



Uutiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

February/Helmikuu 2017

Celebrate *Laskiainen*—Music, Dancing and Pea Soup!

Join us for our annual *Laskiainen* program in honor of the Finnish Shrovetide celebration of the flax season, downhill sliding, and pea soup. We will feature Finn Hall playing some authentic Finnish music, and the Kisarit’s program of dances, including perhaps one for audience participation.

The Sauna Bucket will be awarded to a deserving, hard-working FACA volunteer during the program.

The FACA Board members will supply the *hernekeitto* (pea soup). We ask our members to bring a dish to share, but this is not required. Here is what to bring by last name:

A–D dessert; **E–J** salad; **K–O** appetizer or side dish;
P–Z bread. Of course, there will be plenty of *hyvää kahvia!*

Laskiainen goes back to pre-Christian Finland, when February signaled a return to more light, and thoughts turned to the coming spring and the cycle of flax production soon to begin again. Sliding, besides being fun, offered portents of luck in the harvest.

Girls with long hair streaming were lucky omens on the slope. Everyone tried to slide as far as possible, because that foretold long flax fibers.

(continued on page 3)

Program in Brief

***Laskiainen*, the Finnish Shrovetide Celebration**
Friday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.
International Institute of Minnesota,

1694 Como Ave., St. Paul
(across from the Fairgrounds).

FACA Event Cancellation Policy

If St. Paul public schools are canceled due to bad weather, then a FACA event scheduled for that day will also be canceled. FACA members may contact any board member if they have a question.



Kisarit



Finn Hall with guests

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President's Message

By Gene Ollila

Wow, what a weekend we enjoyed when the Finnish Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi was in town. A breakfast at the office of Faegre Baker Daniels began a busy day, followed by a luncheon at the Minneapolis Club and a short reception at the Ambassador's Hotel with Finnsourc team members. Two comments stood out to me: that Finland enjoys an excellent reputation as to government and corporate honesty—and that it is not always easy to do business with Finland! At Orchestra Hall, the Minnesota Orchestra performed two Finnish pieces, Sibelius's Fifth Symphony and a work by Kalevi Aho. Information tables were set up in the lobby for FACA, Finnsourc, Salolampi and the Finlandia Foundation during the performance. The next day at the Hall, the Traveling Sauna, Sisu, was inaugurated. To conclude the Martin Luther and the Reformation exhibit, Pirjo Markkola of Tampere University, lectured at the MIA on the history of the Reformation in the Nordic countries, especially in Finland, where its influence was a factor leading to Finnish Independence 400 years later.

To me, these were extraordinary and stimulating performances and lectures showing what has been done, where we are now and where we need to go. The difficulty is how to get there.

In FACA, we currently have two empty board positions, and of the four directors remaining, two will leave after June. We must consider requirements for retaining nonprofit status, and for preserving what FACA means to its members. Eliminating the board and holding business meetings as part of each monthly program is a possible approach, but we still need officers to direct the discussion, maintain financial records, obtain speakers and record the proceedings.

In regard to FACA's community participation, charitable and fundraising functions, there is currently no one to lead creation of the cultural booth at the Festival of Nations. Without the booth, only the Kisarit dancers' participation qualifies us for the Café, earnings from which enable us to contribute to Salolampi scholarships. Is this the end of our participation in Festival of Nations?

Please answer and return the questionnaire provided at the last program. It asks what FACA means to people and whether they are willing to continue its existence. We must look at what we want to be, not who we have been. New and younger members may not be interested in old history that the gray hairs (mine included) now coming to meetings enjoy. I really would like to hear from everyone to determine how FACA continues. I think having the monthly lectures/programs is really great, but how to maintain them is the problem. Certainly an interesting program, such as the last one with Soile Anderson and Eleanor Ostman, draws people: there were 77 at our program, and we ran out of coffee!!

Check Finnsourc.org frequently; there are many events scheduled for the rest of 2017, the centenary of Finland's existence. This website is the state of Minnesota information center for Finland 100 events and is being updated frequently. The gems are the Orchestra presentations of Finnish music September 22–23, FinnFest USA 2017 during September 21–24, and the Gala for Independence Day on December 6.



Sibelius's Inspiration: Stunning Landscape, Compelling Music

By Betsey Norgard, Finlandia Foundation TC

Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities and American Swedish Institute invite you to be transported to the world of Jean Sibelius. Through Sibelius's compelling music, narration, and spectacular video—from the magical moss forest, across pristine blue waters, and to the top of Koli—you will experience the landscapes where Sibelius drew his musical inspiration.

Cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian perform a moving program of Sibelius's music, specially arranged for the concert, including Finlandia. The duo has specialized in performing Sibelius's music for more than three years in Finland, much of Europe, the United States and Asia. They have also performed more than 1,300 school concerts for children in elementary and middle schools across Finland. Together with illustrator Katri Kirkkopelto, they have published *The Melody Forest*, a children's picture book about the life and music of Jean Sibelius.

This concert is designed for families and visitors of all ages. A booksigning and reading from *The Melody Forest* will take place following the concert. Ticket prices are \$15 general; \$10 members, students, and seniors; free for kids under 5. Advance registration suggested. Buy tickets online at asimn.org/programs-education/events/finland-100-sibelius-inspiration-concert, or call 612-871-4907.

Sunday, March 5, 2 p.m., Larson Hall, American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Ave., Minneapolis.

The U.S. tour of Jussi Makkonen and Nazig Azezian is sponsored by Finlandia Foundation National and is an official event of Finland 100. For more information, call 651-270-9784.



Jussi Makkonen, cello, and
Nazig Azezian, piano
Credit: Marko Haapalehto

Laskiainen (continued from page 1)

Later, the Christian church tied the pagan holiday to the rituals of Shrovetide, but Finland also maintained the sliding festival.

Of course there is also *sauna* lore that applies to *Laskiainen*. In olden days, it was not advisable to talk much in the Shrovetide *sauna*, or flies and mosquitoes would bother you in the summer to come. Also, if men were the first to take a *sauna*, that would predict bull-calves, but if women were faster, the cows of the household's herd would give birth to female calves. If a family took a Shrovetide *sauna* early in the evening, it was guaranteed that they would never be late from work or in a hurry for the whole year.

FACA on Facebook!

By Ralph and Jaana Tuttila

Since we started promoting the FACA Facebook page, we now have 85 members. The word is spreading, and now folks are asking to join. We are encouraging you to look at the page and subscribe. It's free. Use the search feature at the top of your page to locate Finnish American Cultural Activities, and "like" the page. Ask to join. No obligations, no strings. Anyone can post or comment on posts. It's a good way to keep informed about FACA and other things Finnish in addition to the FACA web site.

Just look, click and "like." Thanks!

FACA Membership

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Board Notes

By Dennis Halme



Left to right: Dennis Halme, Gene Ollila, Phillip Erickson and Janie Ahola.

The FACA board meeting on January 17, 2017, was called to order by Gene Ollila at 11 a.m. at Keys Café in Roseville. Present: Gene Ollila, Phillip Erickson, Janie Ahola and Dennis Halme. Former board member, Richard Harju, was also present at the meeting.

The minutes from the November 2016 meeting were read and approved. The treasurer reported the current balance. Proceeds from Bette Ruskanen's estate sale items, to be exclusively used for Salolampi scholarships, are still in our account. A FACA budget for 2017 is currently in progress. The income collected in 2016 from membership dues was less than in 2015 (14 fewer membership renewals).

This week's February program is set. Speaker for March is Sandra Weise, proprietor of the Finnish Bistro. Programs for April and May have not yet been determined.

FACA donated a one-year subscription to the *Uutiset* newsletter to the 2017 Nordic Gala Silent Auction to support the 40th Annual Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival in June. The board approved \$100 towards the rental of table space during the Minnesota Orchestra and the Finland 100 Traveling Sauna Inauguration.

The Festival of Nations planning will soon begin. Richard Harju will coordinate volunteers for the Finnish Café. Plans for the cultural exhibit booth are in flux at this date. The theme for this year's festival is "Ceremonies and Rituals."

In a recent audit, FACA's financial records were found to be accurate and in good standing for fiscal year 2015. Jeanne Swope and Kaarina Kotkavuori served on the audit committee.

The board discussed how to attract new members, particularly younger people. Richard Harju suggested promotions (e.g., calling cards, brochures) to attract new members.

The board discussed FACA's participation in upcoming Finland 100 events and FinnFestUSA 2017. No decisions were made at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. The next board meeting is February 14, 11 a.m., at the Wedge Table, 2412 Nicollet Ave. S, Minneapolis.

Follow the Traveling Sauna!

