

FCA News



FOR MEMBERS OF THE FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION

November 2015

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

- 01 Sunday Suomi Koulu 12 noon-2pm
- 01 Sunday Suomi Koulu Halloween Party 2 pm
- 03 Tuesday Red Cross Blood Drive 1-6:45 pm
- 06 Friday Night Buffet 5-8 pm
- 08 Sunday Brunch 12 noon-1:30 pm
- 08 Sunday Finnish Film *Raja 1918* 2 pm
- 11 Rental
- 11 Wednesday Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 12 Thursday Pulla Bakers 9:30 am
- 14 Saturday Scandinavian Bazaar 10 am-4 pm
- 15 Sunday Suomi Koulu 12 noon-2 pm
- 18 Rental
- 18 Wednesday Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 6:30 pm
- 20 Friday Night Buffet 5 pm-8 pm
- 25 Rental
- 27 Rental
- 28 Rental
- 29 Sunday Open House 1-4pm

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
Second 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

DECEMBER

- 03 Thursday Sibelius Concert with Katri Ervamaa & Marja Kaisla 12 noon
- 04 Friday Night Buffet 5 pm - 8 pm
- 04 Friday Novi Band Concert 7 pm - 8 pm
- 05 Saturday Independence Day Party 6 pm
- 06 Sunday Independence Day Program 2 pm
- 08 Tuesday-Local Choirs "Little Christmas" Concert 7 pm
- 09 Rental
- 13 Sunday Suomi Koulu 12 noon- 2 pm
- 13 Sunday FASM Concert 3 pm
- 16 Rental
- 18 Friday Night Buffet 5 pm - 8 pm
- 20 Sunday Candlelight Memorial Service 2 pm
- 23 Rental
- 26 Rental



**RESERVATIONS ARE
SUGGESTED FOR
DINNERS AND LUNCHEONS**

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Regards from FinnFest held in Buffalo New York. The FinnFest program highlighted Sibelius 150th birthday and coincided with Buffalo's Kleinhans Music Hall's 75th birthday. The hall was designed by Finnish architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen. The highlights of the weekend for me were the Buffalo Symphony Orchestra concert "Echoes of Sibelius" and meeting our new Ambassador Kirsti Kauppi.



Kirsti Kauppi

Wonderful tributes were not only for Sibelius but also to a young Finnish composer Jaakko Kuusisto, Finnish violinist Elina Vähälä and another Finnish composer Einojuhani Rautavaara.



Left to right: Jaakko Kuusisto, Elina Vähälä, Einojuhani Rautavaara



Taina Elg

With renewed energy we are focusing on the last quarter of this year with a lot going on at the Finnish Center. We are busy preparing for the Scandinavian Bazaar, which takes place November 14. In the beginning of December we have another brownbag concert review featuring Sibelius, and work is in full swing preparing for the Independence Day celebration. Finlandia Foundation lecturer of the Year, Taina Elg, is our guest speaker. (see further information in this newsletter)

The board has also decided to start a fund drive for our building improvement projects. As mentioned last month, the forty-year-old building will need a lot of capital improvements in the foreseeable future.

I would like to express my personal gratitude to Gene Belttari for organizing our charity poker events. The last poker event broke all records. These events are highly work intensive for our members, but the rewards make them worthwhile.

As always, hope to see you at the Finnish Center! Please check the calendar for upcoming events.

Mia Lamminen, Chairman

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

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1 Year

Lois Makee, Robert Waissi,
Roger Wanttaja

2 Year

Lila Ball, Mia Lamminen,
Margaret Laurila

3 Year

Olli Lamminen, Henriikki Panstar,
Marlene Ruuskanen

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#2 Carol Tudball
#3 Katie Waissi

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Sarah Wiideman

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Roger Wanttaja

Cultural

Yvonne Lockwood

Education

Katri Ervamaa

Finance

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www.fcaseniorhousing.org



FROM THE LIBRARY



The following is translated and summarized from the article “Karjalaisten vanhoista joulunviettovaistoista” (“Old Karelian Christmas traditions”) which appeared in VIRTAIN JOULU 1964.

