



Finnish American Cultural Activities

Uutiset

Newsletter of Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.

September–October / *Syyskuu–Lokakuu* 2025



**2025
FINN
FUN
DAY**

FINN FUN DAY

Kickstart your fall before activities, events, and Finnish language classes by joining us for a day of food, music, games, and activities! Finn Fun Day is a multi-generational, family-friendly event that was started as a collaboration between FACA and Suomi-koulu. It has since morphed into a multi organizational event.

All are welcome whether you are Finnish or are curious about other cultures or all things Finnish! Tervetuloa to the 5th Annual Finn Fun Day!

- ✓ FOOD
- ✓ MUSIC
- ✓ GAMES & ACTIVITIES
- ✓ FUN

WHEN

🕒 **SEPTEMBER 28 @ 12-3pm**

WHERE

📍 **Danish American Center**

DAC - 3030 W River Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Proposed FAA 2025–2026 Board of Directors

President

Louise Morgan

612-590-1673

louise.morgan21@gmail.com

Vice President

Betsey Norgard

facaboard1@gmail.com

Secretary

Mirja Hansen

facaboard1@gmail.com

Treasurer

Kathy Jorgensen

kathymjorgensen@yahoo.com

Website/Media

Katja Zarns

facaboard1@gmail.com

Subcommittee

John Morgan

jmorgan7887@gmail.com

Kendra Kauppi

facaboard1@gmail.com

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Kathy and John

Jorgensen

FACA Newsletter Committee

Interim Editor

Louise Morgan

612-590-1673

louise.morgan21@gmail.com

Graphic Design

Darlene Esko

651-455-8843

bobdar@att.net

Membership/Mailing

Urho and Pam Rahkola

651-429-3319

rahkola.urho@comcast.net

Website: finnfaca.org

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/116365755059161/FACA>

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please hit the "refresh" button.)

President's/Interim Editor's Message

By Louise Morgan

Summertime in Minnesota. Is there anything better than that? My summer has been busy, and I'm amazed that it is almost over. I am writing this column for our first newsletter of the season. I am up at my cabin, enjoying the sunshine and cool breeze.

I saw some of you brave Finns at our Juhannus celebrations, where I think the thermometer almost topped 100 degrees that day. We had a sauna there for people to enjoy, but we didn't get many takers since Mother Nature provided her own sauna. To those who came, I can safely say we had a great time. This was our first Juhannus celebration in a long time here in the Twin Cities. But it will not be our last!

I then saw many of you at FinnFest. If you did not get a chance to go, read Judy Mikkola's and Linda Davis's articles about FinnFest. Kudos to the FinnFest planners for another well-organized event. I had a hard time deciding what I wanted to see and do. I really enjoyed the sessions with the Finnish Ambassador, Leena-Kaisa Mikkola. (No relation to Judy Mikkola). But the ambassador has many cousins here in Minnesota! See the article by Beth...for more about that. The music was amazing. I watched my favorites and got to see some new performers as well. If you did not get a chance to go this year, make sure you head to Duluth next year.

Now onto the 2025–2026 programming year. I am excited about this coming year. We are starting out the year with our fifth Finn Fun Day. Yes, the 5th! It is always fun to start the year with music, food, games and great conversations.

Then in October, Aaron Brown will be joining us via Zoom to talk about the Finnish-American influence on Minnesota history. I have been following Aaron Brown for years. I always enjoy reading his blog and now his column in the *Star Tribune*. I listened to his lecture at FinnFest about Gus Hall. This will be a Zoom you will not want to miss!

I hope to see you all. Let's make this the best Finn year ever!

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: Nordic Music Festival (September 6th), Finn Fun Day (September 28), 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!!



Record-Breaking Day for Juhannus

By Diane Pearson

Finnish organizations in Minneapolis/St. Paul called on *Heikki Lunta* to cool off the Juhannus Celebration on Saturday, June 21. It didn't work. Extreme heat warnings, high humidity, and 96° on the thermometer blasted the 1910 temperature record for the day. The heat didn't stop more than 120 Finns and friends from coming out and celebrating the summer solstice and nature at the Lake Phalen Pavilion in St. Paul.

Music was the highlight throughout the day. Admirers of Finnish and Finnish American folk music may recognize many of the artists who played and danced in the sweltering heat. First to play was *Lauluaika*, formed out of a shared commitment to learn, preserve, and teach Finnish and Finnish American folk music—specifically music played at dances in the old Finn Halls. Also, performing singer and kantele player Diane Jarvi joined by Sheila Coughlin, Kyle Gray Young's upbeat songs in Finnish; and Karen Ba introduced us to *Runolaulu*, also known as rune singing, which refers to an ancient form of oral poetry. The Kisarit Dancers proved they had Sisu when they danced two sets for their followers.

