



Uutiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

February/Helmikuu 2014

Come to Our Annual *Laskiainen* Celebration!

Are you looking for a mini warm-up that will make you feel good from head to toe? Then join us on Friday, February 21, for FACA's annual *Laskiainen* celebration. As we enjoy our traditional hot bowl of pea soup while socializing with friends and guests, we will be entertained by Finnish music (CDs/tapes) guaranteed to warm the "tapping" toes.

Of course, for those who enjoy the cold and wish to rejuvenate your inner Finn, you can follow the traditional *Laskiainen* recreation of sledding earlier in the day and then joining us for pea soup. The FACA Board members will supply the *bernekeitto* (pea soup) and, as usual, there will be plenty of *hyvää kahvia!*

Please bring one of the following dishes to share:
If your last name begins with A-F, bring a salad.
If your last name begins with G-K, bring a dessert.
If your last name begins with L-R, bring some bread.
If your last name begins with S-Z, bring an appetizer or side dish to accompany the soup.



During dessert, listen to some *Laskiainen* history. Then the winner of the 2013 Sauna Bucket Award will be announced. This award honors a FACA member who has made a significant contribution to FACA and the Twin Cities Finnish community.

Program In Brief

***Laskiainen* Celebration Potluck**

February 21, 7:30 p.m.
International Institute
1694 Como Ave., St. Paul
If you need transportation, call

Marianne Wargelin
(612) 374-2718

Come celebrate and "*liukasta laskiaista!*" ("have a slippery sliding day!")

Brief History

The origins of *Laskiainen* date back to pre-Christian times, and its many customs rise from layers of history and many regions of Finland. *Laskiainen* (meaning "sliding down") was originally a flax festival. Because of its great importance, much folklore evolved around the spinning of linen. With the coming of Christianity to Finland, *Laskiainen* became generally associated with Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, and signaled the beginning of Lent.

Continued on pg. 2

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President's Message

By *Bud Berry*

In January, we enjoyed Harvey Barberg's program on Finnish American history in the Cokato area. Harvey's great-grandfather settled in the Cokato area in 1865, and the Barbergs now live on the ancestral farm. I was impressed by how effectively Harvey used PowerPoint to illustrate the program, which covered 1865 to the present.



The February 21 program is our *Laskiainen* celebration. This means we will celebrate by eating and talking. Each board member will bring a pot of the traditional pea soup. Check page one to see what you should bring. The business program will be short so that we can get right to the eating and talking. At about 8:45 p.m., we will have a short ceremony to present the sauna bucket to an outstanding FACA volunteer, as we do each year.

Cover, cont.

Laskiainen marked the end of the spinning (and knitting) season. It also marked the beginning of the season of light and the time to begin weaving. Since spinning was forbidden during Lent, the spinning wheels had to be cleaned and put away as an indicator that spinning was over for that winter. With the anticipation of spring, thoughts turned to the planting of crops.

Sliding was an important part of the linen ritual. It was believed that the farther your toboggan flew, the taller your flax would grow and the longer your woven linens would be. While sliding, people would shout out rhymes calling for long linens. They also had special cries for other crops, such as peas, cabbages, potatoes, turnips and rutabagas. If your toboggan capsized, the summer's flax crop would be flattened.

Laskiainen was also known as *Rasvatiistai* (or Fat Tuesday). Many foods rich with fat were eaten. Eating a lot of bacon would make the flax grow tall. Serving your guests bread with plenty of fat would insure that your flax would be disease-free. Fat was also used to grease the sled runners to make them travel farther.

Web resources about *Laskiainen*

Here are Janie Ahola's sources on *Laskiainen*:

finlandtaste.blogspot.com/2011/01/shrovetide-sliding-day.html
sainturho.com/laskiainen/2004/04lask1.htm
ashleyschulman.blog.com/2013/02/12/laskiaispulla-for-finnish-laskiainen/
riittalicious.blogspot.com/2012/02/it-is-time-for-laskiainen.html
www.hometownfocus.us/news/2012-01-27/Features/Laskiainen_festival_celebrates_75_years.html

Board Notes

By Ruth Erkkila



L-R: Bud Berry, Edith Boos, Ruth Erkkila, Janie Ahola, Richard Harju, John Rova.