In the olden days people didn't have a supply of food as they do nowadays. In the fall when summer's delicacies were no longer available we began to anxiously await Christmas and its promised joys, especially those that would appear on the table. Everyone, especially the children, counted the days.

While we were waiting, we made the Christmas candles. Fat which had been saved from butchering in the fall was melted in a hot oven. The whey was placed in a barrel and allowed to harden. Then boiling water was poured on it so that it became very fine. Cotton string was used for the wick. This was pressed into the wax and then brought up so that it was straight. This process was repeated until the candle was thick enough and could be hung up to harden. Thus we made hundreds of candles. Candleholders were also made at home out of wood and left unpainted. We considered them beautiful. When they were lit at Christmastime, someone had to continuously trim the wicks with scissors, or they would smoke. One oldtimer said “Christmas candles shed a wonderful light, compared to the light we ordinarily had from a shingle.”

Next came the preparation of the food. Food in those days was not as plentiful and varied as nowadays. Sometimes a special Karelian style bread was made several days before Christmas. Other breads were made on Christmas Eve morning plus potato and rice *piirakkas*. After the bread was done a Karelian roast, rice pudding, plus potato- and rutabaga casseroles were placed in the oven. Dessert was not known in those days.

After the baking the cleaning was begun. The children were made to perch atop the brick oven while the ladies scrubbed the walls and floor with a brush. When everything was ready Father went outside and fetched a load of straw. Now the children had fun spreading the straw on the floor. Decorations such as stars were also made of the straw. A large *himmeli* was often hung from the ceiling.

At dusk the whole family headed for the sauna. We wanted to be clean on the outside as well as the inside for the great holiday. The light in the sauna was a burning shingle, for we did not have lamps.

After the sauna the table was set for the Christmas feast. The meal was begun with rye bread, a delicacy for it was only made for holidays. The family ate in silence. The candles cast a warm glow over all. After the meal we settled down to hear the Christmas story. Whoever was the best reader read the story from the Bible. Then we sang some Christmas hymns. We went to bed early as we had to leave for church at 6:00 a.m. We had no clocks so we had to ascertain the time of day from the sky and the rooster's crowing. We rode to church in the sleigh to the sound of jingle bells on the horses. The church was not specially decorated except for candles on the altar and in the wooden ceiling fixture. The service was long. Two preachers each preached a sermon. The service lasted until daybreak.

On the way home everyone would race the horses. The poor people rode in the middle of the road and the rich with their better horses raced in the heavy snow on the side of the road. At home we had a quiet meal and then sang, or read God's word. It was a quiet day; no visiting was done. All sat quietly allowing the Christmas spirit to speak to their hearts.

The day after Christmas, St. Stephen's day, was the day for visiting. The children played what they called a cobbler game. They made a figure of straw with a round head and three feet so it would stand upright. Two long sticks were fashioned. One had a pointed end with which the player attempted to knock the cobbler

(continued on page 4)

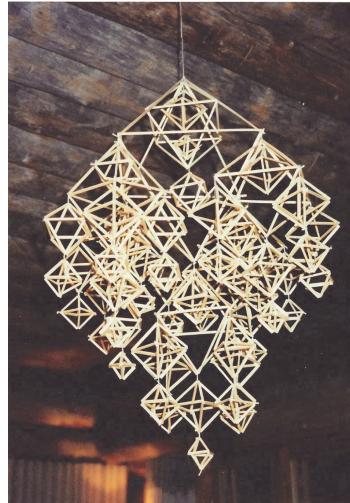
Library (continued from page 3)

over; the other was fashioned to protect the figure. When one player knocked the figure over, the players changed places, and the game continued. After St. Stephen's day visiting the Christmas holidays were over and we looked forward to celebrating New Year's Day.

