



Uutiset

Newsletter of Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.

February/*Helmikuu* 2022

Laskiainen Memories

By Katja Zarns

That Finnish people spend a lot of time outdoors—rain or shine, cold or warm—is neither a myth nor a legend; it originates from a deep-rooted cultural concept. Going outside to enjoy wintery activities during Laskiainen is no exception. Laskiainen lands around Shrove Tuesday and includes sledding and tasty, heartwarming foods like pea or meat soup, *laskiaispulla*, or even some *rieska* with cheese.

As a Finnish kid growing up in Sweden, we would bring our sleds to school on Laskiainen and taste *laskiaispulla* at Mummi's house in the afternoon. Ah, nostalgic memories! I'm definitely grateful that through events like Laskiainen here in the Twin Cities, my own family now gets to experience the joy of this wonderful tradition!



Here are more memories from our Finnish community in Minnesota and beyond:

"My fondest and best childhood memory of Laskiainen growing up in Finland was getting yummy, whipped cream inside of the *pulla*—this of course made it a *laskiaispulla*—and it was something we received only once a year—it was so good!"

—Anne Shadrick,
Minn. Suomi-koulu founder and teacher

"My Laskiainen memories in Finland are from the 80s when we would bring sleds to schools on *Laskiaistiistai*, enjoy pea soup and *laskiaispulla* (*pulla* sliced in half with jam and whipped cream) for lunch and do some sledding with the class. Same night we were likely to have the same food and treats for dinner and go sledding with neighbor kids and our parents."

—Ira Salmela, Duluth, Minn.

"I grew up with my Finnish mother and my American father in my father's home state of Virginia. Every year on a Monday in February, my *äiti* would tell us about Laskiainen, the Tuesday that her whole school would go sledding instead of holding classes. Our jealousy was soothed by baking *laskiaispulla*. I impatiently peeked under the tea towel at the rising dough and took a turn holding the beater to whip the cream. That blissful bite into the soft sweet roll, whipped cream and jelly leaking onto my cheek is still the most thrilling treat. We rarely had snow in February, but if there had been even the slightest flurry, my sister and brothers and I would take our sled to the small hill at the side of the pool house across the street and slide down until it was more mud than snow. Split pea soup for dinner was met with mixed enthusiasm, but I happened to enjoy it. As a minor winter holiday, everything about it felt remarkably warm."

—Anna Renvall, Minn. Suomi-koulu parent, St. Louis Park, Minn.

"Memories" continued on page 2

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President's/Interim Editor's Message

By Louise Morgan

Wow! We have so many exciting articles to share with you this month. I enjoyed reading all of them as they came in. I loved reading memories of Laskiainen. I hope you do as well. I also enjoyed learning more about our sauna culture here in Minnesota. I had no idea that we had a Sauna Research Institute. But...doesn't that make sense?

I took the plunge, literally, into Burntside Lake a few weeks ago, after a nice hot sauna. I was at Camp Du Nord for a knitting retreat. We knitters have a tradition that we take a sauna and then jump into the lake. The camp keeps a hole



clear. Wearing only wool socks, so I wouldn't stick to the ice, I ran to the hole and climbed down a ladder. I was not brave enough to jump. The water did feel REALLY COLD, but I felt so good, as I was walking back to take another trip to the sauna. I did two dips. Two was enough for me. I think the quick walk to the lake is the hardest part of the whole process. So, enough about me.

FACA is continuing strong, even though we have the challenge of Covid. Amy Hultberg spoke to us about Salolampi! She is so inspiring. We are so incredibly lucky to have Salolampi in our state. We want to continue to

support FACA members' children/grandchildren with scholarships. We kicked off our fundraising campaign! I am pleased to announce that many generous members have already donated. We have almost \$500 already. Thank you! We are halfway to our goal of \$1000. Please consider giving so that we can continue to send our children and grandchildren to Salolampi!

Lastly, I have been meeting with members of various local Finnish organizations. We are discussing how we can collaborate and strengthen and work together, not apart. We all share the same passion and love for our heritage, be it in the past, present or future. Our first collaboration is the Laskiainen event, hosted by FACA, Suomi-koulu and Finn Source. More good things to follow!