The soon-to-be-famous sauna was built in Cokato at the FinnLeo factory. On January 12, the new rolling sauna was introduced to and posed for a photo-op by the ancient savu sauna in Temperance Corner, Cokato.

At its formal inauguration on January 14 at Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis, it was checked out and approved by such luminaries as Finnish ambassador Kirsti Kauppi and orchestra director Osmo Vänskä, as well as many other sauna fans or curious investigators.

The men behind the sauna project are Risto Sivula and Jouko Sipilä. Their company, Ice Cold Marketing, is in charge of all sauna logistics like designing the sauna, creating the route and coordinating the sauna stops with local Finnish and Finnish-American organizations. Risto and Jouko are two Finns living in Minnesota who are passionate about promoting Finland and everything Finnish in the U.S.

You can follow the sauna as it visits Texas in February, then heads for a West Coast tour before beginning a cross-continental adventure, where it will arrive in Washington, D.C., in time for Finnish Independence Day on December 6.

Here's where to check on how the historic, one-of-a-kind rolling event progresses: travelingsauna.com/, finland100usa.com/, TravelingSauna on Facebook.



An Evening to Remember— Eleanor, Soile and Food

By Gene Ollila

More than 70 people came to the January FACA program to hear Eleanor Ostman and Soile Anderson present their new book, *Celebrations to Remember*.

It was Eleanor interviewing Soile who talked about her history, coming from a farm background in Finland and wondering if her food ventures would be successful in Minnesota. She discussed her catering ventures (I especially liked the Gypsy theme for a corporate party on Sunfish Lake by the CEO of Ecolab), and showed photographs of various lovely foods.



Eleanor Ostman and Soile Anderson

Soile has been part of the Twin Cities food scene since she opened the Deco Restaurant at the top of the Minnesota Museum of Art in St. Paul in 1982. This was an early introduction to Finnish and northern European food, which my family loved. She operated Deco for 10 years, then opened the Taste of Scandinavia in three separate locations. Soile also studied and acquired credentials for kosher catering, which she has done for a long time. After 13 years she sold this and opened The Finnish Bistro on Como Avenue in St. Paul. All have been successful, but she now does only catered meals under the name Deco Catering, assisted by her able son Heikki. They have catered for President Obama, corporations such as 3M and Ecolab and to individual families.

Eleanor was food editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* for 30 years and turned her newspaper columns into a cookbook, *Always on Sunday*. She is an accomplished speaker and has published other books as well. She and

Soile had just returned from a trip to Vietnam less than three days earlier, and I was told they collected several Vietnamese recipes, of course!

Unfortunately, publication of the new book was delayed, but the authors took orders for signed copies, to be sent to many eager FACA purchasers.

The program was topped off in a delicious and unexpected manner when Soile served her strawberry torte, along with other treats. The night was also remarkable in that all the coffee and drinks provided were gone. Eleanor and Soile stayed around for further individual discussion. It was a totally enjoyable and tasty evening.

Festival of Nations Finnish Café

By Richard Harju, Scheduling

It is that time again, the time to volunteer to help in the Finnish Café. In the past, you have made my job easy and enjoyable by volunteering early. I appreciate that a lot. *Kiitos!* You can volunteer a number of ways: there will be sign-up sheets at the February, March and April programs, or you can email rjharju@yahoo.com, or call or text 612-719-4965. The Festival of Nations is May 4–7, so you may plan which day and time fits your schedule. Yes, it is work, but it is also an event where you may socialize with other volunteers and get to know each other. I am looking forward to another successful Festival of Nations as we keep the Finnish culture alive and visible to others.

I would like someone to “shadow” me as I go through the different steps of this project. That is, I would copy you by email on what I do. All you would need to do is read my emails. At my advanced age, life gets to be uncertain. This program will continue without me. No one is indispensable.

Conversational Finnish Class
Tuesdays, 4–5:30 p.m.
St. Anthony Library
Corner of Como and Carter Avenue
St. Paul
Everyone is welcome.
For more information, please call
Urho Rahkola at 651-429-3319.

Review of Craig Randal Johnson— Piano Music from Finland

By Gene Ollila

Craig Randal Johnson gave a rousing piano performance on January 23 in Normandale Lutheran Church, playing music written during the period of the Finnish Independence movement and Civil War, and commemorating Carl Gustaf Mannerheim. We heard short pieces from Leevi Madetoja, bagatelles from Joonas Kokkonen and several selections,



including *Wedding March*, from Toivo Kuula, who was killed while very young after the White's victory in the Civil War. Eeva Savolainen read a description in Finnish prior to the playing of each selection of iconic music by Einojuhani Rautavaara, who died in 2016.

