



Utiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

November-December/Marraskuu-Joulukuu 2015

Finland's Struggles for Independence - New Research Professor Juhana Aunesluoma

For the November program, we are excited to have Dr. Juhana Aunesluoma from the University of Helsinki and the University of Minnesota with us. He will talk about how Finns today view Finland's struggles for independence in the 20th century.

It is interesting to consider how differently Finns have viewed the conflicts and issues now and in the past. Today views are less politicized than they used to be. There are many narratives out there, but not a single dominant point of view. In school textbooks, students read more than one interpretation of their history.

Finland's position vis á vis the Holocaust (particularly certain Finnish police units' collaboration in Lapland in 1941-44 with the German Einsatzkommando) has been a really hot topic in Finland over the past few years, but other themes dominate people's understanding of the wars.



Juhana Aunesluoma was born in Helsinki in 1967. He graduated from the University of Helsinki (Master in Social Sciences) in 1993 and received his doctorate from Oxford University in 1998. In 2010 he became the Director (Research Director) of the Network for European Studies, a multidisciplinary research and teaching unit in the University of Helsinki devoted to the study of Europe in all its historical and contemporary diversity.

From 2015 to 2017, he will be the Government of Finland and David and Nancy Speer Professor in Finnish Studies at the University of Minnesota.

Coffee, treats, and conversation will follow the program. Remember that we are now beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Program In Brief

Finnish Independence *Juhana Aunesluoma*

November 20, 7:00 p.m.

International Institute

1694 Como Ave., St. Paul

*For help finding a ride to the program:
call any of the board members*

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President's Message

By *Gene Ollila*

Hei, all FACA members, family, and friends,

Welcome to a continued beautiful fall season, one of the longest on record, according to Dr. Mark Sealy at the University of Minnesota; the growing season has been 25 days longer than average. As I write, we are still seeing bluebirds, and some of the warblers are still here! I'm hoping that we will have a "normal" winter with some snow and cold weather, without the January and February thaws of recent years.



I hope that many of you sign up for the Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast on November 24. In addition to good table mates and a good meal, there promises to be a very good program. Contact Janie Ahola if you need a ticket (see her contact information in the column to the left). Later, you can start your holiday at *Joulu—a Magical Finnish Christmas*; more information is available on page 4 in this issue of the *Utiset*.

In recognition of Finnish Independence Day coming up on December 6 (see calendar on page 7 for our local observance), I think that hearing more and current information about Finland's independence struggles and postwar concerns would be most appropriate. To that end, our program on November 20 will be presented by Dr. Juhana Aunesluoma, the new Nancy and David Speer Professor at the University of Minnesota. His expertise is European politics and history, and he will talk about Finnish political thought since World War II. This promises to be a very good program, as was Maria Hokkanen's Finnish language discussion at the last program.

The first Festival of Nations organizational meeting will be held later in November. The topic for the cultural exhibits is *Folklore and Fairy Tales*. Kaarina Kotkavuori has volunteered to assist already, and I am looking for more of you to show your interest in preparing this venue. In addition, we need an overall head for our FON efforts (including the Finnish Café). Please let me know if you are interested in taking on this role.

Finally, it's time to nominate a recipient for the Sauna Bucket award, our recognition of an outstanding FACA volunteer. Please contact me or one of the other board members with the name you suggest. *Kiitos paljon.*



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 Ruth Erkkila



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

The FACA board meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 13, did not have a quorum present; therefore, no business was conducted but general discussion was held. Attending were President Gene Ollila, Treasurer Janie Ahola, Board Member-at-Large Phillip Erickson, and Past President Bud Berry. Absent: Vice President Dennis Halme, Secretary Ruth Erkkila, Membership Chair John Rova.

Two board members (Dennis and Ruth) and a number of other FACA members were in Buffalo attending FinnFest 2015.

Janie presented the treasurer's report and will also present this at Friday's program. The breakfast with eight students and one teacher from Finland's Sibelius Academy Conducting Class was cancelled because there were only three members from FACA signed up for the event.