Lillian Lehto, FCA librarian



Sleigh with horse



A himmeli



Children watching mother clean

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Scholarship applications will be available by mid-November on our website at www.finnishcenter.org or at the Finnish Center itself.

Nancy Sannar,
Scholarship
Committee
Chair



**SAVE THE DATE!
"LITTLE CHRISTMAS"
CONCERT**

Tuesday, December 8 at 7 pm



Back by popular demand,
local choirs will again perform
their Christmas concert.



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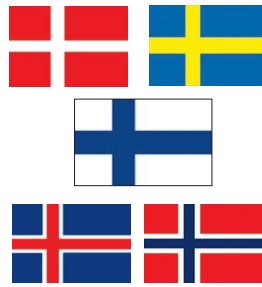


GOING PLACES

Three Men & a Tenor, Sunday, November 22, \$70. Be sure to sign up early for this great show. The performance will be at the Theatre on The Avenue in Wyandotte. Lunch is included at Smokies Restaurant & Bar. Depart at 11:15 am and return about 6: 30 pm.

Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Sunday, January 10, \$103, featuring **Classic Broadway**. Includes lunch in Greek Town. Depart at 12 noon and return about 6:15 pm.

All of these trips are combined with the Nardineers on 11 Mile Rd. Have questions? You may call Betty at (248) 553-7618 or Pearl at (248) 541-0054. Trip flyers will be available at the FCA.



SCANDINAVIAN BAZAAR
SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 14
10 am – 4 pm

Featuring:

Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic and Finnish Imports, Crafts, Baked Goods, Pasties, Ethnic Food, Hand Woven Rugs, Decorative Arts, Pottery, Lavender Soaps & Lotions, and more. Scandinavian Music by Finnfolk.

\$1 donation at the door

PUBLIC WELCOME

FOR RENT

If you, or someone you know, has a need for a hall to rent for special events such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, baby or bridal showers, memorial services, and more, please consider the Finnish Center.

Contact the FCA office at (248) 478-6939 for more information to help you plan the perfect event.



FCA GIFT SHOP



November 14, 2015
 Scandinavian Bazaar

The Gift Shop has restocked the shelves with our favorite candies and breads, plus there are a variety of new items available.

AND check out the new books and calendars,
 AND onesies, tee shirts,
 caps, ear warmers,
 AND cups, bowls, jars,
 AND wood trivets,
 AND towels,
 AND magnets.
 Plus a lot more!.



MEMORIALS

In memory of FCA life member **Erma Ahola** (9/12/15) a donation has been made by Pearl & Ray Wanttaja.

In memory of FCA life member **Rudolph "Rudy" Aittama** (8/19/2015) donations have been made by Arne and Mary Ann Hanninen, Edith Niederer, Billie Aho & Cynthia McKay-Aho, Sally F. Smith, Lovern J. Aittama, Kay Simo, Elaine & Jim Weiland, June Tervo, Lois Makee, Bob Malmstrom, Evelyn & Ed Hyypio,

In memory of FCA life member **Marjorie Haarala** (8/31/2015) donations have been made by Rufus Peoples, Donna & Tom Bosanko, Lois Makee, and Dolores & Will Rajala.

In memory of **Leila Malmstrom** (7/24/15) a donation has been made by her husband Bob and her Family.

In memory of FCA life member **Norma Vuolle Aittama** (5/2/13) donations have been made by Elvi & Rafael Saviniemi, June Tervo and Bob Malmstrom.

In memory of FCA life member **Vera H. Oja** (9/20/2002) a donation has been made by her daughter Linda & Steven Jacobs.

Correction: In memory of FCA life member **Marie Saviniemi Scheel** (2/21/15) donations have been made by her brother Rafeal & Elvi Saviniemi, Ann Saviniemi and John & Lois Saviniemi Sefcovic.

