



Uutiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

May/Toukokuu 2016

The History of an Uncommon Place

Gary Rantala

Gary Rantala of Embarrass will be with us to talk about the history of his town. He will show a couple of short videos, one about the Hanka homestead which is on the National Registry of Historic Places, and the other about Embarrass's designation as one of the United States' "uncommon places." The latter video is mostly taken on the Saari farm, a major potato farm during the time when Embarrass farmers were shipping seed potato stock to Maine (Gary was the designated grip for that recording).

He will cover much of the history of Embarrass from the early days of the French fur traders, to the settling by the Finns in the late 1890s, to major families (Lamppas, Palos, etc.), up to its current status.

Gary Rantala has resided in Embarrass since 1944. He is a graduate of Embarrass High School (1962), and has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Minnesota in Horticultural Science (1966) and an Agricultural Education degree (1974). He owned and operated G.R. Greenhouse and Floral in Embarrass from 1970 through 2012, and taught vocational agriculture at Cherry High School from 1973 to 2003.



Program In Brief

Uncommon Place Gary Rantala

**May 20, 7:00 p.m.
International Institute
1694 Como Ave., St. Paul**

He currently serves as school board clerk for St. Louis County Schools, teaches a weekly conversational Finnish class and serves on church and community organizations and boards. He and his wife Sharon have three children, Kristin, Bryan and Lora, and eight grandchildren.

**Don't forget that May is our annual election of officers.
We need a quorum for the election.**

Summer Calendar Issue Coming in June

June is the summer calendar edition. Please send us your group's Finnish activities from June through September! Deadline is May 27 by midnight to facaeditor@gmail.com.

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President's Message

By Gene Ollila

In an amazingly short time, we have gone from shivering weather to heat, and a gray/brown landscape to vibrant green. I've seen the first mourning cloak butterflies; the earliest migrating birds, such as ring-necked ducks, Canada geese, juncos, bluebirds and phoebes, have settled in. I just love to get up in the morning and listen to the symphony of sounds warming up for the day. Our lilacs are starting to bud out already, and tulips are starting to bloom.



FinnSource, a new group of Finns coming together, initially to plan the centennial of Finnish Independence in 1917, held an open meeting at the Danish Center, where discussion was lively. From my perspective, FinnSource is complementary with and not a replacement for FACA. Besides the Centenary, it will also help increase the virtual and potentially the actual Finnish presence in the Nordic community. This is a lot of activity, and I have been reminded that most of us are Finnish Americans, not Finns. I see this as the story of four blind-folded people feeling different parts of an elephant and describing what kind of animal it is. Each is correct to a degree, but each description is different. My belief is that there is a need for vibrant, active individuals to get together to help all Finnish-related organizations work together. I love history, but my optimistic side also looks ahead at what can happen if we all work together.

The program at the FinnSource event included live music. Finnish composer Olli Kortekangas spoke about his *Seven Songs for Planet Earth*, which was performed the following Saturday at the *Finlandia Meets Earth Day*. In addition, vocalist David Fillman, a Sibelius Academy applicant, sang Finnish music, accompanied by Craig Johnson on the piano.

We had a wonderful April program, featuring Mark Phillips, Commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Commission. This group is under intense legislative scrutiny at this time. I thought Mark did a wonderful job laying out the issues facing the IRRB and the Iron Range as a whole.

Planning for the Festival of Nations is proceeding. We still need more help. If you can volunteer a few hours for the May 5-8 event at River Center in St. Paul, please contact Gill Kinnunen for the Culture Booth, and Richard Harju for the Café.

If you have any interesting information or ideas to send to me, please do so or give me a call. At our next board meeting, we will be discussing speakers for next year.

I still hope to hear from some of you about English translations of original Finnish stories written at the time settlers were arriving in America. Our May speaker will be Gary Rantala of Embarrass, talking about the history of Embarrass and the Heritage Homesites, and perhaps the Flying Finns.

Board Notes

By Ruth Erkkila



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

President Gene Ollila called the April FACA board meeting to order on April 12 at 6:35 p.m. in Bakers Square restaurant in St. Paul. Present, besides Gene, were Dennis Halme, John Rova, Janie Ahola, Phillip Erickson, Bud Berry and Ruth Erkkila

The minutes from the March meeting were approved. Janie Ahola gave the treasurer's report and said that our balance is very nearly equal to what it was at this time last year.

