



Newsletter of the Finnish American Association

November/Marraskuu 2025

FAA NOVEMBER PROGRAM

Salolampi Scholarship Fundraiser Kick-off

Over the years, the FAA has and continues to offer scholarships to Salolampi for the children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews of our members. We do this to encourage the next generation to connect with their Finnish heritage, keeping the culture and language alive!

When: November 21, 2025 @ 6:30pm

Where: The Danish American Center, 3030 W River Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55406

What: We will hear from Mark Johnson (Concordia Language Villages) and panel of scholarship recipients, and current and former villagers. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and to be generous with your giving. We will also have a bake sale and as usual, light snacks will be provided!

Goal: To see YOU there and to raise \$3000!



Let's Keep Our Finnish Heritage Alive In Minnesota!

We can only do this with your help! Support our Finnish American Association by volunteering! Email louise.morgan21@gmail.com to share how you'd like to help. We need volunteers—whether for one event or ongoing support—in areas such as events, committees, leadership, and board membership. Contribute to Uutiset (our newsletter), join our Board, or get involved in upcoming events: Kauneimmat joululaulut, (December 6th) St. Urho's Day (March 16), and Midsummer Day (June 21). Join planning and membership committees, Young Professionals programs, scholarship fundraising, or hospitality teams. Let us know your interest and availability! Fill up Louise's inbox! A Finnish Challenge!!

FAA Cancellation Policy

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

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President's /Interim Editor's Message

By Louise Morgan

Is it already November? What a glorious fall we have had! There are still some leaves on the trees. I love our seasons, especially the fall. Ok enough of that. You will notice that our beloved Darlene Esko has hung up her Utiset shingle. We will miss you, Darlene! This month, Mary Belanger has graciously agreed to help us out. Thank you so much Mary! We are exploring our options on how we should proceed with the Utiset. We want to continue, but we realize we do need to change. So please bear with us as we try things out. If any of you have any suggestions, please let me or one of our board members know.

Our program this month and a lot of the *Utiset* content focuses on Salolampi. We are so fortunate to have Salolampi here in our state! November's program will be the kickoff for this year's scholarship fundraiser. Each year, we make it a priority to award scholarships to relatives of our FAA family! This past year, we were able to give out 5 scholarships. I have included the thank you's from the campers in this newsletter. What a wonderful way to keep our Finnish traditions alive and well and grow the next generation of FAA members! The Campers will be at the program, as well as counselors, past adult attendees, and Marc Johnson, who is a director at Salolampi. Please make this a must attend event. And bring your checkbook! Every dollar helps us continue to set our children to camp!

Lastly, we need your help via your input. Lately, and I am going to be open and transparent here, our attendance has been down. We need to know what we can do to make our programs and events the thing that you want to do! We need to hear from you!



Louise and Mia Morgan



Karen Ba and others shopping at Family Fun Day

Thank You and Happy Trails— **Darlene Esko**

By Louise Morgan

Our beloved Uutiset Graphic designer, Darlene Esko, is hanging up her shingle. The September issue was her last hurrah. Our FACA/FAA community will miss you and want to thank you for your hard work over these past 9 years! Below is the article from when Darlene was presented with the Sauna Bucket award. I think it bears repeating. She has had an amazing career and life. I will miss Darlene. I took over as the editor, not willingly, I may add. Being the editor is not something that comes easily to me. Thankfully I could pull together articles and throw them at Darlene, and she would pull together a wonderful looking *Uutiset*.



Darlene grew up in rural Eveleth, Minn., graduating from Eveleth High School, Eveleth Junior College and UMD and becoming an elementary teacher in Hoyt Lakes. In 1962

when interviewing for a position in Birmingham, Mich., her sister-in-law introduced her to Bob (from Esko, Minn.) whom she married in 1963. They joined FACA in 1996, with Bob being elected to the FACA board soon thereafter in 1998, eventually becoming president in 2000. Darlene and Bob regularly attend and participate in FACA programs/activities and have traveled to nine FinnFests. Darlene truly enjoyed her job at Metropolitan State University, where she used her computer skills producing newsletters and class schedules, editing, proofreading and serving as the university photographer and academic editor.

After her long-delayed retirement, she was asked and accepted the volunteer position as our FACA newsletter graphic-designer in November 2016, after the passing of Beth Jarvis, and continues in that position today. In addition to the *Uutiset*, Darlene also volunteers her graphic design expertise on various other newsletters, including her husband Bob's *Esko's Corner*, The Esko Family Newsletter. Among other credits, Darlene was a proofreader of the Esko Historical Society's publication: *Esko's Corner—An Illustrated History of Esko and Thompson Township*.

