



# Utiset

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

February/Helmikuu 2010

### Program and Dinner

This February, while we enjoy some traditional *Laskiainen* fare, we will hear about the relationship of *Laskiainen* to flax, as well as the traditions, myths, and superstitions associated with them.

The FACA board will provide pea soup and coffee. Here is what you need to bring:

- Last name beginning with A–F: bread
- Last name beginning with G–K: appetizer
- Last name beginning with L–R: salad
- Last name beginning with S–Z: dessert

### Laskiainen Origins

*Laskiainen* is usually thought of as a winter sliding festival somehow associated with Shrove Tuesday and pea soup. It actually dates back to the pre-Christian era; in those times the ancient Scandinavian calendar mandated when certain tasks should be started and when they should be completed. Many of these tasks were critical to survival and had to be done during the appropriate season, month, or week, sort of like “making hay when the sun shines.”



### FEBRUARY FACA PROGRAM

**Laskiainen Celebration**  
**Friday, February 19**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**International Institute**  
**1694 Como Ave., St. Paul**  
*If you need transportation, call*  
*Marianne Wargelin*  
*at 612-374-2718*

### Flax

The growing of flax and its conversion to linen was a year-long series of tasks that required adherence to a very strict time schedule. Flax not only provided fabric for garments, table linens, and bed linens, it also had significant cash value. For example, it was used to pay the taxes. Since life was so heavily dependent on flax production, families did everything in their power to ensure a good crop.

Come to the February meeting to hear how flax and *Laskiainen* interweave!

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## President's Message

*By Kaarina Kotkavuori*

I missed being at our January program, but I heard that Kara Middleton did a wonderful job. Thank you very much for stepping up to the plate, Kara.

In January, I attended a planning meeting at the American Swedish Institute for the upcoming exhibit "My Paradise: Finnish and Finnish-American Summer Architecture." Several members of the Finnish community were asked to share ideas regarding Finnish traditions and how they could make the Finnish community aware of this exhibit. They are also planning a mid-summer celebration with a focus on Finland.

I also attended the reception for Minna Rainio and her husband, Mark Roberts. Their new video installation is an exploration of the richly metaphoric border between Finland and Russia. I hope our members will make it to this exhibit, which runs until February 18, at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery on the University of Minnesota campus.

Thank you to Ambassador Ritva Jolkkonen, the Consul General of Finland. The ambassador, visiting from New York City, attended the art installation and stopped by the American Swedish Institute to say hello during our planning session. She will be back in Minneapolis during the Martti Ahtisaari meetings.

The upcoming 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Amerikan Poijat* celebration "Immigrant Music Celebration" will be at St. Olaf College, March 20, in Northfield. Saana Ensemble will be participating in this special event as well. Saana Ensemble also sang at the Basilica during mass on January 30.

FinnStyle has now moved to their new location, 160 Glenwood Avenue near the Minneapolis Farmers Market. I was a frequent shopper at their downtown location but I know I will be going to the market more often now that FinnStyle is so close.

Our March program will include a fundraiser bake sale. I hope that everyone will participate.

Please come to our February program. There will be a lot of pea soup, as well as other lovely things to eat. I make a really good pea soup and would enjoy having you taste it.

I look forward to seeing you again.

Get the FACA newsletter electronically!

Get FACA *Uutiset* delivered via e-mail! It's fast, convenient and reduces printing and postage costs. E-mail: rahkola.urho@comcast.net to convert your subscription.



## **Finn Hall Wins Performers of the Year**

In their October meeting, the Board of Trustees of Finlandia Foundation National selected Finn Hall as the Finlandia Foundation National Performer of the Year (POY) for 2010. Finn Hall's one-year POY term started on January 1, 2010.

Finn Hall is a group of musicians dedicated to preserving and performing the feel and sounds of the old Finn Halls. Their performance remains true to the original tunes – music of earlier generations – and also includes dance numbers of the mid 20th century. Dance music of other Nordic cultures is in their extensive repertoire, too.

Finn Hall has gone back to the “old country” to learn traditional and contemporary dance music, at the same time deepening their personal connections with living musicians and the places from which band members trace their heritage.

Finn Hall core members are: Al Reko – accordion and vocals, Dennis Halme – accordion, Cheryl Paschke – violin and *nyckelharpa*, and Ralph Tuttila – mandolin. Finn Hall friends, who regularly perform with the group, are Gordon Oswald – bass, and Kip Peltoniemi – guitar. Also Johanna Doty joins on violin.

