



FCA News

FOR MEMBERS OF THE FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION

December 2014

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 30 Sunday Open House 1-4 pm
- 30 Sunday Film "Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale" 3 pm

DECEMBER

- 1-3 Poker-Wild Bill's Cigar Shop (Westland)
- 5 Friday Senior Housing Board Meeting 10 am
- 5 Friday Night Buffet 5-8 pm
- 5 Friday Novi Band Concert 7 pm
- 6 Saturday Finland Independence Day Party 7 pm (\$20)
Finlandia Foundation Performer of the Year -
Olli Hirvonen
- 9 Tuesday "Little Christmas Celebration" 7 pm (Free)
- 10 Rental
- 10 Wednesday Joint Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 12 Rental
- 13 Saturday Pikkujoulu 3 pm & Finnish Christmas Dinner 5 pm
- 14 Sunday Finnish American Singers of Michigan
Christmas Concert 3 pm
- 17 Rental
- 19 Friday Night Buffet 5-8 pm
- 20 Rental
- 21 Sunday Candlelight Service 2-4 pm
- 31 Rental

JANUARY

- 9 Friday Night Buffet 5-8 pm
- 11 Sunday Brunch 12 Noon-1:30 pm
- 14 Rental
- 14 Wednesday Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 17 Saturday "A Night of Blues & Karaoke" (time TBD)
- 21 Rental
- 23 Friday Night Buffet 5-8 pm
- 25 Sunday Open House 1-4 pm
- 28 Rental
- 28 Wednesday Monthly Luncheon 12 noon

**NO LUNCHEON IN
NOVEMBER AND
DECEMBER**

**RESERVATIONS ARE
SUGGESTED FOR
DINNERS AND LUNCHEONS**



Weekly Events

- Finnish American Singers
Mondays 7 pm
- Library
Open Monday 10 am-2 pm
- Nikkarin Talo
Mondays 9 am
- Finlandia Garden Club
Mondays 9 am

Monthly Events

- Finnish Conversation
1st Friday of the month 10 am
- Sunday Brunch
2nd Sunday of the month
12-1:30 pm
- Book Club
Last Monday of the month 1 pm
- Luncheon
Last Wednesday of the month Noon
- Open House
Last Sunday of the month 1-4 pm

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Greetings,

As 2015 approaches, I would like to take the time to reflect on all of the good things that happened this year at the Finnish Center. Many volunteers have worked tirelessly to make our center an enjoyable place for everyone who comes. We are all working together toward the common goal of preserving the Finnish Culture. We are planning to revive some traditional activities, and also include modern activities for our Finnish youth. We are very excited to welcome Alexandra Brewer, our new teacher for Suomi Koulu. Her grandfather was Finnish, and she earned her degree in the Finnish Language from Seattle Washington. Presently, she is a graduate student at the University of Michigan. Alexandra began classes with the children in November. She plans to start adult classes in the beginning 2015.

The remainder of this year is filled with cultural and holiday activities. We are busy organizing concerts, Pikkujoulu, the Christmas dinner, and candlelight service. We have many wonderful ways to enjoy the fun festivities before the end of the year.

As always, the survival of the Finnish Center relies on the willingness of our community members to volunteer. Please let us know if you are willing to devote some time here at the center. We greatly appreciate even just an hour of your time. We have accomplished so much during the year and I would like to thank all of the dedicated volunteers who make this possible. After a successful 40 year building dedication ceremony, we are looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Finnish Center Association in 2016.

We welcome your suggestions for activities and future events. We are always interested in hearing your feedback. Please call the office at (248) 478-6939 or contact me directly at (734) 834-6085. I look forward to speaking with you.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Mia Lamminen
Chairman

Christmas House of Santa
Claus Holiday Village in
Lapland



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Fax: (248) 478-5671
finnishcenter@gmail.com
www.finnishcenter.org

Officers

Mia Lamminen, Chairman
Roger Wanttaja, Vice Chairman
Robert Waissi, Secretary
Marlene Ruuskanen, Treasurer

Board of Trustees

1 Year

Carl Aebersold, Olli Lamminen,
Marlene Ruuskanen

2 Year

Lois Makee, Robert Waissi,
Roger Wanttaja

3 Year

Lila Ball, Mia Lamminen,
Margaret Laurila

Alternates

#1 Katie Waissi
#2 Terry Ball
#3 Carol Tudball

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Erik Lindquist

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Cultural

Yvonne Lockwood

Education

Heidi Mellanen-Swiecki

Finance

Mia Lamminen

Gift Shop

Margaret Laurila

Mailing

Alice Manley

Membership

Eija Lyytinen-Tatseos

Publicity & Publications

Fran Fadie

Social

Lila Ball

SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING CORPORATION

Paul C. Hendrickson, Chairman

Tapiola Village

Laura Fultz, Manager
248 471-3802

Tapiola@ameritech.net

Freedom Square

Jennifer Bridges, Manager
248 442-7250

**NOVI COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5**

DINNER 5-8 PM
CONCERT AND SING-A-LONG 7 PM

\$10 BUFFET AND CONCERT
\$5 CONCERT AND SING-A-LONG ONLY



BOOK CLUB

The October Book Club had a lively discussion on the topic "Finnish Health Issues Discussed at Recent FinnFests".

