



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

April /Huhtikuu 2005



**Rescheduled from January's  
snowstorm!**

**Finnish State & Society on Postage  
Stamps**

**A Presentation by Dr. Pauliina Raento**

We rarely think about stamps, even if we see them every day. However, these seemingly harmless pieces of paper are powerful in shaping images of a nation. Their colorful pictures are designed to represent that nation and they reach both domestic and international audiences. Postage stamps are part of the state's political iconography and official documents, which contribute to the construction of national narratives, collective memory, and a nation's self-image. The propagandistic value of postage stamps has been well recognized, but they serve as image-building tools even if they deliver their message in persuasive 'whispers,' instead of louder 'shouts' typical of propaganda.

Dr. Pauliina Raento's current research project is based on a study of about 1,500 Finnish stamps which were issued in Finland in the twentieth century. Her presentation exemplifies what the pictures on postage stamps can tell about a nation's history, values and sources of pride, if each stamp is placed in the context of its time and space. The examined stamps narrate the evolution of the Finnish state, nation, and society and reflect the changing relationship between the state and its subjects.

### **FACA PROGRAM**

**Postage Stamps**

**Dr. Pauliina Raento**

**Friday, April 15**

**7:30 p.m.**

**International Institute**

**1694 Como Ave., St. Paul**

*If you need transportation, call*

*Marianne Wargelin*

*at 612-374-2718*

Dr. Pauliina Raento is the Government of Finland/ David and Nancy Speer Visiting Professor in Finnish Studies and Associate Professor in Geography at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She will return to her native Finland in the summer of 2005 to work as the Senior Research Fellow of the Academy of Finland (Finland's national science foundation). Her presentation is part of her ongoing research project "Cultural and Political Geographies of the Everyday Mundane-Landscapes,

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## President's Message

By Alan Norgard



Easter came quite early this year, and it seems that once Easter is here, winter is pretty much over. I saw my first robins already on March 24th—another harbinger of spring. Did any of your family's children put soot on their faces, and scarves on their heads, walk around their villages and suburbs begging, carrying broomsticks, coffee pots and bunches of decorated *virpovitsa* willow twigs? Did they go door to door as witches, reciting good luck poems in return for money and sweets?. They might have if they were in Finland celebrating Easter in the Finnish fashion. If you want more information on Finnish Easter traditions go to the Virtual Finland website: [www.virtualfinland.fi](http://www.virtualfinland.fi) and click on the Easter Traditions link.

Another spring rite here in the Twin Cities is the Festival of Nations. We need volunteers for Baking Day and for both the Café and Exhibit booths at the festival. Sign-up sheets are available at our membership meeting in April or you can call Pam Rahkola (café) or me (exhibit) also. We do not have a Bazaar booth this year. There are still lots of open spots on the lists, so please be sure to volunteer if you can. You also get free admission as part of the deal!

For the first time (as far as I know) there will be an opportunity to celebrate Vappu, or May Day this year in the Twin Cities. I have mentioned it in the past few months and I think it sounds like a fun afternoon for everyone. For details see the ad in this newsletter. You may have some idea of what Vappu was like in Finland years ago—sort of a Labor Day with lots of politics, speeches, and student celebrations included. That has all changed in the last 20 years, and it is now more like a New Year's celebration with people putting on funny costumes, etc. and getting together with friends and family to bring in the summer. We will have games and activities for the children (and adults too!) and lots of entertainment. There is an indoor pavilion we will use for the programs, and hopefully the weather will cooperate. Bring the family and enjoy the afternoon!

## In Memory of Eileen Kinnunen

Eileen Edith Kinnunen (Aili), from Moose Lake, Minnesota, formerly of Cromwell and Barnum, died at the age of 90 on March 1, 2005. She is survived by her son, Gilbert (Dawn) Kinnunen (member of the FACA newsletter committee) from West St. Paul, and several other relatives. The funeral was March 5 at the Bethany Lutheran Church in Cromwell. Memorials may be made to the Cromwell or Moose Lake United Methodist Churches, Bethany Lutheran Church in Cromwell or the Salolampi Finnish Language Village (PO Box 14480, Mpls., MN 55414).

## HISTORIC COMMUNITY LANDMARKS

Presented by Doug Ohman

Approximately 50 members and guests ventured out on a snowy Friday evening to attend the March FACA program. They were entertained with a very interesting slide show presentation of Minnesota Historic Landmarks by Doug Ohman, a professional photographer and speaker.