However, beyond her graphic design expertise, Darlene also has several other passions. The Esko's beautiful yard is filled with various trees, bushes, plants, and flowers, both annuals and perennials. Included are two outdoor ponds and waterfalls that contain about 50 goldfish that are shuttled back and forth between their summer outdoor

residence and wintering basement tanks. In addition to the yard, their home is filled with many wonderful varieties of houseplants.

Kiitos Paljon Darlene!

Help shape a logo for the association!



far! We have...

... several designs using the stylized letters—
F A A

... a carefully sketched image joining maps of MN
and Finland

... a preference to keep the FACA flag logo with a
new name

... a suggestion to artistically combine the MN and
Finnish flags

... a Finlandia Foundation National offer to
customize a round chapter logo with Minnesota
icons or images.

Whether you have a complete design, a concept or
suggestions for components, your input is invaluable
to us!

Please send your sketches, thoughts, digital creations
and other suggestions by November 15, 2025, to:

Mirja Hanson at Hanson@consultHLT.com or
5510 Edgewater Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55417

The FAA Board will review all the ideas and report
the results at the monthly FAA program on November
21, 2025.

Thank you FAA—Salolampi Campers

Dear Finn FACA organization,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be able to go to another year of Salolampi. I am so grateful to be able to experience another year of learning a language and being immersed in Finnish culture. I really appreciate the scholarship, and it means so much to me.

Sincerely,
Poppy Ramin



Thank you, FAA Salolampi scholarship committee and FAA members, for generously providing a scholarship that helped me get to Salolampi. This truly means so much to me because of the opportunity to learn the language and culture of my ancestors. The feeling of being able to speak to my *Aiti*'s (mom) side of the family in their native tongue of Finnish honestly feels special. Salolampi is undeniably a wonderful and beautiful place that will create a lasting impact in your life. I have had the opportunity to attend for the last six years due to the generosity of organizations like the FAA. So, one more time, thank you — *Kiitos paljon!*

Maximus "Aku" Zarns



Thank You FAA!

Terve, mina olen Niko! I recently returned from Salolampi, Concordia Language Village in Bemidji, Minnesota!

I had a great time meeting new friends, trying new foods, speaking in Finnish, and learning all about the Finnish culture!



One of the things I enjoyed most was sauna time! My new friends and I sang Finnish songs and challenged each other on who could stay in the sauna the longest. We had fun going back and forth from the lake into the sauna, repeatedly! I also loved playing soccer. My cabin counselor taught campers a couple soccer terms in Finnish. Then he challenged us to a soccer game using only Finnish words! Another activity I enjoyed was listening to music in Finnish. The tunes were familiar to me, but the words were not. It was neat hearing familiar songs with different words.

While at camp, we had a bad storm that came through on my last night as a one-week villager. Camp counselors and directors were great about preparing us ahead of time and keeping us safe when the storm came. Even through the storm, they gave us delicious cookies and yummy meals!

I really enjoyed my time at Finnish camp this summer! I hope to return again another summer, and I hope to be a credit student one day as well! Thank you for the monetary gift, so I could attend Salolampi.

Joel Eisenbeis

My experience at Salolampi was amazing this year! We had some great moments of "SISU", because after a terrible storm we had no power or water for 2 1/2 days. It was a fun and hot adventure. Me and my friend's sauna'd and had fun in the lake. The food was delicious! I would absolutely LOVE to go to Salolampi next year!

Everly/Sonja Vogsland

Call for FAA Salolampi Scholarship Applications

The application process for FAA scholarships for the 2026 Salolampi Finnish Language Village summer sessions is now open. FAA Salolampi Youth Scholarships (for 1-, 2-, and 4-week sessions) are available to FAA members' relatives: children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews.

Criteria for determination of awards includes years of FACA/FAA membership, past scholarship awards received, participation in Finnish activities, interest in Finnish language and culture, and quality of written essays, as well as other criteria for high school credit villagers such as academic merit, character, extra-curricular activities, and community involvement.

Applications can be obtained by contacting Kathy Jorgensen at kathymjorgensen@yahoo.com, or 651-459-2654.

Applications are due by February 28, 2026.

The 5th Annual Finn Fun Day—a Day of Community

By Katja Tiainen Zarns

Five years ago, FACA (now FAA) and the Finnish School of MN (Suomikoulu) decided to come together in the spirit of community for a few hours of games and fun. Since then, Finn Fun Day has had various organizations and groups to join in the fun, donating their time, talent, and treasure. While Finn Fun Day got its start at Lake Phalen, the last few years we have spread out at the Danish American Center. Our fellow Nordics have been gracious hosts.

