

March–April/*Maaliskuu–Huhtikuu* 2024



Who is this FACA member?

- **Friday, March 15, 2024, 6:30 p.m., Danish American Center;**
- **Members, please bring a dish to share if you can, based upon your last name: A-D, dessert; E-J, salad; K-O, appetizer or side dish; P-Z, bread;**
- **Suggested donation: \$5.00 member, \$10.00 non-member.**

We will announce the winner of the 2023 Sauna Bucket Award honoring a FACA member who has contributed to the FACA and Twin Cities Finnish American community in an exceptional way.

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.

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President's/Interim Editor's Message

By Louise Morgan

The days are getting longer, and it seems like spring may be here soon? I saw ducks and geese on our pond today. I don't think I have ever experienced a winter as mild as this one. I better knock on wood, because who knows, we may get winter in April again. This is Minnesota after all. And I just saw some pussy willows on my walk this morning!

Yesterday, I joined several from our Finnish Community at the 612 Sauna. What a wonderful experience. This was our first attempt at organizing a group sauna for our community. I think I can safely say that we all had a marvelous time. We wore the sauna hats, got hot, went outside, and had dippers of water poured over our heads and bodies, and then...repeat. We hope to offer this again, and I hope that you all can join us. We bonded as a community.

St. Urho's Day is coming up again! We had such a great time last year. Once again, we will be doing the pea soup cook-off. So, all you with wonderful pea soup recipes, please come and enter the contest. So much fun! Finn Hall will join us again so once you are full of pea soup and have voted for your favorite, you can head upstairs and dance the night away. We will be talking briefly about the progress we have made on merging FACA and Finn Source, and TC Finlandia Foundation. So, come on out and sing "*Ooksie, kooksie coolama vee, Santia Urho is ta poy for me!*"

In April, Val Myntti from Ely will be talking to us about "My Family's Finnish Immigration Story to Minnesota's Iron Range," at the DAC. A few of our members have heard Val talk and gave her glowing reviews.

And lastly, and this is hard to write, we have lost two more FACA members: Richard Harju and Dawn Kinnunen. Their obituaries are included in this newsletter.

Hope to see you at one of our events! If you get a chance, read the articles about Sauna Culture in the *Star Tribune* and the *New York Times*. Both feature saunas in the Twin Cities!

Merger Update

By Louise Morgan and Betsey Norgard

Progress has been made on the proposed merger of FACA with Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities (FFTC). The combined boards have been working on a mission statement, as well as the governing documents. A joint board meeting will be held on March 9, and an update will be presented at the St. Urho's Day Celebration to the membership.

Board Meeting Minutes will be sent out in May newsletter.



FACA Salolampi Fundraiser 2024

Hei, FACA friends!

Join us for our second annual Salolampi fundraiser—February through March. Fun and knowledge go hand-in-hand for children and grandchildren of FACA members through scholarships. We strive to reach our yearly goal of \$1,000 to continue to support sending the children, grandchildren, and relatives of FACA members to Concordia's Finnish Language Village. We are currently at **\$456.96** for the year! So, let's all support our children with a tax-deductible donation. Together we can reach the \$1,000 goal!

What an exciting promise for future students to continue participating in summer programs at Salolampi! Every dollar helps!

Ways to Donate:

1. Send a check to FACA, PO Box 580708, Minneapolis, MN 55458; in the memo area, write **Salolampi Fundraiser**.
2. Go to the FACA web site and use the PayPal option. Please annotate in the memo space that this is your

Kiitos! We are on our way.

FinnFest 2024

Early Bird Tickets Now Available!

Register for FinnFest 2024 before March 15 and take advantage of the Early Bird discount. This will be the lowest price for full festival registration and with the discount, **Full (5-Day) Festival Pass is only \$150.**

FinnFest members get an additional 20% discount, so if you are not a member yet, become a member and lower your registration fee even further!

Early Bird, student, and children's tickets will be available until March 15, and after that FinnFest will release tickets for 1-Day Festival Passes, tickets to Thursday workshops and symposia, tours, special luncheons, and the symphony orchestra concerts.