Laskiainen Memories *(continued from page 1)*

"I remember there always being snow during my childhood winters. It was common for us children to ski and sled every day, and especially on Laskiainen. The area where my family lived had the best and longest ice hill in the Helsinki region—during Laskiainen it was very popular. We also skied throughout the winter in the magnificent scenery and visited the skating rink to ice skate—it was a happy pastime. At Laskiainen, my dear mother baked small buns filled with raspberry jam and whipped cream which we children then ate together with "milk coffee." Traditionally, for dinner, we also enjoyed pea soup with pieces of ham. Oh, those wonderful childhood times."

—Milja Tiainen, Finnish transplant in Stockholm, Sweden

FACA Event Cancellation Policy

If St. Paul public schools are canceled due to bad weather, then a FACA event scheduled for that day will also be canceled. FACA members may contact any board member if they have a question.



Kicksledding on Laskiainen

By Eeva Hoch

Some of the most wonderful winter memories from my childhood in Finland are those related to Laskiainen. I grew up in Salo, a small town in the Southwestern part of the country. Although Salo was not particularly hilly, we had good sledding and skiing hills all around—perfect for Laskiainen.

As *Laskiaistiistai* (Fat Tuesday) was a school day, most of the fun happened on *Laskiaissunnuntai* (Sunday). We gathered our sleds, skis and most importantly, our kick-sleds, and headed to the nearest hill in the neighborhood. A kicksled is yet another great Finnish winter “vehicle” Finns used—and still use—for exercise and school trips. If you don’t know what it is, I can quickly describe it as a colorful “chair” with long steel rails connected to its legs and a sturdy handlebar on top of the chair. You keep one foot on a rail and the other foot kicks, and off you go—fast.



The best Laskiainen fun was when we connected the kicksleds between long rails and made “a train” on the hilltop. Fathers needed to help us now, as steering and kickstarting the train required “dad power.” Icy snow on a sunny

day was the best combination for the train running fast. In February, we often had perfect conditions, unless it was really cold, less than –20°F. Even if it was cold, we still went out sledding for short periods. Whole families followed our runs and shouted “*pitkia pellavia*” (long flax). The longer the sled runs, the longer flax will grow the following summer. We kids for sure did our part for the successful flax crop. After that, we went home to have some *Laskiaspulla* and hot, sweet lingonberry juice.

Hauskaa Laskiaista! Happy Laskiainen!

Ely Steam Sauna

See story on page 6.



The First Annual National Sauna Week, February 20–26, 2022

Finlandia Foundation National

By Betsey Norgard

Sauna is the most known Finnish word in the U.S., within and outside of the Finnish-American community. While many people have experienced sauna at hotels, spas and gyms, in the time of COVID-19, home saunas have become popular additions. Finlandia Foundation National believes that saunas need to be celebrated!

The very first National Sauna Week will build awareness and appreciation of this aspect of Finnish and Finnish-American culture. Finlandia Foundation National is developing a week full of information about the history, types, and benefits of sauna; fun facts, games, quizzes, etc.; links to sauna resources; and a week-long social media campaign with sauna info tips, photos, songs, and fun facts, and importantly, how to pronounce “sauna.”

Go to finlandiafoundation.org/national-sauna-week for information and details.

YOU CAN HELP the North American Sauna Society with a brief questionnaire to learn about sauna habits and identify quality public saunas across the U.S. and Canada. CLICK HERE to participate: <https://pbex4rdz.paperform.co>

Salolampi Fundraising

Hei FACA friends! Come join us for our Salolampi

FUN_raiser! Fun and knowledge go hand-in-hand for children and/or grandchildren of FACA members through scholarships. We strive to reach our goal of \$1,000 and a generous donor will match that. Imagine how much \$2,000 will help the Salolampi Finnish Language Village programs. FACA has continuously been a support to Salolampi with scholarship donations, but without our normal resources these past two “Covid” years, FACA’s revenue has diminished. So, let’s all support our children with a tax-deductible donation. Let’s reach the \$1,000 goal and make it double. What an exciting promise for future students to continue participating in summer programs at Salolampi!

