

FACCA



NEWSLETTER OF THE FINNISH AMERICAN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, INC.

September/Syyskuu 2008



Karjalaispoika maailmalla ***A Karelian boy out in the big world.***

Presenter: Mauno Silpala

Born and raised in Finland, Mauno Silpala first came to Minnesota in 1966. He graduated from Carleton in 1970, and began his career working in banking/finance with local companies, Northwestern National Bank of Minneapolis (now part of Wells Fargo), Medtronic, and CPT Corporation.

Mauno spent the next 17 years (1988-2005) working with the United Nations, in treasury/finance, most of it in the Middle East, working with the Palestinian refugees. The concentration of his presentation will be spent on his last three years as Chief Finance Officer in the headquarters of a peacekeeping mission in Sukhumi, Abkhazia, Georgia.

We hope you will come and join us for a fascinating and timely presentation.

SEPTEMBER FACCA PROGRAM

Mauno Silpala
Friday, September 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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(2008-2009 to be announced.)

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Past President's Message

By Alan Norgard

I'm writing this column as a past president, because I am leaving the board this year. Last May we elected two new board members, Jane Olson and Jeanne Swope, so I can now step down to let the new board continue on. It has been my pleasure to serve as president for these last few years, but it was time to let someone else take over. I am sure there are new and fresh ideas waiting to be heard and implemented; some things will change and I'm sure many traditions will carry on. Please help me support the current board and keep up the tradition of volunteerism that keeps the club going. It's always easier when we have many hands helping. At this time, I don't know who will be filling the various board positions, but that will be set by September. *Paljon Kiitoksia* for all your comments, support, and help through the years.



I saw many FACA members at FinnFest in Duluth in July, and it looked like you were all enjoying the festivities. I think the organizers should be applauded for their efforts – it was a wonderful festival. The various programs, performances, and exhibits were all great.

As I was usually busy with the *Koivun Kaiku* events in the kantele room, I didn't have as much time to take in as many events as I wanted. I did make sure, however, to hear the Third Generation concert, Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra, President Tarja Halonen's speech, and the Gala Concert. It was great to once again hear the Third Generation play – I have always loved their "sound" and I think they are still my favorite Finnish-American musical group. Hopefully they will find more reasons to get together in the future. After watching the Gala Concert, I wished I had more time to see all of the featured performers in their solo programs. There was so much talent on the stage, and I was impressed that the organizing committee was able to have them all come to FinnFest. The presentation of President Halonen's honorary degree gave me my first chance to see and hear a standing president in person. My sister even got her autograph when she happened to be in the Saami camp when President Halonen was there. Osmo Vänskä and the Orchestra had a memorable program, and it was fun to hear the Rautavaara bird symphony again. My wife, Betsey, and I played the recorded bird call tracks during a performance of local musicians for the 80th anniversary of Finnish independence here in Minneapolis; and it brought back many good memories.

It also was an honor to be a part of the Finlandia Foundation Performer of the Year concert. This group of people certainly shows the wide range and talent of the Finnish-American community, and it was a great idea to once again showcase their abilities.

I have heard that attendance at FinnFest was very good (I'm not sure of the numbers), and I hope it was a highlight of your summer, as I'm sure it was for me.

Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future

September 13, 2008—January 4, 2009
**U.S. Bank Gallery, Minneapolis Insti-
tute of Arts, Free Exhibition**

Finnish-born Eero Saarinen (1910-1961) is best known for such modern icons as the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (Gateway Arch) in St. Louis, Missouri (designed 1948, completed 1964), the Trans World Airlines Terminal at JFK Airport in New York City, and Dulles International Airport in Chantilly, Virginia (both completed 1962). Saarinen's presence in the Midwest is very strong, with his creation of corporate campuses for General Motors (Technical Center, Warren, Michigan, completed 1956) and IBM (Rochester, Minnesota, completed 1959), as well as churches and campus projects, including his collaboration with his famous architect father, Eliel, on Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis (1949). By examining the architect's entire output of more than 50 built and proposed projects, "Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future" will be the first opportunity to understand Saarinen's collective work in the larger context of postwar modern architecture. It will also address his sculptural furniture, including the famous "Womb" chair Eero designed in 1948 for Knoll.

See calendar for additional information.

