

FACCA



NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

May/Toukokuu 2008

“Jos ei viina...”

Presented by: Andreas Ostenso, M.D.

“Jos ei viina, terva ja sauna auta, niin tauti on kuolemaksi.” Loosely translated, “If liquor, pitch and sauna are not curative, then the disease is fatal.” This saying has become such a common part of Finnish vernacular speech that it is understood as a distillation of ancient medical wisdom. However, just as this saying is not particularly ancient (it was likely coined in the mid 1800’s), it also only scratches the surface of traditional medical practices in Finland.

Healing methods are as much a part of our cultural heritage as language and religion and thus give insight into our identity. Illness in the pre-scientific medicine era in Finland could have many causes including an imbalance of humors, a nutritional deficit and/or being cursed. Just as there were a multitude of views of illness, there were a multitude of healing modalities such as cupping, herbal cures and incantations. Though “modern medicine” would label chanting, for instance, over a boil as quackery, incantation was believed to be state of the art therapy at one time. Indeed, traditional medicine should be considered in the context in which it was practiced and against the alternative of doing nothing.

It is nearly axiomatic to say that traditional medicine is not evidence based. On the other hand, a lack of evidence does not mean that something is not true. Thus not all traditional practices were without merit. For instance, it is now known that cranberry juice really can prevent urinary tract infections.

MAY FACCA PROGRAM

Finnish Folk Medicine
Friday, May 16
7:30 p.m.
International Institute
1694 Como Ave., St. Paul
If you need transportation, call
Marianne Wargelin
at 612-374-2718

In this talk, I will discuss various traditional medical practices in Finland and how these practices reflect people’s views of health and illness.

Andreas Ostenso is a medical doctor who practices at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Minneapolis, MN. He received his MD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and did his residency training in internal medicine at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

FACA 2007–2008 Board of Directors

President:

Alan Norgard

651-786-5988

norgard@winternet.com

Vice President/Program Chair:

open

Secretary:

Stella Arola

763-537-0559

hsarola@msn.com

Treasurer/Publicity:

Andreas Ostenso

651-646-9604

tostenso@yahoo.com

Hospitality/Special Activities:

Kaarina Kotkavuori

651-646-7783

Special Activities Director:

Barbara Nikula Owens

651-774-3551

barbnikulaowens@yahoo.com

FACA Newsletter Committee

Editor:

Mary Belanger

mary.belanger@dctc.edu

218-839-1566

Graphic Design:

Beth Jarvis

763-536-9561

brjarvis@umn.edu

Contributing Writers:

Al Norgard, Stella Arola,

Joan Dwyer, Gil Kinnunen

Mailing:

Urho and Pam Rahkola

President's Message

By Alan Norgard



Our April program was a good one in many ways. First, we held it at St. Peder's Lutheran church in Minneapolis. This was a good opportunity to see how our group might work in a different venue. I think it showed that there are possibilities there – the space was about the right size, the facilities worked well, and we had a good turnout. Some people mentioned it was a little hard to find, but that can be overcome after a few visits. The people at the church were easy to work with and willing to help us out as well. I also took a peek at the sanctuary and saw that they have a very Scandinavian touch in there – a model ship hanging from the ceiling! I remember that many of the western Finnish churches also have them and was surprised to see one here. Thanks again to Bob and Barb Nelson for arranging the space for us.

It was also good to see Professor Arnold Alanen again, and I enjoyed his program very much. I hadn't seen Arnold in a number of years, and it was fun to chat with him again. I also learned that he is a past president of FACA as well. This must have been before the late 1970s when I started getting involved in what was FACA's predecessor, the Minnesota Finnish American Historical Society, Chapter 23. Several people mentioned that he was instrumental in starting the tradition of presenting interesting and engaging programs that we have been so lucky to have through the years.

We will be back at the International Institute in May, since Andreas was able to renegotiate our contract for a lower rent. We will be in the downstairs classrooms where we have met in the past. Also, remember that there might be some Festival café baked goods for sale if we don't sell completely out.

I would like to send a thank you to all the people who helped out at the Festival of Nations again this year. It really is the only way we earn money for the club to support our activities and the Salolampi scholarships we give out each year, and it's one of the best ways we have of getting our "face" out in the public eye. This is true for the exhibit as well as the café. As I am writing this before the Festival begins, I can only hope that everything goes well again this year and maybe we won an award for the exhibit as we did last year. Again, thank you all.