The FACA Board met January 14, at the Ramsey County Library in Roseville. All members were present.

The meeting was called to order by President Bud Berry at 6:40 p.m. The agenda was adopted and the secretary's minutes and treasurer's report were approved.

President's report: The Hill family of Park Rapids will be managing the Finnish Café at the Festival of Nations.

Vice president's report: Janie Ahola reported that Harvey Barberg will speak about the Finnish settlement in Cokato at the Friday program. The February program will be a *Laskiainen* celebration. The programs for the rest of the year are set.

Hospitality chair report: Richard Harju said hosts for the January meeting are Dan Salin, Delores Salin and Kathy Jackson.

Old business: *Joulu, the Christmas celebration*, had an attendance of 194 at the buffet and many more overall, slightly down from last year. John Rova volunteered to attend meetings for next year.

The Sauna Bucket awardee was selected from several nominees. The award will be presented at the February program.

Janie is looking for volunteers to help with the cultural exhibit at the Festival of Nations. The Festival's theme of *Peace among the People*, and she would like to present something about the Peace Builders' program in the Finnish schools. A form must be filed with the Festival of Nations at a meeting Feb. 9. Janie and Bud will attend.

New business: Edith Boos presented anticipated

expenses and income from membership fees for the 2014 budget. Income from donations for lunch and sales of materials at the monthly programs is not included. More discussion to follow.

A request from Hjelmkomst was received to again contribute a FACA membership to the fundraising auction at the Nordic Gala, held to support the Hjelmkomst Festival in June in Fargo-Moorhead. Edith made a motion that we contribute this membership, seconded by Richard Harju. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

The next Board Meeting will be Tuesday February 18 at 6:30 p.m., Board Room, Ramsey County Library, Roseville.

Finnish Language Study Opportunity, July 27–August 2, 2014

SISU (*Suomen Innokkaat SISUkkaat Ulkosuomalaiset*) is offering its tenth Finnish Language & Culture Seminar at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. The seminar is a one-week course of Finnish language study (25-30 hours at three levels) directed by teachers Sirpa Tuomainen, Eija Ojala and Johanna Hietikko Tigert.

Marja Kaisla, concert pianist, Finlandia Foundation Performer of the Year, will make a presentation at this year's seminar.

SISU is an independent, nonprofit organization formed in 1996 to foster study of Finnish language, heritage and culture. Its primary activity is to offer biennial Finnish language and culture seminars. Membership and/or participation in seminars is open to all interested adults. Current officers (elected volunteers) are Marie Godell Fowler, President and Treasurer; Ruthann Swanson, Vice-President; and Kathleen Ristinen, Secretary.

The seminar fee is \$425 plus \$20 SISU membership; on-campus housing including food service is \$300 (single room supplement: \$200).

Registration deposits are due before April 30, 2014. For more information and registration forms, please contact: Kathleen Ristinen, Secretary: kaisa@eurekanet.com or 740-592-1157. Visit and join our Facebook group, SISU Finnish Language & Culture Seminar.

Meet the New Leadership at Finnish Café!

This year the Finnish Café at the Festival of Nations will be under the direction of Kathryn Hill and her parents, Burt and Renee. For the last several years, FACA has happily sponsored the Hills' business, Irene's Favorite Things, in the bazaar at the Festival. Kathryn has a background in things Finnish, retail, fair and food, and she has a lot of energy, as you will see below. We asked her the following questions:

Tell us about Irene's Favorite Things.