Board Notes *By Stella Arola*



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

The Board was greeted by President Al Norgard on June 3rd at the home of Stella Arola. The Secretary's minutes of the May meeting and the Treasurer's report were read and approved.

The returning Board members welcomed new member, Jeanne Swope. Jane Olson, the other new member, was unable to attend.

At the next Board meeting, various officer assignments will be decided upon. Al Norgard has provided all the Board members with copies of the FACA bylaws so that changes can be discussed at the next Board meeting.

The Landmark Center is planning a festival in December, and they would like to have FACA participate in that festival.

Andreas has several program possibilities for this fall's FACA calendar.

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.)

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

FinnFest USA Announces 2009 Cruise

Have you heard the rumor? FinnFest on a cruise ship? Yes, indeed! FinnFest USA Board of Directors has booked the 2009 festival on a cruise ship to Alaska, leaving Seattle on May 17 and returning to Seattle on May 24, 2009.

FinnFest will move to a luxury cruise liner gliding by glaciers, towering mountains, scenic bays, bald eagles, and humpback whales. Ports of call will include Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka. The cruise ship will also pass by Malcolm Island, the site of the Finnish utopian colony, Sointula, and spend an evening in Victoria, B.C.

The day-long Sitka stop will allow FinnFest attendees to pay special attention to an early piece of Finnish and Finnish American history: 2009 will mark the 200th anniversary of Finland's becoming an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire, the first step Finland took toward achieving Nation-State status in 1917. While Finland was a Grand Duchy, Finns were highly visible participants in the Russian colony in Alaska. Finnish men worked in the fishing industry and as carpenters. Sitka colony's governors included two Finns, Arvid Etholen (1840-45) and Johan Hampus Furuholm (1859-63.) During Etholen's tenure, Uno Cygnaeus, later known as the father of Finnish elementary schools, served as pastor to the Alaska Finns, setting the stage for the Sitka Lutheran Church, the first Finnish American Protestant congregation on the Pacific Coast.

The Russian Bishop's House, built by Finns, and the Sitka National Historical Park, where Finns and Russians used to go for recreation, will both be open for tours while the cruise ship docks in Sitka. FinnFest will have its own experts along on the cruise, people who can interpret Sitka and the Finnish presence in Alaska. Landscape Geography Prof. Arnold Alanen, University of Wisconsin-Madison, who researched Sitka for the National Park Service, will give background lectures for the Sitka visit and assist with the tours. Prof. Max Engman, Åbo Academy, Turku, Finland, highly respected scholar of Finland's Russian history, will lecture on both the Alaska Finns and the Finnish experience after its separation from Sweden.

The cruise offers all the amenities people associate with cruise liners: fine dining, fitness center, *sauna*, library, a broad variety of on-board entertainment provided to all the guests. But only FinnFest attendees will also enjoy FinnFest's annual lectures, demonstrations, panels on things Finnish and Finnish American,

performances of Finnish music, discussions of Finnish films. One special treat: the cruise ship facilities will enable Beatrice Ojakangas to join the cruise and share her secrets with Finnish cooking. Yvonne Hiipakka Lockwood (Michigan) and Eleanor Palo Stoller (North Carolina) are co-chairing the special programming. Carl Rahkonen (Pennsylvania) is organizing the music.

The 2009 FinnFest will give attendees a unique opportunity to interact with Alaska's Native Americans, opportunities including the world's largest collection of totems in an Indian village and Tlingit and Haida artists working on native crafts. Attendees will also learn about the Sami experience in Alaska.

FinnFest USA's 2009 cruise pricing includes room accommodations, all meals, and the many other ship amenities. Most importantly, the price includes access to all FinnFest events. Each port of call provides special additional cost options like helicopter rides, fly fishing, deep sea fishing, and hiking tours. These can be booked now when people are reserving rooms.

People are already booking for FinnFest USA 2009. The 2009 festival promises to be a unique opportunity to spend time with others who share an interest in things Finnish and Finnish American, all in the context of an Alaska cruise. Regularly scheduled *Kahvi Aika* gatherings will build camaraderie and forge new friendships as participants share aspects of their Finnish heritage and ethnic experiences. The longer time frame of the cruise will also provide a context for workshops on topics like family history and Finnish cooking and for classes in Finnish dances and the Finnish language. Even FinnFest's *tori* will be on board.