The topic for the November 24th meeting will be "Christmas in Finland". This will include information about Pikkujoulu as it is celebrated in Finland, and the legend of Santa Claus.

The meeting begins at 1 pm in the library. You are welcome to join us!

After a holiday break in December, the Book Club will again meet the last Monday in January.



Book Club Joan Daley, Lillian Lehto,
Marlene Ruuskanen, Mia Lamminen,
Donald Autio, Ruth Ojala and Alice Manley.

DECEMBER IN THE GARDENS

A few hardy souls are still working out in the gardens doing final cleanup, spreading seed heads in the wetlands, and cleaning out the birdhouses. As we get closer to the holidays the nativity scene, reindeer, and Christmas lights will be placed out in the gardens. These are typically removed the first Monday of January if you would like to assist the Garden Club with this endeavor.

We have a few artificial poinsettia and other artificial flowers that will go into the planters and on the bridge that we will probably replace next year if we can find some bargains after Christmas [or if we receive sufficient donated replacements].

If you wish to walk across the bridge, please take care as it can be extremely slippery which is why the chain has been placed at the entrance. Plastic Trex and freezing temperatures make a treacherous combination.

The Garden Club had its annual holiday potluck luncheon on Monday, December 8 at Gayle Gullen's house. Videos of the gardens were shown by David Sharpe and ideas for the next year were discussed.

The Garden Club wishes a Blessed Holiday season to everyone and a Happy New Year.

If you have any questions, comments, or donations, you can contact me at (734) 546-5190 or email me gaylegullen@hotmail.com. Extra Christmas lights are always appreciated.

Gayle Gullen
Finlandia Garden Club President



Neil J. Lehto

Attorney and Counselor At Law

nlehto@sbcglobal.net

4051 Wakefield Road
Berkley, Michigan 48072

(248) 545-1753 (Phone & Fax)

FINNISH FILM SERIES

Sunday, November 30, 2014

3:00 p.m.

Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale
(directed by Jalmari Helander, 2010)

In Finnish with English subtitles

No admission, donations appreciated

This is a very enjoyable film to put you in the mood for Christmas.

It is a Finnish horror-fantasy film about local reindeer herders living near the Korvatunturi Mountain who discover the secret about Santa Claus.

The mountain is excavated with an explosion that uncovers a huge sacred grave and the occupant is still alive. It is the supernatural being responsible for the Santa Claus legend; rather than reward good kids, it punishes those who are naughty. Strange things happen: reindeer are mysteriously killed and supplies and naughty children disappear. This is a story about trapping this culprit and recovering the losses caused by the excavation. It also explains how Santa's are able to be everywhere at Christmas.

This film has won numerous international awards and Robert Ebert called it "an original, daring, carefully crafted film." It got a rousing audience applause when it was shown at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor in 2012 and again in 2013.



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, Happiness Fund, FinnFolk Musicians and Finnish American Singers. If a donation is undesignated, it goes to the General Fund for expenses of the Center.

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

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

Please include full name, address, date of death of the deceased as well as the name and address of the next of kin to whom the acknowledgement card is to be mailed. **Also include all names of donors.** If the deceased is a non member of the FCA please include city and state of residence.

In memory of FCA life member **Melvin "Tem" Ahonen** (10/17/14) a donation has been made by Kay Simo.

In memory of FCA life member **Shirley Burke** (10/28/14) donations have been made by Kay Simo and Pearl & Ray Wanttaja.

In memory of FCA life member **Earl Lanyon** (8/5/14) a donation has been made by Dagmar & Gerry Malstrom.

In memory of FCA life member **Ellen Rajala** (9/25/14) donations have been made by Joy Wong, Karen Ellinger, Cheri & Neil Lehto, Lisa & Thomas Crawford, Rose & Chuck Manitz, Marilyn Taipale, Sharon & Timothy Belanger, Maria Hill, Carmen DeLashmutt and Kay Simo.

In memory of FCA life member **Alfred "Al" Hakala** (11/25/14) a donation has been made by his wife Vi Hakala.

