



Utiset

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

February/Helmikuu 2016

Come to Our Annual *Laskiainen* Celebration!

Join us for a pea soup supper and live music from Finn Hall. The FACA board members will supply *hernekeittoa* (pea soup). We ask our members to bring a dish to share, but this is not required. Here is what to bring, by last name:

A-F: bread
G-K: appetizer or side dish
L-R: salad
S-Z: dessert

The winner of the 2015 Sauna Bucket Award will be announced. This annual award honors a FACA member who has made a significant contribution to FACA and the Twin Cities Finnish community.



Laskiainen originated in pre-Christian times, its customs arising from layers of history and many regions of Finland. *Laskiainen* ("sliding down") began as a flax festival. Much folklore evolved around the growing of flax and the spinning of linen. With the coming of Christianity to Finland, *Laskiainen* was incorporated into Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

Laskiainen marked the beginning of the season of light and the time to begin weaving. Since spinning was forbidden during Lent, the spinning wheels had to be cleaned and put away as an indicator that spinning was over for that winter.

In anticipation of spring, thoughts turned to the planting of crops. The farther your toboggan flew through the snow on *Laskiainen*, the taller your flax would grow and the longer your woven linens would be. There were rhymes to shout while sledding, calling for long linens (also special cries for peas, cabbages, potatoes, turnips and rutabagas). If your toboggan capsized, the summer's flax crop would be flattened.

Program In Brief

Laskiainen Celebration

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

Laskiainen was also known as *Rasvatiistai* (or Fat Tuesday). Fat was used to grease the sled runners. Many foods rich with fat were eaten. Eating a lot of bacon would make the flax grow tall. Serving bread with plenty of fat would insure that your flax would be disease-free.

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President's Message

By Gene Ollila

Hei, all FACA members, family and friends,

After the non-winter of late 2015, we now have some skiable snow and lakes are iced over. But even on Lake of the Woods in mid-January, we had only eight inches of ice. The fishing was quite good, though. In spite of the very rare ivory gull seen recently in Duluth, the large number of birds normally seen at this time of year has not appeared, and this seems to be widespread, even in the Sax Zim Bog.



Our January program of facts about Finland by Dr. Dan Karvonen of the University of Minnesota was very stimulating. I was intrigued that anyone may hike or even camp on someone else's land provided they are out of sight of the home site and practice "leave no trace" hiking. Last summer, I found this was true in Germany. A sharp contrast to "no trespassing" signs everywhere in this country! I grew up allowed to walk anywhere in my community, regardless of ownership; and we kids did not harm anyone's equipment, buildings, or land. Sad to say, this is not true any longer.

Our February program celebrating *Laskiainen* is a pea soup supper with music by Finn Hall, and it will include the announcement of the Sauna Bucket winner. ***I am still looking for someone to take the bins (containing the napkins, plates and cups) and get the coffee started because I will not be at the February program. This is of some urgency.***

I am conflicted with all the negative publicity of Middle Eastern immigrants, their desire to start a new life complicated by small groups of them joining terrorist groups attempting to destroy our way of life. I think back to my grandparents who came here with almost nothing and were not considered desirable because of their socialistic way of thinking. Some of them were misled into emigrating to Russia, including an aunt of mine.

Organization is starting for FACA participation in the Festival of Nations next May. Kaarina Kotkavuori is in charge of the cultural booth (theme is *Folklore and Fairytales*), and Kathryn Hill is again heading the Finnish Café. Pam Rahkola is coordinating volunteers for Baking Day. (See April 30 in Calendar, page 7.)

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 Ruth Erkkila



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

President Gene Ollila called the FACA Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:51 p.m., January 12, 2016, at Bakers Square in St. Paul. Present besides Gene were John Rova, Janie Ahola, Phillip Erickson and Ruth Erkkila. Not present: Dennis Halme.

The minutes from the November 2015 meeting were approved. Ruth Erkkila said she would not be at the February board meeting or program. Gene Ollila will also not be there. Treasurer Janie Ahola reported the bank balance. On December 7, 2015, she completed the required annual nonprofit registration with the State of Minnesota for FACA.