His presentation, "Minnesota Historic Landmarks", consisted of beautiful photographs of landmarks and landscapes throughout Minnesota. They were accompanied by stories of the landmarks and the people involved and also of Doug's travels to these sites. Many of the landmarks were familiar to people in the audience and they added to the program with their comments.

We saw many wonderful photographs of old buildings, churches, and barns from around the state and many of them are featured in the book, *Minnesota Treasures*. We also saw photographs that will be in the new series of books, *Minnesota Byways*, that will be released in April.

During the coffee refreshment hour, Doug continued his discussions about the photos and landmarks and had books and photos available to look at and buy.



## Board Notes

By Luella Zibell



Luella Zibell, Andreas Ostenso, Alan Norgard, Floyd Niskanen

Upcoming events for FACA members were the subjects of discussion and decision at the March Board meeting. The Festival of Nations Café and Exhibit are well planned by chairs Pam and Urho Rahkola and Al Norgard. Volunteers are needed for both.

The Vappu celebration, scheduled for Saturday, April 30, from 4 to 9 p.m. at Newell Park in St. Paul, was reviewed. There will be music, entertainment, games for the children, and food. FACA joins Suomi Koulu and Finlandia Foundation in sponsoring this event. It is family-oriented and informal.

Nominations for the Board are urgent—vacancies and term limits have an impact on eligibility. Floyd Niskanen reported that he has made arrangements for programs into next fall.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Tuesday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection in Roseville at 7:30 p.m. Guests are welcome! Please call Luella Zibell at 651-482-1965 for directions or information.

### FACA Membership

A one-year membership provides you with eight issues of this newsletter 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## 2005 Festival of Nations Finnish Café

by Pam Rahkola

We still need many volunteers to work in the Finnish Café during the Festival of Nations. We especially need more people to work either (or both) of the two shifts on Thursday, 4/21 (7:30 to 11:45 & 11:30 to 3:45). We also need several more volunteers for the first and 3rd shifts on Saturday, 4/23 (8:45 to 12:30 & 3:45 to 7:30), as well as the first shift on Sunday, 4/24 (9:45 to 1:30). There are additional shift openings as well.

Everyone who volunteers will receive a free entrance ticket to the Festival of Nations, a parking map and directions to a reduced-rate lot, free shuttle bus rides to and from the parking lot to the River Centre, and a hearty "thank-you."

The baking day will be held on Saturday, April 16th, from 8:00 to 4:00, at the White Bear Lake High School South Campus kitchen (3551 McKnight Ave in White Bear Lake). We will provide directions for everyone that has volunteered at the April program. Please bring cooling racks.

Call Pam Rahkola (651) 429-3319 to volunteer. We need many volunteers to make this happen again this year. Kiitos!



**Conversational  
Finnish Class**

Tuesdays  
4:30 to 6:00 p.m.  
St. Anthony Library  
Corner of Como and  
Carter Ave. in St. Paul  
Everyone is welcome.  
For more information,  
please call Floyd Niskanen  
at 763-540-0121.

## Finland's Education Achievements

From the International Herald, March 23, 2005

Submitted by Kathleen Laurila

The European Union initiative referred to as the "Bologna Agreement" is to improve K-12 education. While improvement has been modest in most countries, Finland is the exception. In the second study of scores for 15-year-olds of 41 nations conducted last year by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Finland leads in reading, mathematics and science. In addition, between the first and second studies, Finland continued to improve more rapidly than most of its neighbors because of the consistent education reforms it has put into place.

The report notes that the most impressive achievement is that the Finnish reforms have minimized the impact of students' different backgrounds. "There, children from disadvantaged homes succeed almost as well as the others," says the OECD spokesperson. For instance, performance differences are only 10 percent in Finland, whereas they are 50 percent in Germany and 66 percent in Hungary.

### VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

FACA needs your ideas and your helping hand. If you can help with any of the committees or events, please return this form. Thanks!

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program     | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter  | <input type="checkbox"/> Visitor Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Library             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership  | <input type="checkbox"/> Laskiainen          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship | <input type="checkbox"/> Pikkujoulu          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Property    | <input type="checkbox"/> Festival of Nations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Website     | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Phone   |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Return to FACA, P.O. Box 580708, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708 or bring to the next program.

## A Book Review: Finland From The Inside

by *Melvin Niska*

We bought the book: *Finland from the Inside: Eye-witness Reports of a Finnish-American Journalist, 1938-1997*, by Paul Sjöblom, a while back at a FACA meeting. I'd like to share my evaluation and opinion.

