



# Uutiset

*Newsletter of Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.*

**September/Syyskuu 2022**



**Mölkky**

## Program in Brief

**Finn Fun Day**  
 Lake Phalen, St. Paul  
 1600 Phalen Drive E.  
 September 10,  
 10 a.m.–1 p.m.  
 Bring your own picnic  
 food.

### 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.

**2022 FINN FUN DAY**

**FINN FUN DAY**

Kickstart your fall before activities, events, and Finnish language classes by joining us for a day of food, fun, and games! Special musical guest: Steve Solkela's Overpopulated One Man Band! All are welcome whether you are Finnish, Finnish American or just love all things Finnish! Tervetuloa!

- ✓ PICNIC
- ✓ MUSIC
- ✓ GAMES
- ✓ FUN

**WHEN**  
 SEPTEMBER 10 • 10a-1p

**WHERE**  
 1600 PHALEN DR E, ST PAUL

**MÖLKKY tournament**

[www.finnfaca.org](http://www.finnfaca.org) [www.minnesota.finnishschool.org](http://www.minnesota.finnishschool.org) [www.finnsource.org](http://www.finnsource.org)

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## President's Message

*By Louise Morgan*

Hei Hei! I hope everyone enjoyed their summer. Mine went by way too fast. I am not ready for fall. I am so hoping that our fall will be nice and long. I am writing this with the help of my two-year-old granddaughter. So, if at times I seem a bit distracted, well that is because I am.

I really enjoyed seeing everyone who could make it to our Midsummer Picnic. We had about 70 people turn out for wonderful music, food and great conversation. We were supposed to leave at 2 p.m., and the park personnel finally kicked us out around 2:30. People did not want to leave! A big *Kiitos* goes to Marlene Moreno for organizing the event for us. Thank you, Marlene. We intend to make this a yearly event. Hopefully next year we will have the event a bit closer to midsummer, and we want to have a bonfire—a bit more traditional.

I hope to see everyone at our Finn Fun Day. We are back at Lake Phalen. This year we have three sets of Mölkky, and we will be hosting a Mölkky tournament. If you don't want to play Mölkky, there will be lots of other things to do. You can play other games, listen to music, eat, or just enjoy conversation with fellow Finns! We will be providing hot dogs and typical picnic food, but you are also welcome to bring your own lunch. Pray for sunshine and warm weather!

I am hoping that we are past the worst of Covid. The board has plans for a hybrid year for our events. Some will be outdoors, some indoors and some Zoom. So please watch for e-mails and the newsletter for event notification. We also intend to collaborate with other Finnish organizations as much as possible—strengthen our community! Minnesota has one of the largest Finnish communities in the U.S. So, let's make it great. If you have any suggestions on what you would like to see from our organization, please feel free to email or call me. **WE NEED YOUR HELP! PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING TO MAKE US STRONG!**

Lastly, in my role as interim editor, I welcome suggestions, articles, anything that you think would be of interest to our readers. I would love to hear from you! Please e-mail me at [louise.morgan21@gmail.com](mailto:louise.morgan21@gmail.com).

## More About FINN FUN DAY

Music this year will be provided by Steve Solkela. Steve's bio reads: "A Funny Finn from out in Palo, no stranger to the stage. Steve can often be seen playing Accordion on a skateboard, tandem bike, stilts, or traveling the country with his "Overpopulated" One-Man Band!"

Steve studied Music at Rowan University out in New Jersey where he starred in several operas and left that campus permanently scarred with his wacky antics.

Be sure to come and enjoy the fun.





## Farewell to Osmo Vänskä, An Epic 19 Years

by Betsey Norgard

In 2003, I stood before 200 Finns, Finnish-Americans, and friends at a gala reception and officially welcomed Osmo Vänskä to Minneapolis as music director of the Minnesota Orchestra. Nineteen years later, on June 3, 2022, at a farewell reception at Orchestra Hall hosted by Honorary Consul Elaine Kumpula and Finlandia Foundation National, I officially and reluctantly bid him farewell on behalf of our Finnish and Finnish-American community.

