



Uutiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

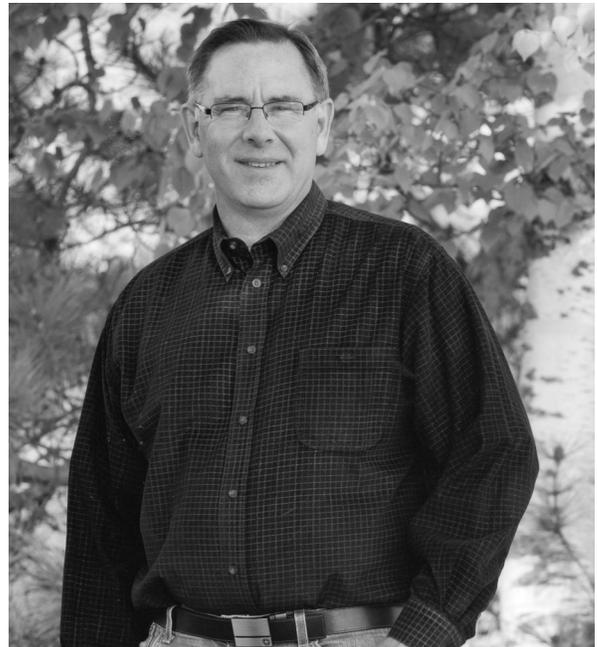
March/Maaliskuu 2016

Finnish American History as Fiction Mark Munger

We are delighted to have Mark Munger, author of *Suomalaiset: People of the Marsh*, and most recently *Sukulaiset: The Kindred*, with us for this program. In his novels, he explores the lives of people making their way through strange places and unknown dangers.

Suomalaiset begins with newly-arrived Finnish immigrants in the harbor area of Duluth, which at the beginning of the twentieth century teemed with immigrants; and shares the demanding lives, the adventurous spirits of the people, the difficulties posed by the new country in and beyond narrow crooked streets, crowded boarding houses, cafés and bars where there is now only a prosperous shopping and entertainment area.

Authentic detail and complex, far-ranging storytelling are also present in *Sukukaiset*, where the story ranges into the dangers of the Baltic world of World War II. A review in the *Duluth News-Tribune* said, “The amount of research that went into *Sukulaiset* is mind-boggling.”



Program In Brief

**Finnish American
History as Fiction
Mark Munger**

**March 19, 7:00 p.m.
International Institute
1694 Como Ave., St. Paul**

Come meet the author and learn about how these books, particularly the new *Sukulaiset*, came together for him. Bring a friend—the program is open to the public.

Mark is a lifelong resident of Minnesota, born in St. Paul and raised in Duluth, the inland seaport of Lake Superior. After practicing trial law for nearly twenty years, Mark became a district court judge in 1998 and serves a four-county region of Northeastern Minnesota. Mark, his wife René and their four sons live along the banks of the wild and scenic Cloquet River north of Duluth.

Coffee, treats and visiting time will follow the program.

FACA 2015-2016 Board of Directors

President:
Gene Ollila
(612) 840-2932
olefin@att.net

Vice Pres./ProgramChair:
Dennis Halme
(763) 208-3294
dhalme560@msn.com

Secretary:
Ruth Erkkila
(651) 454-5441
rutherkkila@yahoo.com

Treasurer:
Janie Ahola
(651) 455-6152
janieahola@msn.com

Membership:
John Rova
(612) 729-1585
jrova@millershanson.com

Member At Large:
Phillip A. Erickson
bricoleur27@msn.com

FACA Newsletter Committee

Editor:
Jeanne Swope
(612) 827-6773
facaeditor@gmail.com

Graphic Design:
Beth Jarvis
(763) 536-9561
bethjarvi@gmail.com

Contributing Writers: **Betsey Norgard, Dennis Halme, Joan Dwyer, Gil Kinnunen, Urho Rahkola, Gene Ollila**

Membership/Mailing:
Urho and Pam Rahkola
rahkola.urho@comcast.net
(651) 429-3319

President's Message

By Gene Ollila

Hei, all FACA members, family and friends,

My wife and I just returned from a birding expedition to Guatemala, which has over 735 species, of which we heard/saw about a third. We also saw Mayan pyramids from the first century A.D., ate wonderful food in Guatemala City (population: four million); but sadly, we also saw people living in what we would call abject poverty.