We have received donations in memory of Betty Ruskanen. John moved and Phillip seconded to create a special fund with this money and use it for some special purpose.

Phillip suggested FACA join the Council of Nonprofits, where help would be available to officers in fulfilling their duties. John made a motion to join this Council, provided the annual fee is \$100 or less. Phillip seconded. The motion passed.

The board discussed details of the upcoming January program. Gene will bring the coffee pots and start the coffee this time. We are still looking for a hospitality chair. February's program will be a celebration of *Laskiainen*, with each board member bringing pea soup. Finn Hall will perform.

Finland will host the 2016 Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast with Marianne Wargelin as chair. *Joulu—Magical Christmas* 2016 will be the second weekend in December, December 10. The

church and caterer are booked.

There was some discussion of the practice of arranging/providing rides for people who want to attend the program. A motion was passed, calling for removing the statement on the front page of the *Utiset* about calling board members to find rides. This means the board will not be arranging rides for members. Of course informal arrangements among members are perfectly OK.

The board discussed the upcoming Festival of Nations.

FACA's website is active again: www.finnfaca.org

The duties of the officers and board members were reviewed based on the FACA document "FACA Board of Directors and Committee Responsibilities (amended 8/15/2012)." Some changes were suggested, but no action was taken.

The next board meeting will be February 16, 6:30 p.m., at Bakers Square restaurant in St. Paul.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Thank You to Joulu Volunteers!

By Dan Salin

The 2015 *Joulu—Magical Finnish Christmas* was again a wonderful celebration for our Finnish community. I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped with this event, giving their time and energy to make our 2015 Finnish Christmas celebration another successful event.

A big *KIITOKSIA PALJON* to the following volunteers: Kathy Chambless, Liisa Ojala, Clyde and Theresa Lund, Ruth Erkkila, Kathy Jackson, Ruthann Swanson, Gil and Dawn Kinnunen, Phillip Erickson, Delores Salin, Al and Betsey Norgard, Bob and Merryalice Jones, Kaarina Kotkavuori, Gene Ollila, Jouko Sipila, Urho and Pam Rahkola.

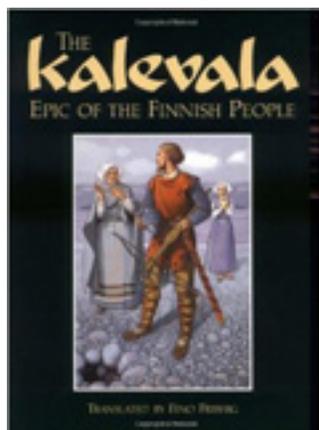
Volunteers are the basis for any successful event. I hope that many other members of FACA will consider volunteering for future events. We need all of you to keep this organization a viable and sustaining voice of the Twin Cities Finnish community.

Kiitos again to all the volunteers!

Finland in Focus: Kalevala Day at the ASI

By K. Marianne Wargelin

On February 28, 1835, Elias Lönnrot signed his name to the bottom of the epic poem that he had just finished, assembled from the many folk poetry fragments collected across Eastern Finland. Each year in modern Finland, the Finnish flag flies on February 28th in honor of this monumental poem which helped the Finnish people to construct a Finnish identity built around these ancient stories.



In honor of this year's Kalevala Day, on February 28, 1:00–3:00 p.m., Juhana Aunesluoma, a historian of contemporary Europe and Finland at the University of Helsinki, and Matti Jutila, a political scientist from the University of Turku and a specialist in nationalism, minority issues and the politics of national identity in current Europe, will share their thoughts about contemporary Finnish identity. Aunesluoma is currently Government of Finland and David and Nancy Speer Visiting Professor in Finnish Studies at the University of Minnesota, and Jutila held the same position in 2012-2015. Marianne Wargelin, Honorary Consul of Finland, will introduce the speakers and provide an introduction to the historic role of the Kalevala for both Finns in Finland and Finnish Americans in the USA.

