

NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC. May/Toukokuu 2006

Nyt Naura—Now Laugh with the Suomalainen Sisters

An hour long non-stop comedy and music performance by the Suomalainen Sisters and based on our Finnish heritage will be our May FACA program, May 19, at 7:30 p.m. at the International Institute of St. Paul. The performance is in English, Finnish and certainly some Finglish!

These three sisters share a natural talent for seeing the funny side of life, while acknowledging that sorrow can be found nipping at the heels of happiness. The audience will enjoy their unique perspectives on growing up Finnish in the Upper Peninsula and just what makes the Finnish people so memorable. The sister trio may jog a few memories of your own life as you listen. It's the only jogging they will consider, so just sit back, relax and reflect on the beauty of the Finnish culture (or the beauty of the person sitting next to you, whichever holds your interest longer!).

Linda Kyro is an L.P.N. When she's not running with needles, she's running with spatulas. She is a talented cook, closet songbird, and an accomplice to the silliness her sisters instigate. Don't let her silence fool you—a wicked streak of humor is bubbling just below the surface.

Sherry Saarinen is a secretary at Michigan Tech University. She is also a sought-after folk artist who enjoys creating whimsical art from nature. A virtual whirlwind of self-inspired activity, she can be counted on to turn the ordinary into extraordinary!



Kris Kyro has been a disc jockey for most of her life. Currently she is exploring other venues for her talents. In her spare time, she writes, sings in a six piece band, and practices massage therapy. An outdoor enthusiast, she swims in Lake Superior until the colors change—both hers and the leaves on the trees.

The trio of sisters enjoy making others laugh and will resort to tickling you, if all else fails.

Come enjoy a few laughs (even out loud if you want) at the FACA program, and afterward enjoy some great refreshments and socializing.

MAY FACA PROGRAM

**“Nyt Naura”
Suomalainen Sisters
Friday, May 19
7:30 p.m.
International Institute
1694 Como Ave., St. Paul
*If you need transportation, call
Marianne Wargelin
at 612-374-2718***

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President's Message

By Alan Norgard

Some interesting developments are taking place in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area Finnish community that I'd like to share with you. As many of you know, there are different faces to our community here and many organizations for various interests. The problem is that not everyone is aware of them or in contact with each other. In April I attended two meetings sponsored by the local and national Finlandia Foundation that were attended by representatives of a number of the various groups. At the first meeting with the Finlandia Foundation National board members, John Laine, FFN president, made a presentation about their commitment and new initiatives to provide more support to the Finnish community. They are seeking opportunities to assist local organizations and individuals with grants from their endowments. They also are working to increase those endowments so that they can provide the grants.

In the second meeting, again with representatives of a number of Finnish organizations, consensus was reached that our various groups need to be more aware of each other, and that there needs to be a more visible "Finnish face" in the Twin Cities. We agreed to hold on-going meetings to share information about our events, plan some events jointly, and respond to larger opportunities, such as a couple of major art exhibits that are coming to Minneapolis.

We also agreed that information for people both inside and outside of our organizations about special events, services, businesses, Finnish culture, etc. can best be provided by a website containing links, general information about organizations, and possibly even the web pages of various groups. Organizing this website will be a cooperative project among us.

The planning is still in the very early stages with many details yet to be determined, but the seeds have been planted. I think this is a promising sign that work needed to be done in the Twin Cities can be accomplished now.

In April FACA lost another hard working, cheerful, and enthusiastic member with the passing of Verdie Niskanen. You might remember him as the coffee host at programs for many years, making coffee for our monthly programs; or perhaps at the Festival of Nations, working in the café; or any of the many special events held by FACA where he was always a ready and willing worker. Any job that needed to be done – he was there. He had been a FACA board member, a frequent contributor to the FACA newsletter, and had also worked to promote Finnish culture in any way he could. I could always count on him to provide me with notices for the pasty sales at the Rockford church, and I hope you were able to enjoy some of the squeaky cheese he brought to our membership programs. Our thoughts and condolences go out to his family and friends. Verdie, you will be dearly missed.



Finnish Sculptor in Minnesota

On Wednesday, June 14, Finnish sculptor Sakari Peltola will be featured in the Minnesota Rocks! Artist Presentation Series. Minnesota Rocks! is an International Stone Carving Symposium, May 21 through June 30 on the lawn of Saint Paul College. The sculpture that Peltola creates during the symposium will be installed in Salo Park in the Village of St. Anthony.