Prior to our next meeting, Gene wants each of the board members to read/review the FACA Board of Directors and Committee Responsibilities (amended 08/15/2012) and provide input (e.g., new, modified or redistributed responsibilities). Gene would also like the board members' opinion on whether we should continue volunteer work for the Festival of Nations Café and Cultural Booth.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 6:30 p.m., at Bakers Square in St. Paul.

Genealogy Research Day, November 28

The Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota is holding its annual Genealogy Research Day on Saturday, November 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Do you have an old letter from Finland that you think may hold family secrets? Do you know your great grandmother's "maiden name" (or wish you did)? Where did your migrating forebears first touch shore in North America? What techniques and resources are being used in genealogy? Group members will be available to help with ancestor searches in both the American and Finnish sources. Translators will also be available for documents in Finnish. This is a golden opportunity to find out more—or to find out how to find out more. Everyone welcome. The day includes a potluck lunch.

Research Day will take place at the Plymouth Apostolic Church, 11015 Old County Road 15.

In case of bad weather that might lead to cancellation, check the Finnish Genealogy Group section of the Minnesota Finnish Pages website, minnesotafinnish.org. Click on Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota in the left column.

In Memoriam

Long time FACA member **Beatrice (Bea) Koski Hiben** passed away on August 27, 2015. She loved all things Finnish. A memorial service for Bea was held at Oak Hill Baptist Church on October 4.

Sharon Lund Filiatrault passed away July 23, 2015. She was always willing to pitch in and worked multiple shifts every year at the Festival of Nations Finnish Café. A memorial service was held for Sharon at the Lakewood Memorial Chapel on Saturday, October 3.

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

Joulu—Magical Finnish Christmas Planned

By *Betsey Norgard*

Christmas may be six weeks away, but *Joulu—Magical Finnish Christmas* arrives in Minneapolis on Saturday, December 12.

Joulu is the Finnish community's day-long celebration of Finnish Christmas traditions and customs. It was organized four years ago to join together the various Christmas events and traditions in one place, at one time—and to invite the Twin Cities community at large to join us. Bring neighbors and friends—people with or without Finnish roots.

Chef Soile Anderson's Christmas Holiday Buffet (noon to 2:00 p.m.) offers a full menu of Finnish traditional holiday foods—Christmas ham, breads, salmon platter, *rosolli* (beet salad), *lanttulaatikko* (rutabaga casserole), *porkkanalaatikko* (carrot casserole), and Scandinavian strawberry torte. Make it a family tradition!

The *Kauneimmat Joululaulut* (Most Beautiful Christmas Songs) sing-along program at 3:00 p.m. is the same program that will take place all across Finland in December. Started there more than 40 years ago by the Finnish Mission Society, *Kauneimmat Joululaulut* is an opportunity for people to join together in singing their favorite traditional Christmas songs, as well as newly-composed music. The offering taken supports projects around the world that promote peace and provide basic help to people in need. In Minneapolis, we will use the same songbooks as in Finland. The music of the Ameriikan Poijat brass septet will fill the sanctuary with bright holiday music.

Added to these highlights are the viewing of Christmas films, activities for kids, a wreath decorating contest, a Finnish café featuring holiday sweets—ginger cookies, prune tarts, cardamom bread—to eat there or take home to bake. Also, shop for Christmas gifts in the marketplace. All this in one day!

Tickets are required for the Christmas Buffet: \$35 for adults, \$15 for children ages 5-12, and free for children under 5. To reserve online, go to <http://christmas-buffet2015.eventbrite.com> or call 612-460-1573. The deadline to reserve is midnight on Friday, December 4.

All other events at *Joulu* are free. Please consider

making a donation to *Joulu*; with increased costs each year, *Joulu* will not be sustainable in future years without additional financial support. With your donations to Joulu we can continue to offer the event without an entrance fee. Donations can be made online at the Christmas Buffet site above or in the donation boxes at the event.

