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**NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN
CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.**

April/Huhtikuu 2008

**“Wood, Earth, and Stone: Rural Finnish Buildings and
Cultural Landscapes in North America”**

**Presented by: Arnold R. Alanen, Professor
University of Wisconsin-Madison**

This illustrated lecture will provide an overview of the rural buildings, farmstead complexes, and cultural landscapes developed by the Finns of North America. Besides Minnesota and the Midwest, examples will be drawn from New England and the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain regions of the United States, as well as the Praire Provinces of Canada.

The program will conclude with illustrations of several representative examples of Finnish-American churches, halls, cooperatives, and other buildings.



Hay barn at farm museum in Kokkola,
Finland. Photo: Beth Jarvis

APRIL FACA PROGRAM

**Wood, Earth and Stone
Friday, April 18
7:30 p.m.**

**St. Peder's Lutheran Church
4600 East 42nd St, Minneapolis**

If you need transportation, call

Marianne Wargelin

at 612-374-2718

Note: This month's program is not at our usual meeting location! We are meeting at St. Peder's Lutheran Church. Address is in the box at left.

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President's Message

By Alan Norgard

With all the talk about climate change, I thought a few stories I saw online from Finnish papers would interest you.

If you are ready for winter to end, maybe you should go to Finland for a taste of early spring. It has been an exceptionally warm winter in most of southern and central Finland this year, and newspaper reports are telling about people already tilling gardens and getting ready to plant potatoes in Helsinki back yards. Contrast this with reports from northeastern Finland where people are shoveling record amounts of heavy, wet snow from their roofs to keep them from collapsing. Some ski trails in the area have been closed because of the danger of trees collapsing from the weight of the snow. Many of the trees are just uprooting because the ground is not frozen after a mild autumn. The situation is unprecedented, and in several areas of the country, including Tampere, power lines have been downed because of a recent wet snow. Many people are hoping for colder, drier weather to allow the snow to lose some weight or blow off the trees. There already is a lot of damage to the forests from the many trees with broken tops and major branches and experts predict damages in excess of 400,000 euros.

Another consequence of the mild winter is that the rabbit population of Helsinki is growing fast, and the damage being done by them is rising. The rabbits are the offspring of escaped and abandoned pets, and due to the mild winter they have been having litters in the winter – something normally not seen. These urban rabbits are eating up everything – trees, bushes, and lawns. Since there are not many natural enemies, the city has resorted to teams of bow-and-arrow hunters and nets to capture the rabbits. Supposedly the best place to spot a wild rabbit in Helsinki is on the National Opera lawn!

Ironworld to host Finn Days

Ironworld in Chisholm, Minnesota, hosts Finn Days July 19 and 20.

Performers include Finn Power, Finn Hall Band, John Scaffeo, Erv's Variety Band and the comedy trio Nyt Naura. Plus, take Tango lessons, play molkkyy, taste ethnic foods, shop the *Tori* Marketplace, enjoy traditional costumes and much more! Explore Ironworld's museum, take a trolley ride and have a great time at Ironworld! Admission is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$6 for students and free to children 6 and under. Ironworld members receive half-off admission. Visit www.ironworld.com for updates or call 800-372-6437 to learn what's going on at Ironworld.



What Makes Finnish Kids Smart?

"We don't have oil or other riches. Knowledge is the thing Finnish people have."--Hannele Frantsi, Ymmersta School Principal

What Makes Finnish Kids So Smart? Is the title of a recent article found in the February 29 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*. The Finns scored highest overall, in an unofficial tally, in tests sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a group funded by 30 countries, monitoring social and economic trends. Finland's students placed first in science and near the top in math and reading.

Countries from all over the world have sent delegations to Finland to learn their secrets. Teachers don't always use or do they have access to the latest technology, students don't spend their entire evenings on homework, nor do they separate the gifted from the more ordinary students. What does Finland do different? To top it all off, college is free!

To read the entire article <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120425355065601997.html>



Welcome New Members!

**Ralph Leiviska-Larson,
Spooner, WI**

**Suzanne Steman, St. Cloud,
MN**

Les Ylitalo, Camillus, NY

Tervetuloa!

Board Notes *By Stella Arola*



L-R: Barbara Nikula Owens, Andreas Ostenso, Stella Arola, Alan Norgard, Kaarina Kotkavuori

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Andreas Ostenso. The Secretary's minutes of the February Board Meeting were approved. The Treasurer's report was approved.