In memory of **Peta Pikula Elias** a donation has been made by Elizabeth Groome.

The FCA also wishes to extend condolences to the family and friends of:

FCA life member **Shirley Burke** (10/28/14)
 FCA life member **Melvin Ahonen** (10/17/14)
Mary Autio (10/14/14)
 FCA life member **Earl Lanyon** (8/5/14)



"Terve kaikki!"

The Suomikoulu for adults will start up again in the New Year, and I am excited to meet all of you. In order to best suit everyone, I am asking interested adults to please email me when they sign up, and tell me about their previous experience studying Finnish. In order to be ready to hit the ground running after the holidays, I ask that you please email me at abrewe@umich.edu **before December 15th, 2014.**

See you all in the new year!

Alexandra Brewer



GOING PLACES

Detroit Symphony – Sunday, January 11, 2015, \$96. Lunch will be at Sinbad’s. Combo with Nardineers. Depart at noon and return about 6 pm.

Soaring Eagle – Monday, February 16, 2015, \$38. Featuring the Kingston Trio. Combo with Nardineers. Leave at 8 am and return about 9:30 pm.

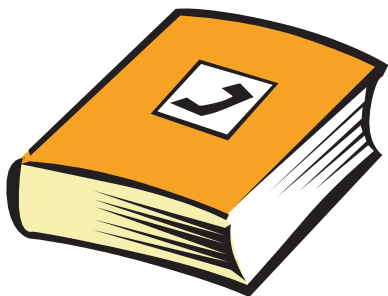
Purple Rose Theatre – Sunday, March 1, 2015, \$92. Lunch at the Common Grill. The play will be Steel Magnolias. Combo with Nardineers. Leave at 10 am and return about 5:45 pm.

Meadowbrook Theatre – Sunday, April 26, 2015, \$82. The performance will be Meshuggah Nuns. Lunch at Kings Court Castle. Combo with Nardineers. Leave at 10:15 am and return about 5:15 pm.

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.



MEMBER DIRECTORY



A new directory is in the works. If you wish to receive one please let the FCA know, There will be a small fee for each requested directory.

Contact the FCA if your address or phone number has changed or if you wish not to be included in the directory. The deadline is December 15 for these changes or to be excluded from the directory.

GIFT SHOP

Finish your Christmas shopping at the FCA Gift Shop.
Great bargains!

Flea Market thanks. It took many volunteers, vendors, and shoppers to make the Fall Flea Market a success. The drawing for the free 6 foot table was won by Kevin Heltunen.

The Spring Flea Market will be in April after Easter. More information to follow.

SUNSHINE LADY

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

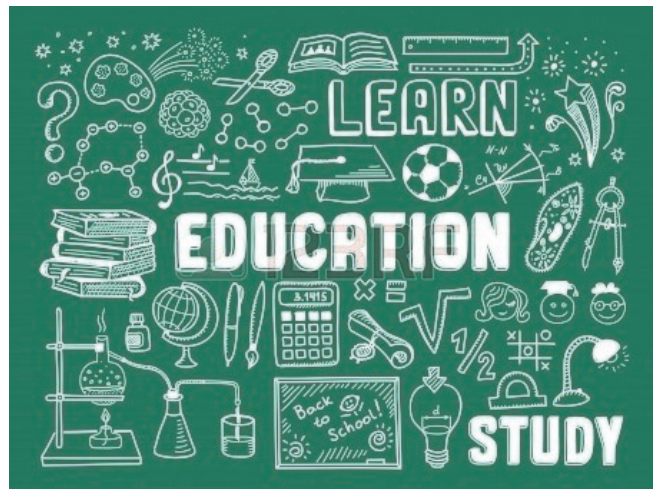
This little-known function has been around for many years, and can only be accomplished when I am notified that someone needs a card. Send or call your card requests to the attention of the “Sunshine Lady” at the FCA.

Thank you, Marge Salo



SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Applications for 2015 scholarships will be available in November on the website or in the Finnish Center office.



FINNISH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Finnish jazz guitarist Olli Hirvonen

Saturday, December 6, 2014

7:00 pm

Admission: \$20.00



We will celebrate Finland's Independence Day with jazz guitarist Olli Hirvonen, Finlandia Foundation National's Performer of the Year. Born in Lappeenranta, Olli began his study of classical guitar and piano at the age of nine. He earned his bachelor of music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and his master degree at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, where he now lives.

This very accomplished performer has appeared in many festivals and events, including Nordic Cool at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. in 2013. In 2011 he was named Pori Jazz Festival Artist of the Year. And this year he launched his debut album, "Detachment."

Join us in commemorating Finland's independence and enjoy an evening of great music and good food with old friends.