"My grandparents, Floyd and Irene Harvala, started the store in 1986 (the year I was born). They were operating an appliance store, Harvala Appliance, at the time; and Floyd decided Irene needed a fun store. My parents, Burt and Renee Hill, now own and operate Harvala Appliance. I took over Irene's Favorite Things in August of 2008. I have been traveling to festivals since I was 14 years old (14 years ago!). We have been all over the country selling at FinnFest— in places like San Diego, CA; Naselle, WA; Tuscon, AZ; Upper peninsula Michigan; Florida; Duluth; Minneapolis. We also have booths at Hostfest in Minot, Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival in Moorhead, *Laskiainen* in Palo; and we also go to Embarrass a couple times a summer. It is usually Burt, Renee and me selling at these events and we love it. Talking to and meeting new people is amazing!"

Where did your immigrant ancestors come from?

"All of my ancestors came from Finland. Some of the places were: Töysä, Wuorinmaa, Karelia (escaped during the time of war) and Typpökylä. I have actually never been to Finland—I would really like to go someday when the time is right!"

What do you do when you aren't busy with Irene's Favorite Things?

"I work at Papa Murphy's making pizza. I am part of a 4-H club; and during every meeting, I do a fun learning activity with the second graders. I also volunteer on the Hubbard County Fair Board, planning and prepping all year round. During the five days of the Fair, I serve in the ice cream stand. It gets really hot but it's a lot of fun. I am Secretary of the Minnesota Finnish American Historical Society State Chapter. I help out with the Minnesota Finnish American Historical Society—Wolf Lake Chapter at the Friendship

Dinner, and I flip pancakes at their fundraising pancake breakfast. Other than all that, I like to relax at home in the evening."

Have you done anything like the Café before?

"As I have mentioned, I work in the ice cream stand at the County Fair, mostly taking orders, but also making the orders. I flip pancakes for the Historical Society's pancake breakfast, where we serve about 120 people in a few morning hours. I can use my Papa Murphy's experience and my work with the Finnish American organizations in the Café and make it as successful as the previous years. I look forward to working with all the FACA volunteers!"

When will you be asking for volunteer help from FACA members?

"In March or April, so keep your calendars open."



L to R: Kathryn, Renee, Burt Hill.

Another Wild Hockey Event! See Mar. 11 in the Calendar.



Conversational Finnish Class

Tuesdays, 4:00-5:25 p.m.

St. Anthony Library

Corner of Como and Carter Ave.

St. Paul

Everyone is welcome.

For more information, please call
Urho Rahkola at (651) 429-3319

Introducing Ari-Matti Korvola, FACC-MN Intern

The Finnish American Chamber of Commerce-MN (FACC-MN) is pleased to introduce Ari-Matti Korvola. He will be here this spring as part of his study year abroad from the Seinajoki School of Applied Sciences, Business School. Ari-Matti's studies are in International Business. He spent the fall months of 2013 in St. Louis, MO, and will be visiting us until mid-April 2014.



Ari-Matti will be helping the FACC-MN with our communications and with broadening our connections with local chambers in Minnesota and in Finland. He will also familiarize himself with the businesses of our local members and help organize our events. One of his focus areas is to coordinate with FinnFest USA and help organize a Business Forum next August.

Thank You to Joulu Volunteers

From Dan Salin

The second annual *Joulu—Magical Finnish Christmas* event was held on December 14, 2013, and was another successful celebration of the Finnish community coming together to showcase a Finnish Christmas.

I would like to give a big *kiitoksia paljon* to the following people who volunteered their time and energy to help with this celebration: Kathy Chambless, Marlene Banttari, Maria Dewees, Ruth Erkkila, Linda Davis, Bob and Merryalice Jones, Richard Harju, Gil and Dawn Kinnunen, Kaarina Kotkavuori, Johanna Lorbach, Urho and Pam Rahkola, Al and Betsey Norgard, Delores Salin, Marianne Wargelin, Jouko Sipilä. *KIITOS!*

Tell Us about a Special Place in Finland

Have you traveled in Finland? Want to travel in Finland? Share your advice or dream! For a story in *Utiset* later in the spring, please write a paragraph about what you particularly remember or what you want to see or experience. Don't work too hard or think too long on this—the first thing that pops in your mind is exactly what we want. Send to faceditor@gmail.com.