The FCA would also like to extend condolences to the families and friends of the following:

FCA life member **Kenneth Harvala** (7/27/14)
 FCA life member **Erma Ahola** (9/12/15)
 FCA life member **Charles Blackwell** (9/19/15)
 FCA life member **Ralph Heltunen** (10/5/15)



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

Also include all names of donors. If the deceased is a non-member of the FCA please include city and state of residence.

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

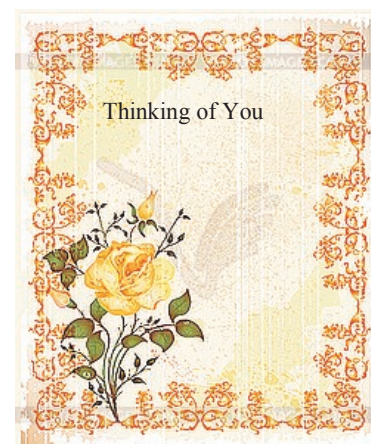
Please include full name, address, date of death of the deceased as well as the name and address of the next of kin to whom the acknowledgement card is to be mailed.

GET WELL, THINKING OF YOU

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

Please notify me if you think someone might need warm and thoughtful wishes from the friends at the FCA. Send or call your card requests to the attention of the "Sunshine Lady" at the FCA.

Thank you,
 Eunice Potti Gould



SIBELIUS CONCERT

Thursday, December 3, 12:00 noon

This "Brown Bag Lunch" concert will be held at the Finnish Center. You may bring your lunch if you wish. Coffee provided. Concert is free however donations are appreciated!

Sibelius 150 and Contemporaries: Cello and Piano Music from Europe: Katri Ervamaa (cello), Marja Kaisla (piano). Selections to be announced.

Finnish born cellist, Katri Ervamaa, DMA, is a versatile performer, who specializes in chamber music, new music and creative improvisation. She has performed and given master classes throughout North America, Europe and Taiwan. She has performed at many festivals, including FinnFest. Katri is also on the faculty at the University of Michigan's Residential College, where she is the head of the music program and teaches chamber music.

Born in Helsinki, Finland, Marja Kaisla, began piano studies at age three and made her public debut at age five. As a chamber musician, recitalist, and concerto soloist, she has performed in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the United States. She is coordinator of the Performance of the Year Program for Finlandia Foundation National, she herself was Performer of the Year in 2013, and she is coordinating the Sibelius 150 for Finlandia Foundation.

This performance is a preview of a concert that will be held the next night, Friday, December 4, 7:15 pm at the Kerrytown Concert Hall, Ann Arbor.



Left: Katri Ervamaa, Cellist
Right: Marja Kaisla, Pianist




SUOMI KOULU

Suomi koulu has gotten off to a good start despite the fact that we did not know whether we would have a teacher in the fall. The plan was to have the parents run the classes, while having all of it be practical programs. So far the initial class was for student evaluations, realizing there were many levels of proficiency of the language in the student body. It turns out that the best form of learning is with practical learning, even with a teacher available. Garden exploration was the next class, learning names of plants and trees by exploring our wonderful garden just outside our door. The next class will have a Halloween theme as well as a wonderful party for children and parents with trick or treating at Tapiola Village next door. Future plans include handicrafts such as woodworking, knitting, weaving, etc.

There is a lot of talent among the members and their skills can be passed on to the young ones and older ones alike, and all would learn Finnish in the process! Baking and other kitchen duties are also in the plans, which includes learning kitchen vocabulary at the same time! There are a lot of adults who are interested in joining in, and we are working on making that happen. We may need additional people with teaching experience to make all this happen. Any volunteers? Please let us know if you are interested in helping this enthusiastic group of youngsters.

