



Arctic Mission Outreach Trust Fund Newsletter

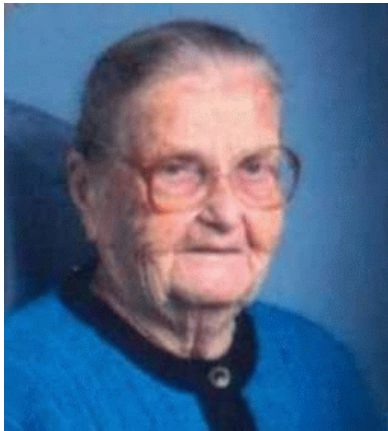
Winter 2007

A Note From David Ellyatt

The following article was read at Tyyne Spillenaar's Funeral. It was our pleasure to visit with her and Grace's family and Dan a few weeks before she went home to be with the Lord.

* * * * *

A Life Well Lived - A Tribute to Tyyne Spillenaar



Tyyne Spillenaar

The most likely person to write a book about, would be my grandfather (Rev. John Spillenaar), whose adventures and audacity took him around the world, but predominantly to the North, to uncharted territory-

meaning no maps, no satellite pictures, no GPS, no listings of settlements, no landing strips, no roads, and archaic communication devices. He loved the thrill and the challenge. Yet, there was a woman by his side who the people of the Far North hardly knew, and the people in the communities where she lived, saw primarily as Grampa's wife.

Who was this woman, Tyyne Nykanen? She was born into very difficult circumstances, and she knew adversity from a young age. However, she learned to be a fighter, to stand strong, to speak her mind and to overcome.

As a young girl, she lived on a large farm in Finland, worked in the fields, and did various other jobs. She once told me of driving a team of horses with a full wagon too fast and of course when she hit a rock dumped the whole load while propelling
(Continued on Page 2)

Eastern Arctic Leaders Conference

It was my pleasure to be one of the featured speakers at the Leaders Conference held in November at the Navigator Inn, Iqaluit, Nunavut. About 35 leaders and spouses were present with guests from the community attending the evening services.

Brother Keith Miner from Steinbach Manitoba joined me and Eva Deer as the principle speakers of the conference. This was our second Inuit Leaders Conference and was held November 2nd through 6th. Workshops were held in the morning and afternoon for the leaders with the evening sessions open to everyone. Special services were also held on Sunday. Themes of the conference included the Prophetic Destiny of the Church, Elders and leaders and other relevant topics for our pastors.

Next years conference will be held in Nunavik.



David at the Keyboard

Ministry Team Expanded

It is good to welcome Andy Koornstra to the Arctic Missions Ministry team. Andy started going north in the 90's and was a member of the Harvest Field



Bobby Deer & Andy Koornstra

Board. He has also served as a member of the Board for the past four years. Andy's ministry has been appreciated by all of us as he has partnered with ministry teams from Singing Waters and joined us at different times with his unique style of ministry that has touched the lives of many of our aboriginal communities both in the south and Canada's far north.

Donations to cover Andy's ministry trips can be made to Arctic Mission Outreach Trust Fund.

Bob and Ellie Muir continue to serve the Lord in Puvirnituk, Nunavik. There have been some additional challenges this year as the enemy has been very active. Both covet your prayers as they stand on the Lord's Word that declares He has overcome the enemy.

A Tribute to Tyyne Spillenaar (Continued)

herself from the wagon. The experience wasn't a horrifying event that scared her from taking the reins of life once again. She laughed as she told me the story, still quite proud of herself.

She loved the land, the open fields, the forests, the lakes, the farm animals, the people, the sauna, the big huge kitchen of the farmhouse and making meals for at least twenty.

By sixteen, she decided she wanted a different life than what she knew and moved to Helsinki dressed in a linen suit that she had made for herself from scratch. She had planted the flax, harvested it, prepared the grain, wove the linen, designed the

pattern and sewed the outfit. What tenacity and ingenuity!

She was a simple country girl with only four years of formal education. She hired herself out as a cook, when she didn't know how to cook. A girl friend coached her along. I don't know if she was able to even read a cookbook. She never did follow a recipe.

