



Newsletter of Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.

April/Huhtikuu 2022

U.S. Student Fulbright Experience in Finland

Emma Mulhern—Fulbright-LUT Graduate Award Grantee 2021–22

Emma Mulhern is a Fulbright-LUT Graduate Award Grantee who is currently pursuing her master's degree in supply management with a minor in sustainable business at LUT University in Lappeenranta, Finland. She is a Twin Cities native and an alumna of the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities Carlson School of Management.

During the past few months, she has had the opportunity to experience everything that Finnish university life has to offer, from its strong academics to its lively student culture. Her presentation will talk about her experiences as an international student studying in Finland, and how student life differs from that in the U.S. She will also discuss the Fulbright program and opportunities it offers for students and scholars to study, conduct research and teach in Finland.



Program in Brief

Emma Mulhern
*U.S. Fulbright Student
 Studying in Finland*
 Saturday, April 23, 10:15 a.m.
 Zoom Program

Date: Saturday April 23, 2022

Time: Central Time (US and Canada)

10 a.m. member announcements, 10:15 a.m. program

Please note date and time difference due to the speaker residing in Finland.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6815304953>

Meeting ID: 681 530 4953

Passcode: MinnFinn

Past presentations can be viewed on FACA website under the Media tab.



*Mikko Koivu
 becomes the
 first Minnesota
 Wild hockey
 player in
 history to have
 his jersey,
 #9, retired.
 He played in
 1,000 games.*

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President's/Interim Editor's Message

By Louise Morgan

Spring is here...I think. Every year, my Finnish grandmother used to say, "...if I can only live to see another spring." Spring was her favorite time of year. I love spring as well, but this year, I am a bit challenged. The sleet is tapping on my window right now. What happened to the 60-degree weather?

Have any of you tried the Salmon Casserole that Beatrice Ojakangas demonstrated? It looked so good and so easy! If you have not, you have a chance because we have included the recipe this month. And congratulations to all the cookbook raffle winners. Stay tuned. More raffles in the future!

A quick update on collaboration opportunities in the Twin Cities Finnish Community: Finn Fun Day, September 10. It will be our kickoff event for the 2022–2023 year, and is sponsored by FACA, Suomi-koulu, and FinnSource.

On June 11, we will be hosting our first ever FACA mid-summer picnic at Como Park. Please mark the date on your calendars. **June 11!** Finn Hall is providing the music. What a fun way to start the summer! Details to follow. Check the website, Facebook and the May newsletter.

Did your Finnish grandmother have favorite sayings? If so, send them to me so we can compile them for a future article. My grandmother could not speak English, so my mother would always interpret the sayings for her. A favorite that I heard often was, "A fool wouldn't notice, and a wise man wouldn't say anything." It was a favorite of my mother's and I guess my grandmother's. My retort, as a smart-mouth teenager would be, "...but what about all those people who are not fools or wise?" What was your favorite Finnish saying?

Congratulations to Janie Ahola, our 2021 Sauna Bucket recipient.

Now, will spring please come?



Lake Worth Midnight Sun Festival

By Steve Solkela

Finns, to most, the sharp part of a fish that helps them swim. To others, a humble and hard-working group of stoic blondes from one of the coldest regions on Earth. Which begs the question, "How did so many Finns end up in Lake Worth, Florida?!"

Myself, being a Minnesota born, cold-resistant, Finnish Heritage snow removal expert, prone to damn-near-fatal sunburns regularly, I asked myself this same question when I attended The LAKE WORTH FLORIDA MIDNIGHT SUN FESTIVAL!—a premiere event in the Finnish-American community of artisans, dancers, and native cuisine with musical singers from Finland itself.

A quirky ethnicity by all accounts, Finns invented a sport called Wife Carrying! Courageous festival attendees can get roped into completing an obstacle course with a woman on their back! They had a competition at the festival. Naturally, I competed. I got a volunteer wife for the day and took home the Silver Medal for Minnesota.

Highlights of the trip for me were hearing wonderful Finnish bands, listening to stories from retired Minnesotan and Michigan snowbirds, doing the extreme trampoline, dancing with Finnish ladies, eating exotic Finnish cuisine, making

—Continued on page 4, Lake Worth Festival

Beatrice Ojakangas' Presentation Recap

By Michelle Ranta

On Friday, March 18, we at FACA had our much-anticipated Zoom presentation by Beatrice Ojakangas. She is our Minnesota celebrity who has appeared on cooking shows with the likes of Julia Child and Martha Stewart, authored 32 cookbooks, has been inducted into the James Beard Cookbook Hall of Fame, and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Minnesota from which she also has a degree in home economics.

