

# FCA News



FOR MEMBERS OF THE FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION

August 2012



Char Lytikainen, FCA volunteer, at work preparing another Monday lunch for FCA volunteers.

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## CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Greetings members; I recently had the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Finnish American Historical Society of Michigan. I learned that the organizational meeting of the group was held in Detroit, in the year 1945, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Murto. At that meeting, Dr. George W. Sippola was elected as the first president of the Society. The Historical Society is still very active, with most of its programs taking place at the Finnish Cultural Center.

The Historical Society has presented a variety of programs recently. Dr. Paul Lehto did a presentation on how to do genealogy of Finnish roots. Steve Lehto introduced his book *Michigan's Columbus: The Life of Douglass Houghton*. Lillian Lehto introduced her book *A Rascal's Craft*.

Celebrating Finland's independence is the most important event of the year, and a new tradition has started at the FCA. The Historical Society has been inviting the Finlandia Foundation National Lecturer of the Year to be the featured speaker at their annual Independence Program. Thus far, Dr. Arnold Alanen, Dr. Carl Rahkonen and Mr. James Kurtti have been speakers. Dr. Glenda Dawn Goss will be featured speaker in December, 2012.

At the annual meeting elections were held. The following officers and directors were elected: President - Lois Makee; Vice-President, Dee Abersold; Secretary- Louise Hartung; Membership Secretary- Dagmar Malstrom; and Treasurer- Hilikka Ketola. The following directors were also elected: Gerald Malstrom, Joyce Keskitalo, Maria Hill, and Marku Ketola.

The Historical Society of Michigan has included the Finnish American Historical Society of Michigan in their publication *Michigan Historical Directory*. I found this meeting to be both interesting and informative and very worthwhile. I couldn't leave without adding my membership to their records.

Cortland R. Book

**WEEKLY EVENTS****Finnish American Singers**

Mondays 7 pm to 9 pm  
(no rehearsal in Summer)

**Library**

Open Mondays 9 am to 2 pm

**NikkarinTalo**

Mondays 9 am

**Finlandia Garden Club**

Mondays 9 am

**MONTHLY EVENTS****Gift Shop—Meeting**

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday 1 pm

**Card and Game Party**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday 11 am-4 pm

**Finnish Conversation**

1st Friday of the month 10 am

**Book Club**

Last Monday of month, 1 pm

**JULY**

- 14 **Rental 6 pm**  
25 **Monthly Luncheon Noon**  
28 **Rental 7-11 pm**  
29 **Open House 1-4 pm**

**AUGUST**

- 11 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
14 **Rental 8:30 am-4:30 pm**  
18 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
19 **Rental 2-8 pm**  
25 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
26 **Open House 1-4 pm**  
29 **Monthly Luncheon Noon**  
30 **Historical Business Meeting 2 pm**

**SEPTEMBER**

- 3 **Labor Day—Closed**  
8 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
9 **Brunch Noon**  
12 **Rental Noon**  
15 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
19 **101st Luncheon 11 am**  
21 **Pasty Prep**  
22 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
22 **Pasty Sale 12-4 pm**  
26 **Monthly Luncheon Noon**  
26 **Rental Noon**  
29 **Finnish language Class 10:30 am**  
30 **Open House 1-4 pm**

**FINNISH AMERICAN  
SINGERS OF MICHIGAN**

Rehearsals resume Monday,  
September 10, from 7-10 pm



**FINNISH  
LANGUAGE  
CLASSES**

Begin August 11

Saturdays

10:30 am - noon

10 Weeks -\$100

Contact FCA Office  
to register.

**SEPTEMBER PASTIES**

The next pasty bake is Saturday, September 22. Make your reservations by signing up on the sheet in the FCA lobby, by calling the Finnish Center, or by email at [fca-pasties@comcast.net](mailto:fca-pasties@comcast.net). All orders must be picked up on Saturday between 11 am and 4 pm.

The cost is \$5 each, but for orders of 10 or more, you can save 10%. Here is how: first, email your order and phone number to [fca-pasties@comcast.net](mailto:fca-pasties@comcast.net) by 10:00 pm on Monday, September 17. Then to receive the discount you must also pick up your order on Saturday.

