Gus and Linda Erdman family (Evelyn, Karl and Ilmar) lived on the Silberman farm (see Evelyn Erdman's story in this issue; brother Karl's obituary in Issue #41). The farmstead has changed hands several times since it was sold in the 1960s. It is still occupied and cared for though the vegetation on the farmstead is considerably reduced.

3. **The Kotkas House**, located in the Village of Barons, is where Rudy and Jean Kotkas raised their three children, Ken, Loreen, and Perry. The house was originally built for the local doctor.



Other Houses

1. **The Walter and Lea Silverton House** is also located in the Barons village. It was built by Walter Silverton himself in the 1950s. When their children were very young they lived on the Silberman farm together with the



Munz Family. The six young cousins had a lot of fun playing on the farm. After WWII, refugees stayed at this house. Lea's parents, sister and brother as well as friends, stayed there during their introductory year in Canada. Stella and Alexander Weiler, with their son Rein and his wife Marga and their family of three lived there. Later he moved to Toronto to launch the Estonian newspaper *Meie Elu*. Roland, Hendrik and Merike attended school in Barons while learning English. Jaan and Salme Raud lived here before moving to Edmonton (see story in *Ajakaja* Issue #40). The Ruus family lived here with two boys, Alan and Ivar, before moving to Edmonton. They also lived in Cynthia and other small towns, eventually settling in Calgary.

2. The Helmi Munz

House, originally built by Pavan of Italy, was moved to Barons from Coaldale in 1949, to accommodate Helmi, her three children (Lillian, Albert and Martha) and her parents, Martin and Lisa, when they retired from farming. The



house had stucco on the outside and plaster walls on the inside with painted floral decor around the ceiling lights. They rented out the farmland. Martha learned to drive while going back to the farm to get milk and eggs. When we became town kids, we could walk to school, church, post office, and all the mid-week groups. No one had to drive us anywhere until Saturday when we went to Lethbridge for music and dance lessons, dental appointments, farmers market, and window shopping.

AEHS Heritage Project

- **Alberta's Estonians.** 30 minute documentary DVD. 2007. Copyright Alberta Estonian Heritage Society
- **Freedom, Land, & Legacy: Alberta's Estonians 1899-2009.** A 298 page illustrated book about Alberta's Estonians. Compiled by Dave Kiil and Eda McClung, 2010. Copyright Alberta Estonian Heritage Society.
- **AEHS website** www.aehs.ca, then click on Heritage under Menu Option and the image of interest, ie. "Alberta's Estonian Heritage." Each image contains organized and searchable historical material about Alberta's Estonian heritage
- **Estonian Archival Collection** is stored and available at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA) in Edmonton
- **PAA website:** <https://hermis.alberta.ca>: In 'Search the Archives', type in AEHS to open the Estonian Collection. There are 213 results, each with a title and brief description of the file's content.
- **Alberta's Estonian Travelling Exhibit.** The display is comprised of six lightweight 3' by 4' panels telling the story of Alberta's Estonian community from 1899 - present. The panels are stored at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton and available for display at archives, museums and special heritage events.
- **AjaKaja** has been published since 1989 and is distributed to AEHS members and others. It contains information, including family histories, about Estonian pioneers and immigrants who settled in Alberta since 1899. All published issues have also been archived digitally and will be available on a new AEHS website under development.

Dave Kiil

Ernie Kerbes Celebrates 90th Birthday!

Ernie was born April 13, 1925 to Minnie and John Kerbes near Linda Hall and celebrated his 90th birthday this year.

He grew up in a music loving family. Ernie, along with his brothers Alec, Archie and Jim, learned the art of playing violin, taught to them by their father John. Ernie recalls many gatherings with piano or violin music along with singing in Estonian and English.



Ernie Kerbes at Linda Hall during John Kerbes family reunion, 1995.

In 1953, Ernie married Irene Sivacoe and they raised a family of five children: four daughters and one son. They farmed with his parents until their passing and he continued to live on the family farm. To supplement farm income, Ernie like many other young men, worked in Alberta's oil patch. Their daughter and husband, Iris and Rick Marshall and family, live in the yard.

Daughters Jessie Kennedy and Joan (Kerbes) and husband Juergen Ross live in the Stettler area. Daughter Fay resides in Red Deer and son Tom lives in Calgary. They have three grandchildren and four great grandchildren.



L-R: Jim Kerbes, Marg (Kerbes) Olive, Ernie Kerbes

The Ernie and Irene Kerbes home is often the gathering place for family and friends to celebrate Estonian traditions and occasions. Ernie especially enjoys celebrations at Linda Hall where he was on the organizing committee for the 1999 Alberta Estonian Centennial. Like other Estonians, he enjoys family, friends, good jokes and lively stories. During his 90 years, Ernie has seen many changes. Now in retirement, he is happy to reside on the original Kerbes farm with family nearby.

Ernie's 90th Birthday celebration was a family gathering at Marj Olive's home in Big Valley to also celebrate sister Marj's 88th and brother Jim's 85th birthday.

Family, friends, neighbours and Alberta's Estonian community wish Ernie a

Happy 90th Birthday!

Memoriam

Laine Sastok

1925-2015

Laine Sastok née Mahmastol passed away April 19, 2015. She was well known in the Edmonton Estonian community for much of her life. Here is a shortened version of the eulogy delivered by grandson Rein, and edited for publication.