I'll have to be honest, having moved here from Michigan and learning to cook by watching my Finnish mother instead of reading cookbooks, I had not heard of Beatrice Ojakangas nor do I have any of her books. She also had learned to bake from her mother—baking bread on a wood stove. It turns out bread is one of her favorite foods. She mentioned that in Finland it was the Karelians who brought the tradition of baking fresh bread every day to broader Finland when they had to relocate during the war. Previously the Finns had only baked *näkkileipä*, or crisp bread that could store well. My own father was one of these refugees, and I regret not getting to know my grandparents to learn about these things; they died quite young as the war was hard. My father has stories of starving and eating lard instead of meat.

Beatrice proceeded to demonstrate for us a salmon casserole from her new cookbook on casseroles, *The Best Casserole Cookbook Ever*, that is now coming out. She showed how to chop the ingredients into slivers—she sharpens her knives every day—and even had a readymade casserole to show how it will look after baking. Casseroles are named after the dish that they are cooked in, and please don't use canned soup—her cookbook has much better sauce recipes to try instead. Traditionally this dish is salmon, but any fish will do. Minnesotans call it *lakslooda*, but in Finland this is called *lohilaatikko*. When deciding on how much to make, plan to have one potato per person.

For the rest of the presentation, Beatrice answered a large variety of interesting questions from our community which you can revisit by watching the YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/tzV1OaJPGGM>.

Finnish Salmon Casserole

Recipe demonstrated by Beatrice Ojakangas to FACA members

From *The Best Casserole Cookbook Ever*—Page 353

Fish is a summertime food in Finland, and Finns have many ways to serve it. We have been served this casserole in Helsinki along with a lovely salad of fresh garden lettuce and sour rye buns.

2 tablespoons butter, plus extra for the dish
1 pound salmon or rainbow trout fillet, skinned
3 medium potatoes (about 1 pound)
2 medium onions
1 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup milk
1/3 cup fine dry breadcrumbs
Salt
Pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 425° F. Butter a shallow 2-quart casserole.
2. Remove any bones from the fish and cut into 1-inch cubes. Peel the potatoes and cut into matchsticks. Peel the onions and trim off the ends. Cut the onions in half lengthwise. With the cut sides down, cut each half lengthwise into matchsticks.
3. Put the fish, potatoes and onions in the casserole and pour the cream and milk over all. Sprinkle with the breadcrumbs, dot with the 2 tablespoons butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until the potatoes are tender, and the breadcrumbs are golden.



*The Best
Casserole
Cookbook
Ever*

by Beatrice
Ojakangas

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.

FACA Board Meeting—March 15, 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 Board meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. via Zoom on Monday, March 15.

Attendance: Louise Morgan, Marlene Moreno, Katja Zarns, Michelle Ranta and Nate Hoch. Absent: Kendra Kauppi.

Salolampi Fundraising: \$4,553.88 received in donations! Four applications are currently under review.

Treasurer's Report: We have a substantial amount in the donations tab. These include the Salolampi donations which are being kept separate.

EVENTS REPORT:

Midsummer picnic, June 11. Como Park area shelter has been reserved. Need to start promoting the picnic.

Finn Fun Day, September 11. Phalen Park.

Book Club. April *Sisterhood of the Enchanted Forest*.

Sauna Bucket Award. Sauna Bucket to be awarded to Janie Ahola at the March program.

Meeting adjourned 8:05 p.m. Next meeting is April 3, 12 noon.

(Lake Worth Festival, continued from page 2)

friends, and getting to practice speaking (and flirting a little bit) in Finnish, a language which I have studied lazily for five years.

As an above average accordionist who has performed in Finland twice, I love every opportunity to improve my language skills and display my Finnish musical repertoire. I can't wait to return next year if the gig schedule allows. To the Lake Worth Midnight Sun FinnFest, I had the time of my life and met so many wonderful fun-in-the sun people. Till next we meet, *nakemiin*.



Wife-carrying contest at Lake Worth, Florida. Steve Solkela won the Silver Medal for Minnesota!