Ways to Donate:

1. Send a check to FACA, PO Box 580708, Minneapolis, MN 55458; in memo area, write **Salolampi fundraiser**.
2. Go to the FACA website and use the Paypal option. Please annotate in the memo space that this is for the **Salolampi fundraiser**.

Kiitos! We are on our way!

FACA Board Meeting—January 19, 2022

By Louise Morgan



Board Members:
(top row, l-r)
*Louise Morgan,
Nate Hoch and
Katja Zarns;*
(bottom row, l-r)
*Kendra Kauppi,
Marlene Moreno
and Michelle Ranta.*

The FACA board met on January 19 via Zoom.

Meeting was called to order at 5:06 p.m. Members present: Louise Morgan, Marlene Moreno, Katja Zarns, Michelle Ranta and Nate Hoch. Absent: Kendra Kauppi.

Marlene Moreno presented 2021 financial results.

Income for the year was predominantly membership dues and book sales. Book sales will not continue at the pace they did in 2021. Major costs are still for the newsletter—printing and postage. Fundraising options were discussed.

Laskiainen celebration discussion.

Event will be held at the Como fire pits, in collaboration with Suomi-koulu and FinnSource. Coffee and *pulla* rolls (whipped cream and jam), plus other goodies will be available for attendees' enjoyment.

Book Club survey results.

Members are still expressing interest in a FACA book club. The next meeting will be February 23 at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. Lynn Laitala, the author of the February selection, *Down From Basswood, Voices of the Boundary Waters*, will be joining.

Sauna Bucket Award nomination period will end

January 31, 2022.

Committee needed for upcoming events: Finn Fun Day in September and possibly Midsummer Festival in June.

Meeting adjourned 6:25 p.m. Next meeting will be Monday, February 21, 5 p.m.

Conversational Finnish Class
Every Tuesday—2-3:30 p.m.
Participation via FACA Zoom Meeting
For more information, please call
Urho Rahkola at 651-429-3319

Hello From Helsinki

By Cristina Youngren

It's proper winter in Helsinki now. Fall moved smoothly into winter—not too chilly. December kicked off with *Itsenäisyyspäivä* or Independence Day on December 6. Blue and white candles were lit in the windows, small cakes with blue and white frosting were eaten and I participated in the student torchlight parade from Hietaniemi cemetery to the steps of Helsinki Cathedral in Senate Square.



After marching past President Niinistö on the balcony, we listened to a number of speakers including the mayor of Helsinki give speeches before finding a coffee shop in which to warm up. I went to *Raskasta Joulua* at Hartwall Arena, an awesome concert of Christmas songs by heavy metal artists. It was a white Christmas in Helsinki, lovely to walk around in and enjoy the festive holiday lights. I visited with some distant cousins and enjoyed their Christmas tree with actual candles. I thought it interesting that here people buy their Christmas trees in the week before Christmas and leave them up until *Loppiainen* or Epiphany on January 6, when the Christmas holidays officially end. New Year's Eve was subdued due to a lockdown that started on December 28, but I could see a lot of fireworks from my student studio, and they continued until around 2 a.m. Dinner was traditional *nakki* and potato salad, but I did not pour tin or light sparklers.

January has been a bit grey but the light art festival *Lux Helsinki* on January 5–9 was impressive. There were 25 installations around Uusimaa, and I went to 10 of them, starting with a light show on the outside of the Parliament building. My favorite display by far was Borealis at Olympic stadium, where it really looked like the northern lights filled the sky above the field with color. Now the new semester has started at the university, and I am busy with classes in chemistry and Finnish as well as a new internship. The days grow longer, and I look forward to whatever might come next this snowy winter in Helsinki.

Sisu + Löyly

By Sisu and Löyly

Sisu + Löyly is located on the East Bay of Lake Superior in Grand Marais, Minnesota. A charming 1930s fish house near the shoreline was restored and converted into side-by-side saunas. The saunas feature seating for six people, vaulted ceilings, beautiful Huum stoves and large picture windows that provide stunning views of Artists Point and The East Bay.