The parts of this book written by Paul Sjöblom are clear, colorful, informative, and entertaining. The book proper is 169 pages--47 of which were written by Glenda Dawn Goss. That indicates that the 122 pages printed in large font type are Goss's idea of what is significant from "nearly 60 years" of observations and writing of one talented journalist.

The Editors' Foreword states Sjöblom "turned over to us original letters and other materials" yet the actual part of this volume written by Sjöblom could have been compiled by someone perusing the archives of *Suomen Silta*.

I appreciate the biographical information about Sjöblom, but spare me such condescensions as: "Those familiar with Finland's history will recall that its past has been profoundly intertwined with Russia's ...." etc. A journalist writes to deadline every day. In nearly 60 years there should have been tons of information. Sjöblom should have had a plethora of opportunity to write colorful and interesting pieces in other places beside *Suomen Silta*.

I enjoyed learning how Sjöblom and Jean Sibelius smoked the same cigar but introspective about the article is not needed. I recommend to all Finnish-Americans the article about the origin of the word: *Suomi*. Did he ever write about the origins of the word "Finland"?

The first person accounts of the Winter War are singular and excellent. The piece about the term "Molotov's breadbaskets" is elucidating. But we don't need the opinion of historian John Keegan that Finns are: "Perhaps the most warlike of all European peoples, ..." Based on what? I would have appreciated more of Sjöblom's "dry" war reportage.

Sjöblom "once boasted that he had written more about Sibelius than anyone alive." Did this contribution then merit only about 20 pages in this volume?

In short, the parts written by Sjöblom in *Finland from the Inside* are very readable and informative, sometimes downright rare. They are recommended and can be read in a few hours. But as far as: "*Eye-witness Reports of a Finnish-American Journalist, 1938-1997*", that volume has yet to be compiled.

# Vappukarnevaali

May Day Family  
Celebration  
Saturday, April 30  
4-8 p.m.  
Newell Park  
900 Fairview Ave.,  
St. Paul

(4 blks. west of Snelling on Pierce Butler  
Route)

Fun for the whole family — bring lawn  
chairs.

Win great raffle prizes!

Birch bark crafts for kids  
Games, *saappaanheitto* (boot throw),  
*kyykkä* (skittles)

Music/dance: Pohjan Akat, Kisarit  
Dancers, Ameriikan Poijat, Finn Hall,  
Kip Peltoniemi, Koivun Kaiku

Food: *Nakit* (hotdogs) & potato salad,  
*sima* (May Day drink), *pulla*, refresh-  
ments

Free admission—buy tickets for  
food and games

For information, go to  
[www.minnesotafinnish.org](http://www.minnesotafinnish.org)

Sponsored by Minnesotan Suomi-  
koulu, Finnish-American Cultural  
Activities, Finlandia Foundation-Twin  
Cities, Pohjan Akat, Kisarit  
Folkdancers

## Finnish Films at University of Minnesota's International Film Festival

### *Dog Nail Clipper*

DIRECTOR: Markku Pölönen

A touching movie about Finland in the 1940's, humanity in harsh circumstances and a dog's eyes. It is a story of a young man, his destiny changed by the Second World War, and of the post-war reconstruction in Finland. The movie takes place in the 1940's, when menfolk worked in the forest to support their families and to help rebuild the country after two devastating wars with the Soviet Union. The story is built around the main character Mertsi's everyday life. He is wounded badly in the war and can rely only on his fellow human beings—and a dog.

Sunday, April 10, 2:45 p.m. at Oak Street Cinema

### *Letters From Karelia*

DIRECTOR: Kelly Saxberg

Taimi Pitkanen last saw her brother Aate in a Leningrad railway station in 1931. Sixty years later, the discovery of his last letters – written but never mailed from a Finnish prisoner-of-war camp – reveals his fate and brings together Taimi and Alfred, the son Aate never met. Alfred follows his father's journey from Thunder Bay, Ontario, to Karelia, from young communist pioneer to ski champion of the USSR to Soviet spy.

Friday, April 8, 9:30 p.m. at Lagoon Cinema

Wednesday, April 13, 5:15 p.m. at Lagoon Cinema

Panel Discussion, Tuesday, April 12: Meet the makers of the film, *Letters from Karelia*, learn about the film and its historical background, and see additional film material! Starting at 7 p.m. in room 145, Blegen Hall (U of M West Bank), the film's director Kelly Saxberg (Sheba Films, Thunder Bay), history consultant Varpu Lindström (York University), and cast member Börje Vähämäki (University of Toronto) will show film excerpts, tell about their experiences and answer your questions. The event is free to the public. For directions to Blegen Hall and parking information, see <http://onestop.umn.edu/Maps/BlegH/>.