Finn Hall has been together as a band for over ten years. Frequent performers at FinnFests and Grand Fests in the US and Canada, they have toured in Finland and performed at the Kaustinen International Folk Music Festival several times.

Finn Hall has produced two recordings. For further information go to their website: [www.finnhall.com](http://www.finnhall.com).

Through Finlandia Foundation National's POY Travel Grant Program, Finn Hall is available for the Foundation's chapter programs. For information, contact Satu Mikkola, Coordinator, Finlandia Foundation POY Program at [satum@aol.com](mailto:satum@aol.com).

## **Welcome for Nobel Peace Laureate Martti Ahtisaari**

*By Betsey Norgard*

On Sunday, March 7, the Twin Cities Finnish community and Christ Church Lutheran will welcome and celebrate the work of Martti Ahtisaari, 2008 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former president of Finland.

Gathering at 9:30 a.m., in the sanctuary designed by architect Eliel Saarinen, the morning worship at Christ Church Lutheran will focus on themes of peacemaking. The service will include Finnish hymns and Saana Ensemble will sing. Ahtisaari is expected to be in attendance.

Following the service, a reception to welcome Ahtisaari will be held at 11 a.m. in the Education Building. A short program will acquaint Ahtisaari with the Twin Cities Finnish community and with peace initiatives in the Twin Cities. Guests also include Ambassador Ritva Jolkkonen, consul general of Finland in New York. This is a rare and fortunate opportunity to welcome such a renowned world leader and former president of Finland to the Twin Cities.

### **Learning about Finland and Martti Ahtisaari**

Two Thursday evening programs prior to Ahtisaari's visit will offer background and understanding to Finland's history and its role in the international community, and to Ahtisaari's life and work. The two sessions will meet on Thursday evenings, February 18 and 25 in the Concordia Room at Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Minneapolis.

- February 18: Introduction to Finland and overview of Finland's history from independence through the world wars
- Feb. 25: “Finland in the World: Multilateralism in International Relations,” presented by Saara Särämä, visiting scholar from the University of Tampere in the Political Science Department at the University of Minnesota; and discussion of the life and work of Martti Ahtisaari.

Details about the events will be posted at [minnesotafinnish.org](http://minnesotafinnish.org). All events are open to the public.

Ahtisaari is visiting the Twin Cities as the honored guest and keynote speaker at the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize Forum, to be held in Minneapolis on March 5-6 at Augsburg College. His keynote address will take place on Friday evening, March 5, at 7:30 p.m. For information, go to [peaceprizeforum.org](http://peaceprizeforum.org).

## THANK YOU

By Evelyn Eskeli, Phonathon Chair

The *Salolampi* Finnish Language Village will begin its fourth decade in 2010. Friends and supporters of *Salolampi* responded favorably during the 2009 Scholarship Phonathon on October 27, 28 and 29. The Phonathon was successful! The estimated final amount will be more than \$32,000.

**Thank you to the Lutheran Community Foundation.** Once again the Lutheran Community Foundation in Minneapolis gave the *Salolampi* Foundation use of their phones free of charge for three evenings. Approximately 1,200 of the total mailing list of 8,000 homes were reached. Readers who did not receive a call are encouraged to send their gifts to: *Salolampi* Foundation, P.O. Box 14480, Minneapolis MN 55414-0480. Large or small, every amount is a helpful addition to the scholarship fund. Online computer donations will be accepted at our secure website [www.salolampi.org](http://www.salolampi.org).

**Thank you to 44 callers.** Callers on-site in the Twin Cities were: Elaine and Michael Anuta, Carole Backman, Marlene and Ernest Banttari, Junelle Bernard, Sara Ahlgren Bogie, Linda Warpula Davis, Evelyn Eskeli, Sharon Filiatrault, Richard Harju, Gil and Dawn Kinnunen, Dixie Luoma, Kara Middleton, Wayne Mikkola, Marvin Nevala, Anna Pesola, Carol Pesola, Urho and Pam Rahkola, Dan and Delores Salin, Jim Kultala, Aili Kultala, Risto Kultala, Jack Rajala, Ruthann and Adrian Swanson, and Tiina Watts.

Additional off-site callers who sought pledges from their homes were: Joanne Bergman, Angora, Mn.; Clare Carlson, Minnetonka; Evelyn Eskeli, Minneapolis; Mary Ann Goms, Hibbing; Ken and Fran Lahti, Eveleth; Beatrice Meyers, Holiday, FL; Karen Kakela Michael, Sun Lakes, Az.; Marvin Nevala, Amery, Wi; Mildred Pierce, Rochester; Bette Ruskanen, Plymouth; Vergene Ollilla-Routhe, Shoreview; Helen Steffen, Webster, Wi.; and Arlene Tucker, Hermantown.