I missed the pea soup brigade but sent a pot along with John Rova. I heard that Finn Hall's music was terrific.

Mark Munger will present our March program. He is currently a district court judge in Duluth and a historical novelist, discussing Finnish American history through fiction. I have thoroughly enjoyed at least two of his books, *The Legacy* and *Suomalaiset: People of the Marsh*. Plans are moving forward to increase the virtual and actual Finnish exposure in the Twin Cities during the 2017 Centenary of Finland's Independence. An active group with some great ideas and concepts is working with Finlandia Foundation-Twin Cities; they are seeking grant money to help with the effort.

Finally, we need you to help at the Festival of Nations May 5 to 9. You can volunteer in the cultural exhibit booth, where a Finnish take on the Festival theme of *Folklore and Fairytales* will provide information and a game for guests; and also in the Finnish Café. Sign-ups will be available at the March program, and there will be information on our website, finnfaca.org, on how to volunteer. It's fun, and shows that we play our part in this community of world immigrants.

Kiitos paljon,
Gene



FACA Event Cancellation Policy

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

Board Notes

By Janie Ahola



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

The FACA board meeting scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 6:30 p.m., at Bakers Square in St. Paul was cancelled due to lack of a quorum; however, business was conducted via e-mail. Participants were: Gene Ollila, Dennis Halme, Ruth Erkkila, Janie Ahola and Phillip Erickson. Nonparticipants: John Rova.

Secretary: The minutes from the January 2016 meeting were approved.

Treasurer: Janie filed an electronic sales and use tax return to the MN Department of Revenue even though FACA had no sales and use tax to report. Failure to file a return would have resulted in a \$100 penalty. She also filed an electronic IRS Form 990 N to maintain FACA's nonprofit status.

Vice President/Program Chair: The speaker for March will be Mark Munger, giving a presentation on his latest book. For the April program, Mark Phillips, commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, will talk about "Sisu on the Iron Range."

Announcements and Other Business: The FACA board approved donating a one-year subscription to the *Uutiset* newsletter for the Silent Auction at the 2016 Nordic Gala to support the 39th Annual Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival.

In January, FACA joined the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN), which gives us access to services and information. Phillip Erickson will be the contact person.

The board voted to donate \$300 to the Salolampi Finnish Language Village. Last year, FACA's \$200

donation helped send two boys, ages 7-11, for a one-week camp session at Salolampi. Villagers explore language and culture through games, sports, crafts, music and outdoor activities, and learn a lot of Finnish.

Committee members for the Festival of Nations cultural booth have been meeting at the home of Kaarina Kotkavuori to implement plans for this year's event. The theme for this year's festival is *Folklore and Fairytale*s.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the board decided to postpone announcement of the 2015 sauna bucket winner until the March program. The next board meeting will be March 15, 6:30 p.m., at Bakers Square restaurant in St. Paul.

Baking Day

By Pam Rahkola

Baking Day for the Festival of Nations Finnish Café will be held on Saturday, April 30, starting at 7:30 a.m., at the White Bear Lake South Campus kitchen, 3551 McKnight Road, White Bear Lake.

We will be preparing/baking/packaging all of the cakes and cookies needed for sale in the FON Café booth. Additionally, even though *piirakkas* will not be sold in the café this year, we are still planning to again make them to sell as a fundraiser for FACA. We expect the baking, clean-up and packaging to be completed by about 2:00 or 3:00 that afternoon.

Please call me, Pam Rahkola, (651) 429-3319, to volunteer to work (what time you'd be available) and to get directions. All are welcome to join in the fun. *Kiitoksia paljon! Monet kädet tekee kevyttä työtä!!!* (Many hands make light work!)

Sale of Finnish Items to Benefit FACA and Salolampi

A sale of Finnish items from the estate of Bette Ruskanen will be held at the upcoming March/April FACA meetings. There will be assorted glassware by Iittala, 1970s dinnerware by Nuutajarvi (Pioni pattern), jewelry by Aarikka and Kalevala Koru, various types of Finnish-related books and other Finnish miscellaneous items. All proceeds from this sale will be dedicated to FACA and the Salolampi Foundation.