Beginning at 5:00 p.m. on June 14 in the Saint Paul College Auditorium, five of the fourteen International Stone Carving Symposium artists will talk about their journeys to this event; their personal histories and artist training, themes and inspirations in their art, and cultural influences on their work in stone. Peltola will be joined in the program by Symposium artists Lei Yi Xin of China, Juergen Zaun of Germany, Pasquale Martini of Italy, and David Wyrick of Minnesota.

A reception will follow at 7:00 p.m. at the nearby College of Visual Arts Gallery. The Gallery is featuring an exhibit of works of the Symposium artists throughout the month of June. Hosts for the June 14 program include Symposium producer Public Art Saint Paul, the Honorary Consul of Finland, and the St. Anthony Sister City Association.

The Saint Paul College is located at 235 Marshall in St. Paul; the College of Visual Arts Gallery is at Selby and Western Avenues in St. Paul. For information about Minnesota Rocks! The International Stone Carving Symposium, see www.minnesotarocks.org or call Christine Podas-Larson at 651-290-0921.



Board Notes

By Luella Zibell



Barbara Nikula Owens, Andreas Ostenso, Luella Zibell, Floyd Niskanen, Richard Harju, Alan Norgard

The agenda for the April 17 meeting of FACA's board dealt mostly with final plans for the Festival of Nations café and exhibit. Also, nominations for the board are still needed and the annual meeting and election will be held May 19.

Floyd reported that *Saunatec* will do the April program and *Nyt Naura!* will be with us in May.

The secretary's and treasurer's reports were reviewed and received. The treasurer will make a brief report at the FACA program each month.

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.

Not Your Grandfathers Sauna!

Presented by Keith Raisanen

At the April FACA program we were entertained with an informative program about saunas by Keith Raisanen, President of *Saunatec*. He briefly talked about *Saunatec* and then with pictures showed us some of the new innovations and designs with saunas.

He became involved with saunas as a hobby in 1984, and by 1986 he turned to it full time. Since then he has grown *Saunatec* to be the dominant sauna business in the US and now it has 102 employees in 3 locations and 1000 dealers nationwide. They manufacture the well-known brands of *Finnleo*, *Helo*, *Amerec*, *Polar* and others.

Keith mentioned that it has been a challenge marketing to non-Finns. They needed to try to change some of the stereotypes and old ideas of saunas, such as sauna parlors, etc. By focusing on health, relaxation, and the stress relief aspects of saunas the sales have grown.

He discussed how saunas have been changing with the heaters, interiors, and use. New designs in heaters have special insulation, more rocks and a cover so they are ready for use 24 hours a day. All that is needed is to open the cover and throw water on the rocks. The larger amount of rocks also gives the sauna a softer heat and steam. Some heaters have a steam generator for extra steam and most now have digital controls to turn the heaters on at preset times.

Saunatec has used well-known industrial designers such as Ristomatti Ratia and Esa Vapaavuori to design new heaters using *tulikivi* and other materials. They also designed more luxurious interiors with more room, movable benches, valance lighting, and materials such as mahogany for more colorful interiors

Other trends include adding sound systems and TVs in the saunas and using fireplace stoves so the actual fire can be observed. Also, adding saunas to the backyard and alongside pools is becoming quite common.

Presently *Saunatec* is working with others in the sauna business to try get accurate sauna information out to the public and the American Sauna Association was formed. They will have a web site for people to use.

The program was followed by questions and answers and then refreshments.

Finnish Passport Update

Marianne Wargelin, Honorary Consul for Finland in the Twin Cities, has returned from a meeting of Honorary Consuls held at the Finnish Consulate in NYC. She reports that after August 26th of this year, she can no longer assist people preparing passports or passport renewals. After that time, all Finnish passports will need to include biological imaging. This means Finnish citizens living in the USA will renew passports only in NYC and LA or in Finland, so a person will need to travel to one of these three sites.

Since last October, no children can be included on a parent's passport. If Finnish citizens have children who want or need to have Finnish passports, this should be done quickly before it is necessary to travel to NYC, LA, or Finland.

For more information see www.minnesotafinnish.org or www.finland.org.

