2006 Edition

The Kiltinen Christmas Chronicles

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You All
Hauskaa Joulua ja Onnellista Uutta Vuotta Teille Kaikille

We send our warmest greetings to you for a blessed Christmas season and for a successful and prosperous new year, 2007.

John and Pauline Kiltinen

2006 a Year for Reorganizing

Last year, 2005, we had some very big events to write about, most notably Finn Grand Fest 2005. Pauline chaired the local organizing committee for this big event.

We had nothing comparable to this during 2006. There were still lots of loose ends from the big 2005 festival to work on, but no big events. Instead it was a year for regrouping for us, to put the finishing touches on old projects and start laying the groundwork for new ones.

It turned out to be a year of working our cell phones into our lifestyle. Eric gave them to us when he and Jane were in Marquette for Finn Grand Fest 2005. By now, we wonder what we ever did without them. If you have need to call us and we cannot be reached via our landline number, try John’s cell number, (906) 250-9951, or Pauline’s, (906) 250-9948.

John and Pauline pose here with Washington’s Mount Rainier in the background. The picture was taken on Sunday afternoon, July 23, when they visited the mountain with Pauline’s relatives, Pauline and Dave Dubois and Peter and Lynn Fenton, and some of their families.
New Linkola Opera in the Works?

An outgrowth of the commissioning of Finnish composer, Jukka Linkola, to write the double bass concerto for Finn Grand Fest 2005 is the exploration of an opera that he would compose based upon an Upper Peninsula story from one hundred years ago about Finnish immigrants. If events go as envisioned, the opera would be performed in 2009 by the Pine Mountain Music Festival in the U.P. and by a company in Finland.

The idea was born when Linkola was in Marquette during 2005. It was explored over the next month, and then put on the back burner. Last spring, John renewed the exploration. Things progressed to the point that he made a trip to Finland in July. The positive signals from this trip led to another by him, Pauline, and Joshua Major, the artistic director of the Pine Mountain Music Festival, at the end of September.

There are still some major obstacles to overcome, but if the opera happens, it will be very gratifying for us. The story starts from an eyewitness account of a copper mine strike written by Alfred Laakso, and includes some fictional components added by his grandson, Andy Hill of Wakefield. Alfred Laakso’s son, David, is a retired music teacher in Escanaba. He was a student teacher of John’s back in the 1950s and has been very helpful. The working title for the opera is Maija and Milton.

On August 6, the Finnish-African Gospel Mass was the liturgy for Marquette’s ecumenical service at the Presque Isle Park bandshell.

Judge John in His Second Year

John continues for a second year as the judge for WNMU-TV’s High School Bowl. Tapings are in the TV-13 studio on campus one or two mornings per week. In addition, he and the program host, g g gordon, confer about the questions prior to the matches.

Remodeling Project at Perch Lake

A need for some roof maintenance at the family cottage at Big Perch Lake has ballooned into a major remodeling project.

The project got launched last winter as we met with a relative, David Mantela of Mantela Modernizing. We ended up contracting with him for a project which added a 16-foot two-story addition at one end of the building constructed by John’s parents in the 1950s next door to what was then John’s Aunt Martha’s cottage.

Completion was estimated at the end of the summer, but it is taking longer than first estimated. We now expect it to be ready for next summer. When complete, the place will be suitable for year-round use, rather than the summer use that is possible now.

NMU Student Finn Club Starts

During the Winter Semester, 2006, John began to serve as faculty advisor for a student Finnish club at Northern. Activities have included weekly language lessons and sponsorship of several programs.
For those of you (most, I think) who do not read Finnish, the headline for this opinion piece is a quote from Psalm 100, which translated into English is “His mercy endures forever.” I read Psalm 100 both in Finnish and English at my mother’s funeral a week ago as of this writing and then added some comments on how my personal heritage of faith has been passed to me through the Finnish language and primarily through my mother’s side of the family.

I went on to say how I value not only the faith, but the fact that it has been passed to me through the Finnish language. (I confessed to holding the belief that Finnish is God’s mother tongue.)

Eric also read a scripture lesson at the funeral, so there was this further validation of the next part of this verse, “and his faithfulness to all generations.” Eric also added some comments based upon his special relationship with his grandmother, and their regular theological discussions while he was studying religion at St. Olaf and the University of Chicago.

Writing this Christmas newsletter causes us to review the events of the past year. This exercise usually reminds us how richly we have been blessed, and the review of 2006 events has been no exception to this rule. There have been a few bumps in the road, such as Pauline’s broken wrist last March and my mother’s death in November, but even in these misfortunes we find reasons to rejoice and for the most part life has been very good.

I wrote in detail last year about my spinocerebellar ataxia, so an update is perhaps in order. The good news is that the progression is slow. I am teaching my last regular classes this fall, and after not doing any regular teaching in the winter, I notice that writing on the blackboard is harder than it was a year ago. Maybe there is a little less balance than a year ago, but since walking is something I do every day, it is harder to notice the very slow change.