For additional information, go to joulumn.org or call (651) 270-9784. *Joulu* is co-sponsored by Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities, Finnish American Chamber of Commerce Minnesota, AlwaysMod, FACA, Minnesotan Suomi-koulu/ Finnish Language School of Minnesota, and the Honorary Consulate of Finland, all in partnership with Christ Church Lutheran.



Cokato Holiday Celebration

We warmly welcome you to our 2015 Scandinavian Bazaar at 16144 20th Street SW, Cokato, for events on Friday, December 4, and Saturday, December 5.

The Bazaar and Bakery will offer beautiful, unique Scandinavian gifts, imported candy and specialty baked goods, including prune tarts, Karelian rice pies, pasties, *pulla* (Finnish coffee bread) and more. There will also be a variety of Scandinavian activities for all to enjoy.

Win a custom outdoor timber-built sauna with cedar benches and a wood-burning sauna stove. Raffle tickets are \$10 each and available at the bazaar. Please contact Jess Wisuri for ticket information at (763) 645-3346 or jess.wisuri@gmail.com

Summary of Activities

Friday, December 4 from 4:00-9:00 p.m.:
An evening of Scandinavian Tranquility

Saturday, December 5
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.: Family Fun Day
3:30: Gather at the Cokato Finnish Cemetery for the lighting of the candles
4:30: Potluck supper and songs begin at the township hall

Check us out on Facebook for more information and pictures of past years at www.facebook.com/CokatoScandinavianChristmas

Program Recap

By *Dennis Halme*

Maria Hokkanen from Finland was our speaker on October 16. Maria is a visiting teaching assistant of Finnish at the University of Minnesota under the Fullbright exchange program. She has an MA in Teaching Finnish as a Second Language from the University of Turku, and has taught Finnish, for instance, to students in Caen, France. She also speaks French, which she improved while working as an au pair in Canada.

Maria began her presentation with some personal information about her family background in Finland. Her parents have their roots in eastern and western Finland—her mother with Ostrobothnian ancestry and her father with Karelian. She was baptized Maria, which apparently in Finland is considered a very formal name, and preferred the affectionate name she was called at home, Maikku. She is here to teach but is also learning something about "American culture," such as eating as much deep-fried food as you can at the State Fair and never wearing the same shirt or blouse two days in a row. Also, "how are you?" isn't meant as a serious question as it would be in Finland.

Her presentation contained a great deal of information about the basic characteristics of the Finnish language, how it is similar to other languages and why it is so different from the other languages of Europe. Finnish is a Finno-Ugric language and most other European languages are Indo-European. Other Finno-Ugric languages in Europe include Estonian, Hungarian and several languages in northern and northwestern Russia. The only other non-European language in Europe is Basque, spoken in northern Spain and southern France, which has no known relatives.

She then talked about characteristics of Finnish that make it different, such as the many cases, the endings which generally replace prepositions but can be used to express other meanings as well. This accounts for the many long words in Finnish, part of why it is difficult for speakers of other languages to learn. Per Hokkanen, Finnish is in category 4 (of 5 categories) of the most difficult languages to learn. She addressed other characteristics that I will not discuss here. It was, all in all, a very interesting and for me stimulating presentation; and I regret that I did not get to talk to her during *kahvi aika* as many FACA members did. It was a well-attended gathering.

FACA Members Tell: What Was Great at FinnFest in Buffalo?

Two things about FinnFest 2015 stand out—the charter bus trip to Buffalo and the wonderful mix of music at FinnFest itself. I had not been on a bus trip since I was ten and accompanied my mother to the Black Hills. Where else could you attend a Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concert one night and a polka face-off the next, followed the next day by a performance by the only brass septet in North America?

Gil Kinnunen



On the bus! Photo: Urho Rahkola

Two art museums across the street from Buffalo State University had events after the Opening Ceremonies. At the Burchfield Penney Art Center, we could eat and listen some more to Allotar (who had been also in the Ceremonies). At the Albright Knox Art Gallery, we found the exhibition by Finnish artist Eija-Liisa Ahtila. Works shown were video installations on multiple giant screens with sound. I particularly liked two of them—*Horizontal*, which was six screens side by side showing the full height of a very large spruce tree. Ahtila shows us the entire tree without the distortion of looking up. *The Ecology of Drama* was four screens, each on a wall of a square room. From the center of the room, we looked at details and experienced a complex environment, contemplating how differently we, animals and birds may experience time.