**A warm thank you to all the donors.** 2010 will still be challenging for families; however, we are grateful for your commitment to the *Salolampi* Finnish Language Village. *Salolampi* is a special place. Let's work together to fill *Salolampi* with villagers for many decades to come. Thanks again.

## EMSO Performs Music From Finland with Finn Hall and *Kisarit*

The East Metro Symphony Orchestra (EMSO), formerly the 3M Club Symphony Orchestra, will perform a concert of Finnish music featuring the Finn Hall band and *Kisarit* Finnish-American folk dancers, at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, March 14, at East Ridge High School, 4200 Pioneer Drive, Woodbury.

This concert will present several forms of Finnish music, including classical-*Karelia Suite* and *Finlandia* by Jean Sibelius, and *Kesäilta valssi* by Oskar Merikanto—featuring East Metro Symphony Orchestra; Finnish social dance music featuring the Finn Hall band with demonstration dances-waltz, tango, polka, schottische and humppa; and traditional Finnish folk dance, featuring the *Kisarit* folk dancers. In addition, special music that combines the three performance groups is being arranged by local composer, Randall Davidson.

FACA members, family and friends are cordially invited to attend, to volunteer to usher (complimentary ticket given in appreciation) or to prepare and serve Finnish refreshments (2 complimentary tickets given in appreciation). If interested in helping, please contact Cheryl Paschke at [paschke4@aol.com](mailto:paschke4@aol.com) or tel. (612) 670-6356.

Tickets will be sold at the door, \$10 adults/\$5.00 children, students, and seniors. For further information, go to [www.emsorch.org](http://www.emsorch.org).

### 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.

## Finnish Christmas Exhibit Features Oiva Toikka Glass Birds

A display of blown glass birds from Finnish artist, Oiva Toikka's collection decorated the second floor display room at the American Swedish Institute during their two month Nordic Christmas event. More than sixty birds, spanning his artistry from 1981 to 2009 and depicting birds from Finland and the United States, were admired by holiday visitors to the Institute.

This year's larger FACA exhibit was an invitation from the Institute, to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Finland and Sweden becoming independent countries. The birds from seven local collections were displayed in lighted cases and created a colorful setting to represent Finland. Collections were loaned by Kathleen Norberg, St. Paul, Kathryn Hill, manager of Irene's Favorite Things Gift Shop, Park Rapids, FinnStyle, Minneapolis, Al and Betsy Norgard, Shoreview, Ernest and Marlene Banttari, St. Paul, Marianne Wargelin, Minneapolis and Richard Harju, MoundsView.

In 2002, Toikka began designing a bird to commemorate FinnFest USA. Eight birds representing the 2002 to 2009 festivals were displayed. In 2008, FinnFest USA was presented her individual bird, "Pyry," by President of Finland, Tarja Halonen when she visited Duluth. This unique bird was available, compliments of Marianne Wargelin, Finnish Honorary Consul, Minneapolis.

Handsome hand woven rugs by artist, Wynne Mattila, Minneapolis became wall hangings and formed a carpet under a table set for a holiday dinner in an alcove of the room. Crystal, china, flatware and candle holders from FinnStyle decorated the table. A lighted Christmas tree, hung with icicles, snowflakes and Finnish star ornaments, complemented the glass exhibit. A continuous video, compliments of Finnstyle, featured Oiva Toikka being interviewed by Elina Ruppert, Finnstyle. Curt Pederson, Curator and his staff at the American Swedish Institute and Marlene Banttari served as designers and were assisted by a number of volunteers.



Three display cases with a Wynne Mattila rug on wall.