Registration, draft schedule and information about lodging, Tori booth rentals, volunteering and sponsorship opportunities can be found at finnfest.us

Date and time:

July 24, noon–July 28, 5 p.m. CDT

Location:

**Duluth Entertainment Convention Center
350 Harbor Drive, Duluth, MN 55802**

First Annual Finnish Community Sauna—A FACA Members Experience

By John Morgan

FACA, FFTC and Finn Source sponsored a sauna event in collaboration with 612 Sauna Society to promote our Finnish history, tradition and culture during National Sauna Week. In the Finnish culture the sauna holds a special place. It's not just a place to relax; it's a sanctuary where people can unwind, reflect and connect with loved ones. Having a communal or introspective experience in a sauna encapsulates the essence of Finnish sauna culture.

I got to embrace this culture with some other sauna goers during sauna week. We did this at the 612 Sauna Society's trailer located at Theodore Wirth Park. As my wife and I entered the sauna trailer, we were enveloped by the warm, comforting scent of wood, which instantly had a nostalgic and calming effect. The interior exuded a natural charm, with a small changing area, cubbies for our belongings, and calm-inviting lighting.

After changing, donning our sauna hats, and being given our introduction to the 612 sauna we entered the sauna.

I had never worn or seen a sauna hat before, but they work! Sitting on the top bench, I closed my eyes, allowing the heat's warm embrace to cleanse both my body and mind. Vanessa, our host, walked us through different aroma therapy scents. She ladled the aroma infused water onto the hot stones. The sound of steam hissing as water was poured onto the hot stones added to the ambiance, creating a serene atmosphere.

We sat together on smooth wooden benches while a gently crackling stove emanated a soft heat. Enjoying the quiet camaraderie that the sauna fosters, conversations flowed effortlessly, interspersed with moments of comfortable silence.

After several rounds of heating and cooling off by pouring cold water over ourselves outside the warmth of the sauna, we emerged feeling rejuvenated and refreshed. The cool air against our skin felt exhilarating, heightening the contrast with the warmth we had just experienced.

This experience at 612 Sauna encapsulated the essence of Finnish sauna culture—a blend of relaxing, socializing, and communing with nature. Kiitos to FACA, FFTC and Finn Source for making this experience available to all of us!

Laskiainen 2024!

By Katja Tiainen Zarns

The Twin Cities *Laskiainen* 2024 is in the books. The balmy weather has hindered some of this year's winter activities. Yet, Mother Nature delivered, and our local *Laskiainen* event landed on one of the few cold and snowy days this winter. This was our fourth *Laskiainen* (winter picnic and sledding event) together with Suomi-koulu, the Finnish Language School of Minnesota. As always, it was such a joy seeing our Finnish and Finnish American communities and people of all ages come together for a time of fun outside.

Laskiainen correlates with Fat Tuesday and begins the fasting period before Easter. A few years ago, while writing an article for *Uutiset*, I asked those who grew up in Finland to tell about their experiences, and they all emphasized the fun traditions surrounding *Laskiainen*. As children, each had memories of sledding at school, after school, and sometimes until the evening. The memories included traditions of steamy *hernekeitto* (pea soup) for lunch at school and dinner at home. The most joyous memory seemed to unite each person: the memory of freshly baked *laskiaispulla* with homemade whipping cream and strawberry jam. As a Finnish immigrant kid in Sweden who attended a Finnish school, I share similar memories.

Locally, we get to partake in those Finnish traditions right here in the Twin Cities. Our Finnish community gathered for meaningful conversations around the (smokey) fire, roasting hot dogs and sipping hot coffee, cocoa and cider. The brave and able ones sledded until their cheeks were red and their toes were cold. Even with the, at times, sideways, wind, you all stuck around!

A heartfelt *kiitos* to all who made *Laskiainen* 2024 fun, and an extra thank you to all who brought food items to share. *Terveisin*



Liisa, Michelle, Anne, Katja and Anna

Finland House Project—Updates from Honorary Consul Elaine Kumpula

The Finland House Project has been steadily advancing since the start of 2024. A committee of hard-working project members have made remarkable progress on a “needs and wants” survey that we hope to send out soon. Stay tuned on that! We want feedback from as many people in our community as possible.