Get the FACA newsletter electronically!

The *Utiset* e-newsletter is fast, convenient and costs FACA less to produce and distribute. E-mail Andreas Ostenso at tostenso@yahoo.com with questions.

Singing Strings in Concert

A Singing Strings concert will be held on July 25, at the Duluth FinnFest. In this concert the group will perform poems from the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, composed for the Singing Strings by Harri Wessman of Helsinki and composer Ville Kangas of Kaustinen. In 2007, Kordelin-Saatio gave funds to the Singing Strings music group to film the performance of three poems from the *Kalevala* – “Vainömoisen Synty”, “Lemminkäinen” and “Sammon Taonta”. Filming will take place in Minneapolis on July 18-22, just prior to the Duluth FinnFest.

Performers include: Singing Strings Director and violinist Helina Leino-Pakola, pianist Hilpi Leino-Kantola, soloist : Eeva Savolainen-Sundstrom and Helina Kantola-Lehtinen, poem readers Liana Kaarina and Michael Kantola.



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.

Board Notes *By Stella Arola*



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

President Al Norgard called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. on April 15th at the home of Andreas Ostenso. The Secretary's minutes of the March board meeting were approved; the Treasurer's report was also approved.

Various program possibilities for May are under consideration, but nothing definite was decided. All the arrangements for Arnold Alanen's presentation were finalized.

The Finnish flag, which was recently received from *Suomi Seura*, will be presented to the Finnish Genealogy Group on behalf of FACA by Stella Arola at their April 26th meeting.

The May 16th FACA meeting/program will be at the International Institute, but in the basement meeting room. At this meeting, we hope to have some nominees for two board positions.

The next board meeting will be at the home of Kaarina Kotkavuori on May 13th.

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 _____

Program Recap

By Al Norgard

If you ever wondered about some of the old buildings and farms that dot the countryside in northern Minnesota, it would be a good bet that our April speaker, Professor Arnold Alanen, could tell you something about them. He led us on a photographic tour of many of the hundreds of homesteads, churches, and meeting halls that he has documented through the years. Concentrating on buildings that were not architecturally designed, but built by immigrants to perform utilitarian tasks, he showed us examples of many of the buildings we might have grown up with in the farms and villages of our home areas. Arnold realized years ago that many of these treasures were being torn down, burned, or were rotting from neglect and needed to be at least documented before they were gone forever. His program highlighted many different states and Canadian provinces, places where there were centers of Finnish immigrants, and showed many of the similarities and regional differences in the typical immigrant farm.

Most of the farmers would follow the style of a central yard, surrounded by the various outbuildings and farmhouse, with fences and wooded areas further defining the space. It was interesting to see how log buildings were usually built with the same notching techniques as in Finland, but then were adapted when locally available woods had to be used, wood that wasn't always straight and uniform. Also, woods, such as poplar, that couldn't be used in many areas worked well, for instance, in Wyoming because of the semi-arid climate there. Some of the photos were of sod buildings on the prairies. Others were of masonry buildings in Idaho. Wherever they went, the Finns seemed to be good at adapting and re-using materials that originally served other purposes. The immigrants themselves were also shown in many photos doing their daily work, farming, quarrying, mining, etc. It was interesting to see the pictures of how haymaking was done into the 1960s in the same manner that was used in Finland when the immigrants left. This involved methods of getting the hay off the ground or into buildings scattered across the fields in moist climates to dry. I used to see many of these hay storage buildings on my way up north and have seen many of them disappear through the years. Some of the buildings featured in the talk were still being used but maybe not for their original purpose. This was

especially true with the public buildings such as churches, temperance halls, and meeting places. Next time I go on a trip through the centers of Finnish immigration, I will have a better appreciation for the architecture of the buildings I see and will be able to know with a little more certainty which ones might be Finnish.