Programs: for April, Mark Phillips, Commissioner of the IRRRB, will talk about *Sisu on the Iron Range*, for May, Gary Rantala from Embarrass will talk about the history of Embarrass.

New officers will be elected at the annual meeting in May. The nominating committee is Urho Rahkola and Richard Harju; they will present the candidates to the membership at the meeting.

Phillip will draft a contract between FACA and Kathryn Hill for management of the Finnish Café at the Festival of Nations.

The Finnish Culture Booth at the Festival of Nation will feature folktales about animals. There will be a wheel to spin; a spin will choose an animal. The volunteer in the booth will put on a hat representing that animal and tell (or read) a tale about the animal. Janie is creating a *Kalevala* display for the booth.

Dennis will present the Sauna Bucket at the April program.

There was a discussion about how event

announcements are handled. Events are listed when possible in the *Uutiset*. Deadline is towards the end of the month with publication at the beginning of the month (check the calendar). Announcements can also be made on the FACA website. Normally e-mail notices to the entire membership are reserved for unusual circumstances, such as the death of a member. The Board makes the decision about sending out an e-mail notice.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

2015 Sauna Bucket Award

In recognition of many years' service, FACA awarded the 2015 Sauna Bucket Award to Stella Arola and Edith Boos, the Pentinen sisters.

For those who are not familiar with this yearly award, it honors a member who has made a significant contribution to FACA or the Twin Cities Finnish community.

Here are some of the many contributions from our winners: volunteers at the Festival of Nations Finnish Café and Cultural Booth for many years; volunteers on Baking Day for many years; often served refreshments at FACA programs; volunteered at the Hjemkomst Festival in Fargo; participate in the Salolampi Finnish Language Village Scholarship phonathon as on-site caller; attended many FinnFest USA Festivals; attend *Oppitunti*, the Finnish conversation group; prepared and served food at *Pikkujoulu*; donated a handmade item for raffle at *Pikkujoulu* (Edie); served on the FACA board of directors as secretary and then as auditor for three years (Stella), and as treasurer (Edie); always join in and work hard; give and volunteer from the heart and always bring cheerfulness to volunteer events!



Stella and Edie.

2016 Hibbing Finnish Accordion Dance Festival

By Vern Simula

A "dance" festival? *Kyllä!* (meaning "Absolutely!" or "Exuberantly YES!")

The first-ever Hibbing Finnish Accordion Dance Festival will be held Saturday, July 23, at the Mesaba Co-op Park's historic Finn hall pavilion, located eight miles east of Hibbing. If you are coming from the Twin Cities, follow this route: Take Hwy. I-35 north to Cloquet exit; follow Hwy. 33 north to Hwy. 53 and take 53 north to Hibbing exit; go west on Hwy. 37 approximately 20 miles to Hwy. 5 sign; when the Thirsty Moose Tavern is on your left, turn left (south) on Mesaba Park Road and go about one-half mile.

The nationally-acclaimed Finn Hall Band of the Twin Cities will play the waltzes, polkas and schottisches, the dance music so dear to earlier generations of Finnish Americans and many others.

The day's program is as follows:

A *tori* (market place) will take place all afternoon with artists, crafters and musicians.

2:00 p.m. A "Concert for Reminiscing" includes Gerry Henkel performing his magic on the kantele; Oscar Forsman on piano accordion; and the Finn Hall Band with accordion, violin, mandolin, bass, and nyckelharpa. This concert is designed especially for the elderly who wish to recall the wonderful Saturday night dancing of their younger days. Dancing assistance will be available for those who wish to try dancing again. Dancing instruction will be available for those who have never learned these traditional dances.

A "social hour" picnic follows at 4:00. Food and soft drinks will be available for purchase.

From 7:00-10:00 p.m., the Finn Hall Band will play a spirited, old-time Saturday night dance.

The festival is designed as a family event for all ages. Admission tickets are \$5.00. Admission is free for those 15 and under.