A discussion was had about the plans for the Festival of Nations. A committee consisting of Dan Stalin, Gil Salin, Betty and Aune Ruskanen, Mary Hanft and Sue Harstad will be working on the heritage exhibit. It will be based on pictures of Finnish paintings and architecture. The menu for the Finnish Cafe has been decided upon and all the equipment and supplies have been picked up by Junelle Bernard (chairman). Baking day has been scheduled for April 26th at the White Bear Lake High School. Additional volunteers for the baking day and the Festival will be sought at the April program.

Our April program will have Professor Arnold Alanen presenting his ongoing research into old Finnish architectural sites. That program will be at St. Peder's Lutheran Church in Minneapolis inasmuch as the International Center is not available in April.

Possibilities for future programs were discussed.

Baking Day Update

Thank you so much to all who have volunteered to help at Baking Day and at the Festival. The shifts are pretty well filled. I will get everybody their tickets and directions soon. If you have to make a schedule change, please call me so we can find a replacement (763)434-5399. I want to encourage everybody to attend the Festival of Nations as there is a lot of good entertainment, learning opportunities at the exhibits and good food in the *café* area as well as all the cool things available in the bazaar. It is wonderful to see all the people of different nationalities working together to create a fun, multicultural event. Hope to see you there!

March Program Recap

By Al Norgard

Darrel Nicholson presented our March program titled “Window to the Past”, a look at a master’s thesis that was researched and published by Ralph Smith for the Department of Sociology at the University of Southern California in 1933. This document, titled *A Sociological Survey of the Finnish Settlement of New York Mills, Minnesota, and its Adjacent Territory*, gives an interesting and detailed picture of what life was like in the area.

The presentation started with a quick biography of Ralph Smith and explained the reason why he, a non-Finn, would write about a community he probably started out knowing little about. Mostly, it had to do with the fact that he recognized he was living in a community that was special in many ways because of the large percentage of the population that was Finnish. Because he was living and working there, it was easily accessible to him. It was interesting to note that he eventually married the student that helped him collect and archive his findings.

Darrel showed several slides copied from the book to illustrate just how thoroughly and detailed the work was. There were answers to questions like “what do you do for entertainment”, “what kinds of food do you eat”, “which political party do you like best”? The answers to these questions were many and varied, sometimes predictable, and sometimes not. I could imagine my relatives would have given many of the same responses. As more details emerged from the book, it became obvious why this book is such a valuable and fascinating tool for researchers and historians.

After Darrel was given a copy of the manuscript 30 years ago, he worked to gather and find parts of the manuscript that had been edited out for some reason, and added new source material in the form of letters written from Karelia. The re-publication of the manuscript with added pictures and letters was printed in 2005 and is available from Darrel Nicholson. Proceeds from the sale of the books go to the Timo Riippa Fund for Finnish American Studies at the University of Minnesota’s Immigration Research Center.

Preservation Workshop at FinnFest ‘08

By Darrel Nicholson

When I initiated my research on Finnish American rag rugs many years ago, I learned about an immigrant-made loom stacked in pieces next to a mailbox available for the taking and another in pieces under hay in a barn. I find Finnish handwoven linens and rag rugs, handcarved wooden spoons, and imported Finnish copper coffee pots in second-hand and antique stores. Finnish language books and magazines often languish and disintegrate in these stores. A drive through any Finnish American rural landscape reveals abandoned farmsteads with deteriorating buildings built by Finnish immigrants. How often have you wished you had taken the time to learn more from your grandparents or relatives about their past and life in the Finnish American community? With each lost moment or discarded object, we as Finnish Americans lose part of our history and culture.

A workshop will be held in conjunction with FinnFest this summer in Duluth about our responsibility to preserve our material culture for future generations. This workshop is for everyone who has a collection of objects, whether left to us by family members or purchased in antique stores. It is also for the staff of small local museums throughout the country that are presenting and safeguarding Finnish American cultural collections.

To prepare for this workshop we need to know where these local Finnish museums and private collections are located. We also need to know about the major non-Finnish institutions, such as the Michigan State University Museum, the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Immigration History Research Center, that have Finnish American collections. We are asking you for your help to assemble a list of such museums and collections. If you know of individuals and local museums, large or small, with Finnish American collections, please contact Darrel Nicholson, P.O. Box 6553, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Thank you! I look forward to your presence at the workshop. Please check the FinnFest schedule for the date and time.

Please Note:

The 03/2008 issue of the *Salolammen Sanomat*, included a few typographical errors—e.g., missing apostrophes and missing, extra, or rearranged letters in headlines on pages 1,4,6, and 7. For some reason yet to be discovered (maybe a mischievous printing *tonntu*), special accent characters and apostrophes did not translate accurately from computer to printer. If you have questions, please contact Gil (651-451-2556) or e-mail, minnfinn@earthlink.net.