Mark Munger, *Sukulaiset: The Kindred*

By Beth Jarvis

I was anxious to read Munger's latest book on American Finns. His first book, *Suomilaiset*, was set in Duluth in the early 1900s, around the time Mom's folks settled there.

This new work is set in the 1930s during the "Karelian Fever" period among American and Canadian Finns. (Mom told me about Communists who tried to convince grandmother to go to Karelia, an area not far from Leppävirta which she'd left about 20 years earlier.) The book continues through the end of World War II and up to 1991.

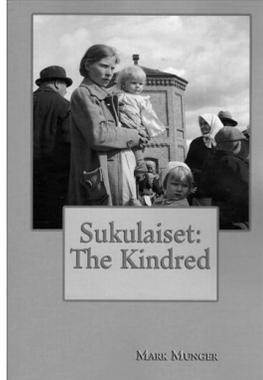
The narrative tells of several people who did go to Russia and the hell they found in Stalin's "workers' paradise" and of some Estonians who battled the Nazis during World War II at home, then fought with the Finns during the Winter War and Continuation War.

Munger, a Duluth judge, is a highly talented storyteller. While this book is fiction, he drew on the experiences of a friend during the wars in Estonia and Finland. His fictionalized characters interact with some real people, such as Mayme Sevander's family. (Sevander wrote *They Took My Father* about her family's experiences in Stalinist Russia.) He provides brief biographies of the real people, and also lists an ample bibliography of books, films and websites to please even the pickiest academic or history buff.

On my last trip to Finland, cousins took me on the ferry from Helsinki to Tallinn where I visited some of the places featured in the book. In the book, the trip from Tallinn to Helsinki is a death-defying rescue of a main character from Nazi clutches. (My most vivid memory of the ferry trip to Helsinki was of young men with rolling luggage-type racks stacked high with 24 packs of beer they brought home from Tallinn.)

This novel is a real page-turner for fans of historical fiction, Finland and Estonia.

Funding for this work was provided by Finlandia Foundation and Paul Vestestein, the friend whose life inspired this novel.



SISU Seminar News

By Kathleen Ristinen

The SISU Finnish Language & Culture Seminar is pleased to announce that Pasi Lautala and Meghan Pachmayer performing as Duo Tupelot will be presenting a program at the 2016 SISU Seminar.

Duo Tupelot comes from Hancock in the UP of Michigan and consists of Pasi Lautala and Meghan Pachmayer. Lautala is a Finnish native with four accordions and a one-way train ticket; almost ten years ago, Meg jumped onto the train with her bass. Pasi and Meg play and sing a mixture of old and modern folk and dance hall tunes from Finland, including some original compositions. Pasi is also the lead vocalist and accordionist in the "arguably third best Finnish polka band in the UP," the PasiCats.

The 2016 SISU Finnish Language and Culture Seminar will be held from July 31 to August 6 at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Teachers will be Anna Leppänen, Johanna Hietikko Tigert, and Kata Hyvärinen; the seminar includes 25-30 hours of Finnish Language Study. Registration forms and deposits are due before April 30. For forms and more information, please contact Kathleen Ristinen, kaisa@eurekanet.com or 740-592-1157. Please visit our Facebook page, SISU Finnish Language & Culture Seminar.

Support Finnish Music Benefit

You are cordially invited to a fundraising event to support a professional Finnish classical music series in 2017 celebrating 100 years of Finland's independence on Saturday, April 16, 2016, at 5 p.m. at the home of Reino and Liisa Ojala, 5 Salem Lane, Sunfish Lake, Mn 55118.

Artistic Director Craig Randal Johnson will present details of the series followed by a buffet dinner. A string quartet of musicians from Minnehaha Music will play during the function.

Please RSVP by April 13 to Liisa Ojala at address above by sending a check for \$50, tax deductible, written to "Springboard for the Arts" (include 'Finnish Music Past and Present' on memo line for matching donation).

For additional information write to: tonttucraig@gmail.com, or for directions: liisa.ojala2@gmail.com

Two Concerts

In April, two Finnish-related concerts will take place at Central Lutheran Church.

Organist Kalle Toivio

On Sunday, April 17 at 4 p.m., organist Kalle Toivio will be in recital with a program including J. S. Bach's *Prelude and Fugue in C minor* (BWV 546), music by César Franck and McNeil Robinson, as well as two of Toivio's own works.

