It came back and it was grand!

The biggest event for us this year was Finn Grand Fest 2005. This was the Finnish festival held in Marquette in August. Pauline chaired the local organizing committee, and John served as her “chief of staff.”

This was a project on the order of FinnFest USA ’96 which was held in Marquette in 1996. That festival nine years ago was the largest ever of the annual series of FinnFest USA festivals which bring Finns together from all over the United States. The “Grand” in the name of this year’s festival reflected the fact that this event was also the annual Finnish-Canadian Grand Festival. This was only the second time that the US festival and its Canadian counterpart had been held together. The previous time was in 2000 in Toronto.

The event drew over 5,300 registrants, and, when admissions to the tori are added in, well over 13,000 people participated. There probably were a few thousand more, but we have no good way of counting them all. The festival lived up to the standards that Marquette set in 1996, and maybe even moved the standard up a notch or two. See other articles in this issue about some of the aspects in which we were most involved.

Pauline and John carried the banner for Finn Grand Fest 2005 in the Heikinpäivä parade in Hancock last January 22nd.
Linkola bass concerto premieres

One of the highlights of Finn Grand Fest 2005 was the Gala Festival Concert on Thursday, August 11. A main feature of this concert was the world premiere of the work we had commissioned for this festival, namely a concerto for string bass and orchestra by Finnish composer, Jukka Linkola. Linkola himself was here to conduct for the premiere, and a young Upper Peninsula bass player, Evan Premo, performed as soloist.

Our good friend from Minneapolis, Craig Johnson, was the primary organizer for the concert. He assembled an outstanding orchestra and conducted the concert, except for the Linkola premiere. We also performed the Almila cantata for baritone, chorus, and orchestra, *Main Paras Vaif*, which we had premiered here in 1996, and that was fun to sing again. The rest of the concert was several Sibelius works.

Here come da judge!

John started a new activity this fall, becoming the judge for High School Bowl, a weekly quiz show on public television station, WNMU-TV. A need for a new judge came about on the program when the host for the past few years, Floyd Slotterback, temporarily gave up the gig because he was going on sabbatical leave from his faculty position, and the person who had been the judge took on the hosting duties.

Getting this gig was an example of being at the right place at the right time. Becky Marjonen, a camera operator for WNMU-TV sings in our church choir at St. Mark’s. She mentioned the need for a new judge to John and suggested that he might want to do it. He applied and was offered the role.

John is having lots of fun with this. It involves taping sessions one or two mornings each week.

Board appointment for Pauline

A new venture for Pauline is serving on the Board of Directors of LSTC, the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Pauline’s appointment came from the executive board of the ELCA Northern Great Lakes Synod.

Her first meeting was last May during LSTC’s graduation weekend. Since LSTC is close to the campus of the University of Chicago, they use their Rockefeller Chapel for the ceremony. Since this was after Northern’s school year was over, John was able to attend too, and both were reminded of having attended Eric’s graduation there some nine years ago when he got his Chicago master’s degree.

On her own at 92

John’s mother, Eva, turned 92 years young on December 11. She continues to live in her own house. She and John consult each week on the big Saturday crossword puzzle in the paper. She copes with the effects of advancing years with dignity.
Editorial: I think I cane!

Each passing year results in each of us getting a year older. With age, in addition to the possibility of growth in wisdom and experience, there is also the possibility of increased health problems.

We are becoming more aware of this truth. One example of this was my (John’s) starting to use a cane this fall.

The reason for this is a degenerative condition called spinocerebellar ataxia that was diagnosed two years ago. This condition originates in the part of the brain that connects with the spine and processes signals to and from muscles. Ataxia results when these signals are not processed rapidly enough. The consequence of this is that the control feedback to the muscles that is needed for balance does not get sent fast enough, and balance is affected. The condition also affects fine muscle control in the hands, and, in its worst cases, can affect speech and eye movement.