LEARN PLAY AND GROW TOGETHER



Finnish Center Association
cordially invites you to celebrate
Finnish Independence Day

Saturday, December 5, 2015
At 6pm

Music & Dance
Finnish style dinner
Cash bar

Tickets \$40.00 per person, Children \$5.00
(\$35.00 when purchased by November 15)

To make reservations call the FCA office
(248)478-6939, by November 29

A portion of the funds raised by tickets will go to
FCA building capital improvements

Guest Speaker ~ Ms. Taina Elg

The lecturer of the Year for 2015 is the multi-talented performer, a ballerina from Finland who found acclaim in Hollywood and Broadway.

As lecturer of the year Ms. Elg, who won a Golden Globe for her role in the 1957 film *Les Girls* starring Gene Kelly, tells her story in the form of an intimate interview conducted by Heli Sirvio, a Finnish actress now working in New York City.

Bring your family and friends!
Tervetuloa ~ Welcome

NOVEMBER PASTIES

November pasties will be made on the 6th and 7th. But they will be sold only at the Scandinavian Bazaar, which is held on Saturday, November 14th from 10-4. Come to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Bazaar but be sure to arrive early to get your pasties.

We will need help on the Friday November 6th to peel and dice the veggies and on Saturday November 7th to bake and package them. Please contact me at prajala@comcast.net if you are able to volunteer. All workers can receive a complimentary pasty on Saturday for their contribution of time.

On September 25 and 26 the pasty bake crew made more than 1100 pasties. Unfortunately, due to many schedule conflicts, the group in the hot kitchen on Saturday was a bit short-handed and many worked an eight-hour shift. I would like to recognize the contributions of the following volunteers for service above and beyond: Neil Manley, Nancy Jacobs, Karen Gasinski, Lila Ball, Terry Ball, and Neil Lehto. Other valuable volunteers on Friday and Saturday were Dee Aegersold, Fred Aegersold, Karen Call, Jon Call, Carol Gambotto, Larry Gersky (who worked both days), Frank Gottberg, Bill Gramzow, Kevin Heltunen, Nancy Hytinen, Carolyn Hunter, Vickie Kimler, Gene Kramer, Margaret Laurila, Norb Leppanen, Tobie Line, Virginia Lopez, Charlotte Lytikainen, Jerry Malstrom, Dagmar Malstrom, Nancy McClenahan, Nancy Rajala (who also made dough on Thursday), Sandy Reidenbaugh, John Saarinen (who picked up the meat and veggies and led the Friday peeling and dicing crew), David Sharpe, Elaine Weider, and Ilene Yanke. Thanks to all.

Paul Rajala, pasty coordinator



Left: Norbert Leppanen prepares baking sheets. Right: Neil Lehto puts a tray of pasties in the oven.



NOVEMBER IN THE GARDENS



The leaves are changing color, the mornings are brisk, the early freeze has killed many of the annuals and our vegetables but we are still hard at work in the gardens. We have been cutting back seed heads on many of our perennials and either spreading them in our wetlands, exchanging some of the varieties with others or giving them to the newest members of the Wayne County Master Gardeners in hopes of attracting new volunteers.

We were awarded another Beautification Award by the city of Farmington Hills in October. This is our 11th year in a row for this award. You will be able to see all this great publicity on local cable television.

We have moved five maples and oaks into the West Gardens outside the vegetable gardens/woodshop to start a mini forest. These were starts that we moved from elsewhere on the property. We are hoping these will survive, however, the lack of rain this fall is taking its toll on transplants as well as existing plants. In fact we are utilizing our remaining rain barrel water to deep water our raspberries as they are showing signs of drought stress.

We are recommending that homeowners deep water their shrubs and trees with ~3-5 gallons of water per large evergreen and ~5-8 gallons water per large tree each week until ground freeze this year. A hose on slow trickle or a five gallon bucket with a couple of ¼ inch holes low on the outside works well.

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

Gayle Gullen
Finlandia Garden Club President

CALLING ALL BAKERS

The next pulla baking date is Thursday, November 12. As always all are welcome. No experience necessary. Activities begin about 9:30 am.

