



Uutiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

January/Tammikuu 2015

Finnish Funeral Customs

Anna Marita Roinila

On January 16, our program will be about Finnish funeral customs.

Anna Marita Roinila is a young Finnish-Canadian-American immigrant and recent graduate from the University of Minnesota's Mortuary Science Program. Marita is a Minnesota-licensed funeral director and entrepreneur. She was born in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada and currently resides in Minneapolis. She is the oldest daughter of Dr. Mika Roinila (well-known author and researcher of Finnish studies) and Grace Roinila. She credits them for her interest in Finnish culture and tradition.

Marita hopes to bring a new way of thinking to the Minneapolis community with a business venture in natural funerals. These funerals take place in a family's home instead of a funeral parlor, in the manner that Finns and often Americans conducted funerals before the 1900s.



Program In Brief

***Finnish Funeral Customs
Anna Marita Roinila***

**January 16, 7:30 p.m.
International Institute
1694 Como Ave., St. Paul**
*For help finding a ride to the program:
call any of the board members*

The URL for her website is www.sentimentalmn.org

The program will be followed by *kahvi aika* and an opportunity to visit with familiar and new FACCA friends.



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President's Message

By Gene Ollila

This past year has gone very quickly, what with the Finnfest in the summer and all the events at the end of the year—the Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast (a wonderful program raising funds for Second Harvest Heartland), the Finnish Independence Day observance, and most recently, *Joulu—A Magical Finnish Christmas*, with a wonderful buffet, children's programming (which my grandchildren enjoyed very much), dancing, and the performance and singalong, "The Most Beautiful Christmas Music," at Christ Church Lutheran.



December is a time of contemplation of what this time of year really means, whether purely giving of gifts, enjoying one's family, or celebrating the true meaning of Christmas. Many years ago, my wife and I declined the continuous party mode and consequently have been less rushed. It is a time of year to give thanks for all the good things that have happened and try to change the less than ideal circumstances to make the coming year a truly outstanding one.

There is often discussion of starting a "diet" and "exercise program" for the New Year, but these things should be important all year. Since Finns had very high heart attack rates, modifications were made in Finland to change diet rather successfully. I can still remember at the 2002 Finnfest sitting by a researcher from Helsinki at the Saturday dinner, and she was surprised that butter was served before the dinner, as she had not seen butter for years.

Slowly, the "American" diet is changing, with more fresh and locally grown food, an emphasis on "slow food" and buying fewer foods with multiple unpronounceable ingredients. An article in a recent newspaper noted lower corporate profits in the processed food industry. Our Thanksgiving turkey and Christmas ham both came from farms that raise the animals in much the same way as on the farm where I grew up. We had a great tomato year, so my wife put up many jars of tomatoes. The rapid increase in "locavore" restaurants is evidence of a rise in our caring what we eat.

Part of living properly is taking care of one's psyche. I never understood zen and other forms of meditation, but many years ago, I realized that if I could hear (outdoors or in my mind) the song of a white-throated sparrow, I was instantly relaxed. It is now my "zen bird." I realized that this sparrow's song was something I grew up with, and it remains part of my core belief. I truly hope each of you have your own "zen bird," something that you can use to stay healthy.

I look forward to the coming year, especially the pea soup for *Laskiainen* in February, and the Festival of Nations from April 30th to May 3rd. By the way, we will have a summary of finances at the January meeting. Please come and we will explain.

Kiitos paljon!

Board Notes *By Ruth Erkkila*



L-R: Front: John Rova, Ruth Erkkila, Janie Ahola, Back: Gene Ollila, Dennis Halme, Richard Harju.

November

The FACA board meeting was called to order by President Gene Ollila at 6:35 p.m. at Bakers Square Restaurant in St. Paul. All board members were present. Also present: Teresa Tjepkes.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted. Treasurer Janie Ahola reported the checking account balance.

Vice President Dennis Halme said the January program would be about Finnish vs. American funerals with some discussion of organic funerals. The presentation will be by Anna Marita Roinila, who works in the American funeral industry. In February, the Finn Hall Band will perform to help us celebrate *Laskiainen* and enjoy the pea soup.