### *Popular Music from Vittula*

DIRECTOR: Reza Bagher

Based on first-time author Mikael Niemi's 2000 blockbuster novel—one of the most successful ever published in Sweden—the semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story is about two kids, Matti and

Niila, who grow up in the northernmost tip of Sweden in the 60's and 70's and, having discovered the Beatles, want to become rock stars. They also discover girls and guitars, but harsh reality, a conservative environment and stern parents create crucial conflicts. Life in rural Tournedalen, where Finnish border culture is as pervasive as Swedish, has its explicit raunchy and hilarious side while its religious fundamentalism provokes chilling confrontations between fathers beating the sin out of their sons, between Niila and his brutal, pious father, Isak(Makinen). Thursday, April 14, 9:15 p.m. at Lagoon Cinema Friday, April 15, 9:45 p.m. at Oak Street Cinema

For more information, see the website at [www.mnfilmarts.org](http://www.mnfilmarts.org) or call the 24-hour hotline at 612-331-3134 . You can also buy tickets at [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com).

## Finnish Woodcut Exhibit in Minnesota

A Finnish Woodcut Exhibit, "Mirror of the Wood: A Century of the Woodcut Print in Finland", will be held from April 8 to May 8 at the Carleton College Art Gallery.

The woodcut print, which embeds the spirit of nature in wood grain, is a powerful medium in the hands of artists from Finland, an abundantly forested nation. This exhibition, organized by printmaker Karen Kunc, curator of the exhibition and Cather Professor of Art, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, presents 100 years of prints mirroring nature, mythology, society, and artistic and design impulses.

The Carleton Art Gallery is located in Northfield, Minnesota, near First and Winona Streets in the lower level of the Music and Drama Center. For information call 507-646-4469 or 5870, or see [www.carleton.edu/campus/gallery](http://www.carleton.edu/campus/gallery). Gallery hours are Mondays and Wednesdays, noon to 6 p.m., Thursday and Friday, noon to 10 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.

## New Members

**Welcome to new FACA member:**

Jane Olson, Stillwater, MN  
**Tervetuloa!**

## Additional Calendar Items:

**June 13–18** Finnish Family Week will be held at Salolampi Finnish Language Village. Register early for this popular week. This week is designed to introduce villagers ages 4–10 and their parents and/or grandparents to the village. Older brothers and sisters are also welcome. Families participate in all Salolampi summer activities, learning Finnish language and culture through language groups, stories, games, crafts, meals and hikes. Some activities are offered just for children, some just for adults, and some for everyone. Call 800-450-2214 for details and registration forms, or see [www.salolampi.org](http://www.salolampi.org).

**June 20–25** Salolampi Finnish Language Village youth session for ages 7–14. Enjoy language classes for all levels, cultural presentations, lots of music, great counselors from Finland and the U.S., Finnish crafts, food, games, sports, and lots of great friends. Many scholarships available. Call 800-222-4750 or see the website at [www.salolampi.org](http://www.salolampi.org) for more information or to get an application.

**June 27–July 9** Salolampi two-week youth session for ages 11–18. See entry for June 20.

**June 27–July 23** Salolampi four-week credit session for High School students. See entry for June 20.

**July 11–23** Salolampi two-week youth session for ages 8–13. See entry for June 20.

**Aug. 10–14** Finn GrandFest in Marquette, Michigan. Joint Canadian-US Finnish festival. Aug. 10 will be the opening ceremonies and a parade. Aug. 11 will be *tori* (marketplace), programs, concerts, sporting events, and a gala concert featuring the world premiere of the Concerto for Orchestra and Double Bass by Finnish composer Jukka Linkola. Aug. 12 will be more programs, sports, concerts, and of course, a dance. Aug. 13 there will be the world's largest sauna, along with the usual, and a banquet and dance in the evening. Aug. 14 will be morning worship services in Finnish and English, and the closing ceremonies. For more details and updates, or to register online, see [www.finngrandfest2005.com](http://www.finngrandfest2005.com). To contact the committee, email [info@finngrandfest2005.com](mailto:info@finngrandfest2005.com).