The nearby sauna lounge building houses the reception area, restrooms with showers, and a fireside lounge for guests to enjoy. The lounge showcases paintings, weavings and prints made by local artists. The outdoor bonfire area is located next to the sauna building. Signature sauna sessions at Sisu + Löyly are 90 minutes and include the use of bathrobes, sandals, towels and water bottles while on site. Tea and coffee are complimentary. Sessions are by appointment only and reservations can be made online at sisuandloyly.com



Sisu + Löyly owner, Katie Usem, lives on the property with her family in a house built by a commercial fishing family with Finnish and Norwegian roots who settled on the East Bay in the 1920s. Usem fell in love with the property at first sight and knew it could be a new home for her family on the North Shore as well as the landscape for a new business. The result is a public sauna in Grand Marais.

Sisu + Löyly has been open for only four months, and in this time her saunas have become a memorable experience for hundreds of guests, with repeat visits being made by locals and visitors alike. It is important to Usem that people feel welcome here whether they grew up with sauna or are trying sauna for the very first time. She is happy to report that the Finns she has hosted have been quite pleased with the heat.

612 Sauna Society

By 612 Sauna Society

Public sauna action in Minneapolis may not be as developed as in Helsinki, but the 612 Sauna Society has been at the forefront, and ahead of its time on a few levels in terms of Finnish style and spirit.

612 Sauna Society is a member-owned cooperative. A volunteer board of directors handles much of the organization and management and operations. Much like *Sompasauna*, volunteers built the sauna and hosts manage its day-to-day operations. Members enjoy sauna sessions at a reasonable price and with a community spirit. As a matter of fact, a 90-minute sauna session with the 612 Sauna Society is comparable to the affordable-to-all and iconic Löyly spa in Helsinki.

612 hosts are more apt to say “sowna” than “saana” and, much akin to Finnish values, believe that “all are equal in sauna” (a common Finnish aphorism). The 612 Sauna Society welcomes all to sauna, regardless of political persuasion, income, or ethnic or sexual orientation.

612 Sauna Society is a Finnish-style sauna. Bathers are offered ample time, 90 minutes per session, and are able to heat up and cool down at their own pace. The hot room is tranquil. The cool down room is well sized. The heat is generated from a wood burning Kuuma stove. Its manufacturer, Lamppa Manufacturing, is a 100 percent Finnish family-owned 4th generation sauna stove company located in Northeast Minnesota.



The 612 Sauna is enjoying its winter residency in the shadows of The Trailhead, Loppet’s ski chalet at Theodore Wirth Park. Many Finns have partaken in the 612 Sauna experience, and when they do, many from the happiest country in the world leave the hot room with a big smile, heat and experience familiar and comparable to the homeland.

Reservations can be made from the website www.612saunasociety.com.

Sauna in Minnesota is alive and well!

Mission and Goals

- **MISSION STATEMENT**

To advance the research and study of hot and cold sauna therapy and practice in order to help people live healthier and happier lives.

Sauna Research Institute (“SRI”) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to initiating studies within the environment of heat/cold exposure as well as potential ancillary environments and conditions.

We intend to engage with universities and existing research institutions for collaborative work in the field of studies on well-being based upon environmental stressors of heat/cold including, but not limited to, methods of sauna and cold plunge. We will be measuring clinical chemistries, molecular biomarkers and vital signs of participants throughout our studies, along with crafted questionnaires.

- **GOALS OF SAUNA RESEARCH**

By studying the effects of thermal exposure, the goals of our work will be to produce peer-reviewed research for publication with conclusions of how different protocols and practices can affect physical and mental health and well-being of humans.

To find out more about the Sauna Research Institute, go to saunastudies.com.

The Legend of Heikki Lunta

From Touch of Finland Website

According to local Finnish American mythology of the Upper Peninsula, Heikki Lunta, the Finnish snow god, is said to live deep in the woods of Tapiola and brings with him abundant snow showers.

The embodiment of Heikki Lunta was created in 1970 by David Riutta in hopes to produce enough snow for a local snowmobile race. Dave wrote the now famous *Heikki Lunta Snow Dance Song* in hopes to garner community support for the race despite the lack of snow.