E & G Heating

Heating and Cooling
Service and Installation
Mostly Residential

(734) 812-6318 - Greg Makila



HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Cathleen Potti Bruder
George Dansby
Friend of the Finnish Center
Frank & Donna Gottberg
Eunice Potti Gould
Matt Haarala
Cecilia Hancher
Ruth Kaarlela
Robert Lahti
Mia & Olli Lamminen
Lillian & Paul Lehto
Luise & Norbert Leppanen
Marja Potti Norris
Joanne Potti Ouellette
Paul Potti
Sara & Andrea Potti
John Potti
Delores, Will & Debbie Rajala
Marlene & Timo Ruuskanen



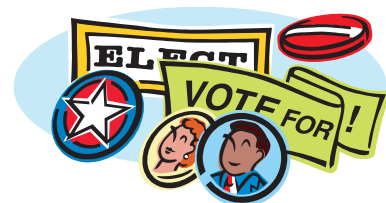
ELECTION NOTICE 2015

The FCA Nominating Committee is asking for your assistance in finding candidates to fill three positions on the FCA Board of Trustees.

Please contact Annikki Kurvi at akurvi@sbcglobal.net or (248) 225-3912.

Members running as candidates need to submit short biographies (250 words or less) by January 5, 2015 for publication in the FCA newsletter.

Please consider serving the FCA as a leader in one of these positions.





FROM THE LIBRARY



We have recently acquired a copy of an article from the *AAMULEHTI SUOMETAR*, a newspaper from Finland, dated March 30, 2014. The headline of the article reads “*General Motors käy suomalaisella sisulla*” (General Motors runs on Finnish sisu). Finns are truly excited about the fact that Mary Barra, the new CEO of GM is 100% Finnish. In fact, her late parents, Ray and Eva Makela, were life members of the Finnish Center Association. A summarized translation of the article follows.

“She is not a lawyer, a banker, and not even a man”. So declared Dan Akerson, adding: “She’s a car gal.” The auto giant’s new top individual, Mary Barra, 52, was born with gasoline in her veins. Already at age ten Mary fell in love — with cars. When she received her driver’s license she had her eye on a Pontiac Firebird, but all she could afford was a Chevette.

Mary Barra no longer needs to dream about cars. She now has over 9.7 million of them. This is General Motors annual production. She is one of the most influential women in the business world.

We sent Barra a request via email for an interview. Although she said she was drowning in such requests, she did take time to speak with us, saying she is proud of her Finnish heritage and hopes someday to visit her ancestors’ beautiful homeland.

If Mary Barra’s grandfather Viktor Mäkelä (1887-1959) had not had a strong work ethic 110 years ago, and had he not had dreams about America, his granddaughter could possibly now be tending a Neste service station in Köyliö. But no, Victor Mäkelä was barely through puberty when he packed his few belongings in a bag and closed the door behind him. Left behind were his father Stefanus and mother Johanna.

Viktor found a home and bride in Mountain Iron, Minnesota, among Finns. There he married Mary (Maria) Luoma, born in Teuva, Finland. They had three children, two girls and a boy, Reino (Ray). Ray married Eva Pyykkonen and they lived unpretentiously in Waterford, Michigan while Ray worked for Pontiac for 40 years. On Christmas Eve 1961 they had a daughter, Mary Teresa.

We return to modern Finland. In Espoo we find Ilpo Simula, 74, a retired physician. Simula, born in Köyliö, is Mary Barra’s first cousin. Until last December Simula had not even heard of Mary Barra. His father Arvo Simula and Mary’s father, Ray Makela, were first cousins. His generation stayed in contact with American relatives and they even visited each other. Letters, photographs and packages were sent from America. Ilpo wrote a family history book. He mentions Reino’s having visited his father’s birthplace in 1986. He mentions that they had a boy who was a college graduate. No mention is made of Mary.