Summer Finch, *Kesuri*, FinnFest 2009



Common Red Poll, FinnFest 2008

Photo credit: Curt Pederson

## January Speaker Minna Rainio Exhibit: almos(t) here

On January 15, Minna Rainio, Government of Finland and Nancy Speer Chair for 2009-2010 at the University of Minnesota, was featured at our program. She talked about “Borderlands,” a video installation about the Finnish-Russian border that she created with her husband, Mark Roberts. If you missed the FACA program, you can still see the installation and the exhibition curated by Minna Rainio. Parking is easy at the ramp directly across the street from the Regis Center.

almos(t) here: New Bearings from Contemporary Artists in Europe  
Until February 18th, 2010  
Katherine E. Nash Gallery, Regis Center of Art  
405 21st Ave. S. Minneapolis

### **Exhibition Opening**

“Almost here—almost there,” Minna Rainio explained the theme of the exhibition in her remarks at the opening on January 22. Thus she encapsulated the experiences presented in the photos and videos in the gallery. The international artists depicted people dislocated by political boundaries and upheavals. Some of the artists have never exhibited in the U.S. before; many of them have Finnish connections. All of the artists created photographic or video installations that described the sense of dislocation and alienation—not quite in their present time and place because of the tugs or troubles of the past and the challenges and problems imposed by today’s world.

Ambassador Ritva Jolkkonen, the Consul General of Finland (located in New York), provided comments at the opening night. Professor Clarence Morgan of the Art Department introduced Ambassador Jolkkonen and Minna Rainio to a large and appreciative crowd.

### **Borderlands**

The Rainio/Roberts installation is presented in a wide, darkened gallery area, where viewers sit in front of three large videos of Finland, the border, and Russia. In the beginning, a single screen appears, showing the border, an endless no-man’s land of ground shorn to stubble and rock with dense forests to the left and right. The landscape is very northern, and snow often whips by. The border extends from the bottom of the screen to the top, fading into the distance. Then two

more screens light up: Finland on the left, Russia on the right. Finland and Russia do not look very different. In Finland, we see a scattering of modern, western-looking buildings; these are the small houses, service stations, etc., of the rural north. In Russia, dwellings look older, unpainted—like old-time photos of Finland or northern Minnesota, with some bland, monolithic Soviet buildings (not many). The snow whips, people walk or drive across and off the screens—nothing happens in the middle, in the border itself.

Voices of border dwellers speak in their own languages. English subtitles repeat across the bottoms of the three screens. The voices talk about fear of and attraction to the other side, and about how perceptions have changed between the time of the former Soviet Union and the present.

You can see images from the Rainio/Roberts and the other installations at this link: [http://nash.umn.edu/pdf/almost\(t\)here.pdf](http://nash.umn.edu/pdf/almost(t)here.pdf)

Works of the other artists in the exhibition are also worth seeing: Adel Abidin (Iraq/Finland), Ursula Biemann (Switzerland), Jaakko Heikkilä (Finland), Pauliina Salminen and Andres Jaschek (Finland/Argentina/France), Maria Ylikoski (Finland); and Katarina Zdjelar (Serbia/Netherlands).

## **Volunteers Needed for Festival of Nations**

The Festival of Nations will run from April 29 through May 2 this year. The 2010 Festival theme is “Folklore, Legends, and Heroes.” Accordingly, we will be creating an exhibit based upon the myths of the Kalevala. In preparation for the Festival, I would appreciate a few volunteers to be on the planning committee to help design the exhibit. We will also need several volunteers to staff the exhibit booth.

Booth volunteers who donate four or more hours will receive free admission to the Festival. If your schedule permits you to volunteer during the day on Thursday and Friday, please consider doing so, as this period may be more difficult for us to cover. Interested committee members and volunteers may contact Kara Middleton at [km7916@yahoo.com](mailto:km7916@yahoo.com), or by phone at (952) 237-5857. *Kiitos!*

## Finnish Language Study Opportunity, summer 2010

*Suomen Innokkaat SISU*kaat *Ulko-suomalaiset* (SISU) is offering its eighth Finnish Language and Culture Seminar at the University of Minnesota, Duluth from July 18 to 24, 2010. The seminar is a one-week course of Finnish language study (25-30 hours at three levels) directed by teachers Sirpa Tuomainen, Eija Ojala, and Anna Leppänen. Presentations relating to specific aspects of Finnish culture and other activities will be included.

SISU is an independent, non-profit organization formed in 1996 to foster study of Finnish language, heritage, and culture. Its primary activity is to offer biennial Finnish Language and culture seminars. Membership and/or participation in seminars is open to all interested adults. Current officers (elected volunteers) are Marie Godell Fowler, president and treasurer; Myrna Wells-Ulland, vice-president; and Kathleen Ristinen, secretary.

Classes are interactive and informal. Teachers are native speakers of Finnish, trained and experienced in Finnish language instruction. Participants include adults of all ages and backgrounds from all areas of the U.S. as well as from other countries.

The seminar fee is \$375 plus \$20 SISU membership; on-campus housing including food service is \$300 (single room supplement: \$200). Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available from UMD (approximately \$25).