The year saw both satisfactions from work and opportunities for gratifying projects that will be more possible once the daily commitments of the “day job” are a thing of the past. As I complete my last semester of regular teaching, a combination of emotions confronts me. I have found teaching college math very satisfying, but at the same time, I am looking forward to what the future has in store.

It will be easy to say good-bye to the grading of papers and tests, but harder to say good-bye to the relationships with the students and sharing information with them that human beings have developed over centuries and even millennia. If teaching only involved these desirable aspects and not some of the less desirable routine, I would go on with it indefinitely.

But a new future beckons. More time and the freedom to travel. Continuing to move the opera project forward. Seeing how things develop with the math parody songs. Seeing the remodeling project at the cottage at Perch Lake to a conclusion, and maybe actually getting to spend some time there. Going with Pauline to Chicago when she goes there for the LSTC board meetings.

There will still be enough ties to Northern Michigan University and the mathematical community to assuage the feelings of being totally cut off. But over time, the new activities will, I hope, make these ties less important.

Pauline’s already having been retired for two and a half years sets a good example. She is certainly keeping busy with important work. I feel especially grateful that she was able to devote the time to being the primary organizer of my mother’s care over the past few months. This would not have been possible with the responsibilities of a regular job.

As we prepare to weigh anchor for a voyage into a new phase of life with both of us retired, we wish you and yours all the best that life can offer in the years ahead.

John Kiltinen
CROSSWORD PUZZLE: Here is our fifth annual crossword puzzle. You will find the information to fill in some of the longer phrases as you read this newsletter. See the next page for a solution.

Across
1 Quote from Sandy
4 1960s pres. candidate inits.
7 Mimick
10 Public key code inits.
13 Pen tip
14 Viking working stiff
16 Computer programs, briefly
17 Day of Pauline’s wrist surgery, nonpossessively
20 Chi. transit
21 Sched. entry
22 Tall, skinny guy
23 Cigarette inits.
24 Finnair, on tickets
25 Stuff delivered, briefly
26 Genre of joke, discussed in Borat movie
27 More than a min.
28 Mother, familiarly
30 Host, gameshow
34 Sooty matter
38 What the opera John is trying to get composed will be called if there is a sequel
42 Actress Ms. Lane
43 Mixed together, as nuts
44 Canadian terr. postal abbr.
45 State postal abbr.
46 Rural hostel

15 Missouri city, for short
18 Soft metal in the periodic table
49 Songwriters gp. based in Nashville
52 Science of bytes, for short
53 Second degree for some chemists
55 What the Finnish car engineer puts on his eggs?
58 Select
60 Military roll call “I’m here.”
61 The date Eva Kiltinen went to her eternal home.
64 Leg follower?
65 Rack in an NRA member’s den?
66 “So this is it!”
67 Certain evergreen
68 Not closed, archaically
69 Supplement (to)
70 Sequence after “Q”

Down
1 Photographer Adams
2 Coins in Iran
3 Fed. Agcy. that enforces the law
4 Overly adequate north country garment
5 Mrs. Nelson Rockefeller, to her friends
6 Helsinki Mr.
7 The father of Aaron and Moses
8 Bodily afflictions
9 A lunar crater (2nd quadrant if that helps)
10 A hazardous element
11 Actor Vincent or orchestra conductor Robert
12 Up until now (two words)
Eva Kiltinen, 1913 - 2006

Eva Kiltinen, John’s mother, died in her home on November 12, 2006. Her health had been declining noticeably for about a year, but in spite of this, she was able to remain in her home to the end, thanks to the help of Lake Superior Hospice and other care-givers who were there around the clock as organized by Pauline.

Until the last several weeks, she was able to be up and around the house. Only during the last week or so was she confined to her bed nearly all the time.

Life became much more challenging for her at about Christmas time last year. She had some sort of flu-like illness that she could not shake off. This resulted in several days of hospitalization in early 2006.

When they were not able to do anything for her at the hospital, she went home, but with several weeks of Marquette Home Health aides coming for things like baths. On one of these visits, she fainted, resulting in a trip to the emergency room on March 14. When she made it clear that she did not want the aggressive treatment that another hospitalization would entail, she was sent home with a diagnosis of congestive heart failure, and a very helpful hospital social worker got us through the maze of bureaucracy to arrange for hospice care.

She had 24-hour-per-day aides for awhile, but this was gradually reduced so that by June, she was on her own again.

She had a good summer, living at 1315 High Street with hospice visits. We were somewhat hesitant about taking a planned quick trip to Finland at the end of September, but went ahead with it because she was doing well enough on her own. When we got back, however, she started having severe pain. Dr. Eldevick, her primary care physician for several years, came to the house. After ruling out bowel obstruction as the cause of abdominal and back pains, she diagnosed the problem as being the result of the pinching of nerves coming out from the spine as a result of spinal stenosis.

The solution to this was heavy doses of pain killers. We went back to 24-hour-a-day care because of the cognitive side-effects of this treatment, and weighed whether it was nursing home time, but decided with Eva that we’d see what we could do at home.

In the end, Eric came from Maryland for a visit and was at Eva’s house along with the overnight aide when she died. Son Jim and nephew Paul Williams, both from California, and Eric’s wife Jane came for the funeral which was on Saturday, November 18.

