



Lady's Finnish-style portraits were hung on poles painted to look like birches, ubiquitous in Finland.



A young Lady with her dad, Esa Kaukinen, who immigrated to New York from his native Karelia.



More than 400 people packed the Vapriikki Museum Thursday, March 17, for the "Lady of Style" opening.

Lady of FINLAND

Lady Ostapeck, the Fly Creek portraitist now living at Oneonta's Nader Towers, is just back from Finland, where 60-by 20-inch blowups of her photos and 100 costumes from her extensive collection are on view at the Vapriikki Museum in Tampere through March 18, 2012.



Barbara Lyon photos for AllOTSEGO.life

JUST PUBLISHED



Back from Finland, Lady Ostapeck has just published "Somewhere In Time," available locally at Augur's Books in Cooperstown and the Green Toad Bookstore in Oneonta. Touted as the first in a series, it includes 50 portraits, many of people you might recognize.

& They Do Adore Photographer At Tampere's Vapriikki Museum

By JIM KEVLIN

You may know the story of Lady Ostapeck's narrow escape while still in the cradle.

It was 1919. The baby's mother had died in childbirth in Brooklyn, N.Y., and she had been sent to live with an aunt in a Finnish community in rural Brooklyn, Conn.

One day, a farmer name Koski emerged from his house with a hatchet in his hand, turned left and butchered everyone in the next five houses, hanging himself in the barn at the end.

If he had turned right, Baby Ostapeck would be one of his first victims.

The baby was returned to Brooklyn, where she was taken in by Mama Jansson, who lived in Edgewater, N.J.

Mama's three young children and her husband had died, Lady related in an interview the other day, wearing a black sombrero and sipping coffee from a paper cup. "I got all the love she would have given her babies - all of it," she said matter-of-factly.

Mama Jansson's love and sincerity was such that girls contemplating suicide would cross the Hudson River for her counseling. Not a one went through with it, Lady said.

As it happens, she had just returned from Finland, where more

Please See LADY, B2



Lady climbed narrow steps to a turret on top of the Vapriikki complex for a view of Tampere's two lakes. A curator accompanied her.



The entrance to the complex that contains the Vapriikki, which means "factory" in Finnish.

Retirees Remain At Home

You Can Renovate For The Longterm

ARA Content

Because so many Americans are aging in place, they're looking for ways to make their homes safe and comfortable for the long term. With just a few modifications, retired couples can make their homes perfect sanctuaries for their golden years. Here are some modification ideas to help you keep your heart right at home:

- Stay connected.

There are video/television systems and services available that allow you to chat with a person from a care program while sitting at your dining room table. Program staff can also monitor your house and contact a relative or emergency service if they notice you haven't moved in awhile.

- Independence is also very important for seniors, and this is especially true in the bathroom. Climbing over a bathtub wall becomes more difficult as people age, and can also make the bathroom very dangerous for slips and falls. Walk-in baths are one option. Because the door opens and seals shut, this walk-in bath allows you to sit down prior to running any water, which can help prevent a slip or fall. Hydrotherapy jets also add additional health benefits, so you can comfortably soak as long as you want.

- Car manufacturers are adapting vehicles to accommodate seniors with such options as seats that swivel to face out the door so you can sit down or stand up easily and not have to bend down at an angle to climb into the seat. Other available adapters are dashboards that push back until the driver is in the seat and ready to start the car, buttons to control the radio and temperature on the steering wheel, and sliding cabinets that help a person load items into the trunk - and get them out easier.

Vapriikki Museum Shows Lady's Costumes

LADY/From B1
 than 400 people crowded into the Vapriikki Museum in Tampere, the country's third-largest city, for the opening of "A Lady of Style: Lady Ostapeck's American Costumes & Portraits."

In her speech opening night, on the podium with the Finnish minister of culture and tourism, Lady Ostapeck gave credit to Mama Jansson for everything that has happened to her in the 90+ years since.

Did you know Lady Ostapeck was originally a seamstress, trained at the Fashion Institute of Technology?

By the time she arrived at her Greek revival cottage in Fly Creek a half century ago – she lived there until moving to Oneonta's Nader Towers two years ago – and began her career as a portraitist with an unusual muse, she had already collected dozens of vintage costumes.

She continued to do so, at thrift shops and auctions, and as she produced hundreds of photo portraits of subjects in vintage clothing, her costume collection – it includes two pith helmets



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Lady and her Fly Creek pal and neighbor, Barbara Lyon.

– grew into the hundreds of examples as well.

Periodically, Lady has been invited to display her photos in Finland, and 10 years ago she met Marketa Frank, now a curator at the

Vapriikki, who was interested in antique clothing.

One thing led to another, and last summer a team from the museum visited the Fly Creek Valley cottage, where it identified more than 100 gowns and other articles from Lady's collection.

When packed, Lady said, the clothes filled 19 of those movers' wardrobes. "Next year," said Lady, "they'll be getting another set."

Lady's promoter and friend Nick Argyros, director of the Photo Center of the Capital District in Troy, had collaborated with Marketa Frank in organizing the exhibit and intended to accompany the photographer.

But, just before they were to depart in mid-March, he suffered a heart attack and underwent a triple bypass. Lady's Fly Creek neighbor,

Barbara Lyon, was recruited for the task and the two departed from JFK Sunday, March 13, aboard a Finnair flight, courtesy of the Vapriikki.

"Non-stop to Helsinki," said Barbara. "We flew Please See *LADY*, B3



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Exhibit 'High Point Of My Life,' Lady Tells Her Friend



The portrait of Cooperstown's Julie Barnes is among those at the Vapriikki.

LADY/From B2
 over the Arctic Circle, looking down on glaciers and ice-blue rivers. It was incredible. It reminded me of 'Dr. Zhivago'."

Met at the airport, the two were driven the two hours to Tampere – a metropolitan area of 300,000 known as "The Manchester of Finland" – and immediately went to the museum.

It was "a wonderful factory building on the river," the Tammerkoski channel that connects the city's two lakes, Näsijärvi and Pyhäjärvi.

The exhibit included most of the clothing, examples of Lady's photos, blown up to 16- by 20-inch sizes, and detailed texts of

her life and work. "We spent every day at the museum," said Lyon.



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Lady with promoter and friend Nick Agyros.

"She had interviews every day. There were ones that weren't planned, and those that were planned."

One morning at breakfast, the waitress approached with a copy of Aamulehti, the daily paper. "This is you, isn't it?" she asked, holding up the front page of the feature section, dedicated completely to Lady's exhibit.

Then came the big night. The museum's reception area was filled. Champagne all around. Finland's minister of culture and tourism was there. Also a cousin of Lady's who was a member of the Finnish parliament, and a nephew who was Finnair's director of marketing.

Lady had had a rough winter. She had been hospitalized twice over Christmas, then had spent time in rehabilitation at Otsego Manor.

"All I want is to go to Finland, and then I can



Barbara Lyon for *All*OTSEGO.life

"A Lady of Style" has more than 100 of Lady's gowns on display, accompanied by 16- by 20-inch images of her portraits.

die," she told Barbara.

"After the reception," her friend recalled, "she said, 'This is the highpoint of my whole life. I can die now.'"

If you die in Finland, would you want to be buried here? asked Barbara. In addition to wanting to know Lady's wishes, she

was pondering the logistics of transporting her back to the States.

"No, no," she said in that abruptly frank way those who know her would recognize. "I have a plot in Fly Creek. You have to bring me back."

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