## Pieniä Paloja

• A Tunisian-born man has been nicknamed the **Mämmi Maestro**, because of his expertise in how to prepare and eat the Finnish Easter “delicacy,” *mämmi*. Ahmed Ladarsi established the *Suomen Mämmiseura* (The Finnish *Mämmi* Association) a year ago. *Mämmi* is a part of Finnish Easter celebrations, but there are almost as many who loathe it as there are who cannot live without it. *Mämmi* is a thick dark brown porridge made from water and sweetened rye malt. It is baked in the oven, then stored in the fridge and served cold, perhaps with sugar and milk or cream. Rather like another odd Finnish speciality, the salty licorice-flavored candy known as *salmiakki* (made, believe it or not, from ammonium chloride), *mämmi* is “an acquired taste.” Ladarsi, a former chef at the Italian Embassy in Helsinki, has collected around 50 recipes with *mämmi* as an integral ingredient: *mämmi* bread, *mämmi* truffles, *mämmi* cookies, *mämmi* toffee, even *mämmi* jam. Ladarsi was also the jury chairman at the World *Mämmi*-Eating Championships held last weekend in a shopping mall in Toijala, home to “the world’s largest *mämmi* factory.” Annual consumption runs to about two million kilos. To join *Suomen Mämmiseura*, contact [mammi.seura@tiscali.fi](mailto:mammi.seura@tiscali.fi). Membership is free.

• At least three people are dead and dozens injured as pile-ups caused morning traffic havoc on roads into Helsinki, Thursday, March 17. After a few days of dry road conditions and sunny, cold weather, an early morning blizzard of ice crystals topped with fine snow left roads slick and dangerous. According to an estimate from Vantaa mobile police units, the accidents involved at least 400 vehicles. The carnage has been so bad that cars are crushed together and even piled on top of one another. The worst shunt took place on Lahdenväylä, the urban motorway leading into the city from the north. Initial reports suggest a tanker truck and a bus hit a stationary line of cars. Traffic heading into Helsinki was at a standstill for hours.

When you're through reading this newsletter, share it with a friend!



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](http://www.finnfaca.org)

## FACA CALENDAR

**April 1–16** Minnesota Film Arts International Film Festival. For films and times, see [mnfilmarts.org/festivals.php](http://mnfilmarts.org/festivals.php). (See p. 6)

**April 14–16** Minnesota Orchestra, under the direction of Osmo Vänskä, performs Sibelius's *Nightride and Sunrise*. Osmo will hold a question and answer session after the performance. Call 612-371-5656 or 800-292-4141 or see [www.minnesotaorchestra.org](http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org).

**April 15, Fri.** FACA monthly program featuring Pauliina Raento discussing Finnish postage stamps and how they depict Finnish society and history, 7:30 p.m. at the International Institute of St. Paul, 1694 Como Ave. (See p. 1)

**April 16, Sat.** Baking Day for the Festival of Nations at White Bear High School. To help bake cookies and other Finnish treats, contact Pam Rahkola at 651-429-3319. (See p. 4)

**April 21–24** FACA will run the Finnish Café at the Festival of Nations at the RiverCentre in St. Paul, as well as an exhibit booth. To volunteer for the café, call Pam Rahkola at 651-429-3319 (see p. 4). To help with the exhibit, call a member of the FACA Board (see p. 2).

For info on the Festival of Nations, see [www.iimn.org](http://www.iimn.org) or call 651-647-0191.

**April 29, Fri.** Finn Hall plays from 6:30–8:30 p.m. at Kramarczuk's Deli and Sausage Company at 215 E. Hennepin, in Minneapolis, 612-379-3018. Great food, dance space available, no cover charge. Contact Ralph Tuttila at [raulit@msn.com](mailto:raulit@msn.com) for more information or see [www.finnhall.com](http://www.finnhall.com).

**April 30, Sat.** Vappu (May Day) celebration from 4 to 8 p.m. at Newell Park, 900 Fairview Ave., St. Paul. Enjoy games, crafts, music, dancing and food for the whole family. See [www.minnesotafinnish.org](http://www.minnesotafinnish.org) for details. (See p. 5)

**May 8–14** Salolampi Finnish Language Village Spring Adult Week. See [www.salolampi.org](http://www.salolampi.org) or call 800-450-2214.

**June 11, Sat.** Finnish American Summer Festival, Timber Hall Embarrass, MN. Ethnic music, crafters, demonstrators, boot throwing, children's activities, storyteller, homestead tour. Admission is a donation. More info contact 218-984-2552 or [awj@cpinternet.com](mailto:awj@cpinternet.com) (*Calendar continued, p. 7.*)