Cruise Masters has been hired to handle all our bookings, including FinnFest USA 2009 registrations and on-board administrative details for attendees. To access the events that FinnFest USA will hold, travelers will need to book with Cruise Masters. While other travel agents can book passage on this Holland Line cruise, only Cruise Masters bookings include the FinnFest 2009 organized events.

Until September 3, people can book passage with a down payment of only \$175 per person.

For details on how to book, as well as details about the cruise ship and its special amenities, check the Cruise Masters' special website: www.finnfestusa2009.com. To speak specifically to an agent, call 1-800-848-7120. **Special advance prices for FinnFest USA 2009 bookings are good only through September 30, 2008.** On October 1, the price will go up by \$50. To get the best rates and assure choice of accommodations, act now.



FinnFest 2008 Photos

Conga Se Menne played to a packed house.

Finnish dancers from Turku, Finland during the Saturday "International Performance"



Bea Ojakangas answers a question.



William Durbin, author of *The Winter War*, leads a discussion.

A little Childhood Perspective at FinnFest 2008

By Erin Belanger

In the warmth of July, I was one of many Finlanders arriving for a celebration. As I gassed up my Honda I practiced my *Mitä uuttas?* and I made the long drive up north. Friends and families, the young and old, all found their way to Duluth, Minnesota. It was my first trip to FinnFest, and I had no idea that I was about to get a lesson on my own Finnish-American childhood. I was impressed with all the things to see and do in every direction, from sampling tasty baked goods to testing out the kick sleds. There were even traditional Finnish dancers in full authentic customs and music on homemade wooden instruments.

With such a variety of lectures and demonstrations, where did I elect to start? In the *tori*, shopping and browsing through all the unique displays. The marketplace had everything! Nordic sweaters, hand-knitted mittens, beautiful woven scarves, brilliant photography, attractive hand-made jewelry, delicious recipes, and blue and white aprons all were available for purchase. You could have walked away from FinnFest with a new scooter or even a sauna!

One booth instantly caught my eye with its exhibition of hand-carved toboggans and sleighs. There was a particular sled that reminded me of the one I had when I was young. It had a beautiful long candy cane shape. It was so much fun riding down the big hill in town and racing my brothers to see who could get to the bottom first. I left the display reminiscing of the snowy days the three of us would ride the toboggan together and have our father pull us down the icy driveway.

My thoughts were interrupted when my ears perked up to the unmistakable sound of the accordion. I cringed. I only have one recollection of the instrument, and it was not a pleasant one. In sixth grade, I was having friends over for a slumber party; and everything was going great. We were laughing, playing with make-up, doing our hair, and gossiping about boys, when my mom dusted off her accordion and decided to “brush up” on her polka skills. To this day I haven’t seen her play again. Why was it on that particular occasion that she decided it was necessary to drag that old squeeze box out of the basement? I have no idea, other than for pure humiliation. I was so embarrassed that my mother was dancing around the

house playing, “*If You Can’t Do the Polka, Don’t Marry My Daughter*” in front of all the girls at school. I thought I would never recover. Needless to say, it was a long time before I allowed my friends to come back for an overnight visit.

However, it was the trusty ol’ accordion that brought the festival together for me. I found myself losing those feelings of embarrassment and actually enjoying the sounds the instrument added to the atmosphere. And thank goodness, its tones were everywhere. The instrument was in every musical act from folk to polka, classical to *Suomi*-rock.

As I was riding a scooter around the market and coming to terms with the accordion on stage, I heard the familiar words that my grandfather used to sing to me. He used to bounce me on his giant knee and sing *Kukka sen saunan lämittää* to make me laugh. When people ask if I can speak Finnish, I smile and sing that song for them. I felt my grandfather teasing me from heaven. I couldn’t help but grin.

As far as the most surprising event of FinnFest 2008, the award for best time goes to Conga Se Menne. Believe it or not they are a Finnish reggae group with a tropical vibe. My parents have been listening to them for years so I was familiar to *Sponge Bunny* and *Guess Who’s Coming to Sauna?* early on in life. I have to admit, for my parent’s sake, it was the highlight of the festivities. It was impossible not to get swept up in their humorous and all too true lyrics about shoveling never-ending snow and looking forward to taking a *sauna* with *Heikki Lunta*. We laughed the whole time we danced and shared the high energy of the band. We were still singing their songs into the very early morning. I have to say that my relatives proved that not all Finns know how to dance, but Yoopers definitely know how to have a good time and can boogie down with the best of them.