The June 3 celebration at Orchestra Hall was a multi-event evening, including a “showcase” reception, the orchestra concert, and a post-concert reception.

The Twin Cities “Showcase” featured more than a dozen Finnish organizations and interests, and was sponsored by the Minnesota Trade Office, following a two-day Team Finland meeting led by Consul General Mika Koskinen from New York and including several trade officers. At the showcase, they mingled with the more than 100 people from the Twin Cities Finnish community.

Ambassador Koskinen stepped in for Ambassador Mikko Hautala, who was detained in Washington for political discussions. During the concert, which was live-streamed, Ambassador Koskinen gave official greetings and tribute to Maestro Vänskä.



*Consul General Mika Koskinen, Honorary Consul Elaine Kumpula and Osmo Vänskä*

A poignant part of the concert program was the tribute paid to musician and composer Jaakko Kuusisto, Osmo Vänskä’s close friend, whose newly composed symphony enjoyed its world premiere that evening. Following the tragic death of Jaakko to brain cancer four months earlier, the symphony was edited and completed for performance by Jaakko’s brother, violinist Pekka Kuusisto. Pekka, his wife Anna-Liina, and Jaakko’s widow Maija all traveled from Finland for this special evening.

For many of us, the special moment of that evening came with Osmo’s surprise when a flash mob from the Suomi Finland 100 Chorus, led by Eeva Savolainen, began singing Sibelius’ anthem, *Finlandia*, throughout the crowded main lobby. Listen to it on Finlandia Foundation National’s YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvjkL50PWHM&t=99s>

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## Finnish Yard Sale—*Suomi Kirppis* Saturday, September 24, 2022, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.

*(Kirppis = kirpputori = flea market)*

Come early for the best catch of Finnish as well as Nordic items! Everything on sale is donated by the Twin Cities Finnish community families. The proceeds will go to support the local Finnish activities and the creation of a Finn gathering house in the Twin Cities area.

***Kirppis Location:*** 4720 Park Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55407  
***Kirppis Time:*** September 24, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.  
***Note:*** Cash only, please

For further information, contact [info@finnsource.org](mailto:info@finnsource.org).



*Michelle Ranta, Urho Rahkola  
and Emma Mulhern enjoy the Midsummer Picnic.*

## FACA Board Meeting—August 28, 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 Finnish American Cultural Activities (FACA) Board met on August 28, 2022.

**Members Present**—Louise Morgan, Marlene Moreno, Nate Hoch and Katja Zarns. **Members Absent**—Michelle Ranta and Kendra Kauppi.

**Status of the Board**—This was the last meeting for Marlene Moreno and Michelle Ranta. They are rotating off the board. Thank you to both for being on the board, especially during the challenging Covid times.

**Open Board Positions**—Secretary and Hospitality.

**Further actions on the board were tabled** until the next board meeting when all board members will be present.

**Updates** on Finn Fun Day, the newsletter, the Finnish Yard Sale, collaboration between FACA, Suomi-koulu and Finn Source were provided by the president.

**Nate Hoch and Marlene Moreno reported on the transition of treasurer duties to Nate Hoch.**

**Actions which required a quorum** were tabled until the September meeting.

**Next board meeting is September 26, 5 p.m. on Zoom.**

**If you would like to find out more about being on the board, or how YOU can help keep FACA STRONG, please contact Louise Morgan.**

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

## International Institute of Minnesota to Begin Reimagining the Future of the Festival of Nations

August 12, 2022—The International Institute of Minnesota announced today that the Festival of Nations will not take place in 2023 to allow the Institute to launch a process that reimagines the future of the Festival of Nations.