This year the Finnish American Association hosted the cafe, an All Things Finnish table, along with ax throwing and plinko. Opettaja (teacher) Lily from the UofM Finnish program sold pulla for our enjoyment in person and loaves to bring home. Suomikoulu hosted a game of saappaanheitto (rainboot toss) along with a table of fun word and board games. Concordia Language Villages and Salolampi Foundation of the CLV Finnish Language Village have joined us the last few years. Please note that we will be having a Salolampi fundraiser in November. Eclectic Egalitarian hosted a game of kalan onginta (fishing) for kids and adults alike with sweet and savory fish themed treats. The Finnish Genealogy Group of MN hosted a fierce game of kännypkänheitto (mobile phone toss). It seems like



tossing and throwing things was the theme, inspiration, and cause of laughter this year.

Local singer songwriter Kyle Gray Young served as our trubaduuri, playing acoustic Finnish pop and rock songs. KGY plays at various venues around the Twin Cities on a regular basis. Keep your ears and eyes open for more opportunities to hear him.

We appreciate and are thankful for Suomikoulu, Salolampi Foundation, Eclectic Egalitarian, Louise Morgan and the FAA, and Nordic Labels for donating items for a silent auction.

Iso kiitos (big thanks) to everyone who came out. As always it was invigorating and exciting to spend time with new and old friends, from newly arrived Finnish exchange students and their host families, members of the various organizations, Finnish Americans from the Iron Range, and those who just love all things Finnish. Community is what makes us rich.



Linda Davis, Liisa Le and Judy Mikkola at Family Fun Day

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 **FAA, Kathy Jorgensen, 9408 Erin Court, Woodbury, MN 55129** (Check your email message for a membership expiration warning or your mailing label for an expiration date.)

Name _____

Email _____

Address _____

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Phone _____

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

electronic copy via email paper copy

Note: choosing the email copy saves FAA both printing costs and postage.

Aaron Brown – Recap

By Louise Morgan

Finnish-American Influence on Minnesota

Aaron, a self-taught historian and columnist for the Minnesota Star Tribune, presented on the significant influence of Finnish Americans in Minnesota, particularly on the Iron Range. He discussed Finnish immigration patterns from 1910 to 1925, highlighting the unique adaptations and cultural changes that occurred in the Finnish American community. Aaron shared personal anecdotes, including his family's connection to Finnish culture and the story of Bobby Aro, a Finnish American musician who became a radio host and later embraced his Finnish heritage. He emphasized that while Finnish culture in America diverged from its roots in Finland, it contributed uniquely to American society, particularly in rural areas.

Finnish Immigration and Cultural Adaptation

Aaron discussed the history of Finland, highlighting its experience as a Russian colony from 1807 to 1917, which included periods of self-governance and heavy-handed control. He explained how Finnish immigration to America was driven by political unrest, economic hardship, and the desire for land and opportunity. Aaron also noted that many Finnish immigrants initially aimed to integrate and adapt rather than assimilate, and that about half of them eventually returned to Finland. He concluded by mentioning a 1914 newspaper headline about a Midsummer Day celebration in Hibbing, illustrating the early presence of Finnish communities in America.

Finnish Immigrants' American Journey

Aaron discussed the diverse experiences of Finnish immigrants in America, highlighting their classification as an ethnic minority and the discrimination they faced, including segregation in public spaces. He shared the history of the Mesaba Co-op Park, a cooperative recreational facility built by Finnish immigrants, and mentioned Gus Hall, a Finnish American labor organizer and communist leader who played a role in forming the United Steelworkers of America. Aaron emphasized the complexity of Finnish American history, noting the intersection of labor organizing, political activism, and personal tragedy in Hall's story.

Finnish American History and Impact

Aaron highlighted how Finns were uniquely rural and influential in land development, introduced sauna culture to Minnesota, and played a significant role in early labor movements. Participants shared personal stories and asked questions about Finnish heritage and history, contributing insights about their families' experiences.

A Generous Gift

By Kathy Jorgensen

Many of you remember long-time FACA member Richard Harju of Mounds View who passed away February 9, 2024 at age 88. During his 20-year FACA membership he served on the board as Hospitality Chair 2012-2014. He was proud of our Finnish American organization. He was passionate about his Finnish heritage, and his Finnish community meant a lot to him. Some of you may have enjoyed the daily jokes he sent out to a broad email list. They were a real "pick-me-up" to start the day, and put a smile on many faces.

Richard has remembered FACA/FAA by generously bequeathing almost \$5000 to the organization that meant so much to him. The FAA board is looking into ways to use Richard's gift to best honor his legacy. Let us know if you have ideas.

Richard was born in Hibbing, attended Nashwauk High School, Itasca Jr. College, and the University of Minnesota School of Mechanical Engineering. He dedicated his career to HVAC design and operation, and held leadership positions at 3M and in The American Society of Heating Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers.