Baking Day 2008

By Junelle Bernard

On Saturday, April 26, we proved once again that many hands make light work (or at least fast work.) Twenty-seven hard workers prepared and packed dozens of cakes, cookies and *piirakka* in record time. These items will be sold at our Finnish Cafe the Festival of Nations, May 1-4. I want to thank the following for showing up on a blustery day to help out: Laura Bernard, Edith Boos, Jenny Borovsky, Kathy Chambless, Elisabeth Collins, Linda Davis, Kathy Jackson, Bob Katvala, Kaarina Kotkavuori, Gary Nies, Jane Olson, Andreas Ostenso, Emily and Katy Overtoom, Pam and Urho Rahkola, Aune and Bette Ruskanen, Dan and Delores Salin, Joan Selover, Marge Stewart, Gloria Thorp, Anita and Ron Wiemer and Merja Wilenius.

I also want to thank the following businesses for providing donations, discounts, or special assistance: Andover County Market; Cub Foods in Cambridge, Crystal, and Coon Rapids-Riverdale; Rainbow Foods in Coon Rapids, Cambridge WalMart, and Wuollet Bakery in Robbinsdale. Please patronize these fine stores.



Merja Wilenius, Kathleen Chambless, and Joan Selover mixing cookie dough.

Photo: Urho Rahkola

Cheese and Heritage

By Erin Belanger

Having taken the 400 mile drive every summer, I was familiar with the route. My mother and I were on our way to visit my grandmother in Upper Michigan. I was keeping her company by listening to her stories about growing up on the farm. As she reminisced about working in the field with her dad and caring for the animals with her siblings, she started describing some of the foods my great-grandmother use to make. And that is about the time when she mentioned *leipäjuusto*.

My mother described *leipäjuusto* as a traditional Finnish cheese with the quite appropriate nicknamed “squeaky cheese.” As it turns out, when the cheese is fresh it rubs against your teeth and creates a squeak when eaten. I was intrigued to try this noisy substance. I agreed to ask my grandmother to help bake this traditional treat once we arrived in the tiny town of Rock.

Hours later, we pulled into the circular driveway. I helped my mother carry in our bags and hurry towards the house. We were both eager to see who was inside to greet us. The smell of fresh baked bread filled the house. My grandmother was just finishing setting the table. It was a full welcome party with hugs and kisses from every direction.

During dinner, I told Grandma about our idea to make squeaky cheese. She beamed in her apron. She explained that *leipäjuusto* literally means ‘bread cheese’ and is traditionally made from beestings, which is rich milk from a cow that has recently given birth. She went on to say that sometimes in Finland reindeer or goat milk is used to make the cheese. She was so excited that I wanted to embrace my Finnish heritage that she left the table and dialed her good friend, the dairy farmer.

I decided that this would be an event to remember. I was the youngest of three generations working together to create a masterpiece. I grabbed my camera to document the experience and the three of us ventured down the old country road to the farm. It had just rained, so there was mud everywhere; and I developed a fine thick coat on my shoes. I took pictures of the black and white beasts, which mooed quite loudly as I fed them. I followed the farmer into the rustic barn where he filled up our milk jugs. I took a few more pictures around the farm and back to grandma’s house we went.

There were all sorts of strange pans brought down from cabinets and pots dug out of the basement. While Grandmother gave the step-by-step instructions, I was pretending I was Little Miss Muffet playing with the curds and whey.



Grandma Helmi, my mom Mary and me.

The three of us took turns stirring and curdling our mixture. When my arms got tired, I took pictures of us in our aprons with flour on our faces.

After hours and stacks of dirty dishes later, the cheese was finally ready to bake. When the cheese came out of the oven, it looked wonderful with its charred marks. As I tried my first piece, I found it had a mild flavor. It was delicious, and it did in fact squeak inside my mouth. My grandmother called everyone in town to come over and try out squeaky cheese. It didn’t take long for all of it to disappear.

As friends and family stopped by the house, they shared favorite ways to enjoy the cheese. Some said squeaky cheese could be served warm or cold. Others discussed how *leipäjuusto* could be dried and stored for several years. My uncle remembered the appetizing aroma that the cheese had when it was dry, almost rock hard, and heated over the fire to soften.

It’s amazing how learning to make *leipäjuusto* bonded me with my Finnish culture. It was a remarkable experience to bake cheese just like my ancestors.