“Since 1932 it has been an honor for the Institute to host the Festival of Nations and work with so many volunteers and community members. So much has changed during that time, especially in the last few years,” said Jane Graupman, executive director of the International Institute of Minnesota. “Now is the appropriate time for the Festival of Nations to explore the new creative opportunities that exist within our community that will enhance this joyful annual event.”

With respect and admiration for all that the Festival of Nations has accomplished over the past 90 years, the Institute will begin the process of reimagining how the Festival continues to celebrate all of the cultures in our state. The Institute and Festival leaders will start by exploring new ways to grow this event through new partnerships, community input and the experience of committed Festival volunteers.

Since the last Festival of Nations in 2019, the urgency and needs of Minnesota’s newly arrived refugee and immigrant communities has only grown. As a leading sponsor of refugee resettlement in Minnesota, the Institute is currently responding to the recent arrival of Ukrainians seeking refuge in Minnesota. This response follows the resettlement of people from Afghanistan earlier this year—representing more than four times the number of refugees served last year. With the urgency of the global refugee crisis, the need for the Institute’s leadership continues to grow. These growing and urgent priorities magnify the need to take time to reimagine the Festival of Nations.

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*

Summer in Helsinki really started on May 1 with the *Vappu* celebrations lighting up the city. I went to see the ceremonial placing of the white student hat on the statue of Havis Amanda, where the entirety of Esplanadi and the *tori* were full of students celebrating and dancing to the free concert by Bess (who really should have been Finland's Eurovision entrant, but I digress). When the crane lowered a ring of students in harnesses down to Manta and the hat was in place, balloons and confetti were released and cheers rang out of the incredibly crowded area. Despite *Vappu* signifying the official end of the school year, my own studies kept me busy with lab reports for another month before I began working as a research assistant studying atmospheric analytical chemistry at the university. Besides a short vacation in Iceland in June to take a break and visit with my grandmother, most of my time has been spent in the lab!

Juhannus eve was spent at the island of Seurasaari, known for its open-air museum which plays host to a large annual Juhannus celebration with music, a church boat and lots of children's games. Normally there would also be a bonfire (and the church boat being thrown on to the bonfire!) but it was too dry so the bonfire was sadly canceled. Still, it was a fun experience, especially for its audience of primarily foreigners like myself who have no lake cabin at which to celebrate.



Sometimes, I am still surprised and thrilled to remember that I have now lived in Finland for more than a year and am so grateful to have had this opportunity. I can only hope the next year of my graduate program is as successful as the first.

*Christina with friends  
at the Sibelius Monument.*



## Celebrating Midsummer

*By Ruth Erkkila*

It was a glorious day with blue sky, sunshine, and comfortable temperatures when FACA celebrated Midsummer on June 11 at a picnic pavilion in Como Park. I arrived a few minutes after 11 and had to drive around and around to find a parking place. I did find a place on the street over a hill and across a play park and picnic area from the pavilion. A little walk before lunch on a nice day is probably a good thing. A large picnic lunch greeted the more than 70 people who joined the celebration. Marlene Moreno and the FACA Board had laid out a fine feast that included hot dogs, potato salad, baked beans, a rice and egg dish, watermelon and lots of desserts. Of course there was plenty of coffee.



I had barely finished eating when the music started. Finn Hall with their full band of eight musicians started playing our favorite tunes on two accordions, a mandolin, several violins, a guitar and a bass. Vocals were provided by Lotta Kiuru-Ribar, Ralph Tuttila, Dennis Halme and Al Reko. It was lively music, toes were tapping and soon

people were dancing all around the pavilion. The Kisarit dancers were present and took the lead in getting people out to dance. Many joined in and filled the area with a feeling of celebration. The Kisarit dancers have not met in two years, so for them it was a treat to be out again. And it was a treat for the rest of us to hear some old favorite tunes.

Meanwhile there was a lot of visiting going on. It was wonderful to be together again and there was a lot of catching up to do. We enjoyed good weather, food, coffee, music, dancing and conversation—a proper celebration of summer.