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

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 _____

In Loving Memory of Verdie Niskanen

Verdie H. Niskanen of Plymouth, Minnesota, formerly of Sebeka, Minnesota, passed away on Sunday, April 23, 2006 after a short battle with inoperable cancer. Verdie was born January 15, 1933 to U. Hjalmer and Ida (Waaraniemi) Niskanen. He lived with his family in rural Sebeka and attended schools there. His mother passed away in 1944 and his father married Lydia Salmen in 1945. They moved to her farm west of Sebeka. In 1946 he started attending Sebeka Public School, but would go to North Dakota to work on farms in the fall. In the fall of 1948 he did not return to school, but moved to Minneapolis. Verdie worked several jobs there and in 1950 he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force, where he continued his education and was trained as an instrument technician. Verdie was stationed at several bases in the U.S. and Canada. After his discharge, he worked as an electrician and then in 1956 he went to work at Honeywell in Minneapolis. He worked his way up to supervisory level and then Human Relations. He retired in 1991 after 35 years of employment.

In 1958 Verdie married Shirley Leighton and two sons were born to this union. They were divorced in 1968 and in 1984 he married Nancy Sanko who had a son and a daughter from a previous marriage. Verdie was preceded in death by his parents, a brother Norman and brother Raymond. He is survived by wife Nancy, sons Verdie (Theresa Lee) and Craig (Theresa Louise), stepchildren John and Leslie, grandchildren, Sara, Kyle, Roxanne, Deanna, and Dylan, brother Marvin of California, and sister Dorothy (Einard) Koskiniemi of Park Rapids, two aunts Lillian Niskanen and Ervina Niskanen of Minneapolis, nieces and nephews, and many cousins here, in Canada, and Finland, and many friends from his work, his volunteer activities, and Finnish organizations.

Verdie was a caring husband, father and grandfather and a willing and active volunteer. He was always ready to help with whatever needed doing. He coordinated the Honeywell food shelf program for a few years, drove the senior bus for 15 years, was chosen as volunteer of the week by WCCO, and participated in many other activities. He was a cheerful smiling person who liked to laugh and always had a joke or something good to say to others. His interment was at Fort Snelling cemetery in Bloomington.

Verdie was also very involved in the Finnish community. He was always ready and willing to serve in any way he was needed. Here are a few comments from fellow FACA members:



Verdie was known as the FACA 'Koffee-Meister' because he made the coffee at FACA programs for many years. He also kept scrupulous track of the coffee supplies and transported them to and from the programs. Whenever he worked at the Festival of Nations he always volunteered for the first two shifts of the day, and no matter how early we got there, at least one pot was already brewed and he was working on the second or third. He always had a smile and a good story to tell. Verdie was a really nice guy who will truly be missed. -Urho and Pam Rakkola

*A Tribute to a Neighbor Boy...
Verdie's father remarried when three of his four children were in grade school and moved to the farm of his new wife, Lydia Salmen, whose farm was a mile from our country school near Sebeka, Minnesota. Verdie, his younger brother, Marvin and his sister, Dorothy were schoolmates of mine at Hay Creek District 219. Verdie was nominated to the FACA board in 1992. He served as FACA treasurer for a number of years and, behind the scenes, was the reliable source of supplies to the monthly coffee service. His last thoughtful gift was the Finnish cheese that he contributed to the March program coffee service. We will miss his kindness and generosity. —Ernie and Marlene Banttari.*

Verdie was an untiring and selfless volunteer in a great number of good causes, one of them being the FACA newsletter. As a member of the newsletter committee, Verdie was in charge of sending me news tidbits from various Finnish publications. Every few days I would receive 2 or 3 emails about anything from unusual Finnish weather phenomena to Finns flying around in bright red "wingsuits." His information added a touch of "Finnishness" to our publication that will be hard to duplicate.—Tiina Watts, FACA newsletter editor

English is Fun

From the book *Finnfun* by Bernhard Hillila

Finglish is produced by Finnicizing English words—giving them Finnish endings, inflections, and accents. Since Finns generally end their words in a vowel, Finglish usually adds a vowel sound—most often “i” or “a”—to the English word. Thus “dress” becomes *dressi*, “store” becomes *stoori*, “car” becomes *kaara*, and “hammer” segues to *hamara*. When a Finnish grandma in Oregon says, *Paita on uunissa*, she means some “pies” are in the oven, but a Finland Finn would think a shirt (*paita*) was getting baked!