Ruth Erkkila

For me, the highlight was that efficient shuttle bus system! Two buses rotated around the city. There were a few glitches, but it was very nice.

Marlene Banttari

Continued on page 6.

FinnFest, continued from page 5

We really enjoyed the Finn Fest 2015 bus trip to Buffalo. A congenial/helpful bus driver topped out the group. He even agreed to take us to Niagara Falls on our last day in Buffalo.



Niagara Falls. Photo: Ruth Erkkila

Pam and I joined a tour of Kleinhans Music Hall, designed by Eliel and Eero Saarinen. The building was completed in 1940 and still looks great. See us at the next FACA program if you want to hear more about the music hall.

Of course the music was spectacular. Every hour a different group would take the stage, including Olli Hirvonen (young jazz guitarist), Allotar (Sara Pajunen and Teija Niku), Papu and Towhead, Finn



Allotar performing. Photo: Ruth Erkkila

Hall, Toivo, FinnAire, plus Wilho Saari performed up in the tori. Some spectacular concerts took place in historical First Presbyterian Church including Ameriikan Poijat with guest artist Alex Jokipii, principal trumpet with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Craig Randal Johnson on piano with clarinetist Dr. Gregory Barrett, and an awesome organ concert by Kalevi Kiviniemi and baritone Jukka Pietila.

The musical finale was a Polka Face-Off on Sunday evening, with the New Direction Band from Buffalo, Toivo and Finn Hall. Dancing was led by the folk dancers from Turku. There was a jam session at the end with many other musicians performing, as well. It was a fun night.



Turku Folk Dancers. Photo: Urho Rahkola

As per usual Finn Fest 2015 was filled with too many events to see/hear and not enough time. In catching some events at the Buffalo Central Library, we stumbled across an amazing exhibit that had just opened on October 4th, which was entitled *Milestones of Science: Books that Shook the World!* It featured a rare book collection of first editions by the world's greatest thinkers, including Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, Ben Franklin, Darwin, da Vinci and others.

One of the ladies on the bus told a humorous story on the return trip. She was a bit tired and found a sitting spot on a bench in a large area off the main space in Kleinhans. A number of men looked at her as they walked in and out of the area. She finally realized she was in the entry area to the men's washroom (equivalent of the women's powder room).

Urho and Pam Rahkola

Of all of FinnFest, I most enjoyed the time on the bus. Of the time on the bus trip, I most enjoyed our visits to the museums in Ashtabula and Fairport Harbor! I want to thank our hosts at the museums who made the visits special.

Kaarina Kotkavuori

Events Calendar

Nov. 15 Finnish Culture through Movies group. Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave South, Minneapolis. 6:00 p.m. *Aikuisten poika/Son of Adults* www.finnkino.fi/eng/Event/300340/ More information: minnesotafinnish.org; click on Suomi-koulu, then Groups, then Finnish Culture through Movies or call (651) 428-3155.

Nov. 20 FACA program, International Institute of Minnesota, 7:00 p.m.

Nov. 24 Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast. (See page 2, President's Message)

Nov. 28 Finnish Genealogy Group-Minnesota Research Day, Plymouth Apostolic Church, 11015 Old County Road 15, Plymouth, 9:30 a.m.- 2:30 p.m. (See page 3.)

Dec. 4-5 Cokato's 2015 Scandinavian Bazaar, 16144 20th St SW, Cokato. Holiday events on Friday and Saturday. (See page 4.)