In Memoriam

We note the passing of Lillian S. (Dormanen) Niskanen in January. Lillian is the mother of a large family, including Floyd Niskanen, who many of us know. Her funeral was held on Saturday January 11 at Plymouth Apostolic Lutheran Church, Plymouth. Interment was in Redeye Cemetery, rural Sebeka.

She was preceded in death by husband, Arnold; two brothers and five sisters. Survived by children, Shirley Johnson, Stanley (Carol), Russ (Joan), Floyd, Jim (Sharon), Sharon Emery and Eldon; 23 grandchildren; 52 great-grandchildren; 2 great-great-grandchildren; brother, Edward Dormanen; numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

Memorials preferred to Plymouth Apostolic Lutheran Church, 11015 County Road 15, Plymouth.

Northern Lights Film Festival Theme "Fire and Ice"

The Nordic Lights Film Festival - Twin Cities, February 28 to March 6, will highlight contemporary cinemas of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and support Minnesota's historic Scandinavian ties while giving a modern look into new aspects of Nordic cultures. The Opening Night Talk will take place on Friday, February 28 at 7:15, free with a purchase of a ticket to any film, on a first-come first-serve basis.

Offerings include three Finnish films. For complete descriptions of films and to buy tickets, see: mspfilmsociety.org/content/2014-nordic-lights-film-festival#above

FACA Membership

A one-year membership provides you with nine issues of this newsletter, plus other benefits, for \$25. To subscribe or renew, complete this form and mail with your check to FACA, P.O. Box 580708, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708. (Check mailing label for membership expiration date.)

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

January Program Recap

By Janie Abola

Pioneers with *sisa*, hewn log cabins and saunas, churches, a new way of life, a one-room school house, Temperance Hall, and a deed signed by Ulysses S. Grant—Harvey Barberg introduced us to 150 years of Cokato history at the January meeting. Harvey is an active member and President of the Cokato Finnish American Historical Society, and he is devoted to preserving the history of the early Finnish settlers.

Harvey began with a map of the Tornio River Valley located just below the Arctic Circle, with Sweden on the left side of the border and Finland on the right. This is the area from which Isak Barba (Barberg) and his family migrated to North America in search of a new beginning.

The first settlers were Elias Peltopera, Mathias Karjenaho, Olaf Westerberg and John Viinikka, who walked from Minneapolis through the “big woods” to the shore of Cokato Lake. Each man staked out a claim in Section 10 of Cokato Township. In 1866, Isak Barba, his wife Eva and son Carl left the Tornio River Valley when they learned that free land was available in North America. When the Barbas and other families arrived, they claimed land in Section 18 of Cokato Township. Due to the distance between the two sections, a road (now Wright County Road 100) was made.

The first permanent log cabin was built on the Elias Peltopera land in 1866. The 10'x12' structure provided shelter for the four pioneers and others until their cabins could be built. During one winter, it was home to 10+ people. In 1868, the *savu sauna* (smoke sauna) was built. It was used by three Finnish families (the Barbergs, Selvalas and Salmonsons) and is considered the oldest Finnish immigrant sauna in North America. When the boundary between the two settlements turned into a road, the sauna ended up on private land close to the middle point. Passers-by saw naked Finns cooling themselves off, were offended and took action. The village authorities ordered the sauna removed from the road. The Finnish landowner filed a law suit in Cokato and won. The village had to pay \$30 in damages and \$40 for moving the building.

The early Finns were religious people and felt a need for spiritual leadership. The first recorded church services were held in Cokato at the Ongamo cabin in 1868. Isak Barba led the services, reading prayers and sermons by Lars

Laestadius. Isak continued to serve as lay pastor until his death in 1883. In 1872, the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Congregation of Cokato was organized. In 1887, a second church was built in French Lake, the Crow River Apostolic Lutheran Church of French Lake (a.k.a. the Riverside Church or the "Tin Church"), because many families had moved to the French Lake and Albion areas and needed a meeting house nearer their homes.