Hello from Helsinki

By Cristina Youngren

It's strange times for everyone right now and Finland is no exception. After a relatively quiet, very snowy winter, Finland had a thrilling February due to winning eight medals at the Beijing Winter Olympics. Cross-country skier Iivo Niskanen won gold in the men's 15 km classical (plus silver in the men's team event), and his sister Kerttu Niskanen won silver in the women's 10 km classical event as well as bronze in the 30 km freestyle. As exciting as that was, the country had a real "*torilla tavataan*" moment when the men's hockey team beat Russia 2-1 to win hockey gold for the first time at the Olympics. As is tradition, there was a spontaneous party centered at the statue of Havis Amanda (Manta) at the market square in central Helsinki. I went at noon on that Sunday to see one heck of a celebration despite the chilly temperatures. People climbed up on the statue and the bus shelters, cheering and dancing to the DJ who had set up in the *tori*; of course, they played Darude Sandstorm. It was a very fun, happy vibe and a welcome relief from the specter of lockdown.



That was on February 20. On February 24, Russia invaded Ukraine, and the atmosphere immediately changed. A protest occurred that very night outside the Russian Embassy, with hundreds of people chanting for peace and solidarity with Ukraine. The following Saturday there was a huge solidarity event in the Senate Square where thousands of people showed support for Ukraine while condemning the actions of Putin's government. Smaller events by groups such as Mother for Peace have been happening every weekend since. As a consequence, Finland has severed business relations with Russian organizations to the point that Hartwall Arena, owned by Finnish-born Russians, had their sponsorship pulled by Hartwall and is now called Helsinki Halli and, in addition, the jerseys of legendary Finnish hockey players like Teemu Selanne and Saku Koivu which had hung in the rafters of the arena have been removed. The day-to-day life in Helsinki continues as ever.

Despite this drama, Finland has won the happiest country designation for the fifth year in a row; this is considered to be somewhat embarrassing and stressful to Finns. I look forward to spring in Helsinki!

Famous Finn's Formula One Star— Valtteri Bottas

By John Morgan

Valtteri Bottas is a Finnish Formula One driver with the Alfa Romeo team, previously driving for Mercedes-Benz and Williams. He epitomizes the Finn “*SISU*” ethos of extraordinary perseverance—professional, stoic, resilient and loving saunas. These traits help him in his relentless pursuit of becoming one of the top drivers in the most prestigious of races in motorsports.

Valtteri was born on August 28, 1989, in the small town of Nastola, Finland. When most children were starting kindergarten Valtteri was at the kart racing track. At age six, he and his grandfather went to a kart racing track and he was enthralled by the speed and power. He was devastated that he could not yet reach the pedals and drive. His grandfather consoled him saying that if he ate his porridge every day, by the next summer he would reach the pedals. Valtteri ate his porridge, and he did reach the pedals the next summer. The rest is history and learning to drive on Finnish roads of ice and snow prepared him for Formula One racing. Porridge is his favorite meal even today.

In Formula One there are 10 teams with two race cars/drivers per team. While racing for Mercedes, Valtteri saw unprecedented team success with teammate Lewis Hamilton, smashing records galore. During his stellar Formula One career, he has seen great personal success as well, including 179 Grand Prix races, 10 race wins and 67 podiums. His *SISU*, unconventional rise through kart racing, Formula 3 to Formula 1, and because of his tremendous success, he moved from Williams to Mercedes to now replacing retiring Finn, Kimi Raikkonen, to lead an all-new lineup at Alfa Romeo.

Congratulations Valtteri! *SISU*!



Janie Ahola Is Sauna Bucket Recipient

By Pam Rahkola

This year's Sauna Bucket award recipient is Janie Ahola.

Janie joined FACA back in 2012 and has since become an invaluable and active volunteer of our organization.

Janie's Finnish father and grandparents emigrated to the U.S. between 1891 and 1913. She learned the meaning of *SISU* at an early age while she and her four sisters (no brothers) helped their parents operate a dairy farm in northern Wisconsin. She retired as a computer systems security analyst and enjoys sculpture, design photography, architecture and playing the kantele.

Janie served two three-year terms on the FACA board, becoming treasurer in 2014. As a member of the board, she has provided many delicious pots of pea soup “with a kick” for our annual Laskiainen potlucks. During the six years Janie served on the FACA board, she never missed a board meeting or a FACA program.

She has been a key volunteer for FACA's Festival of Nations (FON) Baking Day and has become an integral part of the packaging crew.