Immigrant Finns were proud when they learned their *viitapipuli*! That was the Preamble to the United States Constitution—“We the people”—required by some judges to be learned before naturalization. Even a verb form was created: *Menemme viitapipuloi-maan*—we’re doing our *viitapipuling* (taking our naturalization studies).

In Ishpeming, Michigan, our Finnish family doctor, Dr. Talso, founded “Grace Hospital.” That was a beautiful name, but Finnicizing Finns pronounced it *Kreisi Hospitaali*, which made it sound like a lunatic asylum!



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.

Beef Lindstrom

Lindströmin Pihvit

1 pound lean ground beef
2 boiled potatoes, mashed with a fork
1 onion, finely chopped
2 pickled beets, finely chopped
2 tablespoons cucumber pickles, finely chopped
1 large egg
1/4 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
Butter for frying
1/2-1 cup beef broth or water
1 tablespoon heavy cream

A food processor makes it easy to chop all the vegetables. Add the potatoes and chopped vegetables to the meat with the egg, cream, salt and pepper. Mix well. With hands dipped in cold water shape into patties and fry them in butter over low heat until nicely browned on both sides. Add 1/2 cup of beef broth to the pan, cover and let cook 15 minutes more. Remove to a serving dish. Rinse the pan with a little beef broth or water, add the heavy cream and pour over the patties.

Rhubarb Pudding

Raparperokiisseli

3 cups rhubarb, peeled and cut into 1/2” slices
3 cups water
1/4 cup sugar
3 tablespoons potato starch or corn starch
1/3 cup cold water

Place the rhubarb, 3 cups water and sugar into a stainless steel or enameled saucepan, bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover and let simmer until the rhubarb is soft, about 30 minutes. In a small bowl, mix the starch with the cold water and gradually whisk into the rhubarb mixture. Bring back to a boil and cook until the mixture thickens. Sprinkle with sugar to prevent skin from forming, let cool and serve with whipped cream if desired.

The Best of Finnish Cooking by Taimi Previdi

Welcome New Member!
Soile Anderson of North Oaks
Tervetuloa!

Pieniä Paloja

- According to research published by the Romppainen Genealogical Society, **Prince Rogers Nelson**, a.k.a. Prince, is 1/8 Finnish. His ancestry was traced to the village of Jokivarsi, Näätämö, in the eastern part of Lapland, to Hilda Romppainen. Hilda emigrated to north Minneapolis and worked there as a maid. She gave birth to a son out of wedlock who is the grandfather of Prince.
- **Jorma Ollila**, CEO of the famous Finnish cell phone company, Nokia, will be stepping down June 1. In 1993, Ollila talked Nokia into selling off its manufacturing businesses that it had been doing for 100-plus years and focusing on cell phones and the infrastructure behind them. That would be like the CEO of GM telling his board to sell off the entire auto-making business and focus on their OnStar telematics technology. Today Nokia is one of the world's most recognizable technology brands and the company has made about one-third of the 1 billion cell phones on the planet. Finland's global image, its wealth, and its sense of self are tied up in Nokia and wireless technology. In 1998, Nokia passed Motorola to become the world's number one cell phone maker. In 2001, Nokia accounted for 25% of Finland's exports. Ollila will be joining Royal Dutch Shell as a non-executive chairman—the first non-Dutch to hold such a position. (Submitted by Verdie Niskanen)
- A police crackdown has revealed a greater frequency of alcohol intoxication among **snowmobile** operators than among other motor vehicle drivers in Finland. Police constable Reijo Köngäs of the Mobile Police in Rovaniemi, who has investigated snowmobile accidents for more than ten years, says that alcohol is the biggest single problem in snowmobiling. Of the 12 snowmobile accidents that led to death last year, alcohol was involved in 11 of them. At the beginning of the decade, alcohol was involved in half of all fatal snowmobile accidents. "Alcohol is part of the way Finns enjoy their free time. When leaving one's own cabin, people know that out on the open lake there is no risk of being caught. After drinking, people also tend to forget their helmets and other security equipment," Köngäs says. Finland now has more than 100,000 registered snowmobiles. Thanks to an increase in snowmobile rentals, the hobby is reaching a broader range of the population, leading to a rise in the number of accidents involving inexperienced operators. (Submitted by Verdie Niskanen)

More Calendar Items

June 12–17 Family Week at Salolampi. For more information call 800-450-2214 or go to www.salolampi.org.