The song pleaded with Heikki Lunta to perform his magical song and dance, which causes the snow to fall. The song aired for the first time on Hancock’s local radio station, WMPL. Ironically the snow fell and fell, until there was too much, and the race had to be canceled.

Radio stations all around the country soon picked up the legendary tune, including mentions on *The Today Show* and *The Tonight Show*.

Eventually some local Yoopers became angry about the massive amount of snowfall in the winter of 1970, believing the *Heikki Lunta Snow Dance* song was to blame! Mr. Riutta decided enough was enough and created the sequel, *Heikki Lunta, Go Away*, that same winter.

Now it’s time to pick a side. Winter is here and you must decide, are you singing and dancing for more snowfall or for it all to go away? **Be careful what you wish for!**

Listen to original *Heikki Lunta* music!

Heikki Lunta Snow Dance by David Riutta (1970)

<https://heikkilunta.csumc.wisc.edu/music/heikkiluntasnowdance.mp3>

Heikki Lunta, Go Away by David Riutta (1970)

<https://heikkilunta.csumc.wisc.edu/music/heikkiluntagoaway.mp3>

Heikki Lunta by Da Yoopers (1991)

<https://heikkilunta.csumc.wisc.edu/music/heikkiluntadayoopers.mp3>

Ely Steam Sauna

Excerpts from news articles about the Ely Steam Sauna

Since 1915, the Ely Steam Sauna has offered folks a hot room and a cold shower. For \$7, a visitor gets a pair of towels—big enough to cover your top or bottom, but not both—a small bar of soap and an old-fashioned experience: a steam among friends.

The Ely Steam Sauna will be reopening soon after a long hiatus due to the Covid environment.

Star Tribune

“For 100 years, this public sauna has drawn Minnesotans to Ely—birthday suits optional.

“One of the oldest public saunas in the state boasts hot steam, cold showers and good conversation.”

Minnesota Brown

“I got thinking about saunas. In what has been a disturbing year of political and cultural discord, about the only time I *instantly* relaxed was during the sauna I took at hunting camp. Just once. Every other relaxed moment took days of anxious malaise to achieve.

“That’s why the sauna is much more than a steam bath. Originally, the sauna served as one-stop sterile sick room, pain reliever and spiritual center. Of course, saunas represented a suitable replacement for a bathtub and shower. Thrifty Finns could stave off indoor plumbing for decades owing to the serviceability and comforts of the sauna. Some still do.

“Get yourself into a sauna. If not today, then as soon as possible. You don’t have to be a Finn; you just need to be dirty—in mind, body or soul. And we’re all dirty.”

(Photo on page 2.)

Salolampi Presentation Recap

By Michelle Ranta

On January 21 we had a wonderful Zoom presentation by the Dean of Salolampi, Amy (Iida) Tervola Hultberg, Ph.D. She went into quite some depth on all the various aspects of the Concordia language school Salolampi. It was founded in 1961 by Gerhard Haukebo who had realized while living in Germany and watching his children learn German that a total immersion in a language and culture was a very effective way to learn. Everything at Salolampi is made to be as in Finland, even *tonnikala* pizza (tuna pizza)! They also want to keep up to date with Finland as it is today with such new things as kebabs. Many of the instructors are from Finland. The camp buildings at Salolampi are all built as Finnish architecture, but they actually teach many different languages.

During the pandemic Salolampi's focus has been on as much outdoor learning as possible as well as online learning. Iida gave us a mini lesson on the Finnish painter Akseli Gallen-Kallela that the virtual learners would do. She showed us some lovely examples of student artwork from this lesson where the students had replicated a painting in their own way; one in particular that stood out was a photo of a little girl with her cat on a farm—replicating the painting of the ragged little boy.