She was a beautiful, young, vivacious woman, unafraid of any challenge and able to strongly speak her mind. I don't think she had many suitors because most would have been quite intimidated, but then most wouldn't have interested her either. Nonetheless there was one man whom she knew for about three years who she was quite fond of, however not enough of an attraction to detract from her own agenda. She certainly wouldn't be led by a whim or a fancy, Tyyne was far too practical and rational.

After several years in Helsinki she decided to move on to Canada, where she would start a new life again. She was determined to move on, make changes, and be her own person. She and a girlfriend were scheduled to board ship and go together to Toronto. Her friend cancelled. The story goes that she left Finland alone, arriving in Toronto unable to speak the language, which she never did quite pick up. Later she wrote her boyfriend instructing him to find someone else, she wouldn't be returning.

Tyyne hired out as a housekeeper for wealthy patrons. Her first job offered an unorganized schedule with no predictable routine, which she found intolerable. (I think she quit after 3 days, if she lasted that long). Eventually, she found a family who cared as much for her as she would care for them. She told specifically of a time when the lady of the house insisted Tyyne lay down for an afternoon nap because she looked tired. Obviously that kindness wasn't afforded her often by her remembrance of such a special occasion.

Able to find work quickly although she was new to the city, the country, the language and the culture, this brazen, stylish, plucky beauty began organizing Bible studies among the Finnish people and socializing with the like. She even participated in a contest to swim 10 miles along the shore of Lake Ontario.

A few years later, she moved once again, this time to Kirkland Lake where there was a community of Finnish people she could work amongst. She organized meetings and outreach services. She

bought a house and rented out two rooms. John Spillenaar was one of her renters.

I asked her how she fell in love. She explained that when she came home one afternoon, there was no wood stacked up beside the stove as she obviously expected and she gave John a chiding, I'm sure he never forgot.

Later that evening Tyyne overheard John praying about the incident asking God to help him be more conscientious, at which point her heart softened toward him, feeling regretful of how she yelled, and then began to see him with different eyes thereafter.

John was a dashing young man, full of ambition and promise with well-defined goals. Tyyne was eleven years his senior. Why was Tyyne the woman he fell in love with?

Her innate personality coupled with her journeys and experiences made her into a very strong, intelligent, resilient woman, undaunted by adversity or challenge. She was independent, forthright, self-sufficient and assertive, able not only to take on new experiences but to thrive. Grama's main ambition and drive was to do what she felt led to do for the Lord, holding Bible studies, prayer meetings, passing out tracts, holding services, winning souls, and although she had many other talents and interests, none took precedence over her work for God.

I don't know if John saw his marriage as a business partnership or a deep love and admiration for this fiery woman who was his landlord. Maybe both. However the partnership went extremely well. John worked a variety of jobs to support his wife and growing family. Never-the-less his ambition and desire was to continually go North and preach to the Indians and Inuit. Eventually he went to Flight Training in Chicago and from then on he was gone often, flying north, off on adventure after adventure.

Flying is dangerous. John often wondered if there was enough fuel to get from one settlement to the next, and would he find it in time. There were few reliable maps; the temperature could be minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Snow would blanket lakes, masking whether or not there was ice on which to land. Snow would cover rocks. From a few hundred feet above, in blowing snow, igloos would seem to disappear against the snow covered fields. Landings were treacherous. These were just a few of the dangers Grama would face.

Grama lived with news of Grampa missing, of his plane crashing, of the possibility of his death. Each time he left she never knew if he would return. Her faith remained strong and she endured all those days and nights and months and years while John was gone, raising her children, fixing broken pipes in the dead of winter, repairing the house, feeding and clothing her children using all her resourcefulness. John would bring home freshly killed moose and deer and partridge to fill the freezer while Tyyne brought home fish. Tyyne also picked fruit in season and most notably, blueberries.

As a kid I remember Grama driving down old logging roads, out in the middle of nowhere, quite literally, off to find a good patch of blueberries. Bears were the main concern, especially when my Mom was growing up. At that time bears ranged much further south and were larger in population. Did Tyyne stay close to the car? Did she make sure the children stayed close to her? Did she carry a rifle? No she didn't. I don't think any bear would dare to attack her, mainly because of the severe tongue lashing she would give at even the thought of provocation. Mom told of a time when they did meet up with a mother bear and her cub. All survived.