Kalle Toivio is currently one of three finalists in the 2016 American Guild of Organists National Organ Improvisation Competition to be decided in June, in conjunction with the 2016 AGO national convention. Toivio has toured in Europe, Japan and the United States, and has performed on television and radio in Finland, England, Belgium and Austria. With his sister, cellist Seeli Toivio, he has performed as Duo Toivio in Chicago and at Carnegie Hall in New York.

Toivio graduated from Sibelius Academy with a bachelor's degree in church music as well as a master's degree in piano performance. He is the founder and acting dean of the Finland Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (FINAGO). He now teaches in the Manhattan School of Music Precollege and also serves as organist and director of music at the Church of Notre Dame.



Organist Kalle Toivio

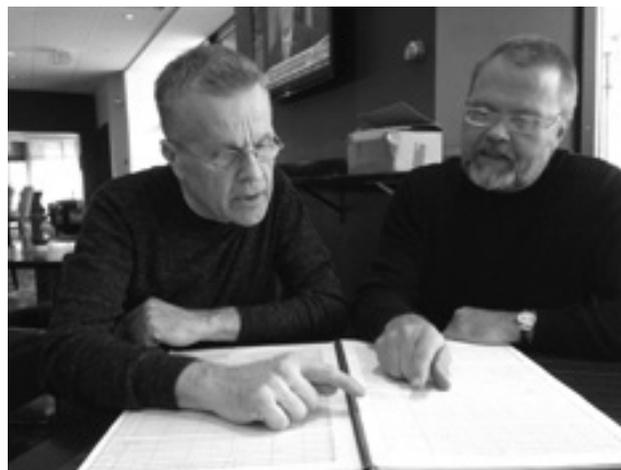
Finlandia Meets Earth Day

On Saturday, April 23 at 2 p.m., the Masterworks Chorale and Orchestra of Augsburg College will

mark Earth Day with *Finlandia Meets Earth Day*. The program will present a work by contemporary Finnish composer Olli Kortekangas, *Seven Songs for Planet Earth*. The texts for the piece are poems by Wendell Berry, a farmer, poet, and environmental activist who celebrates both the despair and the beauty of planet earth. The chorale will be joined by Angelica Cantanti Children's Chorus, directed by Nancy Grundahl. Also on the program is a piece by Minnesota composer Steve Heitzeg. The concert is partially funded with a grant from Finlandia Foundation National.

Masterworks Chorale of Augsburg was founded 22 years ago and is directed by Peter Hendrickson. The choir, which numbers more than 100, has sung locally with the Minnesota Orchestra and at Carnegie Hall in New York. Among other contemporary works, it performed the English-language premiere of Finnish composer Kari Tikka's opera *Luther*.

For both performances, a free-will offering will be taken. Central Lutheran Church is located at 333 S. 12th St., Minneapolis.



*Masterworks Chorale conductor Peter Hendrickson (right) reviews with composer Olli Kortekangas (left) the music score for his *Seven Songs for Planet Earth* that will be performed on April 23.*

Conversational Finnish Class

Tuesdays, 4:00-5:30 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

February Program Recap

By Jeanne Swope, with information provided by Ralph Tuttila and Dennis Halme

Our February gathering was a potluck supper starring a row of fine pots of pea soup! Members brought other items to turn a soup supper into a wonderful spread.

Best of all, we had the music of Finn Hall to warm the evening. The band dedicated the first number, *Ellin polkka*, to Kathy Chambless's memory. Kathy was so much a part of all our events, and she was on our minds throughout the evening.

Finn Hall also played old standards known to Finnish-Americans, such as *Kulkurin valssi* (Vagabond Waltz) *Metsäkukka* (Forest Flowers), and *Maailman Matti* (Worldly Matt). They also played two tangos, and a foxtrot by the well-known Finnish folk fiddler Konsta Jylhä. They ended the program with the longdance (circle dance) to the music called *Lampaan polska*.
Continued next column

In Memoriam

Kathy Chambless

Long-time FACA member Kathy Chambless, age 69, passed away unexpectedly at her home in Burnsville on February 18. Kathy retired from the State of Minnesota after 25+ years. She was preceded in death by her parents, John and Julia Hill; siblings, Hilda (John) Svigel, Leonard, Floyd and Reino Hill. She is survived by her loving husband of 36 years, Michael; son Brian; siblings Roger Hill and Trudy (Myrel) Henning; sisters-in-law, Donna, Sue, and Ruth Hill, also by many other relatives and friends. A memorial service was held on February 27 at the United Methodist Church, Chisholm.