Who and what is a Finn? Membership in the European Union and Finland's economic success (most symbolized by Nokia) has encouraged people to immigrate to Finland for some time. The sudden arrival of 32,000 asylum seekers from the Middle East and Afghanistan in 2015 led Finns to ask: Could these new arrivals overtax Finland's ability to welcome and integrate even more people arriving from other parts of the world? Can Finland remain Finland?

The 2015 Finnish Parliament elections had reflected these concerns. The Finns Party (*Persussuomalaiset*), a party founded in 1995 around populist values and a concern for Finnish identity, won the second highest vote totals. Their leader, Timo Soini, became Finland's Foreign Minister.

Aunesluoma and Jutila will examine these changes occurring today in Finland and its effect on Finnish identity and culture. While the Finnish economy shows few signs of recovery from a prolonged recession, Finns are divided as ever before about the right course of action and the reforms needed to set the course straight.

How do Finns experience the ongoing change? How have they responded to the arrival of asylum seekers and what effect does this have in Finland? What are the current divisions in Finnish politics and public debates? What are the causes behind the ongoing economic difficulties and how do they compare with previous downturns in the Finnish economy? How does the future look?

Sponsored by Finlandia Foundation-Twin Cities, this event will occur at the American Swedish Institute, Paulson Hall, 1:00–3:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Come to hear Professors Juhana Aunesluoma and Matti Jutila explore these questions. ASI, as its own contribution, will feature a small Kalevala exhibit to complement this event.

For further information about the program, contact Marianne Wargelin, Honorary Consul of Finland, (612) 374-2718. For further information about parking and handicapped accessibility, contact the American Swedish Institute, (612) 871-4907.

Salolampi Scholarships Available from Finlandia Foundation

The Salolampi Foundation is proud to offer all Salolampi villagers automatic scholarships. In addition, Finlandia Foundation National scholarships are available for those who apply through a local Finlandia Foundation Chapter, such as Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities (contact Betsey Norgard, norgard@paulbunyan.net).

With the generosity of the Finnish community through these organizations, Concordia Language Village's premiere language immersion program can be made accessible to every family. Help us spread the word about this wonderful opportunity by sharing our press release with all the details about these scholarships with your communities and organizations. *Kiitos!*

For more information: prweb.com/releases/2015/10/prweb13022965.htm

FinnFest USA 2016 Special Cruise Programming

Looking forward to the FinnFest USA 2016 cruise, July 9 to 16, or making up your mind about going? The week-long cruise, so close to midsummer, will create unique early morning as well as late evening events to bookend daily activities, all with a Finnish twist. This cruise up the North Atlantic coastline from Boston and into the St. Lawrence River promises post-solstice days that will introduce new Finnish connections and revisit general knowledge of Finland and Finnish North America.

Asahi classes will occur each morning with instructor Margaret Vainio. A Saarijärvi, Finland, professional musician and certified Asahi instructor, Vainio will introduce attendees to a unique health exercise (invented in Finland in 2004) based on the eastern traditions of T'ai chi ch'uan, qigong, yiquan and yoga, with a western scientific viewpoint. Asahi (or Asahi Health) is designed to suit everybody, regardless of physical condition or age. Asahi exercise is taught and performed in instructed groups, but Asahi can be performed alone. FinnFest organizers hope this exercise becomes a "take-away," a regular feature of future FinnFest USA festivals.

Finnish language instruction and conversation groups, long an important value of FinnFest festivals, will occur each morning. Dan Karvonen, popular University of Minnesota Finnish language instructor, will supervise early morning learning opportunities both for those with a desire to learn Finnish and those looking to improve or practice their Finnish. In addition to instruction opportunities in the early morning and late afternoon, FinnFest attendees will have the option to eat evening dinners in Finnish conversation groups organized around relevant Finnish North American themes.

Finnish sing-a-longs and Finnish language films will provide after-dinner options. Margaret Vainio will introduce contemporary Finnish pop music and encourage singing along. William Lockwood, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, will introduce the Finnish films shown and, after the viewing, guide informal discussions that explore present contemporary Finland.

Late afternoon and evening lecture options will include a Sunday introduction to the Maine Finnish American community, and, on Monday,

St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes connections to Finnish North America, including the sinking of the Titanic. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday will include opportunities to hear and discuss topics related to contemporary Finland.

