

FACA *Uutiset*
Finnish American Cultural Activities
Newsletter of the Finnish American Association

February/Helmikuu 2026



Join us for our annual Laskiainen—traditional sledding day and winter picnic! Sled and play in the snow, chat by the fire pit or in the warming house, and delight in laskiaispulla (shrove buns), kahvi (coffee) hernekeitto (split pea soup) and nakit (hot dogs) with Finnish friends. There will also be an opportunity to sauna on the lake! More details to come.

Co-hosted by FAA, the Finnish American Association (formerly Finnish American Cultural Association—FACA) and Suomi-koulu MN

Given all that has happened and is happening in Minneapolis, FAA plans to celebrate Laskiainen as is done in Finland each year by coming together in our FAA community at a location away from the city and enjoy taking care of each other. For those who live in the neighborhoods of protest, we understand a need to stay at home out of risk, and we will keep you in our thoughts.

**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

Katja Zarns

Subcommittee

Kendra Kauppi
facaboard1@gmail.com

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Kathy and John Jorgensen
612-590-1673

**FAA Newsletter
Committee**

Interim Editor

Louise Morgan
612-590-1673
louise.morgan21@gmail.com

Graphic Design

Mary Belanger

Membership/Mailing

Urho and Pam Rahkola
651-429-3319
rahkola.urho@comcast.net

Website: faatc.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/116365755059161/FACA-3015-2016-B>

**President's /Interim
Editor's Message**

By Louise Morgan

I wrote this column before all the events of this past weekend and several weeks. In light of the recent events in Minnesota, it is so important that we continue to come together and take care of our Finnish community.



Louise and Mia Morgan

Onnellista uutta vuotta! Happy New Year! I cannot believe it is 2026.

Were we not just worrying about Y2K? This past year was a big one for us. We now are Finnish American Association (FAA) versus FACA and FFTC. I am still having to practice saying that. My tongue wants to say FACA and FFTC. But just as Y2K is a memory, so they will be memories, albeit wonderful memories. I know that we will be stronger together. We look forward to 2026 and making more progress. Rome wasn't built in a day, as the saying goes.

February is Sauna month. I hope that you all can come to our Laskiainen celebration, and maybe even partake in a sauna. I hope you enjoy the sauna memories that were shared by our members. I recently attended a knitting retreat at a Y camp near Ely. They heated up the sauna for us. It was a bit toasty. It was 220 degrees when I first got there. I thought to myself that you can almost bake a chicken at that temperature. We opened the doors and cooled it down a bit. They have the hole in the lake, and I did take advantage of that...twice!

February is also a time to learn about the Kalevala. Karen Ba, one of our talented members, has agreed to educate us about the Kalevala. I have always wanted to know more about the Kalevala, and I am looking forward to Karen's presentation.

We have partnered with FGGMN and are now on our third book. Yes, we have a book club. I have enjoyed the first two, and I think the third book should be delivered today or tomorrow. If you just want to read a good book and you might not be able to make it to our meetings, let me know. I will include you in our list.

That is it from me for now. I just want to say thank you for being a member of our organization and I hope to see you at our next event!

FAA Salolampi Scholarships are Available

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, 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. **Due date for submission is February 28, 2026.**

If you wish to donate to the FAA Salolampi scholarship fund, visit our faatc.org website, go to the "Support Us" tab, and select "Donate".

Salolampi Scholarship Fundraiser Kick-off... and beyond! *By Katja Tiainen Zarns*

The Finnish American Association has a longstanding relationship with Concordia Language Villages and their Finnish language village, Salolampi. When we were still FACA, we offered scholarships to the children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews of our members. As we merged with FFTC/Finnsources, it was important for us to keep this tradition - as the FAA, we continue in that spirit of generosity. We do this to encourage the next generation to connect with their Finnish heritage, keeping the stories,



history, cuisine, culture and language alive! At Salolampi our family members have a chance to experience and partake in all those areas.