John’s case is a mild one, which is typical of cases that first present at about age 60 or thereafter. The late onset also means that the degeneration will progress slowly.

Much new knowledge about this particular condition has been uncovered in recent years. In particular, about a dozen strains have been shown to be genetic in nature and tied to particular atypical DNA sequencing patterns. A year ago this summer I was tested at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The diagnosis that had been made in Marquette was confirmed there, and they ran all of the currently known genetic tests. I failed them all, meaning that my case does not fit any of the known genetic categories, and that the cause is at this point unknown.

Using a cane was triggered by getting to see television shots showing me walking during Finn Grand Fest 2005. Seeing the herky-jerky gait convinced me that it was time. The substandard gait was obvious, making it clear that by not using a cane yet, I was not really hiding the fact that something is wrong.

In retrospect, the decision to start using a cane now rather than waiting until it is absolutely necessary makes sense. First, a cane is a communication device, signaling to others that the unsteady gait is for some reason other than being a bit tipsy from strong drink. Second, it is proving to be useful to be learning new skills, for example, when to be wary of a slippery cane tip, while there is still sufficient balance remaining to deal with the situation.

Also, I’ve been able to see some things on the positive side of this. Being a somewhat rare “Yooper Indoorsman,” I have had to give up fewer things than a person who values highly physical type activities. For me, the inability to run does not have serious lifestyle impacts. No problem with having to give up tennis and having my golf game go down the toilet. The one physical loss that affects daily life is riding my bicycle to campus.

Another point on the positive side is the possibility of contributing something to human knowledge of the genetics of this sort of thing. At the Joint Mathematics Meetings in Phoenix in January of 2004, the annual Gibbs lecture on applications of mathematics was given by Dr. Eric Lander who is one of the geneticists who leads the human genome project. His lecture was very inspiring concerning the flood of recent progress in understanding the genetic code, in particular what information one can obtain from it about genetic markers for diseases.

I’d find it rather gratifying to be able to contribute to this body of knowledge. This was more of the motivation for making the trip to the NIH a year and a half ago rather than to know for myself what is going on. It was a bit disappointing to have flunked all of the current genetic tests, but this holds open the possibility that there might be some new information to be garnered from my case.

So life goes on. A bit different, but not really worse. There are still more reasons to be thankful than there are to bemoan my fate.

John Kiltinen
CROSSWORD PUZZLE: Here is our fourth annual crossword puzzle. It has grown in size so that it needed a larger format. You will find clues to key words and phrases needed to solve this puzzle elsewhere in this newsletter. See the next page for a solution.

Across
1 Little devil
4 Cable TV premium channel
7 Un follower
10 Biol. or chem.
13 A Stooge
14 Ms. Knitt?
16 Only in Germany
17 See 4 Down
20 Chi. transit
21 Uncle in Spain
22 Winter Olympic town in France
23 “A note to follow sol”
24 Idiot box
25 To be > one
26 ID no.
27 “A long, long way to run”
28 Type of dash
30 The main FGF 05 concert __ __ _____.
34 Staff designation
38 What P & J needed after Aug. 14
42 “Over hill, over ____ …”
43 Peace activists’ goal
44 The Ocean St.
45 “___! That hurts!”
46 Worldwide lawyers’ gp.
49 Biological baglike structure