A memorial ceremony for Titanic victims will be held in Halifax on Monday, at the cemetery where Titanic victims are buried, including three Finns. Forty other Finns were lost at sea, and 20 survived. An evening discussion will expand on that visit.

Beatrice Ojakangas will demonstrate and talk about Finnish cooking. Attendees will have opportunities to meet her personally during this intimate week aboard Holland America's Veendam. Her husband, Richard Ojakangas, Emeritus Professor of Geology, will interpret the geography of the cruise itinerary.

Summer white nights: The summer equinox will have just happened. The moon will be moving through the first quarter on its way to becoming full. Attendees will experience the North Atlantic coastline north from Boston, sailing through the Maritime Provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, leading finally to the early French Canadian cities of Quebec and Montreal. Those who join the cruise will learn how Finns and Finnish culture connect to both cities.

A festival week with housing and meals provided will create a festival that moves through this Finnish migration route, offering each day a chance to explore eastern seaboard communities with new and old friends. FinnFest USA's still has rooms reserved at all price ranges, many surprisingly affordable. Check the website, www.FinnFestUSA2016.com or call Paul Niskanen and his staff at (800) 848-7120.

FinnFest USA

2016



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

January Program Recap

By *Dennis Halme*

Our guest speaker for the January program was Dan Karvonen, senior lecturer and coordinator of Finnish at the University of Minnesota. He has done previous presentations on the Finnish language and its origins plus Finnish genetics and the origins of the Finnish people. This time he presented a program about his personal observations of Finnish cultural features, customs and laws. It was an interesting talk. He said he has been to Finland eleven times, as a student and as a visitor. He phrased his talk as: "Everyone knows that....but, did you know that....?"

He began with the fact that Finns love their summer cabins (*mökki*) and have between 500,000 and 750,000 for a population approximately equal to Minnesota's (5,500,000). But did we know that Finland has a *jokamiehenoikeus* (everyman's right) law whereby people may camp temporarily on private property, providing they are not in close proximity to the residence of the owner. Pets must be leashed. People must not pick protected plants, though they are free to pick ordinary berries and mushrooms. This rule is common to all Nordic countries. Finns love wild berry picking, mushrooming and just being out in nature. All children are taught to pick berries and mushrooms.

We all know that Finland is a land of forests, but did we know 53% are managed by private owners? Eighty percent of domestic wood used comes from privately owned forests.

He mentioned that the sauna stove in Finland is undergoing an evolution in style from the fire box, *kiuas* (with stones on top), to a round open steel frame holding the stones, also containing an electric heating element.

He talked about good design as a part of the everyday life of ordinary people. Here he spoke about Finns' dislike of clutter, and there is a rule of no shoes in the house. This puts some of us, such as myself, to shame for failing to live up to that ideal!

I found it interesting to learn that while Finland is known for its dairy products, 17% of the population is lactose intolerant. Lactose-free products are widely available.

He included information about Finns' love of coffee (light roast being the main choice, but

brewed strong by using a generous amount of grounds).

He ended his presentation with information about Finnish cemeteries (well-maintained), and his personal experience finding his great-grandmother's grave and attempting to set up a fund among his relatives to have it cared for into the future. (Finnish graves are not given perpetual care automatically as they are here.)

It was another interesting evening with a special guest speaker whom we hope will visit us again in future.

2016 Women's Bandy World Championships

The Women's Bandy World Championship games will be held on February 18-21 at the Roseville Oval. Come cheer for your team; teams from Finland and the USA are among the competitors (Canada, China, Norway, Russia and Sweden will also be present). Who will be best in the world this year?

"Bandy is a team winter sport played on ice, in which skaters use sticks to direct a ball into the opposing team's goal. Based on the number of participating athletes, bandy is the second most popular winter sport in the world; only ice hockey is more popular," according to Wikipedia. For more information, see the USA Women's Bandy Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/usawomensbandy/?fref=nf>

Connect with your team on Facebook. Each team pays for its travel expenses, and USA Bandy pays for hosting the games. Support your team by donating online at <https://www.gofundme.com/WWC2016>. In return, you can get an Official USA Bandy National Team hat.