The festival is co-hosted by the Finnish-Americans and Friends (a local chapter of the Finlandia Foundation) and the Mesaba Range Cooperative Park Association. Funding support has been provided by the Finlandia Foundation National.

For more information or updates, contact Vern Simula at vsimula@pasty.net or (218) 591-5722. A website and Facebook page will be available shortly.

Cokato Spring Program

By Heidi Barberg

The Cokato Finnish American Historical Society will hold its Memorial Spring Program at Temperance Corner on Saturday May 28 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This historic site is located off Highway 12, three miles north on County Road 3. The bake sale will begin at 10:00 and the buildings will be open. At noon, the program will take place, with Tim Jarl as Honored Veteran and Dan Karvonen from the University of Minnesota presenting a Finnish program. Come enjoy some coffee and visiting.

See our website at cokatofinnam.org/.

Piirakka Sale Fundraiser

By Pam Rahkola

We will again be selling *riisi piirakkas* (rice-filled Karelian pies), made on Baking Day as a FACA fundraiser, for the May 20 FACA program, in addition to the usual "leftovers" from the Festival of Nations Finnish Café.

We're making more this year, because we sold out early last year.

If you'd prefer to reserve yours ahead of time, please call Urho Rahkola (651) 429-3319. Otherwise, they will be available for sale before/after the FACA program on May 20, until they run out.

Kiitos paljon!

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

Discover Canada's Finnish American Story

By Marianne Wargelin

Space, although limited, remains available on the FinnFest USA 2016 cruise. People wanting to purchase a berth should contact Cruise Masters at (800) 848-7120. Awaiting you are rich programming, fine conversations and good meals with others interested in things Finnish.

Americans wanting to know the Finnish immigration in North America story will find that FinnFest USA 2016 has created opportunities to discover pieces of that story that no festival has offered before: the St. Lawrence River, Halifax and French Canada. FinnFest USA's 2016 festival on a Holland America cruise ship sailing from Boston to Montreal, July 9-16, will offer a week of lectures, tours, and discussion groups that will enlarge and deepen appreciation for the rich complex story that is Finnish America.

During the Halifax stop, FinnFest attendees will see two exhibits about ship wrecks: the Titanic coming from Europe and the Empress of Ireland traveling to Europe. Attendees will explore in lectures and group discussions international travel's dangers as well as the fact that immigrants did not necessarily come to North America to stay.

Quebec City brings the Finnish American narrative into contact with the French Canadian story. Little known is the fact that Finnish immigrants lived alongside French Canadians, both in the Upper Peninsula and in Northern Minnesota. Henri Grondin, Honorary Consul of Finland in Quebec, himself a French Canadian, will provide a guided tour of the Museum of Civilization's French Canadian exhibit. On board ship, Jim Kurtti, Finnish American Heritage Center director, will make a presentation exploring a Finnish American family history that is also defined as a French Canadian family history.

Throughout the cruise, FinnFest USA attendees will have Prof. Richard Ojakangas on board as a resident expert on St. Lawrence River geology. He will make a presentation and lead group discussions.

FinnFest USA 2016 will introduce a new exercise form, *asahi*, invented in Finland in 2004 and now available every morning to FinnFest USA 2016 attendees. This Finnish health exercise is based on eastern traditions of T'ai chi ch'uan, qigong, yiquan and yoga but with a Finnish western

scientific viewpoint. This long term "take-away" from the 2016 cruise will be led by Margaret Vainio, a licensed instructor. These exercise classes will fascinate and engage people at all levels of fitness. A good way to begin the day!

Vainio, a professional choir director and group singing leader, will also present Finnish popular songs that Finns love to sing in community parks and at their cabins. These pop songs represent music written in the twentieth century, representing Finland's versions of the songs sung in the 1940s, '50s, '60s and on through to the end of the century. A person travelling to Finland in the summer, hearing people singing these songs, will likely realize that Finland popular music is more than folk songs and more than its summer arena rock concerts attracting 20,000-30,000 people in a weekend. Finns also gather together to sing. FinnFest 2016 will offer its attendees a chance to sing these songs with Margaret guiding the fun in a musical world that seldom travels past the Finnish borders.