FAA's November program presented our Salolampi Scholarship Fundraiser Kick-off and what an awesome kick-off it was! We heard from Mark Johnson, the Director of Development at CLV. A highly energetic and joyful panel of scholarship recipients, and current and former villagers inspired us with their camp stories. We had an opportunity to ask meaningful questions and to be generous with our giving.

For a sustainable and robust FAA Salolampi Scholarship fund, our goal was set \$3000. With the November kick-off through personal giving and donations, and an abundant bake sale, along with an angel donor matching \$1000 we were able to meet that goal. Yet, the fundraiser is still going. If you were unable to make it to the fundraiser kick-off, you can still send your donation to our treasurer, Kathy. Make checks out to *Finnish American Association* noting Salolampi in the memo area. You can also give online at faatc.org.

In regular monthly program fashion, we had light snacks, coffee, and a wonderful time of community. Big thank you - Kiitos - to Marc, and our panelists FAA member Diane "Minttu" who has attended Salolampi's adult week, current villagers Maximus "Aku", Everly "Sonja", and Ellis "Sanna", along with "Linnea" locally known as Lily - a villager turned into staff/Finnish language teacher.

The scholarship applications are now open! Please encourage your school-aged family members to apply and have an All Things Finnish inspired summer!



Get to know The Kalevala—connecting our real Finnic roots to the present

February 27th, 2026 6:30 PM Central Time (Zoom)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85949788189?pwd=Y1l1ap-kYOHdKJ1WFshIjelpnL0O9r6a.1>

Meeting ID: 859 4978 8189

Passcode: 280364

Robert Wilhelm Ekman: Väinämöinen and Maiden of Pohjola

Ever felt that Finns are a little different but not sure how or why? Ever wished you could hear how Finnish ancestors told their own life experience in their own words?

On February 27, 2026 at 6:30pm CT, the local Twin Cities based music group VuoriVene will present an overview and excerpts of the Finnish national epic story by Elias Lönnrot. We will share with FAA how this literature connects Finnish Americans to their authentic cultural heritage. Here's your chance to participate in storytelling in the ancient Karelian and Finnish way. After this, you will be ready to take on a chapter of the Kalevala, either by yourself, at a VuoriVene Runealong event, or in the next day's Kalevala Marathon to celebrate the 191st anniversary of the Old Kalevala.

Edith Boos Obituary

Edith Anelma Boos (Penttinen) passed away at her home on December 21, 2025, due to complications from a stroke. She was fiercely independent and hated being told what to do. She had a full 30-year career with the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* Newspaper company; she was a great baker and a lifelong sewist. She probably made over 1,000 quilts in her lifetime. She survived breast cancer twice and esophageal cancer. She was strong and brave and the Finns would say, she had *Sisu* (extraordinary determination, resilience, grit, and courage, especially when facing adversity or seemingly insurmountable odds). She was a first generation American, 100 percent Finnish, and grew up in Northern Minnesota. In Minneapolis, she did charity quilting every Monday for more than 30 years for new immigrants and people in need such as loss due to house fires. She was a truly amazing person.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Robert, her sister Stella Arola (Harvey), her brother Edwin, and granddaughter Tiffany. She is survived by her daughter Mary Jo (Mike Hofferber) and son Craig (Jennifer), her brother Richard, three grandchildren (Laila and Chloe Thor and Grant Penttinen)), and many nieces and nephews.

Mary Jo Thor and Craig Penttinen will hold a celebration of life in the first week of June when the Pink Lady slippers are in bloom on the hill side near their mother's childhood home "up North."