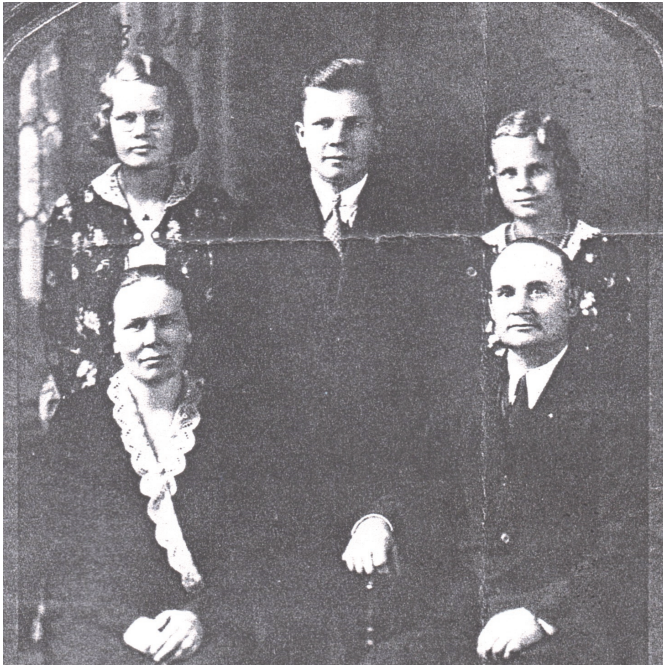
In Finland we still want to find the birthplace of the grandfather of the CEO of GM. Our guide is Hilikka Mäkinen, another second cousin. She is a retired postmistress. Hilikka points to where there once was an apple tree, planted by Victor Mäkelä on a visit to Finland. She also relates what happened to Johanna, Victor’s mother. She drowned on Christmas Eve 1938 when she slipped and fell into a nearby spring of water.

This world is a long way from the Renaissance Center, General Motors’ skyscraper complex on the Detroit River.

Lillian Lehto, FCA Librarian

(see photo on page 9)

Library continued from page 8



"Seated are Mary Barra's grandparents Mary and Victor Makela. Mary Barra's father Reino (Ray) is standing in the back. With him are his sisters Bertha and Alice."

PIKKUJOULU

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Children's Party 3 pm

Finnish Dinner 5 pm

Pikkujoulu is a celebration for children and adults. There will be a children's party with fun, games, music and songs. Joulupukki (Santa Claus) will be making a special appearance to meet and visit with the children.

The children's party will be followed by a festive, traditional Finnish Christmas dinner. The dinner will include ham, several Finnish casseroles, rosolli, and rice pudding with an almond. One very lucky person will get the almond so they can make a wish!

Please plan to come enjoy this Christmas celebration for young and old!

Adults \$12 Children Free



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Sunday, December 21

2-4 pm

Refreshments & coffee will be served

We will be having a candlelight service in remembrance of our loved ones during this holiday season. An angel will be placed on a Christmas tree in their name.

We will be accepting donations for the angels as a fundraiser for the Finnish Center. Please send donations or drop them off at the Finnish Center in care of Candlelight Service/Marlene Ruuskanen. Checks should be made out to the FCA with candlelight service in the memo.

This will be a beautiful Christmas gathering that should warm our hearts as we remember our loved ones at this special time of year!

Lila Ball, Social Committee

A LITTLE CHRISTMAS

Tuesday, December 9, 2014

7:00 pm

Free

Choirs, soloists, pianists, and bell ringers will provide an evening of secular and religious Christmas music. This event began at St. John's Lutheran Church many years ago. After subsequent performances at the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church and then at Celebration churches, the FCA has agreed to host these wonderful musicians who promise a rousing performance in preparation for the Christmas season.

You won't want to miss this! See you here!



CHRISTMAS IN FINLAND by Mia Lamminen

My grandson Erik asked me to write to him about my memories of Christmas in Finland when I was eight years old for a school project. After sitting down to write my childhood memories of what Christmas was like when I grew up in Finland, I was persuaded into submitting them to the newsletter to share with all of you. My own family still celebrates many of the Finnish Christmas traditions I grew up with. These are some of my memories.

When I was a child I thought Christmas was the most exciting of the holidays! The preparations started at least one month before. My aunt Ester and my cousin Raija would come over and together we baked cookies and cakes to last for the whole holiday season. Together they also prepared the ham. It was a big job. Preparing the ham included putting the ham in salt water for three weeks. I was only there to watch what they were doing.

The house was to be cleaned thoroughly before. My job was to do the dusting of all the furniture. A job I never liked.

The big day for us was Christmas Eve. My Father Erkki and my brothers would go to the market in the morning and buy a Christmas tree. My brothers had the job of decorating the tree, except for the candles. We used real candles on the trees and I guess it was a little too difficult a job for kids to do. We would listen to Christmas music on the radio. In those days there was no TV in Finland.

While the boys were dealing with the Christmas tree, my mom was in the kitchen preparing the Christmas meal.

Christmas Eve for me seemed to be the day when time really was slowing down. I always remember that I just waited and waited. In the afternoon we would go and visit our relatives and take them presents. We would also go to the cemetery and light candles on the graves of our loved ones. I thought that was a wonderful thing and for me it really started my Christmas. We would all go to the Christmas Church. In Finland, Christmas time was the only time of year that the church had no empty seats.

