



NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

October/Lokakuu 2008

The Colorful World of Marimekko

Presenter: Susan E. Harstad

Marimekko is a leading Finnish textile and design company that is taking the world by storm. From 1951 to the present, Marimekko's Finnish, Swedish, and Japanese designers have created designs for "beautiful everyday life", which range from subtle patterns inspired by nature to bold cityscapes and bright abstract prints. Marimekko first gained popularity in the U.S. following a December 1960 *Sports Illustrated* cover showing First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy in a simple Marimekko cotton dress.



The company continues to design and market high-quality clothing, interior decoration textiles, bags, and other accessories both in Finland and abroad. Learn about Marimekko's designers, view fabric and samples of colorful Marimekko products, and discover why Marimekko is at the height of modern fashion. You will be inspired by the colorful world of Marimekko!

Susan E. Harstad has degrees in Art History, K-12 Art Education and a Masters degree in Art History.

She has traveled to Finland four times. Susan's strong interest in Finnish language, culture, art, and design stems from her 19 summers of camp counselor work at *Salolampi*, the Finnish Concordia Language Village, her graduate studies focusing on Nordic art, and from working full time at the design store FinnStyle in Minneapolis.

OCTOBER FACCA PROGRAM

**The Colorful World of
Marimekko**

**Friday, October 17
7:30 p.m.**

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

*If you need transportation, call
Marianne Wargelin
at 612-374-2718*

Note: This is a version of the presentation done at FinnFest in Duluth. Even those who attended that talk will get something new out of this version because she continually update the images to show the latest images of the season.

Finnstyle will have merchandise for sale at the *tori* at this program

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President's Message

By *Kaarina Kotkavuori*



I am looking forward to this coming year. This year we celebrate our silver anniversary. It has been 25 years since FACA's bylaws were signed in March 1983. FACA was organized in time to host the first FinnFest, which was held in Minneapolis during the summer of 1983. So many people have come and gone throughout these years. We've had many good times and known a great number of people. There are so many good memories wrapped up in this organization.

I was happy to see many people I know at the September program. I am also excited to see faces of people that I do not yet know. This year we have some excellent opportunities to experience our heritage and traditions, while adding new experiences. One new experience I enjoyed was the Nordic celebration held September 28 of Leif Erickson at the Norwegian Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. I was proud to wear my Finnish national costume while carrying the Finnish flag.

One of our traditions is to celebrate *Pikkujoulu*. This year we will be having *Pikkujoulu* one week earlier, Saturday, December 6 (Finland's Independence Day). Please mark your calendars and plan to come.

We experience cold weather here in Minnesota. To help us warm up, we will have caffeinated coffee ready at the beginning of the program each month. We will continue to have the coffee table and offer caf and de-caf coffee after the program. At the October program, we will also have a *tori*, selling crafts, Finnish music CDs and baked goods. FinnStyle is bringing merchandise, also. If you make crafts and would like to bring them, please do. Because this is a *Salolampi* fund raiser, please consider donating 10% of the proceeds. We would also appreciate donated baked goods. I will be bringing *Karjalainen piirakkas* and perhaps some knitted items. Please price the items. Perhaps this could become a tradition?

In September, Mauno Silpala shared his experiences of being part of the UN peace keeping mission. He had great stories and slides. I am glad that he would like to come back with another presentation at a future date.

I would like to invite anyone who might be interested to sit in on a board meeting. The October 14th meeting is at my home, and you are welcome to attend. Please call me if you plan to come. If you have some suggestions of new ideas or comments, please give me a call. I do not have caller id, so please leave your phone number if you call and want a call-back.

Also, if you have stories about your visit to FinnFest, I would like to hear them. We are going to have an interesting and fun year. Please do come and join us at the next FACA program.

Board Notes *By Stella Arola*

The Board met at the home of retiring FACA President, Al Norgard, on September 16th. The Secretary's minutes of the June meeting and the Treasurer's report were read and approved.

The new Board assignments are as follows: President: Kaarina Kotkavuori; Vice President/Program Chair: Jeanne Swope; Secretary: Stella Arola; Treasurer/Publicity: Andreas Ostenso; Hospitality/Special Activities: Jane Olson; Special Events Director: Ruth Wilkman. A special thanks and recognition for the many years that Al Norgard served as President of FACA were conveyed to him by the Board.