Volunteers are always needed to help with the pasty bake. Simply sign up on the sheet in the lobby or contact Paul Rajala.

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[www.finnishcenter.org](http://www.finnishcenter.org)

**Officers**

Cortland Book, Chairman  
Lois Makee, Vice Chairman  
Marlene Ruuskanen, Secretary

**Board of Trustees**

1 Year  
Gerald Malstrom, Roger Wanttaja,  
Lois Makee

2 Year  
Frank Gottberg, Cortland Book,  
David Sharpe, Marlene Ruuskanen

3 Year  
Carl Aebersold, Olli Lamminen,

**Alternates**

#1 Francis Fadie  
#2 Gayle Gullen

**Financial Review**

Neil Manley, Jr., Dagmar Malstrom  
Marlene Ruuskanen

**Treasurer**

Christine Johnson

**Committee Chairpersons****Building & Grounds**

Frank Gottberg

**Cultural**

Carl Aebersold & Hilka Ketola

**Education**

Hanna Hall

**Finance**

Mia Lamminen

**Gift Shop**

Margaret Laurila

**Mailing**

George Koskimaki

**Membership**

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**Publicity & Publications**

Nancy Sannar

**Social****Sunshine Lady**

Eunice Potti Gould

**Garden Club**

David Sharpe

**SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING CORPORATION**

Paul C. Hendrickson, Chairman

***Tapiola Village***

Laura Fultz, Manager  
248 471-3802

***Freedom Square***

Mary O'Brien, Manager  
248 442-7250

[Tapiola@ameritech.net](mailto:Tapiola@ameritech.net)  
[www.fcaseniorhousing.org](http://www.fcaseniorhousing.org)





## EIGHT HONORED AT 2012 SCHOLARSHIP RECEPTION

Seven college/university students and one Finnish Center adult volunteer were honored at the FCA's annual Scholarship Reception on Sunday, May 20th.

Education Committee Chair Hanna Hall was introduced, and she described the Finnish Language programs for children and adults.

"England and Beyond: My Semester in Europe" was the title of Kristina Rikkonen's Powerpoint presentation. A scholarship recipient in 2010, 2011, and 2012, she will be a senior at Hope College. Her previous scholarship had helped her fund her semester abroad in England. KIITOS, Kristina, for your fascinating slide show!

Scholarship Committee members then introduced the other six college/university students. In addition to Kristina Rikkonen, \$1,000 scholarships were also awarded to Amy Erickson, Megan Hella, Brittany Keranen, Paige Kozak, Rachel Lowrance, and Erik Rikkonen. Congratulations, students!

A \$250 scholarship was awarded to extremely-active FCA volunteer Char Lytikainen to attend the Salolampi Finnish language and culture camp, located in northwestern Minnesota. Congratulations, Char, and KIITOS for all your help at the Finnish Center!

Students who have demonstrated financial need this year are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 Edith Antilla Memorial Scholarship. These special scholarships were made possible thanks to the generosity of the Arlene and F.W. Page Foundation. Recipients' names will be announced in the September newsletter. KIITOS, Page family foundation!

After the ceremony, the scholarship recipients and their families enjoyed delicious baked goods and other coffee table treats which had been donated by Scholarship Committee members and scholarship recipients' families. KIITOS, all!



### 2012 Scholarship Recipients

Pictured from left to right in front of the Hanko Rock are: Kristina Rikkonen, Amy Erickson, Erik Rikkonen, Rachel Lowrance, and Megan Hella. Not present are Brittany Keranen and Paige Kozak.

**MINI GRANTS AVAILABLE FROM FACC**

Information about and applications for mini-grants up to \$200 are available on the website of the Finnish American Cultural Corporation (FACC), [www.finnishculture.org](http://www.finnishculture.org). Individuals, organizations, clubs, committees, non-profits, and other groups may apply. The purpose of the FACC is to educate about, support, cultivate, and perpetuate Finnish and Finnish-American culture and heritage. Examples of these purposes are: library programs; Finnish language classes; choral and instrumental performances; scholarships; museums; and opportunities for research carried out through the documentation, recording, disseminating, and preservation of personal history efforts. Projects that focus on these topics are eligible for consideration. We welcome the opportunity to assist you with your educational project efforts!