Christmas dinner would start at 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve and usually my Grandmother Helmi and our old Nanny Laura would join us. It always consisted of ham and several casseroles made of potato, carrot and rutabaga. As an appetizer we had pickled herring with "rosolli". This was the one dish that I learned to like only when I grew up. Headcheese, which is jelly like delicacy made from head of pig or calf, was also a traditional Christmas specialty that I did not care for.

Lutefisk, which is dried fish, soaked for days in lye and becomes a jelly-like meal is another Finnish Christmas specialty that you either hate or like. My brothers refused to eat but I liked it. The last course was rice pudding. The tradition was, and still is, that mom hid an almond in it and the person who got the almond could make a wish! I did not care for the food but I had to have it served for me in order to get the almond!

I could hardly wait for the meal to end, because I knew that Santa Claus always came after we had finished the dinner. After the dinner we would go to our family room, mom would serve coffee to the adults, we children would have juice and cookies. We played Christmas music and waited for Santa. Waiting for Santa Claus (Joulupukki in Finnish) was the most exciting part of the Finnish Christmas.

When we heard noises on the porch we knew that the long wait was finally over. Santa would ask us to sing for him and he naturally asked if we had been good during the year before starting to hand out our presents. My all-time favorite present was a dollhouse that my father had built. He had even put electricity in it. He had put a battery, run wires through the ceiling and the light was a small flashlight bulb. I still have it at our cottage and Ukki rebuilt and painted it last summer with Emma.

Because it was Christmas, we were allowed to stay up late and play with our new gifts. The following day was to be spent with family only. That seemed a little boring. I wanted to go out and play with my friends. That was allowed the following day (Boxing day). We would go outside and play in the snow, go sledding or skiing. It was so much fun.

Other big celebrations in my childhood were New Year's, Easter, Midsummer and Independence Day. However, for most children Christmas Eve was definitely the most memorable.

FINNISH AMERICAN SINGERS HOLIDAY CONCERT

Getting “inside the music” helps me better appreciate the songs we sing. Perhaps these notes will enhance your listening experience during our concert, Sunday, December 14 at 3 pm! Save money and purchase tickets in advance for \$8 from any FASM singer or from the FCA office. Tickets at the door are \$10.

Three songs in our concert program are very old. The *Coventry Carol* was originally from the 16th century English play, *The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors*. With possible roots to 14th century morality plays put on by tradesmen for the monarchs and town officials, Wikipedia sources share that this play covers the Nativity story from the Annunciation to the massacre of all boys under two years old in Bethlehem by Herod, referred to as the Massacre of the Innocents. The *Coventry Carol* was a lullaby sung by the women in the town to their babies urging them to be still while “Herod the king in his raging...All children young to slay.” *O Come All Ye Faithful* is also known by its original Latin title, *Adestes Fideles*. It is assumed that both the tune and the text found in a dated manuscript were written by John Francis Wade sometime between 1735-1740, but we are most familiar with the 1841 translation by Frederick Oakeley. Someone noted that this tune, “with the repetition of the last line, and the irregular 87 87 47 meter, was quite remarkable as early as 1744.” Our director frequently mentions how shocked listeners were at the time by irregularities like this. I was amazed to discover that there are 40 versions of the text among various protestant religions. Hymnary.org stated that this hymn has been published in 564 hymnals!

That same website, Hymnary.org, related that *Lo, How a Rose 'Ere Blooming* may date back to the fifteenth century, but that the earliest manuscript in German was found in a monastery and dated around 1580. When first published, it had twenty-three stanzas, combining the story of Christ's birth with the prophecies in Isaiah about the “rose” from the “Stem of Jesse.” Although the rose was originally interpreted to mean Mary, mother of Jesus, in 1609 Michael Praetorius pointed the interpretation toward Christ, publishing the song with two verses and a harmonization. Don't worry, we will sing three verses, not twenty-three, at our concert!

A familiar melody made learning the words in *Kuului Laulu Enkelten* much easier. A Finnish singer, Tomi Metsäketo, recorded a “heavenly” version available on YouTube. The “Gloria in excelsis deo” will have you humming along in the refrain of this Finnish translation of the French carol *We Have Heard on High*.

For many, the Christmas season would not be complete without a viewing of the 1942 movie, *Holiday Inn* with Bing Crosby. The music for the movie, written by Irving Berlin, included the song *White Christmas* which he later insisted be removed from the movie. The producer stated if it was removed, the movie would not be released! I wonder what our iconic holiday song would be if the argument had turned out differently?