Laine Sastok enjoying her garden, ca 2009

If one thing can be said of Laine, it is that she was always a strong person. She was determined, she was stubborn. She had typical *Eesti jonn* – an expression meaning a stubborn determination to persevere. She had physical strength, stamina, and endurance that kept her healthy well into her life, and baffled doctors in her final years. She was adventurous – always willing to try new things. She was artistic, and a lover of words. She was straight forward. She was extremely intelligent. And she was clever. She spoke her mind. And she spoke it in five different languages! She was always strong, whether in war times, living under Soviet rule, in refugee camps, emigrating three times . . . she kept on going in the face of any and every adversity.

After escaping from Estonia, Laine lived in a Displaced Persons camp in East Germany, where she was introduced via letter to Rein, her future husband. They kept in regular correspondence until Laine was able to cross over to West Germany using forged documents.

Rein and Laine met face to face on their wedding day, June 25 1946, in Holzminden, Germany. They married quickly in order to secure Laine's right to be in West Germany.

They lived together in Germany for two years before moving to Bradford, Yorkshire in England. There they worked together in a textile factory for five and a half years. When Canada opened its doors to refugees in 1953, they emigrated to Edmonton which they chose because of how sunny it is and its proximity to oil fields.

Once she and Rein were settled in Canada they started their new life, or as Laine termed it, their real life. Rein went to work as a land surveyor, while Laine worked at a bank. They purchased a small house, then once their first daughter, Tiina, was born they built a house in the new subdivision of Laurier Heights. They chose the largest lot facing a park with a south facing backyard so that their family could always have a garden to play in. After Tiina came two more daughters, Helve, then Aime. Rein was away travelling for his surveying work through much of the girls' childhood so the responsibility of rearing three children fell to Laine.

After living in four different countries, it was Canada that was home. My grandparents became proud Canadian citizens. But they never forgot they were also Estonian; they always had a quiet pride of heritage – we celebrated Estonian holidays and ate Estonian food. She instilled a sense of belonging and of cultural connection into her family.

But Laine's cultural explorations did not only look backwards – she was always looking forward, seeking to know and do more. Laine liked to keep busy. After raising three children, she looked for new ways to expand her horizons. For years Rein and Laine would go traveling in their old VW camper van. Her children remember going to the American South West in their teens, and Laine insisted on stopping at every craft and art store to explore. She was inspired by the pottery she found there, so she enrolled as a mature adult at U of A to study Fine Arts in her late forties. She drew, painted, and crafted pottery which she sold at art shows. It is still possible to find her work hidden away in people's homes. Her artistic eye brought her ahead of her time. This was seen in the angles chosen in her design for the addition to the house, the curved lines found in the garden as early as the 1950s, and even in her interior decoration.



Laine Sastok's pottery

She was always inspired by nature, and kept an amazing garden with Rein. Together they grew vegetables and flowers for everyone to

enjoy. In addition to the delicious vegetables, she also used her produce to create unique wines. She loved to be outside. She would sit and bask in the sun on sunny days. In her 50s she started cross country skiing, skating, and hiking. She avidly pursued these interests, and at 74 she was the oldest person in the 32 kilometre Birkebeiner ski race, where she claimed a silver medal. This race was five hours long in -25C weather. Imagine that at age 74!



Laine Sastok and Olympic Decathlon Champion Erkki Nool during a BBQ reception for Estonian Track and Field team in Edmonton, 2001.

In her actions, in her body, in her self, Laine was strong. She was determined. She was her own self. She was ours and we love her. I leave you with some of Laine's final words: Be strong. Don't worry.

Husband Rein passed away in 2000. Laine is survived by her daughters Tiina, Helve and Aimee, and five grandchildren and one great grandchild.

AEHS extends sincerest sympathy to Helve and the Sastok family. For decades, they have been actively engaged in Edmonton's Estonian community and continue to contribute to the preservation and celebration of Estonian culture in Alberta.

Memoriam

Bunny Peterson

August 22, 1945 – September 2014

Allan and Rita Hennel, Stettler, AB

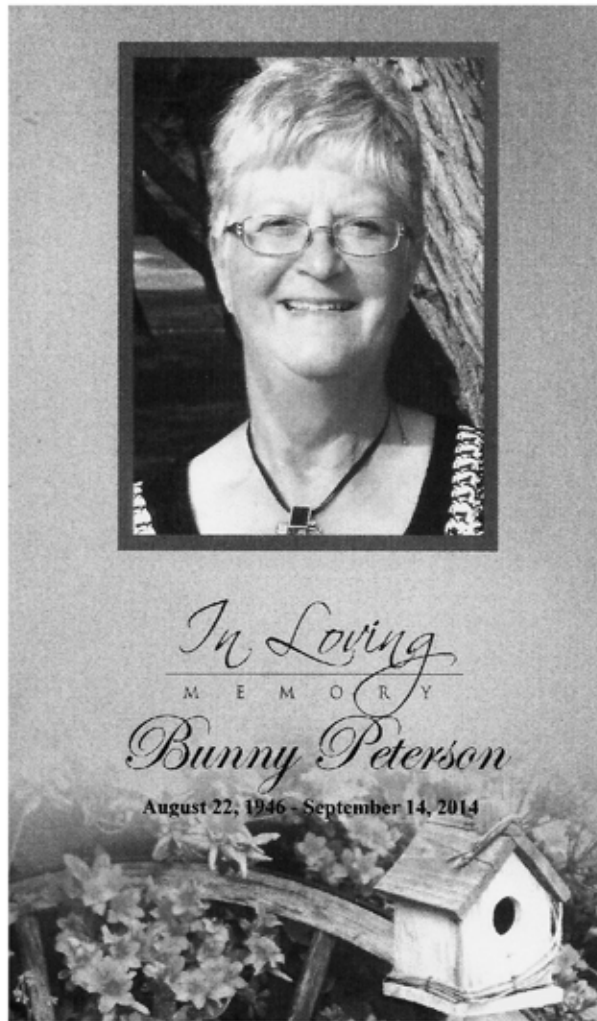
Bunny Peterson, daughter of the late Doris and Rudolph Hennel, and wife of the late Manley Peterson, passed away peacefully age 68 years at the Tom Baker Centre in Calgary after a courageous battle with cancer. Bunny grew up on her family's farm in the Linda Hall area near Stettler. She leaves to mourn her loss of two sons, Greg and Brad, and one daughter Wanda and their families; her brothers Allan (Rita), Ron (Jo) and their families.