Kathy was a very active member of FACA and other organizations throughout the Finnish community. She was a willing volunteer that could always be found working at whatever Finnish event was happening. From being a greeter at the

When a last waltz was then requested, Tia and Brian Smith danced beautifully to *Jääkukka* (Ice Flowers). Conversation and coffee continued on after the music and dancing ended.

More Finn Hall

Want some more Finn Hall music? Here are two opportunities to hear the band and observe the St. Urho's Day.

Wednesday, March 16, 5– 8 p.m., Finnish Bistro: 2264 Como Avenue, St. Paul. Celebrate St. Urho's Day at the Bistro with an evening of music, dance and special menu items created for this special occasion. No cover charge! For more information, please see Finnish Bistro's website.

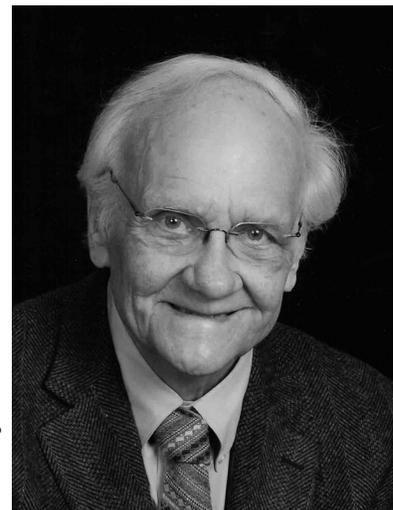
Sunday, March 20, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m., the Eagles Club: 2507 East 25th St., Minneapolis. Finn Hall Celebrates St. Urho's Day at Eagles! Come, wear your purple and green and celebrate with an evening of music and dance at the Eagles! \$5.00 cover charge. Food and drinks available for purchase.

Joulu celebration, to hosting coffee at the FACA programs, she could always be counted on to help out. She was the primary cookie dough mixer on Baking Day and always volunteered to work several shifts EVERYDAY! during the Festival of Nations, either in the Café or the cultural booth. She was a member and active participant in the Finnish Genealogy Group-MN and was always a volunteer for them at their hosted events. She also volunteered yearly to help with the Salolampi phonathon. She was a hard-worker who always showed up with a smile and will be dearly missed.

Bob Nelson

Longtime FACA member Robert Owen Nelson, age 86, passed away on February 2. Preceded in death by beloved wife, Barbara. Survived by son, Eric; daughter and son-in-law, Anne and Bradley Colombo; and grandchildren, Daniel, Molly and Joseph Colombo.

Robert was a graduate of the University of Minnesota. He spent his career as a teacher at the Lino Lakes Correctional Facility. He was a member of and a
Obituary continued next page



volunteer for many organizations including the Minnesota Historical Society, Fort Snelling and the Finnish American Cultural Association. He was an avid participant at multiple churches. Valued for his friendliness, wit and many distinctive traits, he will be missed by many. A remembrance service was held on Saturday, February 13, at Commons on Marice in Eagan. Memorials are preferred to the American Heart Association and Minnesota Historical Society.

Bob enjoyed FACA and helped out whenever and wherever he could. He was the baking day dishwasher for several years and could always be counted on to help out in the Finnish Café at the Festival of Nations. He was also a member, for many years, on the FACA Salolampi scholarship awarding committee.

Events Calendar

Mar. 18 FACA program, International Institute of Minnesota, 7:00 p.m.

Mar. 20 Finnish Culture through Movies. Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis, 6:00 p.m. Movie to be announced. See Minnesota Finnish Pages calendar in early March.

Mar. 25 Deadline for April *Utiset*. Send your calendar items and articles to facaeitor@gmail.com by midnight.

Mar. meeting rescheduled to April 2 Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota. Field trip to the Minnesota History Center for presentations on genealogy resources available online and at the center.

April 2 Diane Jarvi and Dan Newton concert at Mindekirken (Norwegian Lutheran Memorial Church), 924 E. 23rd St., Minneapolis, 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by the Edvard Grieg Society.