Contemporary conversational Finnish may not be what your parents and grandparents spoke when they didn't want you to hear, but Dan Karvonen, acclaimed Finnish language instructor at the University of Minnesota, is joining the cruise; he intends to help you develop some speaking ability—another take-away after a week on the ship.

Maybe you know Aki Kaurismäki as a film director of such films as *Leningrad Cowboys* and *Man Without a Past*. He gets the attention, winning recognition at the Cannes Film Festival and the Oscars. But his brother Mika Kaurismäki is an equally important but less well known film maker. FinnFest USA 2016 is providing a chance to participate in a retrospective showing of his films with group discussion led by Emeritus Prof. William Lockwood, University of Michigan Anthropology Dept.

How is Finland managing its long border with Russia? How does Finland work to keep peace and harmony with its neighbor? How is Finland's membership in the European Union defining life for Finns today? Prof. Hiski Haukkala, University of Tampere, will be helping FinnFest USA attendees think about contemporary Finland.



April Program Recap

By Dennis Halme

Mark Phillips, commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB), was the presenter at our April program. Mr. Phillips is an affable and knowledgeable speaker who gave a detailed presentation on Iron Range history, the IRRRB and its function on the Range, as well as past and current conditions in the economy of the region. The program differed from most of our recent presentations in that its focus was on the Iron Range and not on things Finnish or Finnish American. It elicited a great deal of interest since so many of our members have roots in that area.

He began his talk by stating that he would be discussing the state of the Iron Range today (and how it got there), what can be done for it, and the role of the IRRRB. He listed the three main bases of the iron range economy as: taconite, timber and tourism.

Due to the world market, the taconite industry has suffered serious losses (jobs, income, etc.). He spoke of China's dumping underpriced steel into the U. S., finding its way around new tariff laws by shipping steel products (pipes, etc.), as the cause of the current slump in that industry. There is still taconite to be mined but the whole steel production industry is being affected by this situation. He also mentioned that the mining industry has survived through many changes and gone up and down through the years--for example, the building boom of the 1920s followed by the great depression, the war period and post-war growth economy. Hopefully the current difficult period will also be weathered.

The IRRRB was established in 1941 by Gov. Harold Stassen in order to develop industries and resources other than mining in order to diversify the economy of the range region. It is funded by payments which the taconite companies pay in lieu of property taxes to the local municipalities. The portion that the IRRRB receives is used to fund local projects. Some of the projects the board has funded are the Discovery Center (previously called Iron World) and Giant's Ridge Resort and Recreation Area. IRRRB funds have also been used to encourage the development of timber-based industries such as wood and paper products, and biochemical products based on farm and timber-based chemical products. Some investments have been successful, while others have not. The Essar steel mill near Nashwauk is a project which is so far incomplete.

Mr. Phillips touched on the current controversy going on in the state legislature. He also talked a bit about the proposed nonferrous mining in the area near the Boundary Waters and the disagreements between pro-mining people and environmentalists. His opinion is that the mining will eventually be done by someone, but that perhaps truly environmentally protective practices will be developed before that happens. He also addressed attracting the current younger generation ("millennials") into the region by developing the things which they need or expect such as broadband infrastructure, arts and cultural activities, mountain biking trails, micro-breweries, etc. He also said colleges offering four-year degree programs should be developed in the area which have only had two-year programs.

A lively question and answer time followed the presentation. It was truly an interesting, informative evening with a person who appears to be devoted to helping his home area and who has the educational and business experience to suit the position. Coffee and delicious treats followed.

SISU Seminar News

By Kathleen Ristinen

More good news for the SISU Finnish Language and Culture Seminar: our grant applications to both FinnSpark/Kipinä Kerho and Finland Society/Suomi Seura were approved. We are grateful for additional support for this summer's seminar. As of late April, we have received a good number of paid registrations and pending registrations. Late registrations (after April 30) will be accepted if space remains in the seminar. For registration forms and more information, please contact Kathleen Ristinen, Secretary, kaisa@eurekanet.com (740) 592-1157 or in mid-May (218) 564-4299). Seminar fees are: \$450 (seminar); \$20 (SISU membership); on campus housing and food service if desired \$300 (shared room); single room supplement \$150.