**SUNSHINE LADY**

Sending get-well cards, thinking-of-you cards and words-of-encouragement cards to FCA members

This little known function has been around for many years, and can only be accomplished when I am notified that someone needs a card. Send or call your card requests to the attention of the "Sunshine Lady" at the FCA.

Thank you,  
Eunice Potti Gould

**LAWN MAINTENANCE**

The FCA is looking for a volunteer to mow the lawn and maintain the lawn mower. If you can help please contact the FCA office.



**JUNE POKER ROOM ALL STARS**

The following are recognized for many hours of volunteering at the June poker nights. Profit from these nights went into the Finnish Center general fund.

We will be having three more nights on November 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup>. More volunteers are needed. The location is on Lilly Road just south of Joy Road in Canton at the "Trip Kings Poker Room". Call Gene Belttari at (734) 416-8644, if you are able to volunteer.

Email [ebelttari@wowway.com](mailto:ebelttari@wowway.com).

**ALL STARS**

Nancy Sannar, Frank Gottberg, Neil Manley, Marlene Ruuskanen, Lois Makee, Gary Prevo, Bruce Mikko, Paul Rajala, Tarja Virtanen, Mil-lie Harju, Helena Hatton and Christine Johnson.



**E & G Heating**  
Heating and Cooling  
Service and Installation  
Mostly Residential  
(734) 812-6318  
Greg Makila

**Maynes Insurance**  
2450 Old Novi Rd, Novi, MI  
(248) 668-5800, FAX (248)-668-5803

**Let us help you!**  
AUTO - HOMEOWNERS -  
PROPERTY - CASUALTY -  
WORKERS COMPENSATION - BONDS  
LIFE - HEALTH

## MEMORIALS

When making a memorial donation, you may direct it toward a specific fund.

The funds available are: FCA General Fund, Library, Scholarship, Hoijakat Folk Dancers, Drama Club, Finn Weavers, Garden Club, Soittoniekat/FinnFolk Musicians and Finnish American Singers.

If a donation is undesignated, it goes to the General Fund for expenses of the Center.

The family of the deceased may direct undesignated donations toward a specific fund (up to one year after date of death).

Please make your check out to the Finnish Center Association and send donations to: FCA, 35200 West Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48335.

Donations received by the 5th of each month will be published in the next month's newsletter.

You may also direct your donation toward the Elders' Housing, but then your check must be made out to FCA Senior Housing Corp.

Please include full name (with middle initial), address, dates of death and birth of the deceased; also the name and address of the next of kin to whom the acknowledgement card is to be mailed.

If you know of a member, parent or child of a member who has passed away, please call the FCA at (248) 478-6939.



In memory of FCA Life Member Christine Hosking Jurgensen (6/16/12) donations were made by Kay Simo and Pearl & Ray Wanttaja.

The FCA also wishes to extend condolences to the families and friends of these FCA members:

FCA Life Members:

Fred Johnson (11/15/11)  
William (Bill) Laajala (5/12/12)  
Christine Jurgensen (6/16/12)  
Ella Piirto Hillson (6/24/12)

FCA Members:

Bruce Knivila (4/20/12)  
Vaino Perkioniemi (5/7/12)

### REMEMBER ME:

To the living, I am gone.  
To the sorrowful, I will never return.  
To the angry, I was cheated.  
But to the happy, I am at peace.  
And to the faithful, I have never left.  
I cannot be seen, but I can be remembered.  
So as you stand upon the shore, gazing at a beautiful sea - remember me.  
As you look in awe at a mighty forest and its grand majesty - remember me.  
As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity - remember me.  
Remember me in your heart, your thoughts, and your memories of the times we loved, the times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed.  
For if you always think of me, I will never be gone.  
-Anonymous

## GOING PLACES

**“Country Sunshine”** at Petrolia Playhouse in Petrolia, Ontario, Saturday, July 28, \$89. This is a wonderful foot stompin’ country music show with lunch included, of course. Combo with Nardineers, pick up at 9:30 am at Nardin Park Church on 11 Mile Road and return about 6:30 pm. **This is filling up fast so call A.S.A.P!**

For border crossing you will need proof of citizenship in one of the following forms: Valid passport, passport card or new enhanced driver’s license or certificate of naturalization accompanied by a valid passport and valid U.S. re-entry permit.