The highlight of the presentation was the middle-school-aged boy named Aku who attended Salolampi on our FACA scholarship. His poise and cheerfulness while discussing his experience with our members was quite impressive. His favorite experiences were playing *jalkapallo* (soccer), *pesapallo* (Finnish baseball), and of course the sauna. He thanked us profusely—attending summer camp really is a valuable experience and it's a pleasure being able to help young people like Aku. On the weekend of May 20–22, come volunteer at the *Taukkoot*—they need help cleaning, fixing fences, etc. Food and sauna will be provided.

Tervetuloa!

Welcome, new FACA members!

Linda Dexter, St. Paul, Minn.
Eeva Hoch, Crosslake, Minn.
Calvin Mattson, Aitkin, Minn.
John Morgan, Australia
Brenda Oseland, Stillwater, Minn.
Diane Pearson, Minneapolis, Minn.
Mandy Pedigo, St. Louis, Mo.
Mia Pylkkanen, Waterford, Vt.
Seija Stratton, Shoreview, Minn.

January 2022 Calendar

Feb. 12–13. Finnish American Folk School at Finlandia University in Hancock, Mich., offers an online lament singing class with Emmi Kuittinen, a Finnish folk singer and musician who specializes in Karelian and Ingrian singing traditions. Workshop students learn about the lament tradition, how to sing laments, and how to write their own short lament. No experience necessary. For more information and registration, visit www.finlandia.edu/folkschool.

Feb. 21. 5 p.m., FACA Board meeting.

Feb. 23. 6:30 p.m. Book Club, Zoom (check FACA FaceBook or website for Zoom link); ***Basswood. Voices of the Boundary Waters* by Lynn Maria Laitala**. Oral histories of northern Minnesota. Captures the unique mix of immigrant and Native American voices that forged the culture of the northern frontier. **Lynn Maria Laitala will be joining our discussion!**

Feb. 26. Noon–3 p.m. Laskiainen Celebration. Como Fire Pits. Celebrate Laskiainen the traditional way: sledding, bonfire, coffee, conversation! Coffee and goodies (*laskiais pullas* and other Finnish goodies) will be available. FACA/Suomi-koulu/FinnSource sponsored event.

Tuesdays. 2–3:30 p.m. Conversational Finnish Class (*Oppitunti*) Zoom. For more information call Urho Rahkola at 651-429-3319.

FACA Membership

A one-year membership for \$25 provides you with eight issues of this newsletter, plus other benefits. To subscribe or renew, complete this form and mail with your check to FACA, P.O. Box 580708, Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708. (Check your email message for a membership expiration warning or your mailing label for an expiration date.)

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*Finnish American Cultural Activities
is dedicated to exploring and preserving
Finnish and Finnish American heritage.*

www.finnfaca.org

National Sauna Week

Red River Finns Celebrate Sauna Week

By Ellen Liddle

The Red River Finns are celebrating **National Sauna Week**, as declared by the Finlandia Foundation National, by hosting a one-day Sauna Festival on **February 26, 10 a.m.– 4 p.m.** at the Plains Art Museum, 704 1st Ave. N., Fargo, ND. In the parking lot, **Log the Sauna**, a woodfire barrel sauna will host up to six people for each one-hour session. There will be two stations in the changing tent adjacent to the sauna as well as restrooms indoors. **Log the Sauna** is owned by Folkways, a business that supports the preservation of the community's culture.

Indoors, the Red River Finns will serve coffee and cookies in the reception area where guests can view a display of sauna memorabilia, such as a sauna bucket, sauna thermometer, the artist impression of the old Finnish sauna by E. Tanntu, Finnish and Nordic winter recreational items such as kicksleds, skis and more.

The Plains Art Museum is a free, fine arts museum located in downtown Fargo, and it is dedicated to regional art, including Native American, contemporary, and folk art ongoing exhibits as well as space for temporary exhibitions.



Finlandia Foundation National has declared the last week of February “National Sauna Week” to build awareness and appreciation of this aspect of Finnish and Finnish-American culture, with activities, online programming, and a wealth of information.

Visit:

<https://finlandiafoundation.org/national-sauna-week>

Admission to the Plains Art Museum, coffee, and cookies with the Red River Finns is free, and everyone is welcome to attend the event. The cost for the sauna experience is \$20 per person. Reservations are available on Eventbrite. For information, call 701-281-9303.