The intent was to have a traditional Juhannus celebration, like what takes place in Finland. So, there was a sauna brought in for the occasion. Even though it was 96 degrees outside, a few hardy souls sat in the sauna and got even hotter.

Makkara was sold and other Finnish treats like freshly baked *munkki*, *lettu* made onsite topped with



Juhannus Treat—*Munkki*

strawberries and whipped cream, a sweet and tart refreshing raspberry rhubarb punch, and *Paulig Juhla Mokka* coffee.

What made this event special was the community of Finnish organizations that came together to plan the event. Early in the year, musicians Ralph Tuttila and Lotta Kiuru-Ribar imagined a combined Juhannus event with many organizations in our own city. The planning committee included a member from each Finnish group, including *Lauluaika*, Kisarit Dancers, Finnish American Association—Twin Cities, Finnish Genealogy Group of Minnesota, Finnish American Chamber of Commerce, Finnish Honorary Consul, and Minnesota Finnish Language School *Suomi Koulu*. Most groups also put together an interesting package for a silent auction. The funds raised paid for this year's expenses and will give us a start in planning 2026.

Aaron Brown—Author and Columnist for the *Minnesota Star Tribune*

October 17, 6:30 p.m. Zoom



Aaron J. Brown is an author, historian and editorial columnist for the *Minnesota Star Tribune*. He won a Northeastern Minnesota Book Award for “Overburden: Modern Life on the Iron Range” and is now working on a new book for the University of Minnesota Press. He lives on the Iron Range of northern Minnesota with his family.

Aaron will talk about the Finnish-American influence on Minnesota history: From immigration to politics, stories of how the Finns shaped the North Star State.

Aaron has been a featured speaker at FinnFest.

Only Two Years Left: Experience the Joy of FinnFest in Duluth!

By Judy Mikkola and Linda Davis

Judy Mikkola

FinnFest is now in its third year of a five-year run in scenic Duluth, Minnesota—meaning only two more chances remain to enjoy this vibrant celebration (2026 and 2027) in a city nestled near many Finnish-American communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan.

FinnFest is more than a festival—it's a four-day immersive cultural experience that welcomes both Finns and non-Finns alike with open arms. The Finnish people are proud to share their rich heritage, and the festival is a showcase of everything from crafts and design to contemporary art, music and dance and thought-provoking discussions

The website was well organized, offering many (150) choices. Whether you're watching a live musical performance, or learning about weaving, or hearing about current events, there's something for everyone.

Shop Finnish goods and services at the *Tori* (Finnish Market):

- Sauna supplies, and even a sauna
- Finnish art, clothing and foods (to include *Salmiakki*)
- Nordic walking sticks
- Salolampi Language courses offered in Bemidji

You'll also find a cafeteria filled with a variety of Scandinavian dishes to try such as salmon soup (my favorite).

Cultural Classes and Experiences:

This year, I even learned how to make and clean my Finnish *Ryijy* in a weaving class. One session was about moving to Finland and building a life in Tapio—just a few examples of the workshops and sessions available.

Unique Finnish Sports:

One of the festival's surprises was hobby horsing, a competitive sport in Finland that blends fun and creativity. I also explored *Asahi*, a gentle fitness practice suitable for all ages and abilities, requiring no equipment—ideal for wellness enthusiasts.

Special Guests and Presentations:

Children and families were thrilled by the appearance of the Moomins, Finland's beloved cartoon characters. There was a Marimekko fashion show. Anyone wearing the iconic fashion could take a walk on the runway in the finale.

A major highlight was the presence of Leena-Kaisa Mikkola, the Finnish Ambassador to the U.S., who spoke

on Finland's journey, especially in light of its recent NATO membership. She shared how Finland's global reputation for happiness stems from values like inclusiveness and contentment.

A particularly thought-provoking session focused on Christian Nationalism in the U.S., compared with Christianity in Finland.

Don't miss your chance to join this joyful gathering in Duluth in 2026. With just two more years to go, make sure FinnFest is on your 2026 and/or 2027 calendar. Whether you're reconnecting with your Finnish roots or just curious to explore, you'll leave with memories—and maybe even a sauna bucket—in hand.