The Board is having an ongoing discussion of some changes to the FACA bylaws. We hope to submit the recommended changes in the bylaws to the membership in the next month or so.

It was suggested that we have a *tori* at our next program, at which time FACA members could donate baked goods and hand-crafts (if desired).

The October Board meeting will be on October 14th at the home of Kaarina Kotkavuori at 7:30 p.m.

ANNUAL SALOLAMPI SCHOLARSHIP PHONATHON

Please accept a call on November 8 from Bemidji or November 11, 12, or 13 from Minneapolis

Salolampi Foundation board members and friends of *Salolampi* will be making hundreds of calls nationwide again this year for the scholarship program. Your support this year is more critical than ever. We want to keep up with increased costs at *Salolampi*.

This Phonathon is the major annual appeal by the *Salolampi* Foundation that provides approximately \$25,000 to help defray tuition costs and makes attendance at *Salolampi* more affordable. As the number of villagers increases, the number of dollars needs to increase. **Currently, every villager receives scholarship assistance** to reduce the real cost of attendance.

Postcards will be mailed to remind donors to expect a Phonathon call on November 8 from Bemidji or November 11, 12, or 13 from Minneapolis. Please note that if you will not be available or if you do not receive a call or postcard from the Phonathon, send your contribution directly to the *Salolampi* Foundation, P. O. Box 14480, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0480. Note that if you are a policyholder or investor with Thrivent Financial, additional monies can be realized by requesting a match from Thrivent. You may also donate on-line via our website www.salolampi.org and click on Phonathon Donation.

This year we have two Phonathon sites. Volunteers are needed to staff the 15 onsite phones at the Lutheran Community Foundation offices in the Thrivent Financial Building in downtown Minneapolis, or the ten onsite phones in Bemidji. Please call (612) 359-0805 or email eeskeli@usfamily.net if you can help at either location. This is a very important event. Our Finnish-American villagers need your support.

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.

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.)

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September Program Recap

By Jeanne Swope

Our September program featured Mauno Silpala's "Karjalaispoika maailmalla—A Karelian boy out in the big world." He began by telling about "his own journey"—his family's flight from the eastern border of Karelia because of the Winter War to a village near Kuopio. Their community spoke Karelian, not the Savo dialect of the locals, and were Orthodox in religion, not Lutheran as the locals. There were difficulties in their relationships with the people of Kuopio.

After studying nights in Helsinki to finish high school while working in a bank (starting as a messenger), he applied for a scholarship to study in the U.S. He knew almost nothing about Carleton, Northfield, or Minnesota, but seized the opportunity. The opportunity included meeting his wife Helle in Northfield. After college, he worked in banking and finance with Northwestern National Bank, Medtronic, and CPT Corporation. His family grew. He saw and seized another direction for his life in 1988, when he began working for the United Nations in treasury/finance with UNRWA. He had a moment's hesitation about working with displaced Palestinians—associated with terrorism by many, but once he became familiar with their real situation had a complete change of heart.

Silpala described some of the many U.N. organizations. After 14 years with UNRWA, he worked three years in a peacekeeping mission in Georgia, once a part of the U.S.S.R. Turning to a map of the Caucasus area, he pointed out major features in this land under the Caucasus mountains, between the Black and Caspian Seas, a region of many languages and many alphabets.

Georgia declared its independence from the U.S.S.R. early in the break-up of that power. Georgia has its own language and culture, but is not a homogenous nation. Civil wars in South Ossetia and Abkhazia ensued, leading to the creation of the U.N. peacekeeping missions. The political situation has continued to be complex; one recent controversy is the Russian occupation of both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Silpala described the South Ossetian region and the background of the events of this past August.

His organization was headquartered in the city of Sukhumi in the province of Abkhazia, on the east side of Georgia along the Black Sea. The multinational

staff included local workers. He describes his work in Sukhumi and earlier in Palestine as "an education I will never forget" about racial tolerance and respect for the people with whom he was working.

Silpala presented a fine photo collection including: hair-raising trails into the Caucasus mountains; a small, still-inhabited Estonian immigrant village dating back to the late nineteenth century, the wide beaches of the sea coast, the small stalls that form the local "shopping mall" in the shabby city, peacocks in the yard, tea harvest methods in Georgia, the inside of a former Soviet military helicopter used for U.N. staff transportation, the villa where Gorbachev was held captive during the last days of the U.S.S.R., Stalin's dacha with its own huge outdoor movie screen on the hillside across from the balcony, Putin's vacation home under the ski lift in Sochi where the 2014 Winter Olympics are slated to be held.