Our Finnish Christmas music celebration would not be complete without at least one Sibelius offering. Anticipating his 150th birthday next year on December 8th, we are singing two of his compositions: *Someone's Knocking at the Snowy Door* and *Christmas Now is Coming*, originally written in Swedish. The first is a simple melody urging one to be alert to the winter visitor at the door. The second is an atypical carol, but typically Sibelius, with a deceptively complex melody.

Please join us for this and other Christmas music, perhaps familiar, perhaps not, on December 14th!

Submitted by Katy Koskela, Scribe and V.P. of FASM



Finnish Independence Day is Celebrated on the 6th of December

This year will mark the 97th anniversary of Finland's Independence. This means that in 3 years our country will celebrate its 100th anniversary of independence. Some countries--such as Russia--independence celebrations include grandiose and flamboyant military parades. In the USA the Fourth of July is a more joyful happening with its picnics and fireworks. In Finland Independence Day is traditionally celebrated with restraint and dignity. This relates to the bloody civil war following the Declaration of Independence (Dec 6, 1917), which ended in the spring of 1918.

Finland was part of Sweden for almost 500 years. Sweden was defeated in the war against Russia in 1809. The Peace Treaty ended Sweden's superpower status that had lasted hundreds of years. Finland became part of the Russian Empire for the next 109 years. In a way, this was a lucky break for Finland. Our country received an autonomous position with the Russian Empire. It meant that Finland had a recognized border with Russia and its citizens carried Finnish Passports. As a part of Russia we were allowed to develop our own legislation. The Grand Duchy of Finland also had its own currency. But most importantly, the Finnish language grew very strong in its own importance. It is quite obvious that had Finland remained part of Sweden in the 1809 Peace Treaty, we would today be mostly a Swedish speaking country. Perhaps we would be independent like Norway--which separated from Sweden in 1905. In all practicality it is fair to say that the 1809 Peace Treaty assured the creation of Finnish-speaking Finland.

In 1917 the First World War was still going on. Russia was exhausted. Lenin and the Bolsheviks had assumed power in November. Finns realized that this would be an opportune time to separate from Russia. The situation was similar to what happened to Estonia in 1990. The new government in Russia recognized Finnish Independence on the 31st of December 1917. In many ways this date would be better factually suited to be Finnish Independence Day. Although, our Independence was only assured when the United States and Britain recognized our independence in the spring of 1919. Both the USA and Britain waited to see if the Communists would stay in power in the new Soviet Union. Had the Bolsheviks lost, the White Army most likely would not have granted Finland its independence.

The Declaration of Independence was followed by a bloody Civil War, in which over 30,000 Finns were killed. The Civil War was won by the Whites only after Germany sent 13,000 soldiers to Finland and defeated the Reds in Helsinki Spring 1918. As a result of German assistance in our Civil War, the German influence in the White Army was strong. Many conservative Finns wanted to make Finland a Kingdom and get the King from Germany. The concept of a German king for Finland died when Germany was defeated in the First World War.

The Civil War scars in the Finnish society disappeared only in 1939 when the Soviet Union declared war against Finland. The reds, led by the Social Democrats (who had been defeated in the Civil War) all fought along with the Whites in the Winter War against the Russians. Finland kept its independence at a high price and started to rebuild after the war with all parties joining in.

Although our independence is still celebrated with restraints and dignity, new trends and customs have come up. If twenty years ago the single most important tradition was visiting the War Graves and lighting candles on the windows, today it is following the Presidential Independence Day Reception. The President of Finland invites about 2,000 important guests to the Presidential Palace. Everybody wants to see who gets invited and who does not. Finnish media keenly follow who is not among the invited. President Halonen's (2000-2012) invitations often went to young artists and athletes. President Niinisto has promised to invite primarily citizens participating in volunteer work. Either way, I trust that our Independence Day celebration will slowly develop to be a more joyful event such as in the USA: respecting all of the sacrifices but at the same time enjoying our independence.

Ismo Soderling, Director of Immigration Institute, Turku, Finland, Guest Columnist



FINLANDIA GARDENS WINS AWARD

On October 23 the Farmington Hills Beautification Commission recognized 78 businesses, organizations and residential entrances in Farmington Hills for their landscape design and originality. The Finnish Center received one of these Beautification Awards for its Finlandia Gardens.

The Individual Service Award was also presented to FCA member David Sharpe of the Finnish Center for his many contributions to Finlandia Gardens which help beautify Eight Mile road in Farmington Hills.

Thank you to all the gardeners for their countless volunteer hours in creating and maintaining the beautiful Finlandia Gardens which surround the Finnish Center!

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Chilly days are telling us we are well into fall and soon the white stuff will be flying around us. I'm always excited this time of year with the Christmas season coming soon. Everyone gets cheerful and happy with a giving spirit.