In addition to yearly volunteering to work several shifts in the FON Finnish Café, Janie has also been heavily involved in putting together several of the FON Finnish Cultural Booths, volunteering to be its chair in 2014.

She, along with her sister Marcia, have traveled to attend many Finnish events and FinnFests, and volunteered for the FinnFests held here in the Twin Cities. She was one of the main coordinators of the FACA sponsored 2017 Thursday Pea Soup and Pannukakku fundraiser event.

Most importantly, during an extremely difficult period for FACA, Janie was one of the main people who held the FACA board and organization together. Past FACA President Gene Ollila gave her the title of “treasurer extraordinaire”!

After leaving the board, Janie continues to volunteer to help perform the yearly FACA audit and is FACA's ticket attendance liaison and Finnish representative for the annual Nordic American Thanksgiving Breakfast.

Congratulations, Janie!



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

Down from Basswood— Voices of the Boundary Waters

By Lynn Laitala (Printed with permission)

The Big Wedding—Clara Keskinen's Story (Second installment)

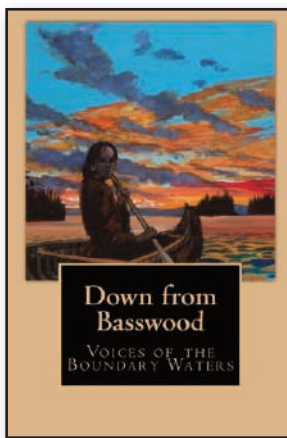
Rose Stepanovich invited me to her house for Christmas Eve. Rose and I were friends in junior college.

"Christmas Eve?" I asked her. Christmas Eve was a quiet time at our house. We ate lutefisk and lit the candles on the tree.

There's a little more life at Rautio's boardinghouse where the boarders go out drinking. Usually they bring home some stray drunk who sleeps it off in front of the stove on Christmas morning.

I never heard of anyone giving a party on Christmas Eve. Mama was disappointed because Laila had come home and thought we should all be together, but I went to Rose's house anyway.

It was an odd party, kind of an open house. The six Stepanoviches were out visiting everyone they knew and everyone they knew was visiting the Stepanoviches. Rose and I went down the street for a glass of wine and baked treats and when we checked back at the Stepanoviches' house it was full of guests but no hosts.



No one cared. Everyone was having a good time. Rose's brother Sam broke off from a bunch of guys and started hanging out with Rose and me. We caroled all the houses in McKinley Location. Sam and Rose drove me home after midnight mass.

Mama was waiting up. She looked worried when I said goodnight and stumbled up the stairs.

Sam came over the day after Christmas. I introduced him to Mama and we sat in the kitchen, talking about our teachers at

the college and drinking coffee. Sam kept looking at me and grinning for no reason at all.

"Do you want to go out with me on New Year's Eve?" he asked.

"Go where?"

"To the dance at the Community Center."

I paused to consider but only for a minute. I had planned to snowshoe up to Basswood with Laila and her gang.

"I'd love to go to the dance with you, Sam."

That's how it started. We were still seeing each other when Laila came home for Easter. She was alarmed.

Final installment next month. Stay tuned!

FACA Book Club Reads

By Ruth Erkkila

The FACA Book Club met on February 23 to discuss ***Down From Basswood: Voices of the Boundary Waters*** by Lynn Maria Laitala. Ten people joined the discussion, including the author, and were from all over, including Saskatchewan, New Hampshire, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Silver Bay, Minnesota and the Twin Cities.

Zoom does have some advantages; sometimes it feels very impersonal and clunky, but it does allow easy participation from distant places.

The lively discussion went nearly two hours. All of us could relate to the stories of immigrants to Northern Minnesota. Some of the characters seemed like our grandparents, but the author told us they were all fictional characters. We were a little surprised; they seemed like real people. She based the characters on

interviews she did with immigrants near her home town of Winton, Minn. for the Minnesota Historical Society.

The stories are of two multi-generation and interrelated families, one Native American and one Finnish American. The Native Americans wanted to teach the new people their ways and were disappointed to find these new white people only wanted to cut down the timber and mine the iron ore. The Finnish immigrants worked as loggers and in the mines with the dream of owning their own farm. Life was hard for them and 25 percent returned to Finland, but some did achieve the small farm with horses, cows and gardens. Some of the communities and farmers were displaced with the creation of the Boundary Waters in 1978, but the people are still there.