After his talk, Mauno Silpala continued to chat with interested FACA members who had many questions for our September speaker.

Tragedy in Finland

On September 23, a 22 year-old trade school student killed ten students, wounded others then fatally shot himself, at the Kauhajoki School of Hospitality. While it is commonplace to watch killing on television, it is shocking to see violence displayed as it was in Finland. As members of the Finnish community, we extend deep sympathy to the people of Finland.

More: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26849077/>

Editor's Note: Kauhajoki was Richard Harju's father's hometown. He visited there in June 2008.

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.

Welcome New Members!

**Siiri Doan, Plymouth, MN
Mauna Silpala,
Lake Elmo, MN**

Tervetuloa!

Sharing the Spirit of Finland

By Karen Luoma-Varichak

Postage stamps have always been a passion of mine. They are tiny works of art that acknowledge a celebrated person's accomplishments; or commemorate an important event in our country's history; or celebrate a particular ethnic heritage, music, architecture, medical or science discovery, and so on. Much of our history is reflected in our postage stamps.

Was it kismet that brought me to work for the United States Postal Service? Who knows? As I navigated myself around the Postal Service over the years, I discovered another type of art—the Pictorial Special Cancellation. It commemorates a particular event with a special postmark. A temporary Postal Station is setup and outbound mail is cancelled using the specially designed postmark. Event participants, such as those at a FinnFest, can send cards and letters to family and friends telling them what a fabulous time they are having—“Wish you were here!”—and have a delightful memento of the occasion with that special cancellation.

I have collected Special Cancellations from past FinnFests as well as from other events; and when I saw the exquisite 2008 Duluth FinnFest logo, immediately I knew it would make a spectacular postmark. I worked with the Duluth Post Office to get the temporary station setup for July 25 at the DECC in Duluth and the logo artists, Angel Sarkela-Saur and Andy Saur, offered their assistance.

I wondered if the “swirls” on either side of the logo had any special significance. Yes, they do, I was told. The swirls represent water (there is plenty in Finland with 60,000 lakes and, of course, in Lake Superior)—and steam rising from sauna rocks (and probably from coffee, too, a staple of the Finnish cuisine)—and the swirls also represent the mystical spirit of Finland. Angel and Andy are referred to as “coffee artists,” so I thought they ran a coffee shop and as an aside, sold art. No, they are literal coffee artists, coffee is the



medium they use to paint. It is an ancient painting technique enjoying a resurgence in popularity. Angel and Andy (and baby-to-be, Annika) had lunch with President Halonen and they presented her with their rendition of the 2008 FinnFest logo they designed, painted with coffee! Annika was the “youngest” FinnFest attendee—born on July 26.

For more information about the artists, contact them at www.justcoffeeart.com. For more information about the United States Postal Service products and Special Pictorial Cancellations, contact them at www.usps.com.

According to Jeanne Doty, FinnFest Executive Committee Co-Chair, the official word is that close to 10,000 people attended the Duluth FinnFest. The Opening Ceremony, which did not require a ticket, was over capacity with standing room only—almost 2,400! *It was a very successful Duluth FinnFest—as we all shared the spirit of Finland!*



Finland's President Tarja Halonen, Angel Sarkela-Saur (and baby-to-be Annika) and Andy Saur.
Photos by Amy Saur.

Sleepless in Seattle, Finnish Style . . .

By Erin Belanger

Ever since we were little, my friend Laura has been obsessed with clothing and fashion. Her passion for fashion has only grown, which explains why she has found herself designing in Seattle. This week was her big fashion show. She would be having a collection of garments making their way down the runway, and I wasn't going to miss it.

Laura's mother was born in Finland; and on her way out to explore the world ended up in Minnesota, where she met Laura's dad, and I am glad she did. Laura and I have been inseparable since the first day of fourth grade. We did everything together. I tagged along on her family vacations, and she came along on mine. We would dress up and have fashion shows in our bedrooms and even on the elementary school monkey bars. Now, years after spending time taking pictures in our new school fashions, Laura had moved on to find her life like her mother had once done. I was on my way to visit my old friend in Seattle.