*Janie Ahola, Louise Morgan and Joanne Bergman*

## Red River Finn's Summer Update Fargo, North Dakota—June 24–25, 2022

By Ellen Liddle

The Red River Finns, Red River Danes, FM Icelandic Klub, Swedish Cultural Society of the Red River Valley, Daughters of Norway and Sons of Norway in alliance with the Nordic Culture Clubs hosted the Scandinavian Festival on June 24–25 at the Sons of Norway Lodge in Fargo, North Dakota.

*Skålmusik* musicians Paul Wilson, Mary Abendroth, Arnold Anderson, and Art Bjorngjeld and *Laulu Aika* musicians Ralph and Jaana Tuttila, Eric Plat, and Dan and Lotta Kiuru Ribar entertained Friday evening and throughout the day on Saturday in the Troll Lounge.

During the mini-festival on Saturday, the Finns sold cardamom sweet bread, cracked wheat bread, open-face sandwiches, rhubarb soup with cream, prune tarts, cardamom cookies and lemon cookies.

Finlandia Foundation National Lecturers of the Year, Chef Soile Anderson and food writer Eleanor Ostman, told interesting stories about their cooking experiences and held a book signing of their book *Celebrations to Remember*.

Red River Finns member Sky Purdin exhibited her weaving display of *Raanu*, *Ryijy* Rug, transparent weave, *revinnäinen* (drawn thread work), rag rugs, and

some *Smettersoser* using rosepath inlay. Norwegian *Åklevev* (Vestfold Inlay) was the project on the loom shown in the picture. Sky wore the dress that her grandmother had sewed before she was married.



The marketplace offered shoppers a variety of Scandinavian items. The attendance was smaller than expected for the one-day festival. Our plan for 2023 is to resume a two-day event at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead, Minnesota.

Finlandia Foundation National Performer of the Year, Kent Washburn, will perform on the mighty Wurlitzer at the Fargo Theatre, featuring the 1929 Silent Finnish Film *Mustalaishurmaaja* (the Gypsy Charmer), on October 15.

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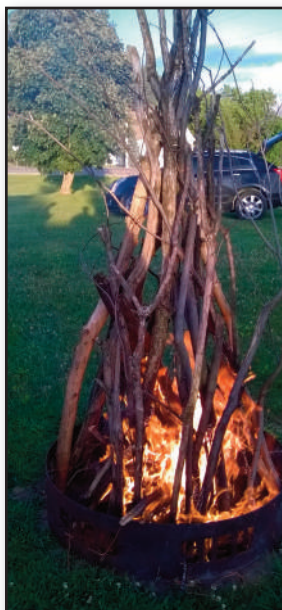
## Midsummer's Eve Cokato, Minnesota—June 25, 2022

By Heidi Barberg

It was a warm summer evening with the showing of a movie titled *Fire and Ice: The Winter War of Finland & Russia* in Temperance Hall. A good number of members showed up to view the movie. Many said they were waiting to see the movie because they heard many good comments about it and that it was worth viewing.

The dessert table was set up at Kiddy-Corner in the schoolhouse. The desserts included rhubarb cakes, a fruit bread, blueberry coffee cake, watermelon, a fresh vegetable salad and cookies. There was enough for seconds as well as thirds if you wanted. Although the worst thing that could happen did happen,

the cord to the coffee pot died with no replacement; it was a warm evening, so it was good that there was lemonade and water to drink.



Davey Bajari was in charge of the *kokko* and he lit it up with some good, hearty pieces of wood. Davey and Harvey Barberg knew the grass was dry, so they had plenty of water and a fire extinguisher handy.

There was a lot of visiting with each other, catching up with family and community news. The evening brought some neighbors to stop in for a tour, a couple from Litchfield, and a mother stopped in to show her kids the schoolhouse.

The mosquitoes did not come out until well after dusk which topped off a perfect evening. We do not celebrate midsummers like the bigger communities, but we have fun doing what we do.