Cokato Finnish American Historical Society (CFAHS) Update

By Heidi and Harvey Barberg

On February 27, highlights of the CFAHS savusauna were shared on KARE 11's Minnesota Bound. This is a television program in Minnesota which features stories about the wildlife and outdoor activities in Minnesota.

Harvey Barberg was interviewed about the first savusauna in Minnesota built in 1868. The program also highlighted Darin and Suzanne Young's homemade sauna in Dassel, Minnesota.

Kyle Heidenrich, media manager of the ronsharaproductions, conducted the interview. The timing was good as that week was Finlandia Foundation's and FinnFest's "Sauna" week.

Aaron Hautala was spotlighted in the interview and was the photographer for the popular coffee table book, *Some Like It Cold*. The Cokato Finnish American Historical Society sauna was included in this book.

Finland's spot in the world keeps growing, and we are proud of our corner. The segment for the program can be seen at this site: <https://file.ac/2a1AXJJ7Z1o/>

In Memoriam

Ennie M. Kapanen, 92, of South St. Paul passed away peacefully on March 15, 2022. She was born in Finland and as a young woman emigrated by herself to the United States. She was a quiet person with a serving heart and independent spirit. Ennie and husband Deane became FACA members in the fall of 1998.



She was preceded in death by Deane and son David; parents Matti and Hannah; sister Kerttu; and brothers, Eino and Antti. She is survived by her daughter Andrea (Joe) Wallin, grandchildren Rebecca (Scott), Garrett (Sarah), Jake (Danielle) and Jordan, and nine great-grandchildren.

Visitation was on March 24 at Roberts Funeral Home in Inver Grove Heights; interment was at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

April–May 2022 Calendar

April 23 (Saturday). 10 a.m. FACA monthly program:
Emma Mulhern; Minnesota Fulbright Scholar studying in Finland shares her experiences. Zoom.

April 28. 6:30 p.m. FACA Book Club. After living for 25 years in New York, Naomi Moriyama moved with her husband and co-author William Doyle and their seven-year-old child to the vast forest of Finland's Karelia, a mysterious region on the Russian border that helped inspire J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth fantasies. Zoom.

May 20. (Friday). 7 p.m. FACA monthly program:
In Person. Danish American Institute. Program to be determined.

June 11 (Saturday). 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Midsummer Festival/Picnic. Music by Finn Hall. Como Park Picnic Pavilion (details will follow).

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

For more Finnish community events, go to
<https://www.finnsource.org/>

The *Utiset* is seeking a new editor. If interested, call President Louise Morgan at 612-590-1673.

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, Inc.

P.O. Box 580708

Minneapolis, MN 55458-0708

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

www.finnfaca.org

Surprise ! *Mojakka*

"Mojakka" Is a Finnish Word (From the November/December 1990 Newsletter).

Many American-Finns call both meat and fish stews *mojakka*, but this word is not used in Finland. The Finnish name for soups and stews is *keitto*. Last year when Helena Rautala, a linguist, was a visiting assistant professor at the University of Minnesota, she was often asked about the word *mojakka*.

Back at the University of Turku, Helena checked the word in the archives of the Finnish vernacular to determine the etymology of the word. She found that "in northern Bothnia, for example in Kalajoki, the word is known in two senses, namely "good tasting" and "fish soup, usually made of potatoes and Baltic herring. This fish soup was a popular meal among fishermen in their little cabins outside the villages. The emigrants took the word with them to the new country and did not invent it in America."

Most of the American cookbooks that feature Finnish food have a recipe similar to the one here. You may want to try this hearty soup with some rye bread.

Kalamojakka

2 cups water
1 teaspoon salt
3 whole allspice
4 whole peppercorns
1 medium onion, chopped
4 medium potatoes, diced
1 to 1 ½ pounds fish cut into pieces
1 ½ cups milk
1 tablespoon flour
Chopped chives and dill

Put water, salt, allspice, peppercorns, onions and potatoes in a large pot.

Cover, bring to a boil and simmer for 10–15 minutes. Place the fish pieces on top of the potatoes. Cover and simmer until the fish is done, about 15 minutes.

Thoroughly mix milk and flour together. Slowly add this mixture to the soup, stirring gently. Simmer slowly for about 10 minutes. Garnish with chives and dill.

Serves about 4.