After the mixing, rising and baking there is always a little product tasting, just for quality control purposes, of course. Hope you can join us.

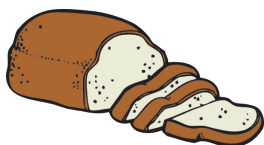


Many hands make light work!

Left to right: Elaine Weiland, Hannah Carlson, Charlotte Lytikainen, Tobie Line, Lorraine Hannah, Barb Whitty, and Ilene Yanke



See how much fun we have?



HOLIDAY GREETINGS

If you wish to extend a holiday greeting to a friend or loved one, submit the full name by Monday, November 16. Greetings will be published in the December issue of the FCA Newsletter. \$10 per greeting

Thank you!



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Sunday, December 20 at 2 pm

Dinner to follow
(donations appreciated)

We will be having our 2nd Annual Candlelight Service in remembrance of our loved ones during this holiday season. An angel will be placed on a Christmas tree in their name. Please also send a picture of your loved one for our memory board and label the 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, attention Marlene Ruuskanen. Checks should be made payable to the FCA with candlelight service in the memo.

Last year was a very heartwarming and special gathering. It is a wonderful way to remember our loved ones during the holiday season!

Lila Ball, Social Committee



THE 2015 LECTURER OF THE YEAR: Taina Elg

Taina Elg, Finlandia Foundation 2015 Lecturer of the Year, is the featured speaker at our Independence Day Party on Saturday, December 5.

Taina, a ballerina from Finland, found acclaim in Hollywood and Broadway. She tells her story in the form of an interview conducted by Heli Sirvio, a Finnish actress now working in New York City.

Through anecdotes and film clips Ms. Elg offers a behind-the-scenes glimpse of life as a young star at MGM Studios, sharing experiences and memories of life in Hollywood. She touches on her view of the industry today, and speaks candidly about what she may have done differently in her career.

Actress, singer and dancer Taina Elg was born in Finland, where she studied at the Finnish National Ballet in Helsinki. While with Sadler's Wells ballet company in London, she was discovered by an American movie producer who offered her a contract with MGM studios.

She has performed in films with stars such as Leslie Caron, Lana Turner, Jeff Bridges and Barbara Streisand. The New York City resident has appeared in many television shows and stage plays and musicals, and earned a Tony nomination for her role in "Where's Charley?" She also earned a Golden Globe for her role in the 1957 film "Les Girls" starring Gene Kelly.

One of Ms. Elg's current projects is a concert in homage to Jean Sibelius and Finnish Soprano Ida Ekman (1875-1942), a great aunt of the actress. The singer performed with Sibelius, and the tribute was inspired by this year's 150th anniversary of the birth of the composer.

Heli Sirvio, who interviews Taina, is a graduate of the Theatre Academy of Finland. She is known for her many roles at Helsinki's Q-teatteri, Kuopio City Theatre and the Finnish National Theatre. She now lives in New York City. Her stage credits there include "Come Back, Little Sheba" and "Oblivion", and she produced the highly acclaimed play "Purge-Puhdistus" by Sofi Osanen.



Taina Elg



Heli Sirvio

This article and pictures are excerpts from Finlandia Foundation National brochure 2015 Lecturer of the Year.

FINNISH FILM

The November film showing is scheduled for Sunday, November 8 at 2 p.m.

Raja 1918 (The Border 1918)

Director, Lauri Törhönen, 2007

"The Border" is set after the Finnish Civil War. Captain Carl von Munck (Martin Bahne), newly returned from the Civil War, is posted near the border to Soviet Russia in the village of Rajajoki to prevent "illegals" from crossing into Finland. Thousands of Russian refugees are fleeing from the aftermath of the Russian bolshevik victory, and no one with Russian heritage is allowed to cross, unless they are willing to face a Finnish firing squad. What seems to be a simple assignment becomes a complicated nightmare of firing squads, forbidden love, and confusing decisions about how, exactly, one draws a border for a nation that has never existed before.