Shirley Barber Obituary

Preceded in death by parents Andrew & Aili; husband of over 40 years, Delos; an unnamed son; and sister: Sonja. Survived by daughter Linda (Mitch); grandchildren John, James, Hazel & Emma; brother Bob (Sharon); sisters: Sandy & Sally (Frank; & brothers-in-law Don & Rolland (Sharon); many nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family and friends. Shirley was a lifelong learner and educator with most of her professional work as a Home Economist with Ramsey County Extension Service. Shirley was born in Aitkin, MN on March 17, 1939, to Andrew and Aili (Niemi) Lake. Shirley attended country school in Finnish until the family moved, then attended Aitkin schools, graduating in 1957. Shirley received a Bachelor of Science and Master of Education in Home Economics and a Ph.D. in Adult Education in Home Economics, all from the U of M with supporting Doctoral Studies from Michigan State University. Shirley retired in 2000 after a distinguished 35-year career as an extension educator in financial and business management, where she was seen as a pioneer and innovator. Shirley, a lifelong learner, educator and leader, served as President of Roseville Lutheran Church, officer and committee member for numerous professional and personal organizations including Beta of Clovia and National Clovia, and assisted countless people, particularly women, in their educational pursuits. Visitation 4-7pm Friday, February 13. Funeral service 2pm Saturday, February 14 at Roseville Lutheran Church, 1215 Roselawn Ave., Roseville. Private interment at a later date. In lieu

of flowers, memorials preferred to the Building the Best Better campaign at: <https://betaofclovia.causevox.com>

Thanking FAA Volunteers

The super-power of FAA is its volunteers, and it is high-time to make sure they are formally recognized bi-monthly, starting with November—December 2025:

Utiset newsletter:

Mary Belanger graciously agreed to design and produce two issues following the retirement of Graphic designer Darlene Esko after nine years of service.

Finnish American Reporter article:

Ruth Erkkila stepped up to write the Twin Cities news article for December issue. Thank you to Ruth for all of the years of wonderful reporting for the Twin Cities Finnish Community.

Thank you to Katja Zarns and Diane Pearson for taking over this important responsibility from Ruth!

FAA website:

Kudos to John Jorgensen for his DIY sisu and acquired expertise to build and maintain the site and work to add features to the site.

The *Salolampi* Fundraiser Kick-Off Program:

The November program was a success thanks to Katja Zarns, our wonderful panel, Diane "Minttu" Pearson, Lily "Linnea" Obeda, Max "Aku" Zarns, Everly "Sonja" and Ellis "Sanna" Vogsland and all of the bakers who provided the goodies for the bountiful bake sale.

Kauneimmat Joululaulut Program:

The community gathered once again for the Christmas Sing-along, Coffee and Market. A big thank you to Elina Koivusaari, Eeva Savolainen and the Suomi Finland 100 Chorus for the beautiful music program. Gail Hain arranged and coordinated the Tori. Irmeli Moran, Al Norgard, Betsey Norgard, Phil Zarns, Katja Zarns, Max Zarns, Kevin Morgan, Judy Mikkola, Linda Davis and coordinator Louise Morgan set up and decorated the fellowship hall and served coffee and pulla to over 200 participants.

Year 2022 and 2023 Audits:

We appreciate the expert work of Janie Ahola and Judy Mikkola to conduct the audit with our amazing treasurer Kathy Jorgensen.

Behind the Scenes:

Recognition goes to the backstage volunteer work of Board Members for planning and coordinating FAA programming and getting FAA registered, financially fit with a new mission, name, website, Facebook, Instagram and soon, a logo!

Kyle Gray Young and Ida Metsberg Wonderful way to spend a Saturday afternoon

By Michelle Ranta

On a cold yet sunny Saturday afternoon a few of us from FAA were treated to a lovely concert at a small coffee shop venue in St. Paul. The Finnish singer song writer hailing from New York City Ida Metsberg joined our very own Kyle Gray Young to play and sing their own songs. Their



styles, playing, and voices really harmonized well together, I was reminded of the Jonny Cash and June Carter team. They had both just come back from a trip to Finland and were ready for a week packed with performances here in the Twin Cities. Metsberg

sang a heartfelt song she had written her young niece about growing up as well as a Finnish traditional song her father who had been in a well know band in Finland used to sing. Kyle told a story about how he had first met Ida at Finn Fest and was excited to finally meet in person the musician on the top of his Spotify playlist. We are all looking forward to hearing more from the duo. I myself (depending on the weather it might be -30 Celsius!) am planning on seeing them next at a St. Paul cat café with real cats milling around.

The New FAA Logo Under Construction ...