After the building of a rail station, more settlers began arriving in 1869. Businesses sprang up to serve them, including hotels, general stores, saloons, blacksmith shops and a post office. In 1900, the first rural mail carrier was hired in the county. In 1904, the Cokato Canning Company was started.

Temperance school, the first public school (teaching in English), was started in 1891. On Saturdays and during the summer months, the Finnish language was taught at the school. There were 74 students, ages 5–19, in grades 1–8 in the one-room structure. In 1921, this building was destroyed by fire. A new school was built and continued in use until 1971.

In 1896, Temperance Hall was built. It is one of the oldest functioning temperance halls and has an auditorium with a full stage. Its purpose was to provide recreation for the Finns other than alcohol. Members made vows to abstain from alcohol consumption. Temperance Hall provided opportunities to socialize and served as the recreational center for the entire area. An athletic club was started in 1910, which included a boxing and wrestling ring. Hooks were mounted to the ceiling for gymnastics.

The Cokato Finnish-American Historical Society (CFAHS) was started in 1939. To preserve early Finnish traditions and customs, society members continue to gather historical material and articles used by the Finnish pioneers. Temperance Corner is a historical park in honor of the early Finnish pioneers, featuring the Pioneer Memorial monument (1949), a log cabin and the *savu sauna* (1970s), and Lee School (1999). Temperance Hall itself is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Harvey concluded his fine presentation by telling us about the May 24th commemorative program in Cokato, celebrating the 150 years of modern Finnish immigration and the opening of FinnFest 2014.

Pieniä Paloja

- Servers at the January program were Kathy Jackson and Delores and Dan Salin. *Kiitos!*
- Lapland's log villas are gathering dust. If you have dreamt of having your own lofty log villa next to a ski center in Northern Finland, now may be the time to act, as companies are scrambling to sell their holiday properties. Built near ski centers in the 1970s and 1980s, the once-luxurious log castles have become inevitably old-fashioned. *Helsinki Times*
- The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions and the Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees have shot down the proposal by Sture Fjäder, the chairperson of the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff (Akava), to cut income tax rates. Fjäder suggested in *Helsingin Sanomat* that by cutting income tax rates it could be possible to promote purchasing power and even to create jobs, especially in the service sector. *Helsinki Times*
- A three-day postal delivery schedule looms in Finland. Shock was apparent on the faces of postmen in Kallio, Helsinki, when they heard about the redundancy plans announced by Itella. "They are preparing for a situation looming ten years ahead, many years in advance," a postman said gloomily. The postmen were only willing to comment on the news anonymously.
- Architectural competition for Guggenheim Helsinki to begin this spring. One of the most disputed museum projects in Finland, the Guggenheim museum, inched toward realization. The Helsinki City Board voted 10–5 in favor of reserving a plot in Eteläsätama (South Harbor) for the architectural competition.
- And from the *New York Times*, a documentary examining the lives of reindeer herders in Finnish Lapland opened with a Critics' Pick review. *Aatsinki: The Story of Arctic Cowboys* looks at a year in the lives of two brothers, Arne and Lasse Aatsinki. "This challenging and mesmerizing documentary captures horror and joy with the same gorgeous dispassion."

Welcome New Members!
Constance Makela, Eagan
Annette Pettit, Osseo

Tervetuloa!

