



4-8 July, 1999 XVI Soroptimist International Convention,
Helsinki, Finland

Arrival in Helsinki

by Kate Moore, Nantwich Club, Cheshire North Wales & Wirral Region, SIGBI

Hi everyone!!

This is a very bleary eyed Kate, awake, just, but definitely up and about on this wonderful, bright, sunny morning in Helsinki.

By the time I had downloaded the messages that came in when I sent out the Convention reports, and cleared a few problems we seem to have on the Chat Line, it was just before 2.00 am :- (Both my room mates (Elizabeth our Club President) and Ruth from Portland were fast asleep - and dare I say, gently snoring. The room was so hot, and regrettably there is no air conditioning that works in this part of this hotel. We are on the front, facing the park and the river, with the Finlandia Hall to the right a short distance away.

Well, with three Soroptimists to get up and ready before 7.00 am breakfast - it was a very early start. I was awake and up at about 5.00 am, and am now ready and organised for the day. It's coming up to 6.20 am - Ruth is getting ready and Elizabeth just went for a shower. You may wonder how consequential this information is <VBG> - let me tell you, I have to move furniture etc. to get at the telephone socket and it is quite a thing to actually move the computer from the dressing table, over to Elizabeth's bed so I can transmit!!!! Last evening Elizabeth and I were in hysterics - we succeeded in doing all this, even taking the wire across a sleeping Ruth - and sent out the Convention reports.

Dear Judy is feeling so poorly, she has a dreadful cold, but refused to miss anything of the opening ceremony because "I am doing a report for the Chat Line!"

All the Chat Line reports from now on will form the main body of a daily newsletter issued to all Convention attendees. Each day, these newsletters will be put on www.sorop.org (the international www site) by Liz Morgan-Lewis. I am going down to assist her, and Alison was editing for her yesterday, and Joc is working away like mad.

My question is, do our Chat Liners want the very full reports our members are actually submitting, or are you happy to download the newsletter from the SI web site? As it is, as long as I can keep going, I'll send whatever I have for you. Hopefully, our members will not be too 'wordy' :-), because some days there will be around 6-8 events to report on.

Quite by chance I have managed to find so many of 'us' - Nancy Hansen, Lisbeth Hass, dear Heidi Konrad, Christin Coleselli, then Audrey Peacock and so many more. Mind you, at the festivities last evening (after the opening ceremony) I joined Carol in wearing our Uncle Sam hats, so had fairly good visibility <gggggg> There are going to be a lot of very confused Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese members who took photos of what they thought was an American

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Soroptimist celebrating the 4th July! I could only get away with it because I informed all non Americans I am an honorary member of NWR with a certificate to prove it.

One of the problems we all suffer from here is the length of time it takes to get fed anywhere! A couple of nights ago it took the hotel around two and a half hours to feed nine at our table, one course and one drink, and the bill took half an hour to arrive! Last night was even worse at a local restaurant, which was why it was nearly 11.00 pm before we got back to the hotel.

So, today is going to be busy. The Friendship Lounge is actually the reception area just outside the upstairs level entry to the Finlandia Hall. I am going to try and be available with the lap top and an overhead projector to display the SI web site, but be assured, if anyone is interested I will have Hendre's site up and the rogues gallery :-)

Also, Fay's large map is prominently displayed right by the same entrance door to the Hall, with a Chat Line poster right next to it. I'm walking around with my cyber friends polo shirt on, with my name in BIG letters right across the back. It also says The Soroptimist Chat Line, List Owner.

It was quite an ordeal to sit through the Board on Friday, not knowing when president Hilary would ask me to speak. It actually came just before coffee on Saturday morning. When I have a few minutes (ha ha) I will type in my report to the Board so you can read it. Until then, bear with me as I do my very best to see a little of the convention, whilst keeping you all part of it too.

Chat to you later tonight.

Love & cyber-hugs