In addition to the survey, another Finland House committee has developed an interview template for speaking with other ethnic group organizations that have established “houses” (e.g., Norway House, the American Swedish Institute, and the Danish Center, among others). During our next call, currently scheduled for March 12, 2024 at 6 p.m., we will discuss the needs and wants survey, the interview template, and locations we will contact for interviewing them about their experiences in establishing and running a permanent location. Small groups will visit with these locations and share feedback in future calls.

If you are interested in participating on the Finland House Project, we would love to have you join us! Please reach out to Elaine Kumpula at elkumpula@outlook.com and provide your email contact. Your name will be added to the invitation list for future calls. We are all better together so please consider joining the Project!

FACA Membership

A one-year membership for \$25 provides you with 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.)

Name _____

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Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

I prefer to receive my FACA *Uutiset* (please check one)

☐ electronic copy via email ☐ paper copy

[Note: choosing the email copy saves FACA both printing costs and postage.]

April Program: Valerie Myntti



A Finnish Family's Iron Range
Immigration Story
with Valerie Myntti



The Finns came to America with an already well-formulated co-operative ethos that emphasized the common good and mutual aid over narrow self-interest. It is fascinating to see how that philosophy played out and thrived on the Iron Range. Finnish immigrants brought their own brand of 'Finnish socialism' to America that inspired them to help lead northern Minnesota's labor unions, and the workers' fight for fair pay and safer working conditions in the mines and lumber mills. They created consumer co-operatives and intentional communities throughout the Upper Midwest. Our Finnish ancestors' deeply-held values of communitarianism might offer us insight into how to address some of the most vexing challenges of our times.

Valerie Myntti was born in Duluth, Minnesota, and lived in various Iron Range mining towns until the 6th grade,

when her family left Minnesota. She has BS and MS degrees from the University of Utah, as well as a law degree from Rutgers University (NJ).

Her career included the practice of law and leading an independent college prep school (Nursery through Grade 12) as Head of School in New York. Valerie and her husband, Frank Sherman, retired to the Myntti family cabin on Eagles Nest Lake 3 in 2018. They have one daughter—a filmmaker—in NYC. Valerie runs, travels, reads, and is engaged in progressive democratic politics & campaigns. Most importantly, she is a proud Finnish-American with deep roots on the Iron Range.

The Iron Range is extraordinarily rich in ethnic diversity, and we hope Val's talk will encourage others to tell their own family stories.

The Story Behind the Picture

By Marlene (Hanka) Moreno

The story behind the photo on page 1. In the winter of 1955 at age 17, I and two girlfriends from Morgan Ave. Finnish Lutheran Church in North Minneapolis, decided to take ski lessons at Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis. We signed up, but there wasn't enough snow for lessons. Instead, we signed up for a weekend trip to a ski area near Ft. Francis, Canada. We met Pete Moreno, a professional ski instructor (PSIA/Central Division), who organized the bus trip. On our last day, Pete told me NOT to ski on a certain run as it was too difficult for my ability. I DID anyway and twisted my knee! Pete was an instructor for the Otto Hollaus Ski School, and I began taking lessons on weekends, traveling to various ski areas in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Pete and I got married in 1958!

Now, the photo. In 1956, Pete's co-worker, who was a photographer for the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* newspaper,

met us at Hardscrabble Ski Area in Siren, Wisc. He posed me behind two long ski poles, and I was so proud that I had just bought the first pair of stretch ski pants on the market, so didn't care that I didn't have other appropriate clothing for skiing. I realized I was like many others who took up this relatively new sport.

Our family of three boys and one girl became expert skiers from very early ages. In 1966, the family was involved with Pete's evening and weekend ski program that he started at Como Park. Pete and I became ski instructors at Trollhaugen Snow Sports, Dresser, Wisc. I mainly taught young children and became supervisor of the children's program in 2000. I'm now teaching during the week to middle school groups from Minnesota and Wisconsin who spend a day having fun! Through the years I've had the privilege of teaching or helping eight grandchildren and seven of nine great grandchildren learn to ski. As I look back, a large portion of my life has been blessed because I wanted to try skiing back in 1955!