Dec. 6 Finnish Independence Day celebration, Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave South, Minneapolis. 3:00 p.m. More information: Betsey Norgard, norgard@paulbunyan.net

Dec. 7 Annual Roseville Area Community Carol Sing-Along, Centennial United Methodist Church, 1524 W. County Road C2, Roseville, 7:30 p.m. Joel Johnson, conductor; Karen Johnson, piano; guest performers, Finn Hall, playing Finnish and Swedish songs. Free admission. Please bring a nonperishable item for the food shelf.

Dec. 12 *Joulu: A Magical Finnish Christmas*, Christ Church Lutheran, Minneapolis. (See page 4.)

Dec. 18 Articles and calendar items deadline January *Uutiset*. Send to facaeditor@gmail.com by midnight. You and *Uutiset* staff will finish our newsletter work before Christmas and New Year's!

Jan. 15, 2016 FACA program, International Institute of Minnesota, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesdays. Finnish Conversation Group. St. Anthony Park Library, Como and Carter Aves., St. Paul, 4:00–5:30 p.m. More information or to check on meetings during the holidays: Urho Rahkola, (651) 429-3319

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 (763) 544-1441.

Fridays. Finlanders 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

Where Will FinnFest Meet in 2016?

FinnFest USA 2016 will cruise to New England and Canada on board a Holland America ship. Here is a summary of some relevant information from a brochure available at the October FACA meeting (it will probably be available again at future meetings).

With FinnFest programming aboard the Veendam, the ship will embark in Boston and cruise to Montréal via Bar Harbor, Maine; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Sydney, Nova Scotia; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; and Québec City, Québec. You can enjoy Finnish music, films, cooking demonstrations, talks, and the company of other people of like interests. Dates for the cruise are July 9 to July 16, and rates range from \$1,299 for a double inside cabin to, on the grand end of the spectrum, \$8,598 for a single occupant in a "Neptune Suite" with veranda. The lower end of the range is affordable.

Cruise Masters in Portland, OR, is the cruise organizer, and the website finnfestusa2016.com contains more information. You can call Cruise Masters at 1-800-848-7120 or email finnfestusa2016@finevoyages.com to ask questions or make arrangements.



FACA Membership

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FACA

Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.

dedicated to exploring and preserving

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www.finnfaca.org

Pieniä Paloja

(Little Pieces)

- **Jane Olson, Judy Mikkola and Donna Erickson** served excellent treats at coffee time, October FACA program. *Paljon kiitoksia!*
- ***Finnish Nightmares*** comic goes viral in matter of days. Graphic designer Karoliina Korhonen's new English-language comic strip *Finnish Nightmares* gained more than 70,000 fans around the world in a very short time. Her comic highlights Finnish etiquette and plays on perceived Finnish awkwardness. *Finnish Nightmares* pokes fun at Finnish stereotypes and etiquette with English captions. "I'm sure many identify with Matti and his brand of awkwardness," Korhonen says. The 26-year-old says she is a female "Matti" herself, and that the situations she depicts are largely from her own experiences. To view the comic, search on Facebook for *Finnish Nightmares* and "like" what you find. *Yle*
- A **huge fireball** was sighted over western Finland on Friday, October 23. The Ursa Astronomical Association's online observation system lit up with reports of a large bright

object streaking across the sky on Friday evening. The apparent fireball stirred consternation in neighboring Sweden. Most of the Finnish sightings were from the Turku region, with others ranging from southernmost Hanko to Merikarvia on the Ostrobothnian coast and Mariehamn in the Åland Islands. The object was seen in the west-southwest sky close to the horizon. The streak of light lasted for several seconds, says Jukka-Pekka Teitto, coordinator of Ursa's Artjärvi observation center in Orimattila. Teitto says that while this incident was particularly dramatic, there are in fact observations of meteors or fireballs over Finland nearly every week. Bursting into flame at an altitude of about 100 kilometers, they can often be seen over a large area. Depending on their size and angle of approach, most fireballs flicker out at an altitude of 50-60 kilometers. They usually burn up completely, leaving only ash, says Teitto. "If it's a bigger piece, some of it may strike the earth's surface, in which case it's called a meteorite," he explains. *Yle, SVT, Expressen*