**Detroit Tiger Baseball versus Toronto Blue Jays**, Thursday, August 23, \$55. Includes free hot dog and soft drink. Seats are at lower base line box, Section 143. Depart from Nardin Park Church at 11:30 am with return about 5:15 pm.

**“Doubletake”** at Courthouse Grille in Plymouth, Sunday, September 23, \$71. Dinner and the show of “Celebrity Impersonators” will be right there at the Grille. Pick up will be at Botsford Cancer Center, 27900 Grand River (west corner near Botsford Inn). Departs at 3:15 pm with return about 8:00 pm.

Please be sure to get your deposits in! We need 30-36 deposits at least 30 days prior to the trip or we lose the bus. If you leave your car at the FCA while on a trip, please park at the north end of the property. If you park near the main or lounge entrances you are using spaces needed for other functions.

Pearl Wanttaja (248) 541-0054



### UP COPPER MINING HISTORY COMING TO THE FCA!

Come to the Finnish Center on Sunday afternoon, October 28, for the Open House, and stay for a presentation about the history of copper mining in the UP. The Finnish American Historical Society of Michigan is bringing Larry Molloy, retired Oakland Community College professor and UP copper mining expert, to present on this topic. Mr. Molloy currently gives tours at the National Historic Park, and will be presenting at FinnFest 2013 in Hancock. More details to follow.

## NEWS FROM THE FACC

The Finnish American Cultural Corporation which is located at the Finnish Center will be purchasing new flags for the Finnish Center. These will be presented at a ceremony at the FCA later this year. In addition, the FACC has chosen to present its first annual member award this fall.

More on this in a later newsletter. FACC membership is open to all persons who wish to support Finnish education and other charitable causes.







## FROM THE FCA LIBRARY



Recently we have posted a list of library acquisitions during 2011 in the library. You will find it at the end of the bookcase to the right as you enter. Among our acquisitions are three books of adult fiction, eleven biographies, 51 volumes of adult non-fiction, three volumes of children's literature, and one item of non-book media. A few of the books were purchased new, but most were donations. Because we are so limited as to shelf space, we must be very selective as to what we add to our shelves. We are adding almost nothing in the Finnish language because of the lack of readers of the language.

We have also recently added the following books to our shelves:

**TO EVERYTHING A SEASON: A YEAR IN THE FINNISH WILDS** by Hannu Hautala and Markku Lappalainen. The author (Lappalainen) and Hautala (photographer) provide beautiful photographs in color, and text describing Finland throughout the year. If you love nature, this will tempt you to go and see it for yourself! Dewey number 914.71 Ha

**SUOMI KUTSUU** aka "FINLAND CALLING" by Carl Pellonpaa. Who has not watched Carl Pellonpaa during the 50 years he has been on the Marquette TV station, and perhaps some of you have even appeared on his show. Finally Carl was talked into writing his autobiography, and this is the interesting result. You'll find it in biography, filed alphabetically, as usual.