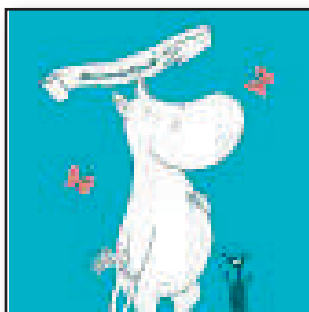
Moomins

By John Morgan

The Moomins, beloved characters created by Finnish-Swedish author and illustrator Tove Jansson, have captivated audiences worldwide with their whimsical adventures and philosophical undertones. The Moomins are a family of fairytale creatures that resemble hippopotamuses. However, the Moomins are actually a family of trolls. The history of the Moomins traces back to the 1940s when Jansson first introduced these endearing creatures in her illustrated comic strips.

Tove Jansson, born in Helsinki, Finland, in 1914, began creating the Moomin characters during World War II. The initial inspiration for the Moomins came from her imagination and her upbringing in an artistic family.” The first Moomin book, *The Moomins and the Great Flood*, was published in 1945, and is where we were introduced to Moomintroll, Moominmamma, Moominpappa and their friends.

It was the publication of *Comet in Moominland* in 1946 that pushed the Moomins into the pop culture zeitgeist. This book marked the beginning of a successful series of novels that would enchant generations of readers.



The Moomins inhabited Moominvalley, a place of wonder and exploration, where they encountered various creatures and faced challenges that often carried allegorical importance.

The popularity of the Moomins continued with subsequent novels such as *Finn Family Moomintroll* (1948) and *Moominland Midwinter* (1957), each a continuation of the Moomin adventures. Jansson’s distinctive illustrations, characterized by their simplicity yet depth of emotion, became synonymous with the Moomin world. Jansson gave the Moomins their distinct shape to evoke a feeling of softness and warmth.

In addition to the novels, Tove Jansson also created comic strips featuring the Moomins, which were published in newspapers and magazines. These strips further solidified the Moomins’ place in popular culture and allowed Jansson to explore different narratives and themes.

Over the decades, the Moomins evolved into a global cultural phenomenon beyond literature. They appeared in various forms of media, including television adaptations, films and merchandise, attracting a diverse fan base of both children and adults. Despite how long the Moomins have been around, the charm and universal appeal of the Moomins have endured, making them an integral part of Finnish culture and a beloved symbol of imagination and friendship worldwide.



Laskiainen 2024

Aaron Glick Family—Suomi-koulu President

Finnish Women First Annual Sauna



March–May 2024 Calendar

Minnesota St. Urho's Day Events

MARCH

- **March 15 (Friday)—DAC—Pea Soup Cook-off** with music by Finn Hall.
- **March 16 (Saturday) Finn Bistro;** music by Finn Hall.
- **March 15, 16, 17 (Friday–Sunday), Finland, Minn., St. Urho's Celebration;** parade at noon on Saturday. This year's theme is St. Urho Travels the World.
- **March 15, 16, (Friday, Saturday) Menagha;** entertainment on Friday, March 15, 6:30 p.m. by Steve Solkela.

Other Events

- **March 15 (Friday) Deadline for early-bird pricing for FinnFest.**
- **April 19 (Friday)—FACA—DAC 6:30 p.m., “A Finnish Family's Iron Range Immigration Story”** with Valerie Myntti.
- **May 18 (Saturday)—FACA Program, TBD.**