June 14, Wed. Minnesota Rocks! International Stone Carving Symposium at 5:00 p.m. in the Saint Paul College Auditorium, 235 Marshall in St. Paul. Five of the fourteen artists, including Finnish artist Sakari Peltola, will talk about their stone carving. A reception will follow at 7:00 p.m. at the nearby College of Visual Arts Gallery at Selby and Western Avenues in St. Paul. For information, see www.minnesotarocks.org or call Christine Podas-Larson at 651-290-0921.

June 16, Fri. Come join the send-off Party for Finn Hall from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Kramarczuk's Deli and Sausage Co., 215 E. Hennepin, Minneapolis. They are going to Finland in July to play at the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival. Come hear the new tunes they will be playing in Finland. \$2 cover charge. Come eat and dance! Call 612-379-3018 or contact Ralph Tuttila at raulit@msn.com or see www.finnhall.com.

June 17, Sat. Viking Boat race in Mora, Minnesota in Mora City Park on Maple Street. From 10 a.m. until after the fireworks that night. For information, or to sell food or crafts, call Eric Carlisle at 320-679-5416 or e-mail at info@carlislestudios.com

June 19–24 Salolampi one-week youth session for ages 7–14.

June 26–July 8 Salolampi two-week youth session for ages 11–18.

June 26–July 22 Salolampi one-month youth credit session for grades 9–12. See www.salolampi.org or call 800-222-4750.

July 3–21 Finland Society's three-week Summer Seminar for descendants of Finnish emigrants at Helsinki Christian Institute. Finnish language instruction offered, as well as lectures on art, history and culture. Send application forms to Finland Society by April 28, 2006. Download application forms at www.suomi-seura.fi

July 10–22 Salolampi two-week youth session for ages 8–13. See www.salolampi.org or call 800-222-4750.

July 14–16 Finn Fling celebration in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. Enjoy arts, concerts, dancing, movies, golfing, theater, sports, food, workshops and lectures. www.finnishcanadiangrandfestival2006.com

July 26–30 FinnFest USA '06 in Astoria, Oregon and Naselle, Washington. See www.finnfest2006.org or call 800-851-FINN for information and registration forms.



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

May 12–14 Spring Volunteer Work Weekend at Salolampi. Come clean, paint, cut wood, etc. Free lodging and entertainment. For more details call Milo Laitinen at 218-564-4266 or email him at laitinen@wcta.net.

May 14–20 Finnish Spring Adult Week at Salolampi near Bemidji, Minnesota. \$455 per person, \$355 for commuters. Experience Finnish food, sauna, language and culture. Call 800-450-2214.

May 18–20 Vänskä conducts Sibelius' Symphony No. 1 and Aho's Flute Concerto. For tickets and times, call 612-371-5642 or see www.minnesotaorchestra.org.

May 19, Fri. FACA monthly program and annual board meeting with nominating of FACA directors, 7:30 p.m. at the International Institute, 1694 Como Ave., St. Paul. The Suomalainen Sisters will be presenting a comedy and musical act called *Nyt Naura!* (*Now Laugh!*). (See p. 1)

May 19, Fri. Every Friday from 11:15 to 12:15 p.m., the Finlanders at the U of M hold a conversation hour at Bordertown Coffee, 315 16th Ave SE, Minneapolis, (near Folwell Hall). All levels welcome! For more information email finns@umn.edu.

May 20, Sat. From 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota will discuss the topic: "Winter War" with a panel of FGG members at the Minnesota Genealogy Society, 5768 Olson Memorial Highway, Golden Valley. For details see www.minnesotafinnish.org or email ds1940@aol.com.

May 20, Sat. Suomi-koulu's (Finnish School's) Spring Party at ChristChurch Lutheran in Minneapolis. For more information on Suomi-koulu, see www.minnesotafinnish.org.

May 21–June 30 *Minnesota Rocks* International Stone-carving Symposium in St. Paul with Finnish artist Sakari Peltola participating. For information: Christine Podas-Larson, 651-290-0921. (See p.3).

May 24, Wed. Deadline for information and calendar events for the **Summer Calendar**. (See p. 2 for contact information.)

June 3, Sat. 20th Annual Finnish American Summer Festival in Embarrass, Minnesota. (Note that this is one weekend earlier than in previous years.) Finnish dinner, entertainment, storytelling, homestead tours, boot throwing, demonstrations, booths, children's games. Call 218-984-3503 or e-mail sisuheritage@yahoo.com.

More calendar items, p. 7