Soiva* Camp comes to *Salolampi

By Betsey Norgard

This summer *Salolampi* welcomes new villagers to the camp—students, ages 11-17, who are studying music. Specifically, *Soiva* Camp this year, from June 15 to 21, is for 25 students in advanced study of flute, piano, and improvisation and composition. The students will live at *Salolampi*, and every day after breakfast they will take a bus to Bemidji State University for lessons and practice with three music teachers from Finland and two from the U.S.—a ratio of five students per teacher.

In the afternoon the *Soiva* villagers will return to *Salolampi* where they join the camp for afternoon and evening activities. *Soiva* music students will learn some Finnish at *Salolampi*, but not to the same extent as the language villagers.

Soiva Camp is a joint project of Finlandia Foundation National, Concordia College, Bemidji State University, Concordia Language Villages, *Salolampi* Language Village, and the Association of Finnish Music Schools. In future years, the program will increase and focus on different instruments or music.

The fee for *Soiva* Camp is \$955, which includes lodging, meals, all music instruction and practice, and activities at *Salolampi*. Scholarships from *Salolampi* Foundation and Concordia Language Villages can reduce that amount to \$700, when applying within deadlines. Transportation at the beginning and end of the week is the responsibility of the student.

For more information, including bios of the music teachers and application forms, go to www.salolampi.org/village/soiva.html. Or, call Heather Vick at (651) 647-4357, x306. A deposit of \$195 is required with registration.

Conversational Finnish Class

**Tuesdays, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.
St. Anthony Library
Corner of Como and Carter Ave.
St. Paul**

**Everyone is welcome.
For more information, please call
Floyd Niskanen at 763-540-0121.**

On the Road with Urho

By Urho Rahkola

Pam and I attended the St. Urho Day Finnish/Scandinavian Party and Old-Time Dance at the Eagles Club in Northfield, Saturday night, March 15. A group of local musicians, called *Multe*, started the evening, by playing a variety of old time dance tunes, including some Finnish ones. Ralph Tuttila and Ruth Sylte helped organize some dance lessons for those interested. I would guess that there were about 15 or 20 couples on the floor at one time learning some *schottische* steps. Later in the evening, the Finn Hall Band took over featuring the vocals of Elina Ruppert. We had a very enjoyable evening.

On Sunday, Pam and I took a drive to Cloquet to take in the *Mojakka* cook-off at the Northeastern Hotel. I believe this is the 6th year that they have had the *Mojakka* cook-off associated with St. Urho's Day. A \$5 donation allowed one to try out each kind. Each sample was put in a small cup, and after tasting all eight varieties, it felt like I had eaten a full meal. Milk and various breads were also available . . . to cleanse the palette after each sample. Each person was given a ballot to vote for their favorite, but Pam and I had trouble voting for just one of the eight delicious choices. There were a number of fish *mojakka* with salmon, trout and/or whitefish, including a non-cream base version with smoked salmon. The meat *mojakkas* included one with caribou and another that was a venison/beef combination.

My brother Olli was one of the three "celebrity" judges for the event. Olli is on the Duluth FinnFest committee, so I guess that makes him a celebrity. We did not stay to find out the results, but they will eventually appear on the www.mojakka.com web site. Proceeds from the event were donated to the Friends of Animals Humane Society of Carlton County.

Upcoming Events and Uutiset Archive on Line

Stay current with events! Check the on-line calendar on the FACA website for any more recent events! Click on: <http://www.finnfaca.org/Calendar.html>

Back issues of the *Uutiset* are available at <http://www.finnfaca.org/newsletter.html>.

Easter in Kaustinen

By LynnAnne Vesper and Eli Bisonett

A different food is eaten in Finland during Lent, and we have to say it is not nearly so tasty, but oh, so Finnish. Before Easter, our classmates were very eager to have us taste *mämmi*. “It’s very traditional,” they told us. “You should try it,” they insisted. Curiosity got the better of our suspicions, and we agreed to meet our classmate Maarit at her place for *mämmi* tasting. *Mämmi* is made out of rye meal that is fermented with malt and baked. In traditional times, it was valued as a very nutritious food eaten during Lent (when animal products were forbidden). *Mämmi* takes little effort to prepare, so it was also commonly eaten on Good Friday when no cooking was to be done. Maarit took a rectangular box from her refrigerator. When she opened it, we got our first glimpse of the dark brown, nearly black, paste. *Mämmi* is about the consistency of chunky peanut butter, and Maarit, with a certain sadistic flourish, used a spoon to transfer the dark fiber to our bowls. “Mmm, this will be good,” she assured us. She also offered us cream and sugar, which is how *mämmi* is usually eaten in Finland today. In the several days following our first taste of *mämmi*, a quick poll among our circle of friends and acquaintances in Finland revealed that most of them like *mämmi*, and most of them agree that it is probably an acquired taste. Oh, and we did like *mämmi* enough to get our own, and we definitely value its taste as a part of our cultural experience. We put lingonberries in the mixture, much to the horror of those Finns we told about it. We still don’t know why this was objectionable — it made the dish quite palatable.