Bunny was a vibrant, youthful woman who retired from nursing in November 2013 after 23 years at the Mayerthorpe Health Centre. The following year she moved back to Stettler, excited about new beginnings and of being closer to the Hennel and Muhlbach relatives. Bunny's primary pride was her family. She could be found traveling, camping, playing cards, attending rodeos and horseshoe tournaments.

Bunny was proud of her Estonian heritage and adamant about her involvement with the Lutheran Estonian Chapel and Cemetery. When brothers Allan and Ron constructed a pipe perimeter fence along three sides of the cemetery, Bunny was instrumental in getting the fence painted. Bunny, Rita (Allan), Theresa (Hennel) Campbell and Kim Hennel completed the job in May 2014.

"Family"

"Like branches on a tree, we all grow in different directions yet our roots remain the same."



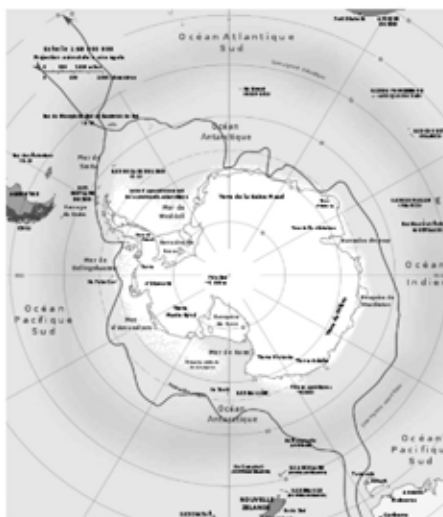
Estonian-born global circumnavigators discover Antarctica

Rein Päsuke, Calgary, Alberta

In his article on the Baltic Heritage Network Summer School 2014 in the last issue of *AjaKaja*, Dave Kiil mentions Ahto Valter as the first Estonian circumnavigator. Actually there have been several more famous Estonians who led circumnavigational expeditions.

Adam Johann Krusenstern was born in 1770 at Hagudi, Rapla, Estonia into a Baltic German family descended from a Swedish aristocratic family. He returned to Estonia in 1816 and lived at Kiltsi Manor in Väike-Maarja Parish until he died in 1846.

Krusenstern led the first Russian Navy's circumnavigation in 1803-6. He served in the Russian navy and spent six years (1793-9) in the British Royal Navy. In 1803 he was appointed by Czar Alexander I to lead a 2-ship (*Nadezhda* and *Neva*, both former British merchantmen) on a voyage to Alaska, the South Pacific, Japan and China, finally completing a circumnavigation in 1806. The charts he subsequently prepared of the Pacific were the most accurate for the next century. One of Krusenstern's lieutenants was Hermann Ludwig von Löwenstern, another Baltic German from Estonia who also spent time in the Royal Navy and was Krusenstern's cartographer. Löwenstern kept a journal of the voyage written in a mixture of German, Estonian, Russian, English and French. The editor of the English version of his diary wrote, "The



Bellingshausen's circumnavigation voyages around Antarctica, 1820

reader has the impression that he, at times, no longer noticed which words belonged to which language."

Another of Krusenstern's lieutenants was Fabian von Bellingshausen who was born at Lahetaguse Manor, Saaremaa. He commanded another Russian circumnavigation in 1819-21. He explored the southern seas, and was the first to discover Antarctica on

January 28, 1820, two days before Edward Bransfield of the Royal Navy made a similar discovery. Bellingshausen's two ships circumnavigated Antarctica twice, essentially circumnavigating the globe each time. Later as admiral, Bellingshausen



Commemorative stamps issued by Eesti Post in 2003 feature Bellingshausen and Krusenstern

commanded the main Russian naval base at Kronstadt, near St Petersburg, where he died in 1852. Several geographic features carry his name, not only on earth but also extraterrestrially (Bellingshausen crater on the moon and asteroid 3659 Bellingshausen).

In 2003, the bicentennial of Krusenstern's voyage, Eesti Post issued commemorative postage stamps featuring Krusenstern and Bellingshausen.