April 15 FACA program, International Institute of Minnesota, 7:00 p.m.

April 17 Kalle Toivio in organ recital, Central Lutheran Church, 333 S. 12th St., Minneapolis, 4:00 p.m. (See pg.5.)

April 23 *Finlandia Meets Earth Day* concert, Central Lutheran Church, 333 S. 12th St., Minneapolis. 2:00 p.m. Olli Kortekangas' work, *Seven Songs for Planet Earth*, with the Angelica Cantanti Children's Chorus. Watch for more info in the March newsletter. Saturday, April 23, Central Lutheran Church, 333 S. 12th St., Minneapolis. (See pg.5.)

April 30 Baking Day for Finnish Café at Festival of Nations, White Bear Lake High School South campus kitchen. (See pg.3.)

April 30 Deadline to apply for a Finlandia Foundation scholarship to Salolampi Language Village this summer. If you know an interested

young person, ages 6-18, email norgard@paulbunyan.net for information and submit the lower portion of the Partner Organization application, plus a paragraph describing why the student wants to attend Salolampi, to Betsey Norgard, 23035 County Rd. 70, Bovey, MN 55709.

May 5-8 Festival of Nations, River Centre, St. Paul.

May 15-May 21 Spring Adult Week at Salolampi, Concordia Language Village, Bemidji. More information: <http://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/adult-programs/detail/finnish-adult> or (800) 222-4750 or CLV@cord.edu

June 4 National Sauna Day in Embarrass. Sponsored by Sisu Heritage. 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Nelimark Museum. For more information: Marlin Bjornrud at (218) 984-3402.

June 24-25 Annual Midwest Viking and Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festivals, Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Av N, Moorhead. For more information: (218) 299-5452, nordiccultureclubsoffice@gmail.com or www.NordicCultureClubs.org

July 9-July 16 FinnFestUSA 2016. Cruise from Boston to Montreal. For more information: finnfestusa2016.com/

July 31-August 6 SISU Finnish Language & Culture Seminar at the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Register by April 30. For more information: Kathleen Ristinen, secretary, at kaisa@eurekanet.com or (740) 592-1157

Thursdays. Kisarit Finnish American Folk Dancers. St. Sahag Armenian Church, 203 N. Howell St., St. Paul, 7:00 p.m. New members welcome. Call Dan Salin (763) 544-1441.

Fridays. *Keskustelutunti*. Finlanders at the U of M conversation hour, 12:00-1:00 p.m.. Bordertown Coffee, 315 16th Ave. S.E., Minneapolis. For more information: karvo001@umn.edu

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.)

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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.

www.finnfaca.org

Pieniä Paloja

(Little Pieces)

- *Paljon kiitoksia* to all of you who brought food to our *Laskiainen* buffet. Special thanks to the FACA board for their crocks of pea soup, to Kathy Jackson for her traditional whole-yellow-pea soup, and to Kathy Jackson, Pam Rahkola, John Rova, and anyone else who helped set up and clean up!
- More than **three million people stayed in hotels overnight in Helsinki** last year, representing a five percent increase on the previous year and a record for the Finnish capital. Tampere also broke standing tourism records, registering over one million overnight stays in 2015. The increased overnight stays (3.5 million altogether) came from home-grown visitors as well as tourists from such places as Germany, Sweden, Russia and China. In fact, the Chinese proved most eager to explore what the capital had to offer; their numbers grew by 44 percent compared to 2014, and they spent more than their Russian counterparts.
- On February 22, Helsinki Regional Transport reminded commuters in the capital area that **the winter skiing vacation** running through this week would affect local bus schedules and some services would be suspended during the period. Winter vacation in southern Finland this year ran from February 22 through 26, in central Finland the following week, and in northern Finland the week after that. Although snow was unreliable in the south, the northern part of the country remained well supplied.
- Finland is the first Nordic country to have performed a successful face transplant operation on a patient. The medical operation was carried out at the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS) earlier this year. A face transplant is a medical procedure where a patient's facial tissue is either completely or partially replaced with skin and tissue from a donor. Typically patients who undergo the procedure are gunshot or burn victims. The operation is highly demanding and as yet very rare worldwide. The operation carried out in Helsinki is the 35th such procedure in the world.