Outside the Twin Cities: Submitted by Sisu Heritage, Inc., Embarrass

- **May 19 (Sunday) 2 p.m. Concert by Shannon Gunderson at the historic Apostolic Lutheran Church in Embarrass.** The church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in August 2023.
- **June 8 (Saturday), 9 a.m.–4 p.m. National Sauna Day at the Nelimark Homestead grounds.** Mobile saunas on display. Live music by Bill and Kate Isles.
- **September 8 (Sunday), 4–6:30 p.m. Community Night Out at the Seitaniemi homestead.** Chili and pie. Live music by Bill Maxwell and the opportunity to walk through the Seitaniemi house barn.
- **The Nelimark Museum will be open** from the first weekend of June through the end of September. Thursday–Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 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

Dawn Kinnunen Obituary

Dawn Ella Kinnunen, age 67 of West St. Paul, passed away peacefully on January 11, 2024, in the presence of her husband Gil and her cherished sister, Pam. Preceded in death by her parents, Larry and Allene (Allie) Kalk. Survived by her husband, Gil; sister, Pam (Dave) Pearson; brother, Dave (Diane) Carl; brother, Dan Miller and his twin sister Diane (Dave) Iverson; and brother Doug (Lori) Brink; plus nephews, nieces, cousins, and friends. Dawn worked 41 years with the State of Minnesota, retiring from the Office of Management and Budget. She was an active member of Faith United Methodist Church in West St. Paul. Dawn's zest for life was evident in her passion for travel, photography, sports, theater and music.

A Celebration of Life was held on February 3 at Faith United Methodist Church in West St. Paul. Memorials preferred to Faith United Methodist Church or the American Cancer Society.

Richard Harju Obituary

Richard John Harju of Mounds View died Feb. 9 at age 88. Born in Hibbing, he attended Nashwauk High School, Itasca Jr. College, and the University of Minnesota School of Mechanical Engineering.



He married Doris Kvaale in 1958, had three children, and enjoyed family vacations to Montana, Florida, and later, to Finland, with his three children, their spouses, and eight grandchildren.

He dedicated his career to HVAC design and operation and held leadership positions in The American Society of Heating Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers) and at 3M.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife Doris and sons Allen and Robert and was survived by daughter Judy (Rick) Galliher, daughter-in-law Mary Harju, and special friend, Caryl Weaver.

The funeral service was Friday, February 16, at Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Home, in Shoreview.

Memorials preferred to Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (jdrf.org), ASHRAE (ashrae.org), or the donor's choice.



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

Finland Elects New President

Centre-right's Stubb Wins Close-fought Finnish Presidential Election

By Anne Kauranen and Essi Lehto (Reuters.com)

HELSINKI, Feb. 11 (Reuters)—Alexander Stubb of the centre-right National Coalition Party narrowly won Finland's presidential election on Sunday, defeating liberal Green Party member Pekka Haavisto, who conceded defeat. Stubb is pro-European and a strong supporter of Ukraine who has taken a tough stance towards Russia.

He declared himself winner in the run-off vote after securing 51.6% of the votes as 99.7% of ballots had been counted, against Haavisto's 48.4%, justice ministry data showed.

Finland's new head of state will be responsible for its security and foreign policy, including the recently approved NATO member's stance towards Russia, with which it shares a long border.

In televised remarks Stubb called his victory "the greatest honour" of his life.

"The feeling is calm, humble but of course at the same time I am extremely happy and grateful that the Finns in such large numbers have voted, and that I get to serve as

president of the Republic of Finland," he said.

Stubb, a former prime minister, had won the first round on January 28 with 27.2% of the vote ahead of Haavisto on 25.8%. He has also led Haavisto in opinion surveys, most recently by 6–8 percentage points.

Haavisto congratulated Stubb as "the 13th president of Finland".

"I believe Finland now gets a good president for the republic. Alexander Stubb is an experienced, competent person for the job. No more babble," he said.

The vote marks a new era in Finland, which for decades has elected presidents to foster diplomacy, in particular with neighboring Russia, and opted not to join military alliances so it could soothe tensions between Moscow and NATO.

But Finns changed their minds after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, in a rapid U-turn that led to the country joining NATO in April last year.

Now under the Western alliance's security umbrella, Stubb will replace Sauli Niinisto, who is retiring after two six-year terms in which he earned the nickname "the Putin Whisperer" for his previous close ties with the Russian leader.