Grama gave her children independence, freedom and self-reliance without the weight of fear and trepidation. The kids were accustomed to fending for themselves, cooking their own meals, fishing out on the lake, canoeing, walking to town to go to church, which was ten miles away. Regularly they prayed and read the Bible - while Grama was off on her own preaching and ministering in nearby towns and villages.

How could I begin to condense 100 years into such a short briefing? I never met a woman who could make a large steaming hot meal by herself and have all the large pots and pans and dishes cleaned and put away by the time we sat down. She would do it all by herself because anyone in the kitchen was definitely in her way and a nuisance.

She loved beauty, she loved flowers and plants, plenty of food and a lot of company.

Once we were fishing up North on a lake only accessible by air and Grampa told a story. Grama was fishing, the hook caught her scalp as she threw the line out. In trying to pull it out, the hook went deeper and still she persisted in pulling the hook out herself. She healed up.

Tyyne suffered from many ailments over the years. In her headstrong, adamant way she willed herself well, she willed herself strong, she willed herself able, despite her aching legs and shortness of breath.

Her fight for doing what she wanted has continued to this day. We all expected Grama to certainly pass on before Grampa, given their eleven year age difference, but she had every reason to stay. She persisted in living, still inviting people over for dinners, still making bread into her late 90's. She had purpose and resolve to live as long as John was living.

Since the day Grampa passed away, Grama used the same determination she used to live, to will herself gone. The evening after Grampa's funeral, she prayed quite explicitly explaining to God how she wanted to go home to be with John and to be with her Savior. Afterwards I did my best to tell her how much I wanted her to stay here, how she still had a lot to live for, that she meant so much to all of us. No matter, her next prayer said the same thing.

She stopped cooking immediately, stopped visiting, stopped inviting people over, needed more care, and although she still went to church, she stopped the frequency of services she attended. This strong, determined, tenacious woman, in three years has willed herself home - and home she is. And with such a strong desire to be with John, I'm sure she is with him once again. The partnership went extremely well for both.

So she is not gone, nor has she died. She left behind a body which no longer served her purpose. Her spirit remains as steadfast and resolute as the day she was born. I thank God to have known her, to have had her example for such a long time in my life.

She never quit, she never gave up. Her energy always amazed me even into this last year and her command of a situation was even more striking. She took a backseat next to John sometimes, but otherwise she was a woman in charge and she ruled. She had a tough exterior covering her warmth and compassion.

This last year Grama and I were singing "Jesus Loves Me", one of her favorite songs, while Uncle Danny played the piano. Afterward she confessed how she wished she could love as Jesus does. Grama did love and care for all the world she came

in contact with, which is why she sacrificed her own comforts and pleasures to give to others, wanting everyone she met to know of Christ and His love.

May this be a tribute to how much she was loved in return.

Tyyne Nykanen Spillenaar
July 19, 1905 - October 28, 2006

*Written by Nancy R. Oakes, Rose (Spillenaar)
Harmer's daughter.*

* * * * *

Annual Arctic Bible Conference

The annual Bible Conference will be held in Rankin Inlet and hosted by the Glad Tidings Church and pastors Rosemary and Tongola Sandy. This will be our third Bible Conference to be held in the Eastern Arctic region of Nunavut. We have received a donation for Bibles for this conference and will also be forwarding other supplies to help support the conference. Due to the lack of more formal accommodation most delegates coming from outside the community will be staying in local homes. Basic supplies such as toilet paper and Kleenex, food are vary expensive.

In the past Arctic Missions has endeavored to help support the conference in some of these basic areas.

Donations toward the convention costs can be sent to Arctic Missions.

Please be in prayer for the conference. DE

For further information, please call
or write:

**Arctic Missions Outreach
Trust Fund**

1795 Parkhurst Ave.

London, ON N5V 2C4

Telephone (519) 451-7121

e-mail:

david.ellyatt@arcticmissions.com

web site:

www.arcticmissions.com