A few ways to enjoy this cheese:

- Put a few pieces in a cup, pour hot coffee over it. Now it’s known as a Swedish desert, *kaffeost* (“coffee cheese.”)
- Serve it as diamond-shaped pieces with jelly or fresh berries.
- Cut slices of the cheese into a cup or plate, pour some cream on the pieces so that they soak a little, sprinkle some cinnamon and sugar over it and grill in the oven for a moment. Serve with jelly.
- In modern Lappish cuisine, you might find diced *leipäjuusto* as a substitute for feta cheese.

News from Finland

By LynnAnne Vesper

LynnAnne Vesper and Eli Bissonett are studying folk music in Kaustinen, Finland this school year. Eli plays the violin and LynnAnne plays the nyckelharpa. They have been learning about ancient Finnish instruments. During the fall semester, Eli built a jouhikko and LynnAnne built a 10-string kantele. During the spring semester they are learning even more about ancient Finnish music.

Our World Music class includes a presentation by each student about a topic of choice. Here, Eli discusses the details of *Tuvan* throat singing.



Bicycling in Finland is pleasant. Drivers are courteous to cyclists, especially in town. Bike paths are wide, well-lit, and plentiful. When I

ride on the roads outside of town, drivers give me plenty of space when they can. However, most road shoulders are about two inches wide, and the traffic lanes are not too wide either. Twice I have elected to hit the ditch on busy roads when a truck was coming in my lane and there was oncoming traffic. Mostly though, I have been able to bicycle on low-traffic roads, some of which are gravel.

Fortunately for me, and my bike-repairing hobby, I have been pleasantly surprised at how inexpensive and readily available bike parts are. I recently replaced the handgrips, pedals, and chain on the old bike for about \$15 total. I could even buy a pedal wrench at the grocery store and it only cost five euros. Otherwise, many things in Finland seem expensive. For example, Eli and I don't go out for a beer very often (about \$7).

When gas costs 1.35 euros per liter (about \$9 a gallon), people do not drive their cars too far just for fun. So I am very glad that a lot of Scandinavians ride bicycles, even though bikes are considered in-town transportation.



9th annual Nordic Folk Music Festival

Nisswa-stämman "9" will take place on June 6-7 at the Nisswa Pioneer village in Nisswa, Minnesota. Nisswa-stämman has grown into one of the largest traditional Nordic music festivals in the upper midwest. This year 150 folk musicians are expected, among them Kip Peltoniemi and Finn Hall. For more information: (218) 764-2994, pwilson@brainerd.net, www.nisswastamman.org

Upcoming Events and *Utiset* Archive Online

Stay current with events! Check the online calendar on the FACA website for any recent events not in the *Utiset* calendar!

Click on: <http://www.finnfaca.org/Calendar.html>

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

Summer Calendar Items Needed!

The Summer Calendar issue needs news of any Finnish activities coming up in June through September. Send info to Mary at Mary.Belanger@dctc.edu by May 21st.

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.

SISU Finnish Language & Culture Seminar

Immediately following FinnFest this summer, SISU will hold a week of seminars (July 27-August 2) at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Contact Kathleen Ristinen, kaisa@eurekanet.com (740) 592-1157, for more information.

Suomen Innokkaat SISUkkaat Ulkosuomalaiset or SISU began in 1996. *Suomen Innokkaat SISUkkaat Ulkosuomalaiset*, to refer to the enthusiasm and determination of anyone who wished to gain knowledge of Finnish language and culture. (Literal translation: Finland's enthusiastic, determined—or having *sisu*—Finns outside of Finland.) The first business meeting in 1996 resulted in the creation of a set of bylaws that established a non-profit organization for those persons having an interest in Finnish language, heritage, and culture for the purpose of offering one-week Finnish language and cultural seminars every two years in the summer. The primary purpose of SISU is Finnish language study. SISU selects instructors who are native speakers of Finnish, trained and experienced in Finnish language instruction. Primary instructors have been Seija Levelä-Johnson and Sirpa Tuomainen, both native speakers with many years of active teaching experience. Eija Ojala, the third teacher for the 2008 seminar, is similarly trained and experienced. Participants are adults of all ages, primarily from the U.S., but also from Canada and even Europe. Their personal goals and backgrounds vary, but include preparation for study or travel in Finland, maintaining previously gained language skills, acquiring a higher level of language proficiency, formalizing and making more functional language recalled from childhood, facilitating communication with non-English speakers, and exploration of heritage, all providing a basis for further study. The seminar is limited to 30 participants.