By Mirja Hanson

Submissions: The search for a new logo for the Finnish American Association (FAA) has generated significant interest and creativity within the community! More than thirty logo ideas and designs were submitted for consideration. By the time of the November FAA program, twenty-seven submissions had already been received, with additional designs arriving before the November 30th deadline.



Feedback: On November 21, 2025, participants at the Salolampi Fundraiser Kick-off were actively involved in the selection process. Each attendee received a handout featuring all the logo options. Twenty-three community members took the opportunity to rank their top five preferred designs and shared valuable comments explaining their choices. Their feedback also included constructive suggestions for improving specific designs.

Next Steps: The FAA Board sincerely thanks everyone who provided input and feedback during this process. All comments and rankings are being carefully considered to ensure the selected logo best communicates the mission and values of the Finnish American Association. Please stay tuned for the final announcement in 2026!

Comments from the Honorary Consul's Corner

By Elaine Kumpula

Fall 2025 was filled with activities that strengthen bonds between Finland and Minnesota. During September and October, I worked closely with our local FACC-MN and Business Kuopio to create a Minnesota-centric business delegation to join the Minneapolis Sister City administration delegation which traveled to Kuopio in November to celebrate that city's 250th Anniversary. Our business delegation included representatives from Ever-Green Energy, Riley Hayes, Eurotech Ventures, and UMD. We met with multiple companies from the Kuopio region that are interested in Minnesota as a place for doing business. We are now following up by, among other efforts, locating and making connections with potential business partners for Finnish companies seeking local manufacturers for items as varied as firefighting equipment, modular workspace pods, and methane reduction materials.

The entire sister city visit with Kuopio was wonderful. The entire delegation (business and city—which also included sister city delegations from France, Germany and Hungary) visited showcase companies such as FinnVector (bladder cancer treatment); Luola, a sports/entertainment center; a beautiful anniversary fire, light, and water show at the tori; a large city reception; a symphony concert; and a choice of entertainment on our final evening—a play or a Kuopio hockey game. Many memories were made, old friendships strengthened, and new friendships forged.

The week after the visit to Kuopio I traveled to Helsinki to attend Slush—the world's leading startup event. I attended numerous side events filled with pitches, networking opportunities, and substantive discussions ranging from the future of food to improved healthcare to policy discussions around AI. Slush is a fantastic event for meeting cutting edge startups and investors, a place where one can meet multiple potential partners for our businesses in Minnesota.

Following return to the U.S., I went to New York to celebrate Finland's 108th Independence Day on December 4 (yes, a couple of days early) and see the Helene Schjerfbeck solo exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Both events were strategically and beautifully held at the Met. The Independence Day celebration was moving and impactful for many reasons. The Schjerfbeck exhibit, "Seeing Silence" is a treasure. If you have a chance to see it, you should take that opportunity.



Finnish Star Making Class 2025

Kauneimat Joululaulut at St. Michael's Church

By Ruth Erkkilä

The Finnish American's and friends of Finnish Americans in the Twin Cities gathered at St. Michael's church in Roseville, as we have for the last four years, to sing Kauneimat Joululaulut (most beautiful Christmas songs) together on December 6. December 6 is also Finland's Independence Day, and we acknowledged



Finland's 108 years of independence by singing the Finnish National Anthem, Maamme, at the beginning of our program.

Our songs were in a pamphlet obtained from Finland; we were singing the same songs as sung in Finland to celebrate Christmas. There were about 215 people attending and so far, the singing was more robust than some years. The Suomi 100 Choir led by Eeva Savolainen joined us. They sang a few songs on their own but then joined in the group singing. This helped to keep us all together.

As a special feature, a children's group led by Ulla Trevo-Desnick performed a couple songs for us. Some of the children were very young and a little restless but they sang enthusiastically. We really enjoyed them and gave them a hearty round of applause.

The MC for this event was our honorary consul, Elaine Kumpula. She kept things on track and provided a brief summary in English of the songs we were singing in Finnish. The accompaniment on piano was by Sari Ronnholm.