**MURUNEN SUOMEA VILLIKORPEEN, or MORSEL OF FINLAND INTO A WILD WILDERNESS: A HISTORY OF OTTER LAKE** by various people who provided memoirs, editing, translation, and such. This book is a gem, giving us a peek into the lives of some of the earliest settlers in the Copper Country and eventually the development of the towns of Askel, Elo and Tapiola. It's in 977.4 Ra

**BEAUTIFUL FINLAND: LANDSCAPES IN COLOR.** No author is given for this book, but R. Luonimo is given credit for most of the beautiful color photographs. It has brief text only in English. 914.71 Be

**FROM HEROES TO ENEMIES: FINNS IN CANADA, 1937-1947** by Varpu Lindstrom. Finnish immigrants arrived in Canada later than those to the USA; many of them came from the aftermath of the Finnish Civil War, and many of those had red affiliations. They

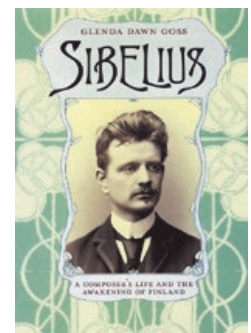
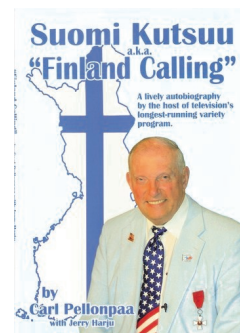
got a lot of negative press during the Depression and the "red scare". But when the Winter War started they suddenly became heroes, for many of them returned to Finland to fight. However, during the Continuation War, when Nazi Germany fought with the Finns, suddenly the Canadian Finns became suspect, for Canada declared war on Finland at the insistence of the United Kingdom. It was nip and tuck that the Finns were not placed in internment camps like the Japanese were. Canadian Finns went from heroes to enemies and back to heroes after the Paris peace treaty of 1947 was signed. This is Finnish and Canadian history of which most Americans know very little. Find the book in 971.304

**UNDER THE NORTH STAR** by Väinö Linna, translated from the Finnish *Täällä Pohjan Tähden Alla* by Richard Impola. This is the first in Väinö Linna's trilogy giving the background of the main character in his *Tuntematon sotilas* (The Unknown Soldier). Richard Impola does a superb job of translating, as he always does. It's in fiction, F Li

**FINNISH LESSONS** by Pasi Sahlberg. This is not about learning the Finnish language, but rather about the Finnish educational system which now produces students who excel in worldwide testing. He talks about how the current successful system came to be. Unbelievably, Finnish students spend fewer hours in school than do American students, have no homework and yet excel in all levels! How is this possible? Could we learn something from the Finns? The book can be found in 494 Sa

**SIBELIUS: A COMPOSER'S LIFE AND THE AWAKENING OF FINLAND** by Glenda Dawn Goss. Ms. Goss, Finlandia Foundation National 2012 lecturer of the year will be our Independence Day speaker in December. In the meantime, many may want to read her well-researched book on Sibelius and how he influenced Finland's social and political awakening in the first half of the 20th century. More about this is a future article. The book can be found in Biography.

Lillian  
Lehto,  
Librarian





## FCA DEVELOPMENT GOAL

The FCA Development Committee has set a goal of raising \$50,000 for year 2012 in order to insure the continuation of our center through the year. As of June 31, we have raised over \$27,500, exceeding our goal for the first half of the year. For those of you who have yet to send in your donation we urge you to do, so we can achieve our goal for this year.

Those of you who are assisting the campaign with donation canisters may return them as soon as possible. Those seeking deductibility on federal income taxes may write a check to the Finnish American Cultural Corporation, FACC, with the designation, "for FCA education programs". These donations will be used to support the FCA. Thank you for all you have done and are doing to support the FCA.

## FARMINGTON ECOFEST

FCA Chairman Book and board member David Sharpe represented the Finnish Center at the annual Ecofest held at Farmington Hills city hall in June. The FCA was invited to attend because of the efforts made at the center to become a green organization. Composting, recycling, collecting rainwater and other efforts made our inclusion possible. The FCA is seen as a good example of a green community organization.



David Sharpe &  
Cortland Book at  
Ecofest

## Neil J. Lehto

Attorney and Counselor At Law

nlehto@sbcglobal.net

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Berkley, Michigan 48072

## MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Thank you to everyone who attended our monthly luncheon in June. We had a wonderful time together and enjoyed some sing-a-long, thanks to Gene Belttari. We are encouraging everyone to bring a guest to the next luncheon and receive a free ticket on our drawing for prizes.

