



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

Finland - A Summer's Delight, A Winter's Dream

by *Maria Jose Elias, Lisboa Sete Colinas Club, Portugal Region, SIE*

Dear all,

I returned from Helsinki last night, and I am now writing to tell you that everything has been actually wonderful. At this Convention as a chat liner, I was eager to meet other chat liners as if I was looking for relatives who I had never met before. The Cyber-Breakfast was wonderful and Anu played some piano. We received cyberbadges and put names to faces. Everything along the week developed in a very smooth way and we must thank our Finnish sisters.

Did you know that everyone of us found a pair of hand knitted blue and yellow wool socks inside the bag with the Convention material? And that all these 1800 pairs of socks had been knitted over the last two years by Finnish Seroptimists for the 1800 Convention participants? I think I shall never use them and I must keep them for exhibition. It seems incredible. In the directory of SIE there are 57 registered clubs in Finland. That means a rate of 32 pairs of socks per club. Inside one of my socks, there was a little card saying: 'A friend is someone who makes you feel totally acceptable'. I felt very moved.

At the Convention web site, I saw that lots of news has been included, and it is very interesting to read them now. I think that many chat liners have not yet returned home as the chat line is so silent. My room mate that I met through the chat line, Alison Sutherland, went to Lapland and many others too.

The Finnish Seroptimists published a wonderful book titled 'Finland - A Summer's Delight, A Winter's Dream' - to celebrate the XVI SI Convention in Helsinki, Finland. It represents a joint effort by Seroptimist Clubs throughout Finland to introduce their country to their Seroptimist sisters coming from all over the world. Contributions and illustrations were solicited from all clubs, and clubs wrote about local characteristics and traditions. A full colour 170 page book, where every club wrote two or three pages with wonderful pictures and text about their own region. A very nice idea, and a very pretty book.

I think that our sisters from Finland surpassed all our expectations.

It is about midnight and I have not yet unpacked everything. Lots of things to do. But I begin to become addicted to the chatline.

Cyberhugs to everyone,

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I do hope many of you have now had time to read through the book 'Finland - A Summer's Delight, A Winter's Dream' which came in your Convention bag. It is everything you need to know about Finland, including some nice recipes.

But most important of all. Did you see that the Finnish sisters paid for two books when they were ordering their own copies, so that their guests should receive one as a gift? That is yet another very generous contribution. The production costs must have been considerable and I will certainly treasure my copy. It is beautiful.

-- *Fay Cori, Cardigan Club, Wales South Region, SIGBI*