Source: Transpress nz
Four-masted barque tall ship Padua was built in Germany in 1926 and named after the early 19th century Baltic German explorer Krusenstern in 1946

of the atolls Krusenstern (now Tikehau). He explored the Chukchi Sea north of Bering Strait, where on the Alaska coast are now Kotzebue Sound, bounded on the north by Cape Krusenstern (there are also Cape Krusensterns on Coronation Gulf, Nunavut, and in New Zealand). In 1823 he made another voyage via Cape Horn to Alaska and Katchatka, returning to Kronstadt via the Cape of Good Hope three years later. Kotzebue Street in Kalamaja, Tallinn, where his family lived, is named for him.

Men from Estonia have thus contributed quite a bit to the European exploration of the seas. In addition to the circumnavigators, there have been others as well: Karl von Ditmar, Eduard Toll, Alexander von Middendorff, Ferdinand von Wrangel, and others.

Among the loot the Soviets took from Germany after World War II was the 4-masted barque *Padua* which was renamed the *Krusenstern* and used as a naval training vessel. From 1981 to 1991. The *Krusenstern's* home port was Tallinn.



Pilguse Manor gate, with Fabian Bellingshausen's memorial plaque

Two cadets on the 1803 voyage were the brothers Otto and Moritz von Kotzebue from Tallinn. In 1815-17 Otto commanded the brig *Rurik* on an expedition to the Pacific. As he crossed the Tuamotos he named one

Von Löwenstern's journal was translated and edited by Victoria Joan Moessner and published in 2003 by the University of Alaska Press as *The First Russian Voyage around the World*.



*Pathway from the limestone-fenced Pilguse Manor grounds
leading to Pilguse Bay*

Editor Dave Kiil's note: My childhood years were spent in Jõgela Village, Saaremaa, roaming the Pilguse-area lands and chasing flounder in the shallow waters of the Bay. My early ancestors lived in the small Pussa Village near Pilguse Manor. My great-great-great-grandfather Jaen (Pussa) Kiil (1769-1839) may have known young Fabian Bellingshausen during the first ten years of his life.

Lahetaguse, the birthplace of Fabian Bellingshausen (1778-1852), and Pilguse (Hoheneichen) Manors, both on the west coast of Saaremaa, were owned by the Baltic-German Bellingshausen family from 1558 to about 1785. Bellingshausen joined the Imperial Russian Navy in Kronstadt in 1788 and later assumed the title of admiral. Fabian Bellingshausen's memorial plaque (pictured) at the ruins of Lahetaguse Manor.

Following their marriage in 1881, my grandfather Mihkel and his wife Marie (nee Mälk, 1862-1910) lived on the "Kopli Kiili" 23-hectare homestead near Pilguse Manor. Mihkel was the captain of a three-masted tall ship 'Jupiter' built on the west coast of Saaremaa in 1893. Following retirement as a seafarer, he built a large Holland-type windmill across the road from the Manor in 1910.



*Windmill built by Mihkel Kiil in
1910. Photo taken in 1937*

Today, the Manor provides accommodation and meals, and facilitates nature studies for students and tourists. The park-like grounds are bordered by a limestone fence, by imposing gates on both sides of manor grounds, and by two sculpted lions 'guarding' a pathway leading to Pilguse Bay. The Pilguse Manor Church adjacent to the Manor grounds is no longer standing.



Photo: Dave Kiil
*Memorial plaque at Lahetaguse Manor,
birthplace of Fabian Bellingshausen*

Oak on Estonian football pitch crowned European Tree of the Year 2015!



Photograph: Elina Kalm/European Tree of the Year

Estonian oak winner of European Tree of the Year 2015 on a football field.

An Estonian oak tree in a football field has left UK trees in the shade by scooping the European Tree of the Year award.

The Estonian oak tree received 59,836 votes, almost a third of the almost 185,000 votes cast in total for 14 trees from countries across Europe.

According to Patrick Barkham of The Guardian, highest-scoring UK tree in the competition, decided by a public vote, was the Major Oak, in Sherwood Forest Country Park, which is associated with Robin Hood and thought to be between 800 and 1,000 years old.

The purpose of the European Tree of the Year is to highlight the significance of old trees in a country's natural and cultural heritage and to ensure they receive due care and protection. It focuses on the tree's story and its connection to a wider community.

The 150-year-old Estonian oak tree has been growing in the middle of a soccer field in Orissaare on Saaremaa since 1951. Skillful players have learned to bounce the ball off the tree trunk to

dribble past defenders or to complete an unexpected pass!

According to the International Oak Society, legend tells that it stood up to Stalin, whose tractors tried in vain to pull it out of the ground. The cables all broke when attempts were made to dislodge the oak.

Recent articles in *Saarte Hääl* (Saaremaa newspaper) highlight the potential of the Orissaare Oak to promote tourism. Visitors arriving at the Kuivastu Harbor on Muhu island, continue via a causeway to Saaremaa, Estonia's biggest island. Orissaare is about 5 km off the Kuivastu-Kuressare Highway and necessitates a side trip.

Local organizers are actively planning to erect signs and other promotions to attract visitors to Orissaare to view the European Tree of the Year, 2015.

*Editors note: In June, 2015 the European Arboricultural Council announced that Tallinn, Estonia was chosen as the city to carry the honorable title **European City of the Trees**.*

Estonian Independence Day Celebrated in Arizona

Peter (Vaga) Feldmann, Arizona

As in past years, many of the Estonian families in Arizona along with visitors from afar gathered at the home of Linda and Jim Abbott in Mesa to commemorate the 97th anniversary of Estonia's independence on Sunday February 22nd. The event, recurring for over 15 years, has become reunion of both familiar and new faces. It enables us to feast on traditional foods such as *verivorst* and *sült*, even Kalev chocolate treats amongst the many deserts. A total of 45 individuals with Estonian and American family members were in attendance.