Richard was preceded in death by his loving wife Doris and sons Allen and Robert, and is survived by his daughter Judy (Rick) Galliher, daughter-in-law Mary Harju, special friend Caryl Weaver, 7 grandchildren, and 9 great-grandchildren.



News from Finlandia Foundation National (FFN):

FFN selects Performer and Lecturer for 2026

FFN's Performer of the Year (POY) in 2026 will be Finnish-born singer, songwriter, and author Ruut DeMeo. During the year she will share her songs of Finnish culture and heritage at local FFN chapters and perform at larger events. Here's the song she wrote for the last sauna week, sung with 2025 POY Ida Metsberg. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGoumXn_U5M&list=PLgbPg6jjsQ3S6jskMDY-TAcRZqHCfC3p85&index=2

FFN's Lecturer of the Year will be researcher and historian John E. Smith, who will bring life to the story of John Morton, the Finnish-descended signer of the Declaration of Independence, during the 250th-year celebration of American history. Read more about both of them at finlandiafoundation.org/programs

National Sauna Week returns, Feb. 15-21!

Do you have a great idea for a National Sauna Week 2026 poster?? Enter by November 15 for your poster to appear on all NSW promotions and programming, plus a \$300 prize. Watch also for FAA's plans for our own sauna celebration. [NATIONAL SAUNA WEEK 2026 POSTER CONTEST](https://finlandiafoundation.org/programs/2026-poster-contest) [ENTRY FORM](https://finlandiafoundation.org/programs/entry-form)

Upcoming dates and deadlines!

FFN Project Grants—Each year, FFN provides up to \$5,000 for grants and projects that relate to Finnish heritage and culture. Deadline to apply is January 17, 2026, for projects between May 1, 2026 and April 30, 2027. <https://finlandiafoundation.org/programs/grants/>

FFN Scholarships—FFN scholarships, between \$1,000 and \$3,000, are available to full-time students in undergraduate and graduate studies at post-secondary, accredited schools in the U.S. and Finland. Deadline to apply is February 1, 2026, for study in academic year 2026-27. <https://finlandiafoundation.org/programs/scholarship/>

What is FFN's Finnposium?

Like the ancient Greek arts symposium, FFN has developed a wide variety of virtual programs, including music, Sauna Week lectures, conversations, webinars that connect us to Finnish culture, heritage, and contemporary topics in Finland today. Check out FFN's YouTube channel...<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOmt1HUZUwFyDaV5CzRlpQA>

FocusFinland: Old and new

By Betsey Norgard

Finnish Pioneer Monument

Have you seen and wondered about the monument in Theodore Wirth Park with the outline of Finland on one side and Minnesota on the other?



On Juhannus (Midsummer) 1958, about 400 members and friends of the Finnish American Society of Minneapolis unveiled this granite monument to Finnish Pioneers, honoring them for the start of modern immigration of Finns to North America in 1864.

The monument is engraved, "Finland, from this land of Kalevala immigrants have arrived on the North American continent since 1638. In memory of the Finnish pioneers who since 1864 through their ideals, industry and sisu have helped to develop the great State of Minnesota."

Sanna Marin's struggle for a normal life outside her office

Here's an interesting profile on Sanna Marin that appeared recently in *The New Yorker* magazine. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/10/13/the-prime-minister-who-tried-to-have-a-life-outside-the-office>

Would you consider being part of a team to produce an FAA blog? If so, I would enjoy talking with you about it. All ideas are encouraged and considered. Betsey Norgard, bjnorgard@gmail.com or 651-270-9784.

Our objective is to spark interest and participation in growing our Finnish community and encouraging our work (and play) together.



Finnish American Association
9408 Erin Court
Woodbury, MN 55129

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

www.faatc.org

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Saturday, November 15th, 9–12 Christ Church Lutheran: Back by popular demand.... Sarah Stngle will once again teach us how to make the beautiful Finnish Stars in time for the holidays. If you are interested, email louise.morgan21@gmail.com. More information will follow soon.

Friday, November 21st, 6:30 PM Danish American Center Salolampi Scholarship Fundraiser kickoff—Meet our scholarship campers and much more! A must attend event! Let's keep sending out children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews to camp and keep the Finnish Culture and language strong!

Saturday, December 06, 11:00 AM–12:30 PM Minnesota History Center, 345 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102

Celebrated local chef and author, Beatrice Ojakangas, has spent her career committed to preserving Nordic and Scandinavian cuisine. Through her cookbooks, plus radio and TV appearances, Ojakangas makes cooking and baking accessible while foregrounding quality ingredients.

Saturday, December 6th, Kauneimmat Joululaulut St. Michael's Church, Roseville, Christmas sing along 2–3 PM, Coffee and Christmas Market 3–4:30 PM

Friday January 09, 2026 Nordic Soundscapes—Orchestra Hall More details to follow.