Membership Chair John Rova will have FACA information at the December 13th *Joulu--Finnish Magical Christmas*.

Teresa Tjepkes was at the meeting to tell us of some of her experience in archiving. She is one quarter Finnish and her grandmother is a member of FACA. Teresa has an MS from St. Catherine's University and has done some contract work at the IHRC. She has agreed to serve as a consultant to us in the area of archiving. In return, Teresa was given a one-year membership in FACA.

Janie provided a list of questions regarding archiving and some suggestions on how we might get started. Questions include: what needs to be archived? How often should we archive documents?

Teresa provided a spreadsheet of FACA materials

(1949-1992) that are now in the IHRC archives. These include some meeting minutes, financial statements, correspondence, newspaper clippings and obituaries. Also included are the constitution and by-laws for Chapter 23 of the Minnesota Finnish American Historical Society. Our group later separated from the statewide organization and became FACA.

Teresa volunteered to inventory the FACA library, currently stored by Urho and Pam Rahkola.

Regarding the cancellation policy, if St. Paul schools are closed for the day as announced by WCCO radio and TV, FACA events on that day will also be cancelled. Gene will discuss any other aspects of event cancellation with the International Institute—for example, will they still charge FACA rent for that day?

President Gene Ollila attended a reception held when the Finnish Ambassador visited Minneapolis. Several FACA members are planning to attend the Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast on November 25.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

The next board meeting is January 13, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. at Bakers Square in St. Paul.

December

No meeting was scheduled for December; but President Gene Ollila called a meeting of the FACA board on December 19, 2014, especially to discuss FACA participation in the Festival of Nations. He called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. at Bakers Square in St. Paul. Present: Gene Ollila, Ruth Erkkila, Dennis Halme, Bud Berry, Edith Boos, Urho Rahkola and Pam Rahkola. Not present: Janie Ahola, Richard Harju and John Rova. A quorum was not present.

The minutes from the November meeting were reviewed.

The FACA event cancellation policy was further defined: If St. Paul public schools are cancelled and announced on WCCO Radio and TV, then a FACA event scheduled for that day will also be cancelled. The decision will be made by the president. The president will notify each board member by e-mail. FACA members may contact any board member if they have a question about whether an event is cancelled. The vice president

Board minutes continued on pg. 4

December Board Minutes, continued.

will contact the scheduled speaker and negotiate the speaker's fee and an appropriate make-up date, if possible.

Gene Ollila will discuss this policy with the International Institute, so we are clear on whether we will be charged space rental, etc.

Joulu—Finnish Magical Christmas, held on December 13, was reviewed. The comments were overwhelmingly positive. The event, put on by a united group of Finnish organizations in the Twin Cities, drew wide participation from attendees of all ages. The children's activities and movies were well-attended and well-received.

The Festival of Nations has as its theme this year International Art. There was some discussion of participation in the Festival this year, and it was generally agreed that FACA will participate in the cultural booth and the Finnish Café. Kathryn Hill will chair the Finnish Café and will also have a Finnish merchandise booth (Irene's Favorite Things) in the Bazaar. FACA will recruit workers for the cafe and the cultural booth. The Kisarit dancers will also be on the dance program.

Since Finland has a rich tradition in art, participation in the cultural booth was favored by all present. The booth needs a chair.

Kathryn Hill has provided an income and expense report for the 2014 Finnish Café, and the board reviewed it. Total sales were in line with previous years, slightly less than 2013, but more than 2012. FACA will take a \$300 profit from the net. The remainder will be held by Kathryn Hill against expenses for 2015. No management fee, hotel or travel expenses were paid.

The annual Salolampi Scholarship donation was discussed. There was not a quorum, so a donation will be discussed and voted on at a later meeting. Kathy Jackson will report on how last year's donation was used at the January program.

Pam and Urho Rahkola are storing the FACA library, which amounts to about 10 totes full of books, and would like to get it out of their home. There was some discussion about what to do with the library, but no conclusion at this time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

A Historic Truce

The FACA Cultural Exhibit booth at the Festival of Nations in 2014 featured information about Ahtisaari Days. You may want to know what happened during Ahtisaari Days in November 2014 (from the newsletter of the Finnish American Chamber of Commerce).

