

Charter member reminisces

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Reino (Rey) Mustonen, the oldest living member of the Detroit Finnish Cooperative Summer Camp Association, known simply as Finn Camp, was 100 years old on May 14, 2015. Rey became a Finn Camp member in 1941. Throughout those years he was always an active participant in the life of the association. He only recently retired as a member of the Future Planning Committee, having joined that group in 1943.

During his working years, Rey designed special machines at a machine tool manufacturer, from 1938 to 1954. He then worked at the GM Technical Center until retirement in 1974. At GM he started as a project engineer in the mechanical engineering department, finally advancing to the head of that department as process staff engineer. That unit's mission was to develop new processes and machines for use by the various GM divisions in their manufacturing of products.

Among Rey's hobbies have been designing and making gadgets for special uses, such as a fold-up handicapped-access ramp to cover the steps down into the Finn Camp's Clubroom, and architectural design—for the sauna, the Clubroom kitchen, public bath rooms and dance hall stage, among other such projects. He also continues to enjoy reading and spectator sports and playing golf at the local Hickory Hill nine-hole public course.

Along with Rey, the Mustonen family includes the following current members of Finn Camp: Gary Mustonen (son), Norma ("Sam") Dernberger (daughter), Jody Dernberger (granddaughter) and Kristen Tury (granddaughter) and their families.

Past Finn Camp members include charter members August and Fanni Mustonen and Lois Mustonen.

Rey's memories of the early days around Finn Camp were still vivid in a recent interview. He recalled camping out in a family pup tent on the bumpy ground as far back as 1926. When the summer heat became unbearable inside, with three kids in one tent, they would raise the bottom flaps of the tent to let air in—until the mosquitoes that also came in became worse than the heat. At another time, Rey and a brother *each* caught the same 36-inch pike in Loon Lake, one off one side of the boat, the other from the opposite side! A huge tug-of-war ensued until they figured out that they were trying to reel in each other. Other childhood activities were playing fox-and-hounds (tracking down a set of trails of shredded paper left by a "fox"), seeing who could eat the most cakes of shredded wheat (the record still stands, at 12 ½ cakes) and, by the adults, seeing who could stay in the sauna the longest: the winner was declared the King of Finland.

Swimming at Sun Lake was always a mainstay activity. At one time the original four-story diving tower became so overloaded with swimmers that it slowly leaned over into the water, but no injuries were sustained. Milk was obtained not by driving to the convenience store but by rowing across Loon Lake to the Hopkins farm, now a development.

Upon the occasion of Rey's 100th birthday, last May, the local golf course gave him free use of a golf cart and free greens fees for the next year. Rey, hale and hearty, is hoping that they will extend those privileges into his 101st year.