We finished the singing with a perennial favorite, Silent Night in Finnish and English and then retired to the Fellowship Hall to enjoy coffee and pulla, a little bit of visiting and a little bit of shopping in the shops set up on the perimeter of the hall. Many smiling faces were seen leaving the church. It was a good beginning for all of our individual Christmas celebrations. And now a Happy New Year to all our readers.



Katja Zarms, Marlene Moreno and Ruth Erkkilä with pulla

Nordic Soundscapes

Orchestra Hall, Jan 10–18

By Kathy Jorgensen

From Jan 11–17, the Minnesota Orchestra held its second Nordic Soundscapes Festival at Orchestra Hall, inspired by its conductor, Danish native Thomas Søndergård. This year, the Jan 9–10 concerts were incorporated into Winterapolis, the citywide celebration of winter in Minneapolis.

From 4–8 pm, the outdoor courtyard featured crackling fire pits, cozy seating with blankets, ice carving, and an igloo offering warm beverages such as cocoa and glögg. Mitten trees, decorated with donated mittens, reflected



Minnesota's spirit of giving by helping keep others warm during winter.

Patrons were invited to "come in from the cold" to try curling in the lobby, while Nordic partner organizations offered cultural experiences and musical performances before the concerts. On Jan 9, the Suomi 100

Chorus performed, and the Finnish American Organization and FinnFest USA hosted informational tables in the mezzanine.

At the FinnFest table, Marianne Wargelin presented a "show and tell" highlighting FinnFest's history. The FAA table, hosted by husband John and me, shared information about FAA along with local MN Finnish resources, books such as the Kalevala and Silbelius, and Finland guide booklets provided by Hon. Consul Elaine Kumpula. Our display case of Finnish design and art featured Iittala Ultima Thule glassware, Alvar Aalto candleholders, intricate wooden chip carving, Marimekko fabric, and a Helene Schjerfbeck exhibition catalog. Activity boards created by Mirja Hanson once again drew crowds, inviting guests to "Put yourself on the map!" and take a Finland trivia quiz.

The Jan 9 concert featured the Sibelius Violin Concerto, highlighting Nordic themes of migration and cultural heritage, performed by the outstanding James Ehnes, and Esa-Pekka Salonen's Nyx, inspired by Greek mythology. Søndergård also conducted the First Symphony of Carl Nielsen, one of Denmark's musical greats. It was a wonderful evening.

Sauna Memories

Gail Hain My best sauna memory was from the Fall of 2024. I traveled with a group from MN to Salo, Finland. Our hosts in Salo planned for us to go to a community sauna on a lake where we could jump in to cool down. It was so refreshing.

Then they served us a reindeer stew with rye bread and other Finnish treats afterward. It was very fun!

Elizabeth Brauer My first sauna memory happened at Salolampi, in Bemidji, MN when I was 10. We didn't grow up with a sauna at home. Neither did my grandparents. I explained to my parents what sauna was. The Salolampi sauna will always be very important to me and I am sure many others!

Mary Miller The first sauna I can remember was with my mom at my uncle and aunt's home in Kaleva, Michigan. I was very young but I loved it!

Ellen Lehto Liddle My grandfather built a sauna in the basement of the house where I grew up. It was traditional in that it had the barrel wood stove with a water tank. I was probably about 4 years old when I remember that we had one pail for all of us to scrub ourselves. My mother helped me bathe. I sat on the lower lava while my father and older sister sat on the upper lava. Finnish friends and relatives knew that the sauna was always heated on Saturday night, and they liked the convenience of the indoor sauna; it wasn't unusual for us to have sauna company. When our Finnish pastor caught a cold, he came for sauna to relieve the symptoms. In later years we installed a shower to cool off since there was no lake near us in North Dakota.

Georgia Ramin Poppy's mom—I love to sauna with my middle aged best friends. It's a great way to relax together and talk about whatever comes to mind and get a little silly, and a safe place to say what you really think in privacy. We laugh and sing and gossip together, and it's pretty perfect.