As I was about to book my ticket for my 'best friend reunion,' I decided that it's no fun to go alone and found that my mom also had a good friend from elementary who has found herself living in the Emerald City. After collaborating with my dad, brothers and my mom's friend Gina, I booked tickets to Seattle for my mom and myself. We would attend the fashion show and spend time just enjoying that we are all Finnish-American women. I couldn't wait for the nostalgia! I love reminiscing with Laura, but it would be great to hear my mom reminisce about her past with Gina.

The next day came all too soon, and it brought the fashion show. I couldn't wait. Laura had created fabulous garments, inspired by her mother and vintage attire. The array was simple, elegant, and guided by nature. The silk was hand dyed; together the collection was cream, peach, green, and brown in color. The show was brilliant, and I was so happy to be there to see Laura and all her hard work's reward. It was clear that no matter the distance between our daily lives, the spirits of true friends were bound eternally. I couldn't help but wonder if it would be this way for my mom and Gina.

Saturday morning, Gina would join us. I couldn't wait

to meet her. We met in Bell Town at Cyclops, a restaurant owned by Gina. It was unmistakable with the giant eye on the corner. My mother and I were the first to arrive. I asked my mom if just like how I knew the garments were Laura's, if she could have been able to tell if it was Gina's restaurant. She looked around and took in the velvet art, the collection of jaguars on the walls. She smiled and said, "Yes." It was a hip and eccentric lounge atmosphere, just like Gina herself. Just then, I noticed that my mom's eyes were behind me and as I turned, there she was, my mom's friend. As they searched each other's faces for memories, they shared, and memories they missed, it was clear that it wouldn't take them long to catch up.

Laura arrived. We enjoyed a delicious brunch off the menu, complete with coffee. We Finns do love our coffee, consuming an amazing average of eleven kilograms per person every year. I was surprised at how easily we all talked. It was no surprise that Laura and Gina would get along, but I didn't have any idea how similar the two would be. There was one big common denominator between the four of us, and it was that we were all Finnish-Americans; but I could not believe how much that brought the four of us together.

As dinnertime, we found warm bread from the local bakery. We then made a special stop for salami and cheese. We sat around Gina's kitchen drinking wine, sharing stories, and enjoying our *voileipä*. The day had brought two sets of childhood friends together, and as an added bonus, an accordion was once again in my mother's arms.

It was hard to say our goodbyes; it seemed like we just arrived in Seattle. Even though I had only known Gina for a few days I saw my mom in her; and that made her seem as familiar as the scent of cardamom. I enjoyed listening to the two of them reminisce of teachers and past football games. As we packed up the car to head to the airport, I wanted Laura to know how much she meant to me. I was so proud of her for pursuing her dreams. It may have been a long time ago when we use to model our new outfits for each other; and as far away as the memory is, it felt present as we gave our final embrace. We said our *hyvästi's* to the coast with good wine, full bellies, and kindred friendships. In those few days together, Laura, Gina, my mother, and I, were able to remember who we were back then, and how each other has made us who we are today.

Pieniä Paloja

Kiitos to members of the board who were servers at the September FACA program.

Helsinki's restaurant assortment has rapidly grown more international and taken an ethnic turn. The strongest inroads have been made by Asian restaurants, as dining habits have changed at a brisk pace and the willingness to try out new tastes has grown.

Finland has seen a decline in summer tourism numbers, as hotels report fewer overnights among Finnish and foreign guests. Chilly weather and expensive gasoline have taken their toll.

The Home of Dark Butterflies is Finland's nominee for Foreign-Language Film Oscar for this year's Academy Awards. The film is set in a reform school for boys on an island. It has been produced by Markus Selin's Solar Films, and it is based on Leena Lander's novel of the same name from 1991.

Finland dominated in the **10th Annual Sauna World Championships** held in August. The men's champion stayed in a sauna heated to 230 degrees for more than 18 minutes, while a Finnish woman sweated her way to the title with a time of 5:22. Finland has an estimated 2 million saunas.

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.

More Calendar Items (from pg 8)

Oct 25 FGG all-day research/workshop 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Plymouth Apostolic Lutheran Church. See: www.minnesotafinnish.org, click on Finnish Genealogy Group for directions. Pot-luck luncheon. Members share special knowledge of Finnish and/or American genealogy research. Invite guests interested in learning some of the "how tos" of Finnish and Finnish American research.