After almost five years of on-going conflict between the birds and the pigs, Rovio and CMI are pleased to announce that Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Martti Ahtisaari has managed the impossible: a truce in the epic and ongoing conflict between birds and pigs in the *Angry Birds* world. Check out the peace negotiation video! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9T4GrQV_Vs

"It is my eternal optimism that all conflicts can be solved" says President Ahtisaari. "What are we trying to achieve? Human rights, decent healthcare, truth, reconciliation and a fair egalitarian society," he adds.

"One point five billion people, every fifth person on the planet, are being robbed of freedom and basic human rights because of conflict," said Blanca Juti, Chief Marketing Officer of Rovio. "We wanted to support CMI, the conflict resolution organization founded by President Ahtisaari, by bringing awareness to the importance of conflict resolution and peace mediation. *Angry Birds* world offered the perfect way to do this and we are delighted to be part of the Ahtisaari Days."

Ahtisaari Days, which first started in Finland in 2011, is held yearly in November. The goal of the Days is to make peace work and mediation part of everyone's daily life at all levels of society by treating the themes in Finnish schools and by raising discussion at public events. This year CMI is partnering with Rovio to jointly bring awareness about conflict resolution and peacebuilding to the next generation.

Read more about Ahtisaari Days from this link. <http://www.ahtisaaripaivat.fi/en/>

FACA Event Cancellation Policy

In case of bad weather or driving conditions, if St. Paul public schools are cancelled and announced on WCCO Radio and TV, then a FACA event scheduled for that day will also be canceled. The president will decide and notify each board member by email. FACA members may contact any Board member if they have a question about whether an event is canceled.

Rapid Warming across Finland

From an article in *Global Climate Change News and Analysis*, by Sophie Yeo

Even icy Lapland faces diminished snowfall as Finland warms at over twice the rate of global average. The average temperature in the Arctic country has risen by more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) since 1847.

December is now 4.8 degrees Celsius (8.64 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than it was before the industrial era, Finland's top scientists have found. Researcher Santtu Mikkonen predicts that in the future, there will not be snow cover in December.

Scientists at the University of Eastern Finland and the Finnish Meteorological Institute published their findings in a study this week in the journal *Stochastic Environmental Research and Risk Assessment*.

It means that the country will see less snow, which will instead fall as rain, thanks to the warmer weather. When it does snow, it will melt away sooner. Even Lapland, the cold northern region where Santa Claus is said to make his home, will be affected. While the impact will not be as dramatic as in the south, the Finnish Meteorological Institute predicts the number of snow cover days to decrease 20 to 30% by the end of the century. "In the north of Lapland, there will still be snow for quite a long time, but eventually it will also happen there," added Mikkonen.

The reason for this rapid warming lies in the geography of Finland. The effects of climate change are amplified in the Arctic region.

Melting ice and warmer oceans create a feedback mechanism that speeds up the heating. Since the 1960s, temperatures have increased between 0.2 and 0.4 degrees Celsius every decade. In spring, trees are starting to bloom earlier. Finland's boreal forests are growing faster. These patterns can be expected to intensify as long as global warming continues.

Scientists averaged data produced by weather stations across Finland, as well as some in Sweden, Norway and Russia.



Thank You, Volunteers

By Dan Salin

Our third annual *Joulu—Finnish Magical Christmas* was held on December 13 at Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis. I would like to thank the following FACA members who joined volunteers from many Twin Cities Finnish organizations to make this Christmas celebration a success. I hope I have not excluded anyone. If I have, my apologies. *Kiitoksia paljon*, volunteers!

Stella Arola, Carole Backman, Marlene Banttari, Barb Besonen, Edith Boos, Kathy Chambless, Ruth Erkkila, Kathy Jackson, Gil and Dawn Kinnunen, Al and Betsey Norgard, Gene Ollila, Urho and Pam Rahkola, John Rova, Delores Salin, and Jeanne Swope.