Speaking of spirit, we are having on December 21 our first candlelight service, remembering loved ones who have passed on. Pastor Liimata is planning (weather permitting) to come speak at our event. Donations for angel ornaments in memory of loved ones passed on are now being accepted. An angel will be placed on a Christmas tree along with a program and refreshments.

Please join us in this time of inspiring fellowship.

The October luncheon was fun and attended by over thirty-five members. Winner of the 50/50 raffle was Elaine Lada. Maryan Haffner won a beautiful basket full of goodies. Other winners were Charlotte Lytikainen, Lillian Heikkinen, Eunice Potti, Marge Salo, Marlene Ruuskanen, Elizabeth McCue, Debbie Rajala, Pearl Wanttaja and Ruth Ojala.

The monthly luncheon begins again in January on the last Wednesday of the month. The menu will be ham, scalloped potatoes and veggies.

Start your New Year's list with coming to the Finnish Center events and meet new friends. Please continue to refer to your front page calendar for event dates and times.

Thank you to everyone who donated blood at our Red Cross blood drive. It was a successful event.

Respectfully, Lila and Terry Ball



FINLAND TODAY

First, earlier this summer, the Finnish Omegawave company, which develops measurement systems based on sports and space medicine, won the award for "Best Performance Technology for Elite Athletes" at the UK based Sports Technology Awards. And recently, Omegawave, the Espoo-based company, was named the winner of the 2014 Under Armour Future Show, an annual best ideas contest for both established companies and startups. The Omegawave measuring system, which looks like a cell phone, produces readings for strength, speed, endurance, and coordination, which the athlete and the coach can use the real time data to evaluate the athlete's training results. Based on a quick measurement, the Omegawave system provides immediately applicable information on the readiness, recovery and physical condition of the athlete. In addition, it identifies the athlete's physiological restrictions and provides insight into how they should be taken into account in the amount and intensity of training.

This autumn, the Finnish Vigofere company launched, Moodmetric, a wearable technology which measures emotional well-being. Moodmetrics joins biosensing with wearable technology and mobile apps, and throws in fashion for good measure. The system includes a ring which measures the emotional state of the wearer, and a smartphone app which analyses the data produced. But the Moodmetric ring is not "your parents' mood ring." The Moodmetric ring, "measures the autonomous nervous system signals that can be used to understand reactions and improve the quality of life", so says Niina Venho, the COO of Vigofere. And where does the name 'Vigofere' come from? It comes from two scientists, Vigouroux and Fere, who published the first discoveries regarding the electrical conductivity of human skin in the late 1800s.

Fireball, a popular, fiery flavored alcohol drink made in Canada, is being pulled from store shelves in Finland. Finnish officials are concerned about one of the ingredients in the drink, propylene glycol. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has classified propylene glycol as an additive that is "generally recognized as safe" for use in food. Propylene glycol is used to absorb extra water and to maintain moisture in certain medicines, cosmetics and food products. In a statement issued by Alko, Finland's state alcohol monopoly, "Fireball liqueur does not meet European standards for consumption." According to Alko, it says that, "Fireball is prepared according to North American food regulations, but doesn't follow the stricter requirements of the European Union."

Just like the U.S. and Canada, Finland got a "taste of winter" on November 4th. The Pohjanmaa and Kainuu areas got about 6-10 inches of slush. The areas received about a month's worth of precipitation in one day, which of course, meant flooding along the rivers. Meanwhile, up north in Utsjoki area, the temperature dipped down to -14F. The heavy snow caused power lines to snap, and caused major slow-downs in the country's railway system.

And finally, during her physical examination last summer, Doctor Nurmi asked a retired woman, Hilma, who lives near Marquette, about her physical activity level.

Hilma said that she spends three days a week, every week, in the outdoors. "Well, yesterday was typical. I took a five hour walk. I walked about seven miles through some pretty rough terrain. I waded along the edge of a lake. I pushed my way through two miles of brambles. I got sand in my shoes and my eyes. I barely avoided stepping on a snake. I ran away from an irate mother bear and then, ran away from one angry bull-moose. The mental stress of it all left me shattered, so at the end of it all, I drank a scotch and three glasses of wine".

Amazed by the story, Doctor Nurmi says, "You must be one hell of an outdoor woman!"

"No", Hilma replied, "I'm just a typical Yooper who happens to be a really, really lousy golfer.

Hauskaa Joulua ja Onnellista Uutta Vuotta!! Markku Ketola, marketola@yahoo.com

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If you, or someone you know, has a need for a hall to rent for special events such as birthdays, weddings, baby or bridal showers, memorial services, please consider the Finnish Center. Contact the FCA office at (248) 478-6939 for more details.



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