Center Row: Rob Montaño, Marilyn Willis, Ivi Montaño with Jude & Quinn, Arne & Carolyn Matiisen, Guido & Dottie Tihkan, Norm & Petra Melhorn, Jane & Erik Arro, Darlene Grossthal, Geoffrey Grossthal, Gerald Creton & Olja Määrsepp, Rees Fischer, Krista Kull, Jim Abbott, Kerly Poolak, Steve & Hilja Martinez, Linda Becker, Oliver Paap, John Willis, Peter (Vaga) Feldmann; Right Upper Row: Mariliis & Kalev Kaarna, Ene & Allan Corupe, Tatum Wright, Vasily Brodsky; Front Row Seated: Häili Grossthal, Evan Grossthal, Eda Fischer, Mari Fischer; Kirke Kaarna, Ervis Saagim with children, Oliver & Emma Poolak; Linda Abbott (Of the 45 attendees Jim, Linda and Amy Paugh had to leave prior to making the photo) - photo by Peter (Vaga) Feldmann

This year we had the honor of two visiting Estonian scholars, Kalev Kaarna and Krista Kull. Kalev is on a stipendium as an instructor at the Faculty/Scholar/Research Center for Policy Informatics at Arizona State University. He has a video presentation which was aired in Tartu's TED-x conference in 2013 at this web address where he emphasizes the need to formulate "the best question" to solve answers to most problems: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NamV7e3dKKk>

Krista Kull is on a Fulbright scholarship at Arizona State University as part of the Humphrey Fellows at the Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication. In Estonia, Krista is the Head of Department of Public Relations and Tourism for Viljandi Town Government. It is amazing to see how Estonians have extended their presence with esteemed credentials into distant and remote places such as the American Southwest. It truly reflects the vigor and perseverance of our people and our inherited genes.

LEP 2015 West Coast Estonian Days, August 5-9, Whistler, BC.



Mission: To proudly celebrate and share Estonian heritage and culture at the 32nd West Coast Estonian Days festival in Whistler, Canada.

West Coast league rotates on a two-year basis among the five West Coast centers Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C..

Theme: “From Sea to Sky, Celebrate Estonia on the West Coast.”

Event Highlights

Tuesday, August 4-Golf Tournament

Wednesday, August 5-Opening Gala

Thursday, August 6-Performances at Millenium Theatre, Folk BBQ Picnic

Friday, August 7- Song Festival and Golden Ball

Saturday, August 8-Folk Dance Celebration and Dusty’s After Party,

-Vanemuine Ballet Performance at 7:30 pm

Sunday, August 9-Chan Centre Choral Concert in Vancouver

Performers!

We are pleased to provide an array of performers for this year's LEP Festival including Justament, ESTuudio, Saaremaa Meeskoor, Noorkuu, The Estonian National Opera, Vanemuine Ballet, Tuuleviilid, Võlukeeled, Unistus Chamber Choir, Mr. Stephen Bell accompanied by Charles Kipper, Martin Kuuskman, Vancouver’s Sweet Pea Swing Band, and all your favourite local Estonian performance groups from across the West Coast and North America!

Check www.lep2015.com for accommodations, full performer lineup and complete list of events.

Ringings under the Northern Lights: Handball Choirs Tour Estonia May 2015

Bob AtLee, Edmonton, Alberta

In May 2015 a group of "ringers" (of English Handbells that is), under the direction of Debbie Rice, of Edmonton's JUBILOSIO! Bells of Concordia, toured Estonia and Finland. We went to see the sights, and to make music with the ringers and singers there.



Alberta Bell Ringers on beach at Pärnu

In total, our group comprised close to 50 musicians, from Canada, the USA and Puerto Rico. The Canadian contingent included four from Lethbridge and eight from Edmonton.

After touring and ringing our way around Finland for a few days, our group took the Tallink ferry from Helsinki over to Tallinn on a rainy day. Our intro tour to the city took us to the great Tallinn Song Festival amphitheatre ... kind of cool to stand on the steps of the silent stage and imagine the sound of 15,000 voices in the festivals.

Tallinn, especially the Old Town, was bustling with tourists from the cruise ships. There were three in town one day. Wall to wall people up and down the Viru shopping street. Fortunately the weather cleared and we were treated to nice spring days.

We played two concerts in Estonia: one each in Tallinn and Pärnu. The Tallinn concert was in the great old Niguliste Museum / Church. What a thrill. The big old stone walls gave the sound a ring (no pun intended) that you could hear long after the last note was played. Several choirs from Tallinn joined us: Campamelli, the Kiili Handbells

Ensemble and KellaRing under the direction of Inna Lai; and the NoBell Laureates and The Belles directed by Karolina Sepp. Seeing the local choir come out in evening gowns and tuxedos was a little intimidating! . On to Pärnu several days later. We played the Pärnu Kontserdimaja (Concert Hall) with three local groups all under the direction of Elo Keskula: the Pärnu Chamber Choir, Esmaspäev, and Neljapäev.