We have been doing more than eating and studying. On the day before Easter, we participated in a traditional local fest. “*Tikkahiihta*” translates to something like “dart-ski.” The event is a competition, but it is not a test of speed, and not really of skill. The dart-ski course consists of a 1.5km groomed ski loop and a dart board. Each participant skis the loop and then throws 5 darts at the board, completing the cycle three times. An alternative walking loop is available for those who don’t prefer to ski. Competitors start individually, at 30-second intervals. Before the start, each competitor has to declare how many minutes it will take him to complete the event. (One’s estimate should allow time to spend in line to throw darts.) Timepieces are not allowed. The person who finishes closest to his or her declared time is the



Some people appeared in some quite unusual costumes for dart-skiing. Maybe they wanted to conceal their identity?

Photo: LynnAnne Vesper

winner (a good dart score can be used as a tie-breaker, or a deciding factor if two individuals have the same timing). All the other prizes are awarded as door prizes (by lottery). This annual event is organized by the local “*Pelimanni*” restaurant / bar, and at 1:30 in the afternoon, we were in the minority because we hadn’t yet had a sip of alcohol. We were actually casually admonished for not “doping” sufficiently when we first arrived. A few of the participants fell down before they had skied 100 yards. Several participants came clad in costume, and it seemed like a lot of local residents save their oldest, rattiest pair of skis just for this event every year. Before the event we saw one competitor smoking and waxing his skis by dripping candle wax on them from a lit candle. Then he used a caulk gun and smeared them with a bead of silicone. The authorities turn a blind eye to this fairly harmless revelry, and we thought it was great fun. LynnAnne finished 4 minutes slower than she said she would, and Eli turned in a stellar performance, only 35 seconds off of his stated time of 50 minutes. We spent the rest of the afternoon socializing.

We hope each of you had a restful Easter holiday.

LynnAnne Vesper and Eli Bisonett are spending the year studying at the Ala-Könni Opisto Folk Music School, one of many programs at the Folk Arts Institute in Kaustinen, Finland.

26th Annual Minneapolis/St. Paul International Film Festival

Some half-dozen Finnish features and documentaries are scheduled for the upcoming 26th Annual Minneapolis/St. Paul International Film Festival set for Apr. 17 through May 3, at St. Anthony Main theaters, the Oak St. Cinema and possible "satellite" screenings at the Bell Aud. Crown Block E downtown Mpls. and the Riverview. Check Minn. Film Arts website for titles, times, tickets or MSPfilmfest.org.

A Man's Job

2007 Dir. *Alexi Salmenpera Drama 101 min*

Juha (Tommi Korpela) is out of a job, but he's trying to keep his unemployed status a secret from his wife Katja (Maria Heiskanen). When his wife discovers he was laid off Juha is finally forced to tell the truth about his new occupation.

Colorado Ave.

2007 Dir. *Claeus Olsson Drama 120 min*

When Hanna is little, she and her mother are forced to leave their home. Eventually Hanna returns to her home village with her son Otto and daughter Ida. When prohibition takes effect, Otto starts his career as a smuggler. Hanna cannot forgive Otto for choosing the criminal path.

Leajsa! (The Matriach)

Dir. *Marku Pölönen 90 min. Drama 35mm*

The heart of the film is the Koppelo family. Worn out after a number of travels, but united and strong, this family is proud of their history. They have their share of misfortunes but never stop believing in themselves.

Travelling

Dirs. *Anastasia Lapsui & Markku Lehmuskallio 77 min Documentary*

The seventh Nenets film deals with the religion of the indigenous people. The poetic journey of exploration in the tundra covers the entire life cycle of man, from birth to grave.

Sonic Mirror (Germany/Finland/Switzerland)

Dir. *Mika Kaurismaki 90 min Documentary*

Revered drummer Billy Cobham takes the audience on a long musical journey around the world and through a myriad of musical genres and styles.