We have a 50/50 drawing along with several prizes and of course the food has been delicious. Getting to know one another and growing closer relationships is building up the Finnish Center. Price is now \$9 each.

June winner of the 50/50 was Connie Fosness. Prize winners were Hannah Carlson, Charlotte Lytikainen, Marge Salo, Lila Ball, Cele Spayd, Natalie McCue, Dagmar Malstrom, Eunice Gould, Laura Hirvela and Kay Simo.

Hope to see you next month to meet with old friends and make new ones.

Lila and Terry Ball



## MONTHLY LUNCHEON SUMMER SCHEDULE

**JULY 25  
AUGUST 29**

**At Noon - \$9.00**

**Call the FCA for reservations  
(248) 478-6939**

**Bring a friend and receive an extra raffle  
ticket when you purchase one.**



## Finland Today



First, in a study done by the University of Lapland in Finland, and Oxford University in England, it is discovered that parts of the Arctic tundra are turning into forested areas faster than anybody had predicted. Because of the global warming, it was expected that parts of the tundra will be forested in a matter of centuries, but it is happening now, in a matter of decades. The ground hugging shrubs are turning into trees, which in turn will increase the rate of global warming.

Finland's economy is doing relatively better than rest of the Eurozone countries. The economy grew by 0.8% during the first quarter and is expected to grow by 1% for the whole year while the rest of the Eurozone countries' economy will contract by 0.3%. Compared to the first quarter last year, exports increased 3.7%, while imports fell by 1.3%, and the private consumption increased by 2.7%.

How is the Finnish government doing? According to the latest Gallup poll, 38% of the Finns think that the government is doing a good job, this is compared to last September when it was 24%. About 19% of the people disapprove of the government's work compared with 24% at the last poll. The rest of the people, about 39%, say that the government's performance was neither good or bad.

Eleven bottles of champagne that are about 200 years old will be auctioned off in Mariehamn, Aaland Islands. The bottles are a part of the 145 bottles discovered in a ship wreck near the Aaland Islands in 2010. The wreck occurred between 1825--1830. Six of the eleven bottles of the French Champagne are from the House of Juglar, four are Veuve Clicquot, and one is Heidsieck and Co. Last year a bottle of Veuve Clicquot sold for a record \$37,400. Officials are hoping that each of these eleven bottles will be selling for more. The money from the auction will go to a variety of charitable causes.

Turku, Finland and Tallinn, Estonia were last year's "European Cultural Capitals". Turku is Finland's oldest city, being founded in 1229. The area around Turku has been inhabited for the last 8,500 years. This year, Helsinki has been chosen as the 2012 "World Design Capital". According to Design magazine: "This stylish, relaxed city is a dream destination for walkers, as most of the important sights are conveniently located in the city center."

A billion downloads since the "Angry Birds" were introduced by the Finnish company, Rovio, in 2009, the company has spread its wings beyond the smart phones and iPads. The company has launched plush toys, lunch boxes, clothing, food and drink items, jewelry, Formula 1 driver's sponsorship, an Angry Birds debit card in Russia, and Angry Birds Land theme parks in Tampere and in Nottingham, England.

And finally, Hilma, a professor at Finlandia University, is flying from Chicago to L.A. for a conference, when one of those obnoxious talkative guys sits next to her. Man: "I always believe a trip goes by a lot faster when you talk to the person seated next to you." Hilma putting down the book she was reading asks the man, "What would you like to talk about?" The man not knowing Hilma is a professor says: "Shall we talk about origins of life?" Hilma: "Before we talk about that, perhaps you could answer one question for me?" Man: "Sure." Hilma: "A cow, deer, and a horse eat approximately the same stuff, namely grass; how come their "droppings" are so different looking?" Man: "I don't know." Hilma: "So what makes you think you can hold an intelligent conversation on the "origins of life" when you don't know anything about sh-- ?"