...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Across</th>
<th>Down</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>52 “To ___ or not to …”</td>
<td>28 FGF ’05’s month, in Finnish, was ___kuu.</td>
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<tr>
<td>53 3.141593 approximates it</td>
<td>29 Lieutenant’s superior, just barely</td>
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<td>55 What Pauline calls our new piano</td>
<td>30 Roll of bills</td>
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<td>58 Place for experiments</td>
<td>31 “___ ___ Glance” (pocket calendar name)</td>
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<td>60 Simile word</td>
<td>32 Part of RSVP</td>
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<td>61 Type of work premiered 8-11-05</td>
<td>33 In the neighborhood of</td>
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<td>64 One in France</td>
<td>34 You eat it as a sign of humility.</td>
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<td>65 NHL player of 1980s, now an AHL coach</td>
<td>35 Par follower in Paris</td>
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<td>66 Air conditioner meas.</td>
<td>36 Class for foreign students</td>
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<td>67 A brew from leaves</td>
<td>37 Floral delivery syst.</td>
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<td>68 ___ Jima</td>
<td>39 Cycle opener</td>
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<td>69 Terminate</td>
<td>40 Flint to Detroit dir.</td>
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<td>70 Car engineers’ gp.</td>
<td>41 To hear in stereo, it helps to be <em><strong>-</strong></em>.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>46 “Quick, get me a band aid!”</td>
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<td>47 One ___ ___ (singly)</td>
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<td>48 Sleep disorder</td>
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<td>49 City in the Czech Republic</td>
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<td>50 Archer’s need</td>
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<td>51 City in the Phillipines</td>
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<td>52 Type of insulation</td>
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<td>53 Italian cuisine staple</td>
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<td>54 Matter of attention</td>
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<td>56 Continent-wide economic org.</td>
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<td>57 In favor of</td>
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<td>59 Piece of small ammo</td>
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<td>62 Enemy</td>
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<td>63 Washboard wanna-bes</td>
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Eric and Jane in Maryland

Our son, Eric, and his wife, Jane Calvert, continue to live in Maryland. She teaches at Saint Mary’s College of Maryland and he works as a legal researcher for a firm in Washington, DC, that specializes in intellectual property cases.

We enjoyed seeing them, if briefly, in Marquette during FGF ’05 and appreciated their behind-the-scenes help at the Finn Hall Variety Show.

This fall, Eric kept the home fires burning in Maryland while Jane was in Chicago engaged in intensive, grant-funded historical research. She returns to Maryland for teaching during the winter semester.

Puzzle talks trip in April

John made a trip to Kentucky in April to give a talk at the Kentucky Section of the Mathematical Association of America annual meeting. On the way there, he gave talks at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, and Louisville, Kentucky. He also had a day to visit with good friends, Doug and Jean Amman, in Muncie, Indiana.

The three talks all related to mathematics related to his puzzle software and book, OvalTrack and Other Permutation Puzzles (And Just Enough Group Theory to Solve Them).

And the piano’s grand too!

One souvenir of Finn Grand Fest 2005 dominates our living room now. It is a Petrof grand piano, made in the Czech Republic, which Pauline is very much enjoying having.

Our Gala Festival Concert held in Lakeview Arena required a grand piano. Since hockey arenas typically do not have grand pianos in them, we had to arrange for a piano to be brought in. We lined one up from Michelsen Music, a store in Negaunee.

In working out the deal for the loan of the piano in exchange for program acknowledgment, John told Dan Michelsen that we would buy the piano if it was damaged as a result of its trip out of the store. Well, this planted the seed. We decided to buy it in spite of the fact that it came through with only a few easily fixed scuff marks.

The piano takes the place of a prized oak dining set, purchased almost a century ago by Pauline’s maternal grandparents. The round, expandable table and six chairs have a new life now in Plainfield, Illinois, at the home of sister Elizabeth and her family.

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Crossword Puzzle Solution

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One of John’s favorite Finn Grand Fest 2005 projects was helping Eeva Savolainen and Nikke Nason mount a production of a Finnish children’s opera, “Heinähattu, Viiltitossu ja Suuri Pamaus.” When we were in Helsinki in May, we saw a poster for a new staging of the opera there.
Rest in peace, Maria (Lola) and Robert

We were saddened twice this past summer by deaths in the family, both on John’s side. In June, John’s brother Jim’s wife, Maria, whom we have always called Lola, died unexpectedly in California. She was buried on June 23 in her hometown of Tijuana, Mexico. The second death was of John’s cousin, Robert Kiltinen. That happened the week after Finn Grand Fest 2005.