The last part of the program featured lesser known selections by Jean Sibelius, such as the *Jaeger March* and *Laulu*, followed by *Korkeuksissa* by Erkki Melartin. The final composition on the program was a rousing rendition of *Finlandia* by Sibelius that was more energetic than most versions I have heard. This was a fitting end to a wonderful performance, which had introduced me to some music that I had not heard before.

There will be other concerts in this series, called *Finnish Classical Music Past and Present*, later this year.

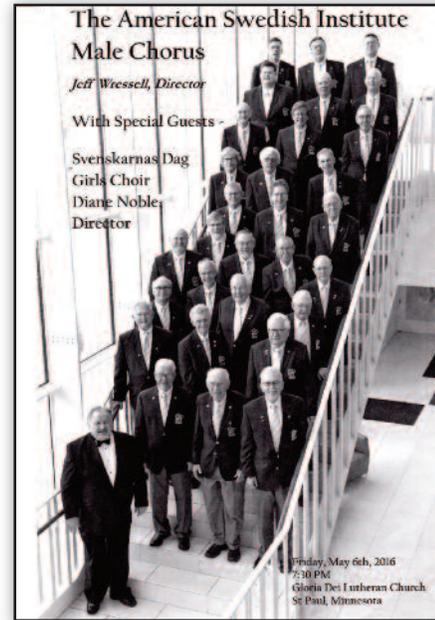
In Memoriam

Florence Knox, 87, of Sartell passed away December 26. She was born to Matt and Liisa Nikkola and was a graduate of East Range High School. She married, raised four children, and attended State Cloud State College, advancing to a master's degree in special education, writing a dissertation comparing special education in the U.S. and Finland. She worked as a speech pathologist and audiologist for 30 years. Our thanks to William Edward Senn for a memorial sent to FACA in her honor. He writes, "She certainly loved her Finnish roots."



ASI Male Chorus to Hold Swedish Breakfast Fundraiser

Come to *Svensk Frukost*, the fundraiser for the ASI Male Chorus (by the way, some of the singers are Finns). The breakfast is Saturday, February 25, 8–11 a.m. For a short video promoting the fundraiser and information about the chorus, see www.asimalechorus.org. The ASI Male Chorus will sing at least four times during breakfast and take care of your breakfast table.



Frukost Buffet includes: Swedish pancakes, *kringler*, sausage, herring, fried potatoes, egg bake, cinnamon toast, cereal and more.

Tickets must be purchased in advance at the ASI information desk, 2600 Park Ave., Minneapolis, 612-871-4907, or from Eric Jaakkola, president of ASI Male Chorus, 612-669-9158, or any chorus member. The donation is \$15 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12. Tickets are nonrefundable. Proceeds support ongoing activities of the ASI Male Chorus.

Admission to the Turnblad Mansion is included in the ticket price. Mansion opens at 9 a.m.

Membership Promotion

By Richard Harju, chair

We can all agree that FACA needs some dynamic new members. We are planning for a promotion whereby if you bring a guest to a program and that guest joins FACA, you will receive one year of membership free. Watch for details and membership promotion material.

Events Calendar

Feb. 17. FACA program. International Institute of Minnesota, 1694 Como Ave., St. Paul, 7 p.m.

Feb. 24. March Uutiset deadline for articles and calendar items. Send material to facaeditor@gmail.com.

Feb. 25. Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota meeting. Speaker: Greg Isola. Topics: Calendar Changes, and Researching in the Publication, *Kalenteri*. Plymouth Apostolic (Lutheran) Church, 11015 Old County Road 15, 9:30 a.m.

Feb. 25. ASI Male Chorus *Frukost*. Breakfast fundraiser. American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Ave, Minneapolis, 8:00–11:00 a.m. Chorus will sing during breakfast. Tickets must be purchased in advance at ASI information desk, 612-871-4907, or from Eric Jaakkola (chorus president), 612-669-9158, or any choir member. Admission to the Turnblad Mansion is included in the ticket price. Donation: adults \$15; age 12 and under \$5.