Additional Calendar Items from page 8

- Feb. 25** March *Untiset* deadline. **Note the early (Wednesday) deadline**, faceeditor@gmail.com
- Feb. 28 to Mar. 6** Nordic Lights Film Festival. St. Anthony Main Theater, Minneapolis. Includes three Finnish films this year. For more information: mspfilmsociety.org/content/2014-nordic-lights-film-festival#above
- Mar. 11** Let's Play Hockey—Wild vs. Edmonton. Excel Energy Center, St. Paul. A joint event with the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish Chambers. Tickets are available at Eventbrite. www.eventbrite.com/e/nordic-chamber-event-wild-vs-edmonton-march-11-2014-tickets-9633218215
- Mar. 13 to 15** Finnish passport machine in Minneapolis. 2429 Girard Avenue S. Minneapolis. More information: K. Marianne Wargelin, Honorary Consul for the Republic of Finland, (612) 374-2718, kmwargelin@comcast.net
- Mar. 14** Finn Hall at Kramarczuk's. 6:30 p.m. 215 E. Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis (612) 379-3018. Information: Ralph Tuttila, raulit@msn.com, www.finnhall.com, www.kramarczuk.com
- Mar. 21** FACA program.
- May 24** Opening ceremony for FinnFest 2014, Cokato. (FinnFest 2014 will occur in several locations and at several times during 2014).
- June 27 to 28** 37th Annual Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival, Moorhead.
- Aug. 8 to 10** FinnFest 2014 Twin Cities. Info: www.finnfestusa2014.org

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

FACA needs your ideas and your helping hand. If you can help with any of the committees or events, please return this form. Thanks!

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Laskiainen</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pikkujoulu</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Festival of Nations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Phone |

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Return to FACA, P.O. Box 580708,
Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708 or bring to the
next program.



Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.

P.O. Box 580708
Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708

FACA

Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.
is an organization dedicated to preserving and
promoting the cross-cultural heritage of
Americans with Finnish ancestry.
Information: (612) 374-2718, www.finnfaca.org

Thursdays. The Kisarit Finnish American Folk dancers meet every Thursday at the International Institute of Minnesota on Como Ave, St. Paul, across from the State Fairgrounds, 7:00 p.m. The group does not meet during holidays. New members welcome. Call Dan (763) 544-1441.

Fridays. Finlanders at the U of M conversation hour meets at Bordertown Coffee, 315 16th Ave. SE, Minneapolis (very near Folwell Hall), 11:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m. For more information: karvo001@umn.edu

Feb. 8 11th Annual Nordic Gala. Hjemkomst Center, Moorhead, 7:00 to 10 p.m. Nordic Bees, food, music, silent auction. Fundraiser for 37th Annual Kjemkomst Festival. \$25 at the door. For more information: Amanda Nordick, NCC Executive Director, Nordic Culture Clubs. (218) 299-5452

Feb. 9 Urban Expedition, Finland. Landmark Center, St. Paul, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Free! Travel the world without leaving St. Paul. International adventures sponsored by Concordia Language Villages, Minnesota Parent, Ramsey County, Ecolab, Travelers, RBC Wealth Management.

Feb. 16 Finnish Culture through Movies group. *Täällä Pohjantähden alla II. Under the North Star II.* 6:00 p.m., Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave

South, Minneapolis. More information: Movie group page: www.minnesotafinnish.org (select “The Finnish Language School of Minnesota,” then “Age Groups,” then “Finnish Culture through Movies”) or call (651) 428-3155.

Feb. 17 Sara Pajunen, 416 Club Commissions. The Cedar, 416 Cedar Ave S, Minneapolis, 7:30 p.m. Doors open at 7:00. \$5.00. For more information: thecedar.org/events/416-club-commissions-2014/2014/02/17/sara-pajunen-416-club-commissions

Feb. 21 FACA program, 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 22 Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota. 9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Gus Fenton, genealogy presentation given at FinnFest 2013. Meetings at the Plymouth Apostolic Church 11015 Old County Road 15, Plymouth. For driving directions or for changes in meeting times and/or places, see the FGG web pages: www.minnesotafinnish.org (select “Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota,” then “Meeting Information”)

Feb 23 *Sisu* Heritage, Inc., Annual Meeting, at the Town Hall, Embarrass, 2:00 p.m. Guest speaker, Aaron Hautala, photographer for the book, *The Opposite of Cold*. Coffee will be served. For more information, call (218) 229-2198.

Calendar-continued on page 7