Lola’s death happened at a time when we had been planning a trip to Arizona for Lori Fenton’s wedding. It worked out for John to modify plans to extend this trip to go to California and drive with Jim to Tijuana for the funeral.

Robert had been at Marquette for Finn Grand Fest 2005, and had gotten to see quite a few relatives, although Pauline and John were too busy to have seen him (or anybody else) except in passing. Upon his return home to New Berlin, Wisconsin, he suffered an apparent heart attack and died. We drove to West Allis for his funeral.

These deaths are of people of our own generation. Thus, they remind us more vividly that we all have but a finite amount of time on this earth, and we ought not postpone the important things.

Can you hear me now?

Thanks to Eric, Pauline and John are now up to date in the sense of being cell phone users. When he was here for Finn Grand Fest 2005, Eric gave both of us cell phones as a belated birthday gift, and said that he would be paying for the contract for a year.

We have been getting used to them. We’ve explored the idea on our own, but had not taken the leap because of the fact that the coverage is not as widespread in the U.P. as we would like.

In particular, our experiments at Perch Lake, where our cottage is, had suggested that coverage would be very uncertain there. This held us back until Eric made the decision for us. It turns out that a new tower that just came online in September ought to help solve the Perch Lake problem, so we are on our way to working this new mode of communication into our lifestyle.

In case you need to reach us, try (906) 250-9948 to reach Pauline’s cell phone, or (906) 250-9951 for John.

In Helsinki in May: Pauline and John pay respects to Sibelius. Would you believe that this was at about 9:30 p.m.? We had just eaten a fine dinner at a restaurant across the street.

Pauline is shown here playing our new Petrof piano, the piano which she played in Lakeview Arena at the FGF ’05 Opening Ceremony.

John was Master of Ceremonies of the Finn Grand Fest 2005 Opening Ceremony. Behind him are a row of dignitaries, a choir, and the big projection screen.
One more year, he says

While Pauline experiences her first year of real retirement, John continues on his “gentle glidepath” toward that phase of life.

Pauline retired from teaching at Gwinn High School in June of 2004, but with the heavy demands of getting ready for Finn Grand Fest 2005, it really did not seem like being retired, just having taken on a different job. This fall, however, while there are still many follow-up responsibilities for last summer’s festival, the pace is much more like that of a typical retirement.

Meanwhile, John has been debating with himself whether this should be the last year. He entered into a limited appointment agreement several years ago that called for him to put in up to three final years at one-third time. Last year was the first of those, and this academic year is the second. For both of these years, he has taught only in the fall semester and has not had any regular classes during the winter. He has decided that he will do the same for one more year in 2006-07, and then that will be it.

Finland in May, Arizona in June

Our long-distance travel during 2005 was limited to two major trips, each coming within a period of just over a month.

In May, we went for a quick week in Helsinki. The reason was to attend the Finnish Expatriate Parliament, a body which gives Finns and their descendents living outside of Finland a forum for expressing themselves. This was the second such session for John and the first for Pauline.

We stayed in a downtown hotel so as to be near the sessions. However we marveled at the fact that we were able to walk to major theater, opera, and orchestra events right from our hotel. We took full advantage of the opportunities. We also marveled at the coincidence of running into one of John’s second cousins on the street and having a chance to visit with Markku at his office the next day.

The June trip to Arizona was for Lori Fenton’s wedding to Gilead Wurman. The wedding was in Sedona. We flew to Phoenix and rented a car there for what should have been a two-hour drive to Sedona. It turned into a much longer trip because of several-hour stops on the highway due to brush fires that were blocking the freeway.

When we got there, the wedding was very nice, and it was a good opportunity to visit with the whole Fenton clan.

Pauline and John pose at the reception at Lori’s and Gilead’s wedding with son, Eric, and his wife, Jane.

Pauline and her siblings at Lori Fenton’s wedding in Sedona, Arizona. Left to right, Gus, Liz, Pauline, and Larry, father of the bride.