Linda Davis

FinnFests are amazingly fun! The 2025 FinnFest was vibrant and intriguing! There were 150 sessions from which to choose, and their topics were extremely varied and uplifting. The delicious food was authentically Finnish down to the last teaspoon of a spice. The many choices of entertainment couldn't be beat—from a fashion show to a one-man concert to extraordinary dancing! The highlight for us was the opportunity to connect with cherished, long-lost Finnish friends. The chance to reunite was priceless.

A special treat was the two Moomins roaming around the entire DECC area. Finns of all ages clamored to get their pictures taken with the Moomins. We thank the FinnFest committee, who sponsored their trip to Minnesota from Finland. WHAT A BONUS!!



At FinnFest 2025, we learned of one example of the full impact of Salolampi, the Finnish immersion village in Minnesota. Two grandparents stopped by at our Salolampi FinnFest table and proudly told us of their granddaughter's accomplishments. She attended Salolampi and learned about the Finnish culture and language. Her experience made her want to live in Finland. She lived in Helsinki for one year, and now she is working at the Finnish embassy in Washington, D.C.—all because of Salolampi.

It was heartwarming and inspiring to learn how far-reaching her Salolampi experience has taken her.

Finnish Connection: Finnish Ambassador's Cousin

By Beth Esselstrom

It is mid-April 2024. I open my email inbox to find a message from FinnFest USA's President of the Board to announce Finland's new ambassador to the United States. Before I even open the message, I am thinking: *Wouldn't it be something if the appointee is my third cousin?* Sure enough—Leena-Kaisa Mikkola has been appointed and began her ambassadorship effective on September 1, 2024.



***Leena-Kaisa Mikkola,
Finland's Ambassador to the United States***

She comes to the post as a well-seasoned career foreign diplomat—having served in similar capacities to Israel, Africa, the Middle East and, most recently, China. And she is my third cousin. I reply-all on the email to thank FinnFest's president for the announcement and to inform the board that the ambassador is my third cousin. No kidding. And then I email the ambassador to congratulate her and to extend an early invitation to speak at FinnFest 2025 in Duluth.

The Finnish-American connection in the Lumpppio family from which the ambassador and I descend began with Ambassador Mikkola's uncle and her first cousins visiting Minnesota in the mid-1970s. Over the next five decades, several descendants in this Lumpppio family line have crossed the Atlantic—Finns to America and Americans to Finland—to nurture relationships and to meet new relatives. Each trip extended the family circles known in the homeland and the new land.

When my family first visited Finland in 1980, we were so excited to meet relatives descended from ancestors who remained in Finland while ours had emigrated to the U.S. around the turn of the 20th century. What surprised us was that our Finnish relatives were just as interested in meeting us and learning about our lives as descendants of their ancestors who'd come to the United States.

Some of the most enduring memories of my three trips to Finland are visiting the birthplaces of my great-grandparents. Worshipping in the church where my great-grandmother was baptized and confirmed invoked an extremely powerful sense of place. It is what impelled me to plan a gathering of about 40 family members the day after FinnFest—to welcome the Ambassador back to Minnesota and to renew our shared connections between Finland and America.

The Finnish-American connection runs through family lines and extends into each generation. It is no coincidence that family histories are recorded as trees—our roots nourished by relationships to grow strong, to branch out, and to flourish through generations.



Relatives with Ambassador Leena-Kaisa Mikkola

Hyvää Päivää! / Good Day!  

FAA, the Finnish American Association, presents our brand new Website! (Here is the link.) faatc.org
(HYPERLINK “http://faatc.org” /“\t “_blank”)

The website provides information on:

- FAA’s mission and how we go about following in that mission
- Activities and events
- Monthly program and events calendar
- News or announcements
- Library containing photos from our programs and community events, videos of past programs and books in our collection
- Links to other Finnish and Finnish American organizations locally and nationally
- Volunteering—We NEED you to sustain our organization!
- How to become a member or renew
- Donating financially to help support our programming and operations
- How to get in touch with us—FAA board members, contact info, email address, Instagram, Facebook, etc.

So, take a peek! If you are already a Member of FAA/FACA—Good for you! We thank you for supporting the programming and events, communications, web site, and other endeavors that keep our group thriving, our heritage alive, and underscore the value to the Finnish and Finnish American community in the Twin Cities!!

And if you are seeing this message and are not yet a member, we do hope you will join and help support this fun, vibrant, and passionate organization full of very cool people!

Kiitos!