Crossword Puzzle Solution

John’s mother, Eva Kiltinen, who died at the age of 92 on November 12, 2006. Her full obituary can be read online at the funeral home website, www.swanson-lundquist.com.
Pauline Breaks Her Wrist

One of the effects of John’s ataxia is that Pauline has taken over much of the shoveling. Following the last big storm of last winter, she was doing exactly that when she slipped on some ice, fell, and broke her left wrist on Tuesday, March 14.

A trip to the hospital emergency room resulted in X-rays which confirmed that it was a break, and the setup of an appointment with the local orthopedic surgeons group on Thursday for what we thought would be a routine cast-making. They even had us waiting in the cast room and we were choosing colors.

However when Dr. Colligan came in, he had already looked at the X-rays. He said he thought Pauline would have a better outcome if she had surgery by a wrist specialist in Green Bay. He said that his mother, like Pauline, was a church organist, and thus he was aware of the importance of preserving good mobility in that wrist.

That very afternoon, they had Pauline set up for surgery in Green Bay the next day. This presented us with a bit of a problem, because Friday, March 17, was when the taping of the High School Bowl semifinals and final was scheduled for. This would keep John in Marquette until noon, and Pauline needed to be in Green Bay early enough for pre-surgery preparations.

Our good friends, Judy and Jim Quirk, came to the rescue. They drove Pauline to Green Bay in the morning. John left as soon as he was finished with High School Bowl and was there in time for the surgery.

They put in a permanent t-shaped plate to realign the broken bones. They do surgery like this on an outpatient basis nowadays. After Pauline was clearly recovered from the anesthesia, we were free to go. We stayed overnight in a Green Bay motel and drove back to Marquette the next day.

They did not even put a cast on the wrist, just a temporary splint. A week later, Pauline started physical therapy, and the therapist made her a plastic splint held on by velcro straps. After a few weeks of therapy and renewed regular use of the wrist, she is almost as good as new.

It is even hard to find the scar. And there isn’t enough metal there to set off the metal detector at the airport!

John was recognized for 35 years of work at a luncheon last spring. He is pictured here with NMU President, Les Wong, after the recognition luncheon.

One of several mittens the NMU Finn Club made for the NMU Winter Fest was displayed in the library entrance.

Center: Michael Shirtz, L, composed music for chorus and jazz ensemble to celebrate Messiah Lutheran’s 125th anniversary. The May concert included an arrangement by Shirtz of Pauline’s Psalm 100 composed for their 100th anniversary. Pictured with Michael and Pauline are Pastor Nancy Amacher and choir director David Dagenais. In July, his choir led the Messiah congregation in Pauline’s version of Psalm 125. Messiah and St. Mark’s are shared ministry partners.
Raise, Raise the Exponent High!

Last January, John had a math parody song published as a filler in the *American Mathematical Monthly*. This got him going on a kick to write more such parody songs. He now has enough that he is contemplating doing something with them.

The plans include putting together an after-dinner sing-along and offering it to organizers of math meetings. He had a chance to test out the idea at a recent Upper Peninsula math meeting held at Michigan Technological University. Pauline came along as accompanist. It went well, and people seemed to enjoy singing the silly songs. The tunes for his songs range from college fight songs to Broadway show tunes to pop songs to hymns.

Trip to West Was Memorable

Pauline and John travelled to Washington and Oregon this past summer. The main reason was to attend FinnFest USA ’06, a very enjoyable event shared by Astoria, Oregon, and Naselle, Washington on the other side of the Columbia River.

On the way, at the Art Car Parade in Minneapolis, we cheered on Pauline’s brother Gus riding his “Bike de Triomphe.”

We had a chance to visit with Pauline’s relatives who live in Seattle. These include Pauline Fenton Dubois, a second cousin of Pauline’s who grew up with the same first and last names, and her brother, Peter, and their families. John also got to meet with two young mathematicians at Pacific Lutheran University with whom he had been working via the Internet on a joint paper but whom he had never met.

Odds and Ends

- Last spring, Pauline was honored as the Chapter Woman of Distinction by the local chapter of the women in education sorority, Delta Kappa Gamma.

- In August, the ecumenical service at Presque Isle Park, used the Finnish-African Gospel Mass as the liturgy. Pauline of course had a major leadership role. This gave our Methodist, Episcopal, and Presbyterian friends a chance to experience this liturgy which is by now quite familiar to the Lutherans in the area.

- Last winter Pauline and John did a program for the Northern Center for Lifelong Learning on the previous summer’s Finn Grand Fest 2005.

- John and Pauline traveled to Knoxville in August for Mathfest, the Math. Association of America’s summer meeting.

- In February, Pauline and John were given a Distinguished Citizen Award by the Kiwanis Club of Marquette for their work with Finn Grand Fest 2005.

BEFORE: This is what the cottage at Perch Lake looked like in May just after the work had begun. The porch was gone, but not much more.

AFTER: This is in early October. The lighter blocks outline the 16 foot addition. The new space includes a bedroom and bathroom upstairs and family and utility rooms downstairs.