I would also like to thank all who attended this wonderful event and those who gave monetary donations to help with funding this event. *Kiitos!*



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

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 _____

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November Program Recap

By *Dennis Halme*

The November presentation by Tia Salmela Keobounpheng was a unique insight into the life and professional development of a talented young Finnish-American artist.

Tia, daughter of architect David Salmela, used a well-written script and PowerPoint to highlight her life from childhood through the present, beginning with her exposure to her father's work as a very young child, when she was shown drawings of prospective building projects and asked to pick her favorites. She was obviously encouraged to express herself at a young age. She soon began experimenting in graphic art and showed some of her early work.

As a teenager, she spent a year (1995–1996) in Finland, where she lived with Finnish architect Veli Karjalainen and family in Oulu, who exposed her to Finnish architecture. She attended Oulun Lukio (senior high school), where she felt most at home in the art room. She was impressed with the idea prevalent in Finland that good design was for everyone and for use in everyday life. Living in the land of her ancestors, touring the country with her host family, she also learned that she was "really an American."

When Tia returned from Finland, she attended the University of Minnesota, Duluth and Minneapolis, receiving a degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota TC in 2000. In the same year, she married Souliyahn Keobounpheng, a fellow architecture student.

Since then she has worked at an art store; for Ikea where she designed room settings and redid the employees cafeteria; and for Salmela Architects. During this time she gave birth to two sons, Silo and Veli. She began making acrylic jewelry while on maternity leave with her first child. She and her husband, also an architect, formed a company called Silvercocoon (named for the Airstream trailer they used as a studio) to market her jewelry creations and their other projects—to do "what they really wanted to do" as artists.

The whole program was well illustrated with beautiful photography and was very detailed.

All in all, it was for me and I hope for everyone an interesting look at the life and work of a talented young artist.

In Memorium

Gene Karjala, age 81, passed away on November 18, 2014, in Clare Bridge of Eagan. Preceded in death by his parents. Survived by his wife Beth; aunt Katherine Karjala and cousins throughout the country. As a career educator, he directed bands and choirs in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Germany and was on the faculty at Ball State University School of Music for 24 years. Gene was proud of his Finnish heritage and in retirement was active in the Finnish American community, serving on both the FACA and Salolampi boards. Memorials to Salolampi Scholarship Fund, Salolampi Foundation, PO Box 14480, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

Jaakko Kotkavuori, age 87, died November 23, 2014, in Lake Worth, FL. Jaakko was a Finnish military veteran, immigrant to Canada with his wife and older daughter and thence to the U.S., and an artist and art gallery owner. He participated in the Finnish-American community of Lake Worth after his retirement. He is survived by son Hans (Finland), daughters Aila (Florida and Missouri) and Kaarina (Minnesota, FACA member and former president).

Emma Jean Kydd, age 78, of St. Paul, died unexpectedly on November 10, 2014. Her Finnish heritage played a big role in her life; dedicating time to support many organizations and connections. Cards can be sent to: Jeanne Marie and Jeffrey Tucker and family, 5100 Winsdale St. N., Minneapolis, MN 55422

Anna Stoehr, age 114, died December 21 in Plainview, MN. She was the mother of former FACA board member Harlan Stoehr.

Gerontology Research Group listed her as the 12th-oldest validated living supercentenarian in the world as of August 12; it also states she was the sixth-oldest person in the United States. She was the oldest Minnesota resident.

Anna lived in her rural Plainview farmhouse until she was 112. She moved into Green Prairie Place where, even in the spring of 2013, she was outside pulling weeds. She was communicative (including using an iPad and Facebook) and in good health until the final week of her life. She is survived by her son Harlan (Marlene) Stoehr of Shoreview; daughters Lois Neighbors of Emmetsburg, Iowa, and Dorothy (John) Wood of Rochester; daughter-in-law, Beverly Stoehr of Elgin; 12 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren; family and friends, and two apple trees she planted at 105.

Events Calendar

Jan. 16 January FACA meeting, 7:30 p.m.
International Institute of Minnesota.