Massed Choirs and Bells in Niguliste Church, Tallinn

Pärnu in the third week of May was like a Canadian resort town the week before Victoria Day ... still pretty quiet, just starting to gear up for summer. The beach in front of the historic old Rannahotell was well-nigh deserted. As formal as the concert in Tallinn had been, so laid back was the atmosphere at the Pärnu Kontserdimaja. Elo Keskula apologised for her "quiet little city" but there was nothing bush-league about her groups and their music.

In all, about 900 people came to listen to the Estonian concerts. We were wowed!

All in all, it was a rewarding experience for our band of travelling musicians to make music with such talented and passionate musicians in Estonia.

Editor's note: Author Bob and wife Judy AtLee are members of the JUBILOSIO! handbell choir in Edmonton. According to Bob, Judy is the "top gun fighter ace handbell ringer" and he is the "second stringer ringer". Bob says he was gently prodded by Siim Ruusauk to write about the Estonia trip.

Brothers reunited in Estonia

Siim Ruusauk, Edmonton, Alberta

During our visit to Holland to see my wife's family, I had an opportunity for a four day trip to Tallinn. As the Dutch no longer use cash on their transit systems, I was given an e-card to swipe on and off the train journey to Nijmegen, from where there was a shuttle to Weeze Airport in Germany. I had some misadventures getting there as I had no mobile phone, and Holland has done away with public phones, but I managed to borrow one to set things straight. I won't make that mistake again.

The Ryanair flight to Tallinn took only two hours. I marvelled at the new modern Lennart Meri Ülemiste Airport, a far cry from my first visit in 1992! My main reason for the visit was to make reacquaintance with my younger brother Kalle Mikkels, his wife Tiit and their families. They met me at the airport, drove me to my "Rotterdam City" quarters near the Old Town, where we chatted for a long time. This we continued to do whenever possible.

My brother and his wife had spent their life in Estonia during the tough times of the Soviet occupation after WW II. I, as an older child, escaped to Sweden with my parents. Years later we learned that two days after our escape, the Soviets were looking for my father at my Grandmother's home. All they found was his rifle. He had fought against the Soviets, as had many others.

Tallinn has changed drastically since my last visit in 2004. There are new roadways, overpasses, malls, city buildings, futuristic streetcars and trains. Increasing tourism is evident by the many cruise ships in the harbour, and the double decker sightseeing busses where for a fee, you hop on and off anywhere during the day. I did not have to use tourist transportation as buses and streetcars are free to Estonians over 65.

I visited Inge Koot, the widow of Kaljo Koot, who's sister Hilja, lived in Edmonton. The Koot's became good friends after Kaljo visited Edmonton three times during the Soviet era: once to meet his sister who he had not seen since childhood, then to attend her funeral, and again when he and his son Mäido got permission to visit her grave.

On the morning of May 29, my brother's birthday, I rode one of the orange futuristic trains from "Balti Jaam" to Pääsküla and back. Some have nicknamed it "The Carrot". All trains were parked at the station for about 2



*Oiler fans get together in Tallinn.
Left: Siim Ruusauk and brother Kalle
Mikkels*

hours for "lunch break". Even trains need nourishment. I certainly had a leisurely brunch. The train station itself is in need of repair, but I'm sure by my next visit it will have received it.

That evening Kalle, Tiit and I celebrated his birthday at a Turkish restaurant as during the day he had to treat his coworkers to coffee and birthday "Kringel". Although he is retired, he is supplementing his pension as a PR man for the Tallinn Streetcar and Trolleybus Co.

For many years Kalle was a corporate lawyer for the Tallinn Television Station where he also gained country-wide popularity with his own Night Show. Wanting to switch to politics, he had to resign from television, worked as sales manager for a Nissan firm, and then he became "Vallavanem" of the Mustamäe district of Tallinn.

At the moment he is vacationing in Italy with his wife, but his services are in demand. On their return he will open the ceremonies that mark the 50th anniversary of the first Trolleybus to hit the rails in Tallinn in 1965. The festival at "Vabaõhumuuseum", where a flame will be lit, will feature a concert by Estonian Superstar Anne Veski, a Smörgåsbord, and Kalle will introduce and give out medals to nearly 200 trolleybus veterans.

During my visit I also renewed my Estonian passport, visited Metsakalmistu, where my family and ancestor's are buried, and where Kalle and Tiit also plan to be buried. I put flowers on the Koot grave at the adjacent Pärnamäe Kalmistu for Nurmi Simm as we are mutual friends with the Koot's.

A point of interest was my late aunt Magda's summer residence in Kaberneeme and the memorial to the fallen "Kalevlaste Malev" during the 1918-1920 Estonian freedom fight. The script on the rock reads "SIIA MAANI JA MITTE KAUGEMALE" (This Far and No Further).

We had our a farewell dinner at the Azerbaijani "Sõprus Kohvik Dostlug", a fine restaurant with an extensive menu, great food, and the best Greek salad I have ever tasted.

The time had gone quickly. I was sorry to miss the hand bell ringers from Edmonton (see adjoining article) during their Tallinn visit! I was late by a few days. I am looking forward to a return visit soon.

“Did you know that there are over 100 exciting, quirky, unique and important reasons to visit Estonia?”

Dave Kiil, Edmonton, Alberta

Introduction: This book review is based on an Estonian World Review online posting, April 14, 2015. The Estonian text was paraphrased and translated into English.

The book contains over 100 exciting, weird, unique and relevant reasons to visit Estonia. The contents even surprises Estonians. The book presents illustrated short stories received from Estonian organizations which depict their fact-based customs as powerful and multi-faceted. Thus many sentences start with “World’s biggest”, “First in the world”, and “Unique”.