March 5. Sibelius Inspiration. Concert and book signing. Cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian, with video of Eastern Finland. American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, 2 p.m. Book signing and reading from *The Melody Forest* will follow the concert. Ticket prices are \$15 general; \$10 members, students, and seniors; free for kids under 5. Advance registration suggested. Buy tickets online at asimn.org/programs-education/events/finland-100-sibelius-inspiration-concert, or call 612-871-4907.

March 16. St. Urho's Day. *Heinäsiirkkää, heinäsiirkkää, mene hiteen!*

March 17. FACA program

May 4–7. Festival of Nations. St. Paul RiverCentre. For more day/hours information, festivalofnations.com/info/.

Sept. 21–24. FinnFest USA 2017. In Minneapolis, in conjunction with the Minnesota Orchestra's weekend of Finnish music Sept. 22–23. Hold the date—more information to come.

Tuesdays. Finnish Conversation Group. St. Anthony Park Library, Como and Carter Avenues, St. Paul. 4 p.m. Information: Urho Rahkola, 651-429-3319.

Thursdays. Kisarit Finnish American Folk Dancers. St. Sahag Armenian Church, 203 N. Howell St., St. Paul. 7 p.m. The group does not meet during holidays. New members welcome. Call Dan 763-544-1441.

Fridays. Finns at the U of M conversation hour. Bordertown Coffee, 315 16th Ave. SE, Minneapolis. For more information or to check on meeting day/time: karvo001@umn.edu.

Found! Velma Doby and Poems by Charlotte Goodman

At the January program, Elizabeth Hallowell conveyed greetings to FACA from Velma Doby, FACA member from our early days and a Sauna Bucket winner. Velma now lives in the Brule, Wisconsin area. Elizabeth said that her mother, Charlotte Virginia (Maki) Johnson Goodman, was a close friend of Velma, and Elizabeth has kept in close contact.

Charlotte was a poet, and Elizabeth has sent us some of her writing. We will share some of her poems as space permits.

Home Again

By Charlotte (Maki) Johnson Goodman

The slippery shale
on the country road
pierced my feet and made me wish
that I'd chosen another path

I turned around
and slowly stumbled along
Oh, there must be another way—
I tripped and
fell on my knees
I'm too tired to go on
I'm really in pain

Then a loud clap of thunder
a cloudburst
Time to seek shelter
from the cold rain
I arose and forgot I hurt
I ran to my home
my shelter
All was well, Again.

Lauri Saukko's "Year" Books: *Opi I* and *Opi II*

Each *Opi* book contains 52 weeks of useful exploration in colloquial Finnish. Every practice includes an English translation on the facing page, offering an immediate opportunity to read and understand Finnish in both form and function.

Both books will be available at upcoming FACA meetings, or email northwoods3@me.com to order. All (tax-deductible) proceeds are a gift to Salolampi scholarships from Lauri Saukko and you. *Kiitos!*

Pieniä paloja—Short news items from Finland

- **There was record low ice in the Baltic, but winds made work for Finnish icebreakers.** Although the winter has been mild and the extent of ice cover in the Baltic Sea is the lowest recorded at this time of year, the northern Gulf of Bothnia experienced one of the windiest Januarys since 1994. High winds created packed ice in Finnish coastal areas, keeping three icebreakers working full-time. Even the most powerful sea-going vessels needed assistance to get through the pack ice to reach the ports of Tornio, Kemi and Oulu.
- **Defense Minister Jussi Niinistö plans to launch an initiative for legislation that would prevent people holding dual nationality from taking up professional military positions.** “I personally take the view that when we talk about professional military positions, there are weighty reasons for excluding dual nationality. There will now be a review to clarify...how national security can be improved in how we filling professional military positions,” he said. *Yle* had reported earlier that the Defense Forces had begun applying restrictions to Russian-Finnish dual citizens in armed service, and that guidelines have also been issued in the Defense Forces restricting the tasks assigned to conscripts with dual Russian-Finnish citizenship.
- **Finnish tennis star Henri Kontinen and his Australian doubles partner John Peers won the Grand Slam doubles in the Australian Open,** making Kontinen the first Finn ever to win a doubles major. Seeded four going into the tournament, the pair defeated the third-seeded Bryan brothers 7-5 7-5 in the final. The Finnish-Aussie duo dazzled in its two-set win against the most decorated doubles team in tennis history, the U.S.-born Bryan twins. Kontinen worked the net well and Peers came through with great serves.

Source, *Yle*