Oct. 29 Copy deadline for *Utiset* November-December issue. All to: mary.belanger@dctc.edu

Nov. 2 All Saints Sunday Finnish Service, 1:30 p.m. Rev. Melvin Johnson, presiding, Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave. S., Minneapolis. More information: (612) 721-6611.

Nov. 8 *Salolampi* Scholarship Phonathon at the Concordia Language Village offices, 8659 Thorsonveien NE, Bemidji MN 56601. Volunteers needed to make phone calls to raise money for scholarships to *Salolampi* Finnish Language Village. Call Joanne Bergman (218) 741-1174 or email northwoods@northlc.com if you would like to participate. Lunch included.

Nov. 11, 12 or 13 *Salolampi* Scholarship Phonathon in Minneapolis. Support our youth by participating in the *Salolampi* Scholarship Phonathon. Volunteers needed to make phone calls to raise money for scholarships to *Salolampi* Finnish Language Village. Contact Evelyn Eskeli (612) 359-0805, email eeskeli@usfamily.net if you can help. Light supper provided.

Dec. 6 FACA *Pikkujoulu*, more information to follow.

Dec. 6 Cokato Finnish American Historical Society *Pikkujoulu*, Cokato, MN. More information: www.cokato.mn.us/cmhs/fahs.html

Dec. 17-18 A Scandinavian Christmas with the Minnesota Orchestra, 7:30 p.m. A very special Yuletide celebration: a winter bouquet of Scandinavia's most beautiful Christmas songs, plus lovely seasonal selections by Schubert, Sibelius, Humperdinck and Grieg. It may be cold and dark outside, but inside—*God Jul!*—a warm welcome awaits. The wreaths will be hung, the Hall will be aglow with the magic of Santa Lucia, complete with a candlelight procession...a feast of sweet surprises! Ticket prices vary.

Minnesotaorchestra.org

Dec. 20 Service of Finnish Christmas carols, 3:00 p.m. A celebration with choirs, instrumental music, readings, refreshments. Free will offering to benefit children's ministry in Karelia/Russia, St. Michael's Lutheran Church 1660 West County Road B (south of 36 between Snelling and Fairview) Roseville. More information: (651) 501-8892, (651) 633-8221.



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

Oct. 11 The Cokato Finnish American Historical Society Fall Festival, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Temperance Corner on the corners of County Roads 3 and 100, Cokato, MN. More information: www.cokato.mn.us/cmhs/fahs.html

Oct. 10- 12 Symposium: Eero Saarinen: Beyond the Measly ABC. Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), Walker Art Center (WAC), and Christ Church Lutheran (CCL), Minneapolis, present this three-day symposium in conjunction with the University of Minnesota College of Design.

Oct. 10 Lecture "Rendezvous with the U: A Conversation with Balthazar Korab" 7:00 p.m in the U. of M. Bell Museum of Natural History Auditorium, 10 Church Street SE, Minneapolis. A reception at 8:30 p.m. will take place at Ralph Rapson Hall, 89 Church Street SE, Minneapolis. For more information, call the College of Design at (612) 624-4743 or visit www.design.umn.edu.

Oct. 11 Two exhibitions at the MIA and WAC. Meet at the MIA at 8:30 a.m.

Oct. 12 Tour Christ Lutheran Church, 3244 34th Avenue S, Minneapolis. For information, call (612)

721-6611, or visit www.christchurchluth.org. Kristine Carlson, pastor, will welcome attendees at the church at 2 p.m. Ozayr Saloojee, Uof M. assistant professor of architecture, presents new research on CCL accompanied by an on-site exhibition. At 2:40 p.m., Timo Tuomi, head of research at the Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki, will examine first-hand the collaborative effort of Saarinen and Saarinen, the father and son practice that produced one of the finest examples of modern ecclesiastical architecture. Admission \$40; \$25 for WAC, MIA, and AIA members.

Oct. 14 FACA Board Meeting at Kaarina Kotkavuori's home. Call (651) 646-7783 for address.

Oct. 17 FACA Program "The Colorful World of Marimekko", Susan Harstad. 7:30 p.m. International Institute, 1694 Como Ave., St. Paul.

Oct. 17-18 Rajaton Sings Queen with the Minnesota Orchestra, with Jaakko Kuusisto, principal guest conductor of the Oulu Symphony Orchestra, 8:00 p.m. Orchestra Hall, 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis. More information: www.minnesotaorchestra.org

Calendar cont. pg 7