Markku Ketola [marketola@yahoo.com](mailto:marketola@yahoo.com)

## **BIG LOUIE MONUMENT PROJECT** By Rev. Rudy Kempainen

Lauri Moilanen, born in Suolijärvi, Puolanka, Finland on January 1, 1848, emigrated to the United States in 1889 and first settled in the Boston location, a copper mining area about five miles north of Hancock, Michigan. His wife Anna Kaisa (nee Pykkonen, born September 24, 1848 at Puolanka) arrived in 1891 with their six children. Their youngest, Lauri (Lassi) was born in Aittokylä, Puolanka, Finland on January 5, 1886 and was four years old when he arrived in America.

The family later moved to Salo, where Lauri had purchased a 40-acre parcel of land from Andrew Johnson, a logging contractor for the Quincy Mining Company. Many land owners in Salo were from the Puolanka area of Finland and it could well have been called the “Puolanka of the USA.”

Young Lauri Moilanen was destined to become the world’s tallest man. At age 9, he was already of adult stature and at age 16 he reached his maximum height of 8 feet, 3 inches.

By the time he reached his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, “Big Louie” was the talk of the Copper Country. And now, Copper Country residents are working to create a memorial to honor the man who became known as the Copper Country Giant. All Big Louie has now is a small granite stone at his grave in the Hancock Lakeside Cemetery. The stone bears his name, his height and weight – but not even his birth date or death date.

Ideally, the monument, which would be a polished granite slab that’s exactly Louie’s height, should be in place by the spring of 2013. There could be an unveiling at Finn Fest, June 19-23 of that year. A plaque would respectfully memorialize his life and all Finnish immigrants who came here and worked hard.

There are many legends about Big Louie, who is well known throughout the Copper Country and beyond. Whenever he rode into town from Salo either by horse drawn wagon or sleigh, there were curious spectators. The story is told of Big Louie and his mother arriving in the Boston location with horse and sleigh from Salo to deliver eggs. While his mother was making deliveries, pranksters would throw snowballs at Big Louie while he sat on the sleigh keeping watch over the horse with his long legs dangling over the side.

His notorious height gained him national and worldwide attention. F.M. Sackrider, a Houghton, Michigan businessman and hotel owner employed Louie as a special attraction at his hotel for approximately two years. Later, Sackrider contracted him to travel with the Ringling Brothers circus as the world’s tallest man. Traveling across the country proved to be a trying time for him. Deeply self-conscious and shy of temperament, he disliked his role as a sideshow attraction and abandoned circus life after two years and returned to the farm in Salo to live with his widowed mother.

Big Louie worked in the Franklin mine on the timber gang for a time, but his height made him awkward at his job. The story is told of how five men on the timber gang struggled to put a heavy hardwood underground mining timber in place. Frustrated, they called on Louie, who singlehandedly lifted the timber in place.

He also tried his hand at bartending. He operated a saloon at Tezcuco and Franklin streets in Hancock for a brief time. Because of his incredible reach, he served his customers from a seated position at the center of the bar, leaning in either direction to fill his patrons’ glasses. Once a brawl broke out in his tavern below his living quarters. He was summoned to come down and end the fight.

Instead, he threw his awesome big shoe down the stairs leading to the tavern and hollered out, “If the

fighting doesn't stop, a man will follow this shoe." When they saw the huge shoe (size 19) the fighting abruptly ended.

Another episode tells of two men who were robbing people at night as they walked across the bridge connecting Hancock and Houghton. Big Louie was sent to the scene. He caught the culprits one night, took them both by the neck and held them over the bridge railing saying "I am coming here again tomorrow night and if I find you on this bridge, I will drop you into the icy water below."

His unusual height invited ridicule as well. As he walked on the street in Hancock, someone viciously asked "How is the weather up there?" Big Louie grabbed the man, blew and spit in his face, and said "It is blowing and raining up here."

He apparently enjoyed one aspect of his enormous size. He would take the ring from his finger and pass a fifty-cent piece through it as onlookers marveled at his size.

Running a tavern was not a satisfying experience. A couple of years before his death he moved back to the farm in Salo to live with his widowed mother. He was elected Justice of the Peace in 1911 and served in this office until his death.