For example, did you know that the idea of a war-free Europe originated in Põltsamaa? Or that Europe’s geographic centre is on Saaremaa at Mõnnuste Village? Or that the first Olympic basketball game was won by Estonia?

Anu Soosaare, Solo Sokos Hotel Estoria, publisher of the book, explains that the book is a gift to all of us prior to the Republic of Estonia’s 100th birthday in 1918. Compilers Peep Ehasalu and Jussi-Pekka Aukia suggest we can all feel a sense of pride about accomplishments of Estonians. It would make a wonderful gift for friends and business partners, as well as a resource for research.



The colorful 196-page hardcover book is published in English, Finnish, Russian and Estonian, and contains contact and search information about additional material. It also contains a full page Regio illustrated map of Estonia.

Book is available at www.rahvaraamat.ee/p/ov. It is also available in bookstores, larger museums and at Solo Sokos Hotel Estoria.

Book Review
Helgi Leesment, Calgary, Alberta

The Czar's Madman

a novel by Jaan Kross

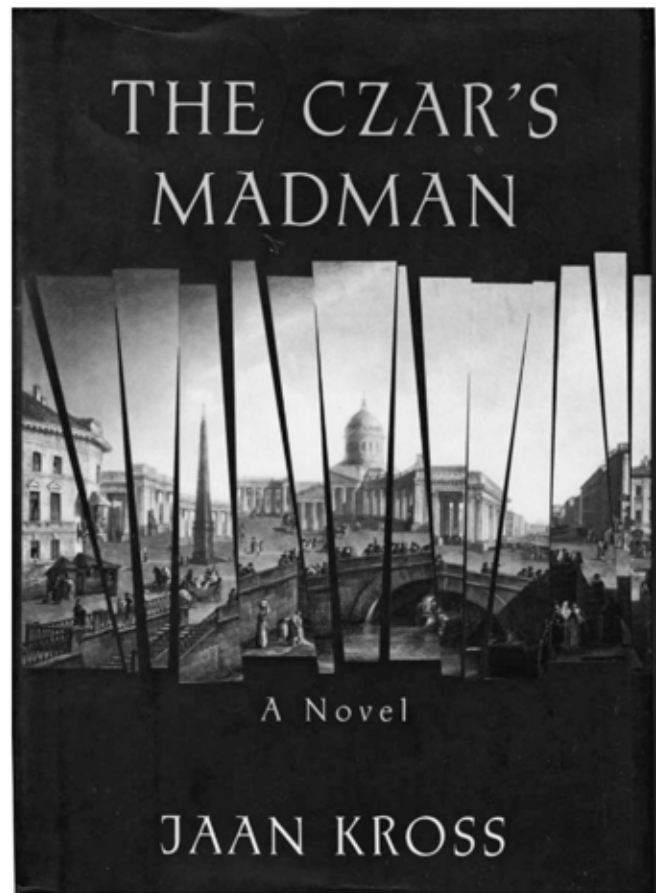
Translated by Anselm Hollo

New York, Pantheon Books, 1993 362 p.

Originally published in Estonia as *Keisri Hull*
by Eesti Raamat, Tallinn, 1978.

It is 1827 at the Voisiku Estate and Timo (Colonel Timotheus von Bock) has just been released from nine years of imprisonment mandated by Russian Czar Alexander I. Timo is a Baltic-German nobleman who scandalizes his peers by marrying beneath his station in life, namely an Estonian peasant Eeva Mättik, a coachman's daughter from the Holstre Manor in the Viljandi area. In order to wed Eeva, Timo first purchases the family from the estate that owns them and arranges for the members to be officially certified as emancipated. The young woman then undergoes a few years of training for her new station in life, including a concentrated formal education and learning several foreign languages, after which she becomes Baroness Katharina von Bock.

Unlike most of his contemporaries, Timo believes in the equality of all human beings before God. Such a belief does not fit into the rigidly stratified society and autocratic government system of his times. For his next scandal, Timo sends the Czar a lengthy note condemning his tyrannical rule (there are a couple of complicated reasons for this wild act, gradually revealed). That deed nets Timo official certification as a "madman" and nine years of royal punishment while his wife raises their little son alone at the now impoverished Voisiku estate. The next Czar, Nicholas I, lets Timo go home under close government surveillance, as a prisoner in his own home, with spies appointed to also live on the estate.



This historical fiction deals with the von Bock family as it copes with additional difficulties and the couple tries to figure out how to live their lives productively and positively despite their circumstances. Timo and Eeva are especially concerned with the future of their son Georg (Jüri in Estonian). The Czar's powers are mighty, even decreeing that the boy must attend a particular school hundreds of kilometers distant from his home, and therefore, away from the dangerous influence of his officially insane father. Even nobility class parents have no choice in matters decided by the head of the Russian royal family.

The tale is told in the format of the diary of Jakob Mättik, Eeva's brother, who records events as they happen after Timo's return from

prison, adding explanatory notes from ten years earlier leading up to the time of the arrest.

The novel is set in the Põltsamaa area of what is now southern Estonia, approximately 60 km north-west of Tartu. However, until 1918, most of what is now southern Estonia and northern Latvia, comprised a Russian administrative district called Livonia with the city of Riga as its capital. The current northern Estonia was a separate administrative district. Therefore, in the story, the main characters sometimes travel from their estate in Livonia to Estonia, or to Courland located in what is now western Latvia and occasionally eastward to St. Petersburg, then the capital city of Russia.