Erin Patton, 15, a Benilde-St. Margaret student, practiced with the USA U-17 Bandy team. Photo: Star-Tribune

Events Calendar

Feb. 19 FACA program, International Institute of Minnesota, 7:00 p.m. *Laskiainen!*

Feb. 21 Finnish Culture through Movies group. Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave South, Minneapolis. 6:00 p.m. *Kaikella rakkaudella* (With All My Affection) www.finnkino.fi/eng/Event/299450/ More information: minnesotafinnish.org; click on Suomi-koulu, then Groups, then Finnish Culture through Movies or call (651) 428-3155.

Feb. 26 Articles and calendar items due for March *Utiset*. Send by midnight to facaeditor@gmail.com.

Feb. 27 Finnish Genealogy Group-Minnesota. Speaker is U of M Visiting Professor Juhana Aunesluoma from Helsinki: Historical Events in Finnish History Leading to Emigration. Plymouth Apostolic Church, 11015 Old County Road 15, Plymouth, 9:30 a.m. (See website for driving directions and other information: <http://www.minnesotafinnish.org>. Select Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota.)

Feb. 27 Annual Nordic Gala, Sons of Norway, 722 2 Av N, Fargo, 7:00-10:00 p.m. For more information: (218) 299-5452, nordiccultureclubsoffice@gmail.com or www.NordicCultureClubs.org

Feb. 28 Kalevala Day. Profs. Juhana Aunesluoma and Matti Jutila: Contemporary Finnish Identity. American Swedish Institute, 2600 Park Avenue Minneapolis, Paulson Room, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (See article on page 4.)

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

April 30 Baking Day for Finnish Café at Festival of Nations, White Bear Lake High School South campus kitchen. Call Pam Rahkola for information: (651) 429-3319.

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 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/. (See article on page 5.)

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. (See article below)

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

More News about SISU Seminar

The SISU (*Suomen Innokkaat SISUkkaat Ulkosuomalaiset*) seminar, a one-week course of Finnish language study for adults (25-30 hours at three levels) will be held at the University of Minnesota Duluth from July 31 to August 6. Teachers will be Anna Leppänen (beginning/lower intermediate), Johanna Hietikko Tigert (intermediate), and Kata Hyvärinen (advanced).

The seminar fee is \$450 plus \$20 SISU membership; on-campus housing and food service will be \$300 (single room supplement: \$150); registration forms will be available soon and will be due before April 30. Contact: Kathleen Ristinen, Secretary, kaisa@eurekanet.com or (740) 592-1157 for more information or registration forms.

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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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

- Serving *kahvia* and treats in January were Kathy Chambless, Delores and Dan Salin, and Kaarina Kotkavuori. *Kiitos!*
- Furniture retailer IKEA has bought and will expand and refurbish a wind farm in Kemi in an effort to meet its energy needs through renewable electricity production. Ikea has six outlets in Finland and another just over the border in Haparanda, Sweden. *YLE*
- The Finnish National Institute for Health and Welfare says that pregnant women should be even more cautious than before about their consumption of liquorice and the salty liquorice treat *salmiakki*, although this is not a total ban. The ingredient glycyrrhizin can have negative effects on the placenta and make it possible for stress hormones from the mother to be passed on to her growing fetus and could cause problems for the child. Previous research has also found that consumption of liquorice and *salmiakki* can raise blood pressure in some people. *YLE*

(Little Pieces)

- Finland's immigration authority has reported that it had rejected nearly half (41 percent) of asylum applications filed in 2015. The agency said that it approved just over 1,600 applications for asylum last year and is preparing to accommodate up to 50,000 new asylum arrivals this year if the need arises. *YLE*
- Iraqi asylum seekers have continued to withdraw their applications due to the hostile environment and climate in Finland, the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) reported, adding that many have also been disappointed with the painstaking nature of the [asylum] process. Result has been a lot of withdrawals between late last autumn and this winter. *Helsinki Times.*

Welcome, New Members!

Susan & Glen Milbridge, Chanhassen

Tervetuloa!