I was surprised at how the celebration inspired me. It was amazing how many Finns had gathered from all around to share their talents, gifts, and heritage. There were so many artists, dancers, musicians, and events that FinnFest is a celebration that can bring a little perspective to any childhood. There was no way I was going to get any sympathy for my mom busting out that old accordion in a group like that, and I can honestly tell you that some of my friends have heard me mutter *voi kauhia* when I think no one is listening. As for *Kukka sen saunan lämittää*, it was apparent that everyone there knew the words to that song; and I can’t help but smile every time I hear it.

Pieniä Paloja

- **Finland's team of 58 athletes returned from the Beijing Olympics** with four medals and eight placings in the points. Medallists were Satu Mäkelä-Nummela (gold, women's trap shooting), Sanna Stén and Minna Nieminen (silver, women's lightweight double sculls), Henri Häkkinen (bronze, men's air rifle), and Tero Pitkämäki, (bronze in the men's javelin).
- The availability of **Finnish language teaching for adult immigrants** in Helsinki is inadequate compared with demand. Applications for beginners' language courses far outstrip the amount of space available. Immigrants applying for language courses have to wait as long as six months to get in.
- Oulu hosted the **13th Air Guitar World Championships** recently. The annual event has come a long way since it was introduced in 1996 as a neat joke to complement the Oulu Music Video Festival. Results can be found on YouTube.
- The **price of Finnish fish** continues to rise as a result of the decreased supply and increasing cost of processing. The number of professional fishermen has gone down as more and more fishermen give up fishing, and there are no newcomers to the field to replace them.
- **Finnish wild mushrooms** still exhibit elevated levels of caesium from Chernobyl nuclear accident while the caesium content of berries and animals has already become almost zero. The radiation amount from food is less than 1% of all radiation an average Finn is exposed to annually. A considerably higher amount comes from radon gas exposure in dwellings.

Welcome New Members!
Carla and Gene Lehtinen of
Bloomington, MN
Darrel Nicholson of
Minneapolis, MN
Robert Pratt of Tower, MN

Tervetuloa!

More Calendar Items *(from pg 8)*

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. 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. Pastor Kristine Carlson 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 Eliel Saarinen and Eero 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. 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. 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

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

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

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

Sept 12 Finn Hall will play, 6:30-8:30 p.m., at Kramarczuk's Deli and Sausage Co., 215 E. Hennepin Ave. Mpls (612) 379-3018. Great food, beer and wine available, and of course dance space! \$2 cover charge. Contact Ralph Tuttila at raulit@msn.com for info.

Sept. 14- Jan. 4 The Saarinen exhibit *Eero Saarinen, Shaping the Future*, Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Walker Art Center. More information: www.artsmia.org, www.walkerart.org

Sept. 14 *Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future*, 2:00 p.m., Pillsbury Auditorium, Finlandia Foundation Lecturers of the Year: Susan Saarinen, daughter of Eero Saarinen, and Mark Coir, will immerse their audience in the Saarinen design story and legacy, from both personal and scholarly perspectives. Admission \$5; MIA members free. To reserve tickets, call (612) 870-6323 or register on line at www.artsmia.org.

Sept. 16 *Apocalyptica* at First Avenue, 7:30 p.m., 701 First Avenue N, Minneapolis, More information: www.first-avenue.com, <http://www.apocalyptica.com/>

Sept. 19 FACA Program, 7:30 p.m. "A Karelian boy out in the big world". Mauno Silpala. International Institute, 1694 Como Ave., St. Paul

Sept 22 FACA Uutiset copy deadline. Copy to Mary at Mary.Belanger@dctc.edu.

Sept. 28 Frigg plays in Nordic Roots Festival, 2:00 p.m., Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Avenue S; Minneapolis, (612) 338-2674 More information: www.frigg.fi,

www.nordicroots.org/NRF2008/index2008.html

Oct. 3-5 Salolampi Fall Work Weekend, contact Harlan Haanpää at harlanhaanpaa@msn.com, or (218) 326-6884 for more information.

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. <http://www.artsmia.org/index> (See details in next three items, pg. 7)

Calendar, cont. pg. 7