Uurit (The Victims of 1918)

Dir. *Seppo Rustanius 50 min Color English subtitles*

The film presents us with several important questions and brings the violence of 1918 close to the viewer. The film contains vivid scenes that might be disturbing for some audiences.

Pieniä Paloja

- *Kiitos* to **Dan and Delores Salin, Betsey Norgard, and Kathy Jackson**, our March servers!!
- **Harry Potter ja kuoleman varjelukset**, or *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the final Harry Potter book written by J.K. Rowling was just released in its Finnish edition with a record-breaking first run of 180,000 copies.
- **Finnish culture** is moving to France! Roughly 500 artists will be taking part in this three month celebration. In addition to classical and contemporary music, there will be folk music, jazz, dance, circus performances, literature, film and photography, media and electronic arts, design, architecture, and more on show.
- **A deluxe wedding in Lapland** is the hot ticket for the bride and groom who are looking for the perfect destination wedding. A ride to the ice chapel in a reindeer-drawn sleigh, a performance of Lappish *joik* singing, rental of Lappish costumes for the couple, a bridal spray, and a wedding supper can all be a part of an event to remember!
- Formula 1 driver **Kimi Raikkonen** storms to victory in Malaysia while fellow Finn **Heikki Kovalainen** was McLaren's leading runner finishing in third place.
- In a normal winter, the **Gulf of Bothnia**, which lies between Finland and Sweden, is completely covered by ice between the end of February to mid-March. But this winter ice only formed in the northern parts of the gulf and in patches in the south. Hundreds of baby ringed seals born this winter could die in coming weeks due to lack of food or from cold because there is not enough snow and ice in the Baltic Sea.

FACA Membership

A one-year membership provides you with eight 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 _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____



Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.
P.O. Box 580708
Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708

FACA

Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc. is an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the cross-cultural heritage of Americans with Finnish ancestry.

Information

612-374-2718

www.finnfaca.org

FACA CALENDAR

April 17-May 3 26th Annual Minneapolis/St. Paul International Film Festival (*see page 7 for more info*).

April 18 April FACA Program "Wood, Earth and Stone; Rural Finnish Buildings and Cultural Landscapes in North America", **St. Peder's Church** 4600 East 42nd St, Minneapolis (*note location change*)

April 25 Newsletter copy deadline

April 26 Baking Day, Festival of Nations White Bear Lake High School, Junelle (763)434-5399 or SJBL2@msn.com

April 26 Apocalyptica 18+ Show, Doors 8:00 p.m. Music 9:00 p.m., Tickets \$14.50 in advance, \$16.50 day of show finelinemusic.com Original in every respect, these Sibelius Academy, classically-trained merchants of genre-shattering metal, sound quite unlike anything or anyone else in musical history. Formed in the early '90s, this cello band plays music by everyone from Bach to Hendrix.

April 26 Finnish Genealogy Group of MN meeting 9:30AM-12:30 PM. Plymouth Apostolic Church 11015 Old County Road 15 Plymouth. More information: FGGMN website or ds1940@aol.com

May 1-4 Festival of Nations, RiverCentre, St. Paul.

May 2 Finn Hall at the Festival of Nations, River-Center, St. Paul in Atrium at 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. For more info see www.festivalofnations.com.

May 3 Kick off event for Minneapolis Mosaic. Finn Hall will play at Mill City from 11 am - 1pm
www.minneapolismosaic.com

May 9-11 *Salolampi* Work Weekend Harlan Haanpää harlanhaanpaa@msn.com at (218)326-6884

May 21 Summer Calendar Deadline

May 29-May 31 Crash! Bang! Boom! Percussion Festival II, Osmo Vänskä, conductor.. Minnesota Orchestra, (612) 371-5642 or (800) 292-4141.

www.minnesotaaorchestra.org

June 5 and 6 Crash! Bang! Boom! Percussion Festival Finale, Osmo Vänskä, conductor

June 6-7 Nisswa-Stämman Folk Music Festival, Nisswa

June 14 Finnish American Summer Festival, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Timber Hall, Embarrass, MN.

sisuheritage@yahoo.com

July 19-20 Finn Days at Ironworld, Chisholm, MN (*see page 2 for more info*)

July 23-27 "Sharing the Spirit of Finland", Finnfest 2008, Duluth finnfest2008.com

July 30-Aug 1 10th Annual Sibelius Academy Music Festival, Hancock, MI

Aug 2 Petrell Hall Summer Music and Dance Festival, Brimson, MN (50 miles northeast of Duluth). For more information call (612) 624-0823 or emailhanso107@umn.edu