In order to impart the multi-lingual nature of that society 200 years ago, the author occasionally has a character say a phrase or refer to another character in the language which he/she would have spoken in the 1820's. English translations are provided at the end of the book. Most of the German nobility shuns the mixed-class couple, so does not speak to them at all. In fact, the first time the newlyweds seat themselves in the von Bock family pew at church, all the nobles get up and exit the church. However, ten years later, after Eeva's reputation as a highly capable and considerate baroness has reached everyone's ears, the noble families remain seated in the church when Eeva and her recently released husband join the service. Throughout, the reader is introduced to the flavour of that society's values, customs and behaviour.

The novel's characters debate at times whether Baron von Bock is or is not insane. This in itself is politically dangerous as the Czar has declared him "mad", therefore he must be mad. Disagreeing with the Czar's decisions or questioning him is not tolerated. Of course, the Czar is playing mind games with Timo, on the one hand being harsh, on the other generous: he places Timo in a jail cell but provides him with

a grand piano there; he sets Timo free but imposes difficult conditions; he sends the son far away but places him in a luxury school at government expense; other deeds are hinted at but never clarified. Yet, the question of Timo's sanity/insanity is so intriguing that nearly all the characters engage in discussion of the topic. They do so despite the risk. It is a time when concepts of freedom of opinion, fairer government and rule of law are slowly emerging in the Baltics, though other parts of Europe have been struggling with such ideas for decades.

The Czar's Madman is a historical novel of special interest to pioneer Albertans of Estonian descent, as it relays a colourful picture of what life was like for their ancestors and why so many eventually left their homeland. Albertans researching their family tree frequently encounter the problem of multiple spelling variations in foreign languages. This story helps the reader understand why the spelling of Estonian place names as well as family names may vary greatly on old documents. For example, Jakob Mättik, the diary writer in this novel, is addressed as Jaagup by his Estonian parents, as Jacques by those Russians who consider French to be a prestigious language, as Jakob Mettich by German speakers, and Jacóp Mettic by yet others.

The tale contains references to actual towns and estates. Specifically, the estate at Voisiku exists to this day. The manor house has undergone major renovations and currently serves as headquarters of a residential care facility for approximately 325 individuals with mental and physical disabilities. Jaan Kross further made use of actual events and conversations taken from archived documents. Many of the characters in his novel actually did exist, including Eeva (1799-1862) and Timo (1787-1836), as explained in the *Afterword*, near the end of the book.

Alberta Estonian Heritage Society

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Dinning	Shirley	Edmonton	AB
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Gue	Brian	Edmonton	AB
Gue	Kevin	Hornby Isl.	BC
Gue	Lisa	Ottawa	ON
Gullickson	Barbara	Barons	AB
Hall	Gwen	Ashmont	AB
Hennel	Gloria	Myrham	AB
Hennel	Leah	Calgary	AB
Hennel	Lorne & Anne Marie	Calgary	AB
Hennel	Rodney & Liz	Stettler	AB
Hennel	Ron W. F.	Stettler	AB
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Herman	Lori	N. Vancouver	BC
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Kenzle	Alice	Nanton	AB
Kenzle	Susan	Austin	TX
Kerbes	Deane & Irene	Stettler	AB
Kerbes	Richard	Saskatoon	SK
Kiil	Dave & Betty	Edmonton	AB
Kingsep	Bob & Annette	Victoria	BC
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Kotkas	Perry & Karen	Calgary	AB
Kraav	Jüri & Helle	Calgary	AB
Krasman	Leslie	Champion	AB
Lapp	Roy	Courtney	BC
Leesment	Peeter & Helgi	Calgary	AB
Leilop	Aino	St. Albert	AB
Leffler	Edna	Manson	WA
Love	Gloria	Erie	PA

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Pääsuke	Rein & Janice	Calgary	AB
Pääsuke	Toomas	Canmore	AB
Pallo	Jack Henry	Red Deer	AB
Peet	Ethel	Edmonton	AB
Peetri	Ave & Kevin	Calgary	AB
Phypers	Kaidi	Olds	AB
Pilt	Shirley	Edmonton	AB
Pohjakas	Kaljo and Lilian	Lethbridge	AB
Renne	Thomas	Calgary	AB
Robertson	David & Christine	Leduc	AB
Ruus	Allan	Calgary	AB
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Ustina	Stephanie	Victoria	BC
Visser	Mari & Igor	Cochrane	AB
Wartnow	Floyd C	Delta	BC
Watson	Maret	Spruce Grove	AB
Zach	Inge	Calgary	AB
Zielinski	Michel & Kristine	Spruce Grove	AB



The 35th Annual Consular Ball was held at Edmonton's Fairmont Hotel Macdonald on May 23rd, 2015



Organizing Committee with RCMP escort (L-R): Barb Wright, Ena Rudovics, Coleen Neita, Christine Robertson, Helve Sastok, Victor Tanti, Eda McClung, Sahye Cummings. Missing: Kulliva Kangur



Tommy and Jeff Hennel



Enn and Parja Tiislar



Juri and Hella Kraav, Ave Peetri and Kevin Ellis, Morris and Hazel Flewwelling



Christine Robertson and Lucas Waldin