Jan. 17 Scandinavian Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner,
4 seatings. First Lutheran Church, 1555 40th Ave.
NE, Columbia Heights. Tickets: (651) 633-0679
Info: www.flcch.org

Jan. 18 Finnish Culture through Movies group.
Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave South,
Minneapolis. 6:00 p.m. (this time may change;
check website or phone contact below).

Kekkonen tulee. Kekkonen Is Coming. www.
finnkino.fi/Event/299695/ More information:
Minnesotafinnish.org; click on Suomi-koulu, then
Groups, then Finnish Culture through Movies or
call (651) 428-3155.

Jan. 18 Finn Hall Dance at the Eagles of
Minneapolis, 2507 E. 25th Street, Minneapolis,
6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Everyone welcome.

Jan. 23 Deadline to submit articles for February
Utiset. Send to facaeditor@gmail.com by
midnight.

Jan 24 Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota.
Presentation on the DNA grouping of FGG-MN
members by Gus Fenton. 9:30 a.m. Plymouth
Apostolic Church, 11015 Old County Road 15.
Driving directions or changes/cancellations:
minnesotafinnish.org; click on left menu, Finnish
Genealogy Group

Feb. 15 Finnish Culture through Movies group.
Christ Church Lutheran, Minneapolis. 6:00 p.m.
Valo www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vgrVWXj7EM
More information: See Jan. 18, above.

Feb. 20 February FACA meeting, 7:30 p.m.
International Institute of Minnesota. *Laskiainen*
celebration with Finn Hall providing the music.

Thursdays. The Kisarit Finnish American Folk
Dancers Thursdays at the St. Sahag Armenian
Church 203 N. Howell St., St. Paul (new location),
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 at Bordertown Coffee, 315 16th Ave. SE,
Minneapolis. For more information or to check on
meeting day/time: karvo001@umn.edu



*Buffet attendees at Joulu--Magical Finnish Christmas
enjoyed Soile Anderson's traditional holiday food.*



*Kathy Jackson of Kisarit taught folk-dancing to Suomi
koulu students. For their final number, they inveigled
audience members to join in (astonishingly, they did!).*



Soile Anderson and table.

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 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Festival of Nations |
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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.

dedicated to exploring and preserving Finnish and Finnish-American heritage. (612) 374-2718,

www.finnfaca.org

Pieniä Paloja

- Hospitality at the November program was provided by Judy Mikkola, Ester and Melvin Niska and Jane Olson. *Kiitos!*
- Ismo Leikola from Finland was declared winner at Laugh Factory's Funniest Person in the World competition a few weeks ago. Check the top performances from this link <http://www.laughfactory.com/channels/featured-videos/1777> (Ismo's performance starts at around the 17 minute mark).
- Mikko Hyppönen, the research director of the computer security company F-Secure, has confirmed to the Finnish media that one of the hackers who brought down the PlayStation Network and Xbox Live services last year is based in Finland. Rumors have been circulating for several months about the "Lizard Squad" group of hackers who say they disrupted the two computer games console networks. He confirmed that at least one of them is a Finn.
- Sales of consumer fireworks for ringing in the New Year began in Finland on December 27. Other than novelties and sparklers, consumer fireworks are sold in Finland only once a year, between Christmas and New Year. By law, Finns are only allowed to use consumer fireworks for a period of eight hours, from 6 p.m. on New Year's Eve to 2 a.m. on New Year's Day. Several municipalities have prohibited the use of fireworks all together or made them off limits in the city centers. Riikka Oravainen, a fire chief with Ostrobothnia Rescue Services, says, "In my opinion, people adhere to the time limits surprisingly well, but they have a harder time staying away from places where the use of fireworks is banned."
- Need for food aid has spiked in Helsinki. "In 2005, about 300, maximum 600 people came," says Heikki Hursti of Veikko and Hursti Charitable Gifts in Kallio. "Now we get 2,400-2,600 people from all around Helsinki each day we're open." It is one of the few places offering help for people in Helsinki. On Wednesdays and Fridays, they distribute food, and on Mondays they give clothes. People who come to the charity include the elderly, students, the unemployed, single parents, people on low-paid jobs, and people who have come to Finland for work, often speaking only Russian or Estonian. "And families come, with children."