Big Louie became seriously ill on September 13, 1913 and was lodged in the jail because some speculated he was going insane. Dr. Labine examined him while in jail and determined he was not insane, but was suffering a serious physical illness and ordered him transferred to St. Joseph's hospital in Hancock. Upon closer examination, he was diagnosed with tubercular meningitis of the brain. On Tuesday, September 16, the nurse noticed that at 5 a.m. the light in Louie's room was on. Checking on the patient, she noticed he was reading the Bible. A short time later she heard a loud noise and found him on the floor unconscious. About a half-hour later he died. An autopsy by Dr. Labine, assisted by Drs. Turner, Scallon, Pover, Conrad and Stern confirmed that death was the result of tubercular meningitis.

Louie died at the early age of 18 on September 16, 1913. A special casket had to be ordered from Chicago by the undertaker, John C. Crawford. The manufacturer was so flabbergasted at the size he wired the local undertaker to verify the measurements.

The casket was 8 feet and 10-1/2 inches long, 3 feet and 2 inches wide, and weighed 300 pounds.

Shortly before his illness Big Louie had expressed the thought that he would not live very long. He said he wished that 16 men would serve as his pallbearers.

Funeral services were conducted at the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hancock on September 19, 1913. Also buried at the same service was a Hancock resident named Simon Harkonen. The service was conducted by pastor Matti Pesonen.

Because the horse-drawn hearse was not large enough to bear his casket, special transportation was arranged and 16 pall bearers carried Louie to a burial plot that a friend had purchased for him in Hancock's Lakeside Cemetery. John Hiltunen, one of the pall bearers, stated that because there was no hearse large enough to bear his casket, it was placed on a horse-drawn wagon and strapped on to the wagon as it made its way up the steep road leading to Lakeside Cemetery.

Townpeople speculated that Big Louie died a rich man, but he died penniless. Ill health and not being able to find a suitable job depleted his funds, making it necessary to even mortgage his farm.



A close friend purchased the burial plot and the funeral expenses were paid by the county.

Even in death, rumors of Big Louie abounded. Shortly after he died, rumors persisted that his body had secretly been stolen. Approximately a year later the body was exhumed by undertaker Crawford and witnessed by civil authorities who found the giant's body as it had been buried. Cement was poured over the casket to prevent the theft of the body and to set the rumors to rest.

The year 1913 is remembered in the Copper Country from two significant events: the notorious Copper Strike and the death of the world's tallest man, Big Louie.

If you are willing and able to support this monument project, send donations to: Big Louie Monument Project Houghton County Historical Society, PO Box 127, Lake Linden, MI 49945

For more information call:  
Houghton Co. Historical Society at  
(906) 296-4121, or Dana Richter at  
(906) 482-3361.



Louis "Big Louie" Moilanen



We hope to see you at the sixteenth biennial Finnish American Folk Festival in Naselle, Washington. It will be held July 27-29, 2012 at the Naselle Schools, located at the junctions of SR 4 and SR 401. There is no admission charge or pre-registration for the festival itself.

The festival kicks off at 10 am on Friday with the opening of the tori, food vendors, and exhibits-art, arts and crafts, flowers, quilts, a museum, a gill net boat, a Chinook dugout, logging trucks, Finnish war memorabilia, puukkos, and numerous photos. They close at 6 pm.

Local musicians, writers, and readers will headline the performers for this 30th year. Food vendors will offer authentic Finnish and other foods throughout Friday and Saturday. They include meatballs, pancakes, sima, makkara, split and whole pea soup. A play "Finnish Roots Run Deep" by Sue (Pakenen) Holway is also planned.

The Tori vendors include book, woven rugs, table runners and placemats, Finnish jewelry and puukkos, Norwegian Lapland hats, and numerous items from FinnWare in Astoria. Many other Scandinavian themed items will be available.

New this year will be instruction for playing the Finnish fiddle "Palikka". It is appropriate for the whole family. Special arts/crafts projects for children will also be taught.

Further details can be found at **Finlandia Foundation® National**,  
**Email: [office@finlandiafoundation.org](mailto:office@finlandiafoundation.org)**

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 LAYOUT AND DESIGN: NANCY RAJALA  
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