Registration deposits are due on April 17. For more information and registration forms please contact: Kathleen Ristinen, secretary: [kaisa@eurekanet.com](mailto:kaisa@eurekanet.com) or (740) 592-1157.

### 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  
Urho Rahkola at (651) 429-3319

## More Calendar Items (from page 8)

**Mar 19** March FACA program.

**Mar 21** Finnish Culture Through Movies group, 6:00 p.m., *Kulkuri ja Joutsen*  
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0154750/> Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis. More information: (651) 428-3155.

**Mar 27** Marianne Wargelin will speak about "Growing up Finnish," Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota. Meetings begin at 9:30 a.m. at the Plymouth Apostolic Church, 11015 Old County Road 15 in Plymouth. For questions about FGGMN and its activities, see: [www.minnesotafinnish.org](http://www.minnesotafinnish.org) or contact Joan Dwyer, [dwyers@ties2.net](mailto:dwyers@ties2.net) Subject: must include FGGMN. Inquiries by mail: FGGMN; P.O. Box 4731; St. Paul, MN 55104

**July 18-24** Finnish Language and Culture Seminar sponsored by *Suomen Innokkaat SISU*kaat *Ulko-suomalaiset*, University of Minnesota, Duluth. (Details are at left.)

**July 28-Aug 1** Finn Grand Fest, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada. <http://www.finngrandfest2010.com/>

## Pieniä Paloja

- The January hostesses were **Bette Ruskanen** and **Betsey Norgard**. *Kiitos!*
- A total of 216,000 copies of the *Twilight* series vampire books written by American writer Stephenie Meyer were sold in Finland, making her the best-selling author for 2009.
- Finland is sixth in the all-time medal count standings, with 151, as we begin the 2010 Winter Olympics. Norway leads with 280 medals.

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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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

**Now –February 18** “almos(t)here: New bearings from contemporary artists in Europe” Katherine E. Nash Gallery, Regis Center of Art, University of Minnesota <http://ihrc.umn.edu/pdfs/IHRC2010SpringEvents.pdf>

**Feb 14** Traditional *Laskiainen* celebration, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., Como Park Ski Chalet. In addition to the outdoor fun, sledding, cross-country and downhill skiing, and some *lumibandy* (snow hockey), there will be pea soup and *laskiaispulla* in the chalet. Como Park Ski Center, 1431 North Lexington Parkway, Saint Paul. (651) 488-9673. More: [suomikoulu@minnesotafinnish.org](mailto:suomikoulu@minnesotafinnish.org).

**Feb 16** FACA Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the home of Kaarina Kotkavuori.

**Feb 19** FACA *Laskiainen* program and dinner.

**Feb 21** Finnish Culture Through Movies group 6:00 p.m. *Pahat Pojat* [http://www.solarfilms.com/elokuvat/kaikki/pahatpojat/en\\_GB/badboys/](http://www.solarfilms.com/elokuvat/kaikki/pahatpojat/en_GB/badboys/) Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis. More information: (651) 428-3155.

**Feb 26** Minnesota Orchestra, Vanska conducts Sibelius. Information: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org).

**Feb. 27** A presentation on Sami. Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota. Meetings begin at 9:30 a.m., at

the Plymouth Apostolic Church 11015 Old County Road 15 in Plymouth. For questions about FGGMN and its activities see: [www.minnesotafinnish.org](http://www.minnesotafinnish.org) or contact Joan Dwyer, [dwyers@ties2.net](mailto:dwyers@ties2.net) Subject: must include FGGMN. Inquiries by mail: FGGMN; P.O. Box 4731; St. Paul, MN 55104

**Mar 7** Church service and reception honoring Martti Ahtisaari, Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2008 and former president of Finland. Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis. (See pg. 3.)

**Mar 12** Rajaton Finnish Vocal Ensemble, 8:00 p.m., Orchestra Hall. The six members of this a cappella group have already thrilled Orchestra Hall audiences with their unique take on the music of rock group Queen and '70s pop group ABBA. For additional information: [minnesotaorchestra.org](http://minnesotaorchestra.org)

**Mar 14** East Metro Symphony Orchestra concert with Finn Hall Band and *Kisarit* Finnish-American Folk Dancers, 3:00 p.m., East Ridge High School, 4200 Pioneer Drive, Woodbury. Tickets \$10 (\$5 children, students, and seniors) at the door. More information, go to [www.emsorch.org](http://www.emsorch.org). (See pg. 4.)

*More calendar items on page 7*