Programs and lectures focus on a variety of topics relating to Finnish culture such as music, architecture, politics, folklore, and other subjects which vary from seminar to seminar. Recent seminars have included performances by Vicki Lundberg Gornick (organ) and Craig Randal Johnson (piano), both Finlandia Foundation Performers of the Year. Well-known Duluth architect, David Salmela, will be one of the presenters in 2008. The informal and friendly atmosphere is appreciated by all, fostering learning and creating a true sense of companionship among participants.

Pieniä Paloja

- **Kiitos** to the FACA Board members for serving at the April program
- **Although there is an abundance of flowers** on private yards and the sunny weather is bringing out the outdoor cafe customers, the City of Helsinki will wait to plant its flowers in public places only after the first of May.
- **Blooddrunk**, the sixth studio album by Finnish power metal band **Children of Bodom**, has gone straight to No. 1 in the UK. The list looks at sales for stores specializing in rock music. Finnish “symphonic metal” group **Nightwish** are also represented on this list, with *Bye Bye Beautiful* at No.4 and *Nemo* at No.6.
- The *Freedom-class Independence of the Seas*, owned by Royal Caribbean International and built at the **Turku shipyard** of Aker Yards, sailed off to meet its customers recently. The 160,000 gross tons ship can take around 4,000 passengers, served by a crew of more than a thousand.
- The number of **wolves** has fallen sharply in eastern Finland, while they seem to have spread into new areas in the south and southwest. There are now approximately 200 wolves in Finland; a year ago the number was closer to 250, according to a report produced by the Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute.
- **Finland's earlier spat with the European Union** over wolf-hunting has been resolved. The European Commission made a recent decision accepting hunting of wolves in Finland, stating that in its view the practice was acceptable in order to protect livestock.
- **Sami Hyypiä** signs on for tenth year with Liverpool. Hyypiä, one of the pillars of the Finnish national *futbol* team, has extended his contract with Liverpool FC to run until the summer of 2009. He was voted Sports Personality of the Year in Finland in 2001, and has been chosen as Finnish Footballer of the Year on no less than six occasions, two fewer than his one-time Liverpool colleague **Jari Litmanen**.
- Just recently, **the first baby camel in 37 years was born at Helsinki Zoo**. The camel has been named *Nuuskamuikkunen* (Snufkin), after one of the beloved Moomin characters by the Finnish children's author Tove Jansson. Snufkin will have to move to another zoo sometime in the future, as two males cannot be kept in the same compound without trouble ensuing



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 9 Finn Hall at Kramarczuk's, 215 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. (612) 379-3018. Cover charge \$2. Ralph Tuttila, raulit@msn.com, www.finnhall.com

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

May 17 *Suomi-koulu spring party* 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., Crosby Park. More information: minnesotafinnish.org

May 21 Summer Calendar deadline. Details on pg. 6.

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

www.minnesotaorchestra.org

June 5-6 *Crash! Bang! Boom!* Percussion Festival Finale, Osmo Vänskä, conductor.

June 6-7 Nisswa-Stämman Folk Music Festival, Nisswa. See pg. 6.

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

June 20-22 Celebrate Midsummer Juhannus at Palmquist Farm, Brantwood, WI (800) 519-2558 www.palmquistfarm.com

June 27-29 The Scandinavian Hjemkomst

Festival. Celebrate the unique cultures of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Scandinavian America; and experience the finest in Nordic entertainment, arts, traditions and contemporary cultures at the Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival in Fargo and Moorhead. www.scandinavianhjemkomstfestival.org

July 19-20 Finn Days at Ironworld, Chisholm, MN (See April *Utiset*, page 2 for more information.)

July 23-27 *Finnfest 2008: Sharing the Spirit of Finland*, Duluth. Information at: www.finnfest2008.com

July 27-August 2 2008 *SISU* Finnish Language and Culture Seminar, University of Minnesota, Duluth. For more information, contact: Kathleen Ristinen, kaisa@eurekanet.com, (740) 592-1157 (See page 7.)

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 email hanso107@umn.edu.

Aug 24 *date tentative Pesäpallo game* 3:00 p.m. Join us at Newell Park, 900. N. Fairview Ave., St. Paul, on Sunday afternoon for a game of Finnish baseball. All ages, all levels of experience are welcome. See Summer issue for more information.