Marissa Callender Here are our first/best sauna memories:

1. When my brother pee'd on the sauna stove when we were at our grandparents house. —Konsta
2. Taking sauna in the wash tub on the floor and sneaking a sip of my dad's sauna beer in the dressing room. —Marissa
3. Taking our first sauna together (mommy and me) when we traveled to Finland. —Eva (age 7)

*I do have to agree with Eva, of alllll the sauna's I've had in my life—there was something so special, soul-filling, spiritually significant, connection to the ancestors about taking a sauna IN Finland, absolute bucket list moment.

Marlene (Hanka) Moreno This Sauna story may be very familiar to many Finns (non-Finns too) living in the USA. Visits to my grandparents' home always included a Saturday night sauna. When my husband, Pete, and I, plus

four young children continued those visits, I introduced them to the "art" of bathing in the sauna. Something they had never experienced before. This new tradition was great because we didn't have the luxury of a sauna at home, even though we lived in Finn Town in North Minneapolis! Imagine that? I know some area residents had them, but we didn't know those lucky people, unfortunately! It was about a year later, on our way to my grandparents, Pete stated that we should separate from the kids because a sauna bath was not our family routine. Being a stubborn Finn, I argued for the benefits of the sauna. Of course, his rationale was the evident conclusion and I managed to work out a plan for all of us to enjoy those infrequent Saturday night saunas! Life is so complex!?!

2025 Sauna Bucket Award Request for Nominees

A sauna bucket serves an important function in containing water to be ladled onto hot rocks to generate steam or löyly—spirit, breath or soul. Do you know someone who is the spirit behind FAA? Someone who generates the steam at member gatherings, volunteer events or board meetings? Please consider nominating that individual for the Sauna Bucket Award.



The Sauna Bucket Award has been given out annually since 1980 honoring dedicated FACA volunteers and contributors to the local Twin Cities area Finnish Community. Nominations will be accepted through February 2025 by filling in the questions below and submitting them

electronically or via postal mail. E-mail is the preferred method.

Mail—Louise Morgan, 5370 Union Terrace Lane N., Plymouth, MN 55442 [E-mail—louise.morgan21@gmail.com](mailto:louise.morgan21@gmail.com)

1. Name and contact information of person submitting nomination.
2. Name and contact information of the person being nominated for their dedicated service.
3. Provide a narrative as to why the person is being nominated. Why do you think this individual should receive the Sauna Bucket Award? What FAA activities has the nominee been involved in? What impact has the individual made to the FAA/Finnish community? How have other individuals benefited from the accomplishments? What has the Finnish community gained from the contributions? Provide specific examples.

Cancellation Policy

If St. Paul schools are canceled due to bad weather, then a FAA event scheduled for that day will also be canceled.



Finnish American Association
9408 Erin Court
Woodbury, MN 55129

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

www.faa.org

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 21 Laskiainen and Sauna, 12–3 pm Lebanon Hills Regional Park 860 Cliff Rd, Eagan, MN 55123
 Pea Soup, Hot dogs, Pulla, Sledding, Bonfire, Sauna! Something for everyone

February 27 6:30 pm Learn about the Kalevala with Karen Ba before Kalevala Day. Zoom information will be sent out the week prior.

February 28 Kalevala Day—TBD

February 28 Sauna Bucket nominations due

March 5 FAA/FGGMN Book Club, 1-3 pm Ridgedale Library. This month's selection: *The Clues in the Fjord* by Satu Ramo

March 15 St. Urho's Day Celebration, 1–4 pm Christ Church Lutheran, 3244 34th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55406 Come and help us celebrate St. Urho, the saint who (allegedly) saved Finnish wine. We will be holding our 4th annual Pea Soup Cookoff, followed by dancing and merriment.

April Date TBD, Zoom Event: Come and learn about why the Finnish people love or are fascinated by Heavy Metal.




The Finnish American Association
invites you to the annual

ST URHO'S DAY CELEBRATION + PEA SOUP COOK-OFF

FOOD - MUSIC - DANCE - FRIENDS

March 15, 2026 - 1 to 4pm
 Location: Christ Church Lutheran
 3244 34th Ave S, Minneapolis

www.faatc.org