

# FINMUN

## Finnish Model United Nations

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2009

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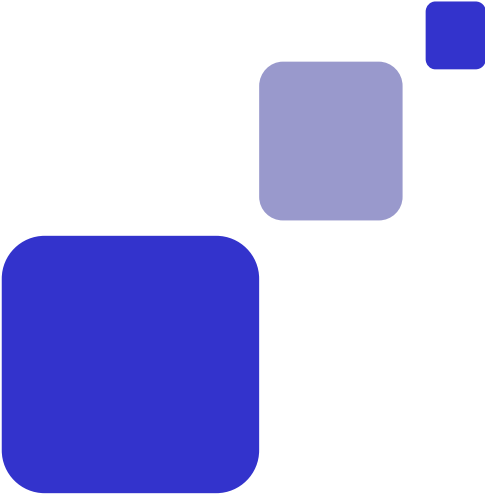
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## FinMUN board wishes everyone a pleasant Christmas and a happy New Year!

We have reached the end of yet another FinMUN year. During the Fall, a set of events such as UN Edutainment seminars, EduMUN weekend, Christmas Party and our 5th Anniversary party attracted a great number of great people. We would like to thank everyone who participated in our events! Let's keep in touch!

Yet the thing giving us real thrills is the gathering of the Secretariat for FINMUN 2010. With new reinforcements, our team is now keen on brain-storming, evaluating and putting new ideas to practice for the coming conference. Next year will be challenging, yet extremely rewarding for us taking along in making next year's conference even better than the last ones!



FinMUN brings together students to organize and participate in Model United Nations (MUN) seminars. Members debate issues on the UN and global agenda and develop their understanding of global politics and Finnish foreign policy. Our work is international, but activities are mostly based in Helsinki. The working language is English.

## EDUMUN2009 *Written by: Ilari Aula*

I have to admit that it came as a bit of surprise. After seeing all the great pictures of the mansion, I was prepared for a huge turn-off when forced face to face with reality. It all seemed just too good to me and, as we Finns are good in reminding ourselves, there's nothing wrong with healthy pessimism. My initial stance wasn't much brightened as we struggled towards Sammatti, taking a series of wrong turns, discovering dead ends and having constantly dense rain darkening the initially picturesque landscape around us.

Yet, upon taking the final turn and catching the first glimpse of the charmingly aged building, its large courtyard and, especially, the traditional lakeside sauna beckoning nearby, the weekend suddenly appeared a way better as it first had been.

We had gathered to Sammatti for EDUMUN, an educational weekend aimed at introducing new victims to the MUN world and the peculiar society which we're part of. During the intensive two-days seminar, the aim was to introduce an institution known as the United Nations, get a touch into this modelling activities by running through the theory and rules of the actual simulations and, finally, put all the things we had learnt into practice by solving a looming international crisis. Not to forget all the fun introductory games, which were necessary in a group of thirty not knowing each other beforehand, common lunches à la Finnish student cuisine and a mind blowingly relaxing sauna experience in the evening. It was going to be intense.

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Yet with a bunch of participants from different countries backgrounds there was a great atmosphere already in the beginning. The ice was soon broken as we started whacking each other with newspapers. The names really got hammered through, and on my behalf, I haven't come up with a better way to get to know each other than a bit of old-school fun&violence together.

It was also delighting to notice that the range of study backgrounds was wide: outside the inevitable and strong representation of students of political science and other diplomat wannabes, our group included also prospective doctors, teachers and economists. Just as it should be; world politics concerns everyone.

The actual process of indoctrination & manipulation into UN affairs started already before the first lunch.

As some members of FinMUN society got to apply their wealth of knowledge in the form of giving the lectures, I, putting my special skills for the common use, focused on preparing the lakeside sauna for the evening. A short, yet heated discussion of principles ensued, and its escalation into full conflict was avoided only through a series of expert diplomacy and adaptive negotiation methods.

The reason for this fight of wills was, of course, the grave question of whether to use a sauna stove heated by wood or electronics. Guided by inevitable restrictions on logistics and schedule, we naturally came into mutual agreement which, as we shall see, turned out functional.

As evening turned to dusk and the mind-blowing stream of information on theory and Rules of Procedure was gradually quenching down, it was time for the participants to apply all that had been learnt into reality - or into something resembling it, anyway.

The participants were herded towards the negotiation table, since yet another crisis was threatening the world: a conflict on a small patch of territory between Nigeria and Cameroon. Behold the marvels and misdeeds of gravest manner that were so awe-inspiringly described in the opening speeches of the delegates! Such a mixture of eloquence and fresh idealism was sure to bring a sane resolution for the anxious mankind.

Near Lohilampi mansion, as the public eye was turned on the closed doors of the negotiation room, behind which those bright minds, their individual thoughts so unselfishly combined for the common good, were bravely working in unison, a task of another kind was taken up. Through united efforts of several board members we succeeded in lighting the fire under the water boiler. So another looming crisis was avoided; could there be more miserable a fate than a relaxing sauna session ending up in tears because of a lack of warm water for washing?

As it appeared, the battle fought on many levels was on the turn of its tide; as the doors of the negotiation rooms opened and a flock of weary young diplomats staggered out towards the dining table, everything was set for a relaxing evening.

Nothing could've more rewarded the strained bodies of our diplomatic combatants than a tasty dinner with a subsequent dash into the heart of Finnish culture - sauna. As I admitted before, the decision concerning the methods of warming up the sauna hadn't been done without difficulties. Yet the conclusion we had come up with, to use an electronically heated sauna stove, that is, satisfied the needs of all minds - except those of sauna veterans used to extremities of infernal heat and humidity.

Be it as it may, the temperature soothed our troubled international minds and, combined with a short swim in the chilly, dark lake and company of extraordinary gentlemen and -women, the excursion to sauna surely met the promises that had been given on first sight.

Evening was followed by a night which included a sprawl of chatter, games and various festivities. Some of them contain elements only a mind seasoned through numerous diplomatic endeavours is capable of digesting. In our children-friendly publication here it is not appropriate to venture into too much details rather than highlight the main events which illuminate the nature of the following day.

Waking up was gradual. Breakfast was heavenly. Lectures were tiring. Negotiations were brutal but, thanks to the vigour of our delegates, the world was saved. I cleaned up the sauna, which turned out to be an easier task than was expected - traces of previous night were surprisingly smoothly removed. In the afternoon our brave delegates were engaged in a laid-back game of UN knowledge. This was followed by a spontaneous, yet absolutely delightful piano concert. And didn't our cup of musical ecstasy get filled to the brim as we watched a flock of swans engage in an eerie chorus on the lake. Just like we, they were planning to leave.

Having spent a memorable weekend together, we had come to consensus that the time in Lohilampi hadn't been in vain. Our knowledge on UN and simulations had been given yet another boost while having jolly good time together at the same time.

After the farewells and promises of meetings in the near future, as we packed ourselves into cars, there was only one tiny concern which still lingered in my otherwise numb and resolved mind. How easily could a weekend which had been filled with educative programme as well actions truly enhancing *sprit de corps*, let itself be folded into a description of adequately all-embracing and amiable nature?