The FAA Board

P.S. If you have suggestions for future improvements to the faatc.org website, have questions, run into issues, or find any errors in this new site, please contact us via email: webmaster@faatc.com, or catch us at an event and let us know.

Needed: An Effective Logo

I hope you are enjoying summer 2025!

Last year, you helped identify the new name for our organization—**The Finnish American Association** (FAA). *Kiitos*, to everyone who participated in the Town Hall or the selection survey.

We are excited to announce an open call for creative minds to help shape a logo for the association! We invite all FAA members to submit ideas and inspirations for a new visual identity for FAA.

Here are some tips! An effective logo...

... **conveys** our mission and activities (see our website for our mission statement);

...is **memorable** and timeless;

...is proof that “a picture **paints a thousand words**;

...**works well** in large or small format;

...**can be printed or displayed** in various modes.

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 **September 29, 2025**, to: Mirja Hanson at Hanson@consultHLT.com or 5510 Edgewater Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55417.

We look forward to seeing how you envision the spirit and future of our Finnish American Association!



Join us: The Finnish American Association

Calendar 2025 Programs and Events

Saturday, September 6: Nordic Music Festival in Victoria, Minn. from 10 a.m.–7:30 p.m. Nordic Music and Dance: A wide variety of Nordic dancers, singers, instrumentalists and bands.

Sunday, September 28: Finn Fun Day, Danish American Center from noon–3 p.m.

- Kickstart your fall before activities, events and Finnish language classes by joining us for a day of food, music, games and activities! Finn Fun Day is a multi-generational, family-friendly, and multi-organizational event.

Friday, October 17, 6:30 p.m.: Aaron Brown, author/columnist for the *Minnesota Star Tribune*, will talk about the Finnish-American influence on Minnesota history: From immigration to politics, stories of how the Finns shaped the North Star State. Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6815304953?pwd=Qj-FUQIVzbkR3ZEK4VC9YbTBxNEJtUT09&omn=89940792899>

Saturday, November 15, 9 a.m.–noon, Christ Church Lutheran: Back by popular demand...Sarah Stengle will once again teach us how to make the beautiful **Finnish Stars** in time for the holidays. Email louise.morgan21@gmail.com if you are interested. More information will follow soon.

Friday, November 21, 6:30 p.m., Danish American Center—Salolampi—Meet our scholarship campers and much more!

Saturday, December 6, Kauneimmat Joululaulut: St. Michael's Roseville: Watch for a flyer with more information.

Book Club Is Coming: We will be reading *The End of Drum Time* by Hanna Pylvainen. If you are interested, contact louise.morgan21@gmail.com. The date and location of the first discussion session will be announced soon.

Farewell Readers!

This is my final FACA Uutiset! I am retired as this issue hits your mailbox or computer. Producing this document has been quite an experience. I hope you enjoy future issues. Keep sharing your Finnish news and events with other readers.

Darlene Esko

Conversational Finnish Class
Tuesdays—2:00-3:30 p.m.
Participation via Zoom Meeting
For more information, please call
Urho Rahkola at 651-429-3319

FAA 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 **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.)

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



FAA and Genealogy Book Club!

The FAA and Genealogy are joining forces this year to launch a book club. Our first book will be *The End of Drum Time*, a novel by Hana Pylvainen, set in the 1850s Scandinavian tundra, exploring themes of faith, identity and cultural conflict through the story of a Sami reindeer herding community and a Lutheran Minister attempting to convert them.

If you are interested in joining our book club, contact Louise Morgan, louise.morgan21@gmail.com, or Linda Mell, lmell46@msn.com

Details on date and location for first discussion will follow.



Finnish American Association
9408 Erin Court
Woodbury, MN 55129

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



Minnesotan Suomi-Koulu
THE FINNISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL OF MINNESOTA



IS HIRING TEACHERS!

Access our library of art, music, books and toys to teach Finnish language and culture. Our Minneapolis facility includes classrooms, full kitchen, and gymnasium.



Age Group Positions :

- 0-2 years Music & Play (Muskari): Teach caregiver & baby songs and fingerplays
- 3-6 years Preschool (Eskari): Teach preschool concepts and Finnish culture in immersive Finnish with music, crafts, baking, and games.

REQUIREMENTS :

- **Native or fluent speaker**
- **Experience with teaching age group preferred**
- **Commitment to full semester**

School year: Sep 20- Dec 6 and Jan 17- May 16, 2026,
First and third Saturdays, 10-11:30am.

SEND YOUR RESUME :

finnishschoolofmn@gmail.com