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 will include 25-30 hours of Finnish Language study at three levels. Presenters will include Pasi Lautala (accordion) and Meg Pachmeyer (bass); Pasi and Meg play and sing a mixture of old and modern folk and dance hall tunes from Finland (presentation will be open to the public). Other activities are being planned.

Events Calendar

May 5–8 Festival of Nations, River Centre, St. Paul. Information: iimn.org/festival-of-nations/

May 15 Finnish Culture through Movies. Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave South, Minneapolis, 6:00 p.m.
Ella ja kaverit 2 – Paterock, www.finnkino.fi/eng/Event/299937/ Genres: Comedy, adventure, family, domestic.

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

May 20 FACA program by Gary Rantala, Embarrass History (see page 1); FACA Annual Meeting and election. International Institute of Minnesota, 7:00 p.m.

May 21 Finnish Genealogy Group-MN, Elections and sharing of summer plans. Plymouth Apostolic Church 11015 Old County Road 15, 9:30 a.m. Information and driving directions: minnesotafinnish.org/ Select Finnish Genealogy Group of MN on the left-side menu.

May 27 Deadline for items for the June 2016 *Utiset*. Send by midnight to facaeditor@gmail.com.

May 28 Cokato Finnish American Memorial Spring Program at Temperance Corner, Cokato, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. See page 4 for details.

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 10-11 Nisswa Stamman. Pioneer Village, Nisswa. For more information: nisswastamman.org

June 24-25 Scandinavian Hjemkomst and Midwest Viking Festival, 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: page 5 finnfestusa2016.com/

July 23 Hibbing Finnish Accordion Dance Festival. Mesaba Co-op Park, 2:00 to 10:00 p.m. Information: page 4.

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

Thursdays. Kisarit Finnish American Folk Dancers. St. Sahag Armenian Church, 203 N. Howell St., St. Paul, 7:00 p.m. The group does not meet during holidays. 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 or to check on meeting day/time: karvo001@umn.edu

Beginning Finnish Summer Session Offered

Beginning Finnish class to be held at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, June 14-August 4, 6:00-8:20. Students can also connect via videolink from any location.

Non-University of Minnesota students can register through the College of Continuing Education, more information here: cce.umn.edu/. Students 62 and older can audit the course for free or pay \$10 per credit via the Senior Citizen Education Program: onestop.umn.edu/registration/special_for/senior_citizen_education_program.html. For more information, contact Daniel Karvonen at: 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)

- Serving coffee and treats at the April program were Phyllis Kiihn, Ross Kiihn and Jeanne Swope. Luella Zibell also provided a share of the good food. *Paljon kiitoksia!*
- **As we put this newsletter together**, in Finland snow showers were set to blanket the west, including Satakunta, southwest Finland and Pirkanmaa; rising flood waters in the north threatened buildings near waterways, and showers combined with breaking ice could exacerbate flooding; protesters braved unsettled and chilly conditions to stage an anti-government demonstration in downtown Helsinki; and Finland's under-18 ice hockey team beat the U.S. in the World Championship quarter final then beat neighbor Sweden in the final. *Yle*
- **Posti workers will cut Finnish lawns**; patrons order in May for this summer's pilot program. Lawn mowing is part of the new home-delivered services to add more work to mail delivery operations. Traditional mail volume is falling, and Posti hopes its new home services will aid a transformation into a service company. Prices for every-Tuesday mowing: 30 minutes, 65 euros/month; 60 minutes, 130 euros/month. The service will be available in one-month packages. *Finland Today*
- Finland held a **special 24-hour speed enforcement operation** recently as part of a European Traffic Police Network campaign. Some 4,800 drivers were caught during that period for not observing speed limits. The number of offenders this year was 400 greater than in last year's campaign, but still came in below the police's projection of 5,000 speeders. The police credit its expanded network of automated traffic monitors, also known as one-legged policemen. *Yle*
- **Carrots grown domestically are running out of stock** in the grocery shelves. Only imported carrots are available for the remainder of spring. According to the wholesalers, domestic carrots are available at this time for industrial use; however, the remaining supplies cannot be delivered to stores for consumers. The carrot shortage is country wide, and is the result of night frosts in autumn that thoroughly froze the roots, leaving some planted carrots unharvested. *Turun Sanomat*