## Sisu Environmental School Update

By Kendra Hunding

Due to circumstances beyond its control, the Board of Directors of Sisu Environmental School made the difficult decision to postpone the opening of the school until September 2023. We faced many of the same challenges start-ups experienced over these last two difficult years, including funding delays, transportation shortages and supply-chain issues.

The board decided that more time was needed to have all the structures, processes and resources firmly in place for our students and their families. Our partners in Finland, New Nordic Schools, support this decision and we look forward to working with them over the next year to create a school that offers “A Finnish-style education for Minnesota kids.”

The plan for the location for Sisu is still to be in St. Paul’s Highland Park neighborhood, serving grades K–5 to start and adding a grade through 8 each year. While we won’t be able to occupy the building until next spring, the founders of Sisu will continue to build relationships with our supporters by hosting informational and social gatherings at other locations throughout the year to answer questions about Sisu Environmental School and build our school community. The first of these will be on October 1 at Crosby Regional Park picnic shelter, so please feel free to join us for some fresh air and fireside refreshments with the mighty Mississippi just a short walk away.

If you are interested in getting involved or just learning more about Sisu Environmental School, feel free to contact us at [sisuenvironmentalschool@gmail.com](mailto:sisuenvironmentalschool@gmail.com).

We are committed to a strong start for Sisu in order to carry out our mission of “Delivering a bold education in the renowned Finnish style to empower all children on their own unique educational journey to become competent, creative and joyful learners.”



## September 2022 Calendar

**September 10, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.—Finn Fun Day;** see front page banner.

**September 13—Look who’s coming to the U.S.!**

A message from Kardemimmit: “Hei American Finnish community! Just wanted to let you know that my Finnish band Kardemimmit is touring in the States in September/October. Here’s your chance to listen to the beautiful sounds of kantele and songs inspired by the Finnish tradition (sung in Finnish as well)! See schedule: [kardemimmit.fi/concert](http://kardemimmit.fi/concert) Cedar Cultural Center.”

**September 14, noon–1:30 p.m. (EDT)—Finlandia**

**Foundation Sponsored Event:** “How will NATO membership affect Finland’s work for peace?” Dr. Janne Taalas and Antti Ämmälä; CMI Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation.

**September 17, 10 a.m.—Suomi-koulu** classes begin.

**September 18, 3 p.m.—Red River Finns Meeting 2022,**

Perkins Restaurant, 1220 36th St. S., Fargo.

**September 24, 9 a.m.–2 p.m.—Finnish Yard Sale,**

*Suomi Kirppis*. See page 3 for further information.

**October 15—Red River Finns Fargo Theatre Silent**

**Movie Night Features,** 1929 Finnish classic, *Mustalaishurmaaja* (The Gypsy Charmer).

**October 21, 7 p.m.—Diane Jarvi,** Danish Cultural Center.

### 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.**

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

**[www.finnfaca.org](http://www.finnfaca.org)**

## Suomi-koulu

### Suomi-koulu Update

*By Katja Zarns*

*Hei ja hyvää syksyä kaikille!* Hi and a good fall to everyone!

The Finnish Language School of Minnesota, also known as Suomi-koulu, is a nonprofit organization geared toward connecting families and individuals with a Finnish heritage or an interest in the Finnish language and culture. Suomi-koulu offers classes for beginners and higher fluency of all ages, from baby to adult. All of our teachers are native speakers. Classes are held the first and third Saturday mornings of the school year at Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis.

Since the start of Covid, we also offer live-instruction online courses for adult and teen-aged students. Our online school has developed into having students in and around Northern America.

This year we are excited to start our 20th year! We hope to see you at FINN FUN DAY and on our first day of

classes September 17 at 10 a.m.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.minnesota.finnishschool.org](http://www.minnesota.finnishschool.org) or email us at [finnishschoolofmn@gmail.com](mailto:finnishschoolofmn@gmail.com).

*Tervetuloa ja nähdään.*