In Finnish and Russian with English subtitles.



NOVI COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND

Friday, December 4, 2015

Buffet Dinner and Concert \$10 5pm-8pm
Concert Only \$5 7pm-8pm

SEPTEMBER POKER ALL STARS SEPTEMBER POKER ALL-STARS



Poker all stars are: Norb Leppanen, Fran Fadie, Bruce Mikko, Aggie McManus, Dave Sharpe, Lois Makee, Mark Belttari, Neil Manley, Mia Lamminen, Olli Lamminen and Roger Wanttaja.

We had a very successful four day event on September 24-27. We were awarded the event, with only a four day notice. A special thanks to the above for stepping up on such short notice. The November 5-8 poker event has been canceled.
Gene Belttari

Neil J. Lehto

Attorney and Counselor At Law

nlehto@sbcglobal.net

3530 Wakefield Road
Berkley, Michigan 48072

(248) 545-1753 (Phone & Fax)

Over Our "Back Fence"

Wilson was a key character on the wildly popular TV comedy, *Home Improvement*. He offered sage advice to his neighbor, usually over their joint fence, while keeping his face strategically hidden from viewers. Faithful fans discovered he was wry, self-confident but also self-deprecating, enjoyed gourmet food, and was ready to help his friends when needed! Although the upright piano the Finnish American Singers use is not exactly a fence and we have seen his face, the previous description could be applied to our much-appreciated key player, Bill Gramzow.

Bill, more formally known as William Gramzow, IV, was born and raised in Detroit. He always knew music was his "path" and began organ lessons at thirteen. By age sixteen, he had a regular gig playing for a church's Sunday services. Bill attended a Lutheran high school as well as Concordia University in River Forest, IL. His 20-plus years as an organist/choir director in a Lutheran church provide familiarity with that liturgy as he subs now for local Lutheran churches. However, for the past seven years he has been the Assistant Director of Music Ministry at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in Farmington. Along with the four masses on weekends, a children's choir and two bell choirs of young people who perform weekly in their school mass and twice a month in regular masses, he still finds time to practice weekly with our group.

When FASM needed an accompanist to go to Finn Fest eleven years ago, Ilene Yanke asked Bill, her church choir director, if he could help out. "The rest is history," as they say. When asked to identify highlights of those years, Bill responded that learning about the Finnish culture through their music has been a wonderful journey. Also learning to play styles of music he didn't usually encounter in traditional church music is a factor that led to his current job at Sorrows. A red-letter FASM memory is the trip Bill and the group took in 2006 to the FinnFest in Astoria, Oregon. "The Northwest was glorious, and I never would have seen it if not for that trip!"

We may see Bill from the other side of a piano most of the time, but it's definitely not a fence separating us from this great guy. We appreciate his crucial contribution to the group and hope we have a long future in song together!

Submitted by Scribe, Katy Koskela



FASM very own "Wilson" - William Gramzow, IV
The man behind the piano

FINLAND TODAY

First, "It's been kind of a social right to provide citizens with sporting possibility," says Hanna Vehmas, a sports scientist at the University of Jyväskylä. She says it's a Nordic thing to consider sports a social right. As a matter of fact, "Under the Constitution...physical activity is a basic cultural right." In the 1970's, the government started subsidizing sports gyms in even the smallest towns. "Now", Vehmas says, "there are an estimated 30,000 sports facilities in this country, which is more per capita than any other country in the world." Municipalities spend about \$700 million a year subsidizing sport facilities and clubs. A portion of the National Lottery also goes toward funding sports facilities and sports research.

Walkways and bike paths snake through the cities. Public swimming pools are busy year around, even above the Arctic Circle. And during the cold and dark winters, cross county skiers cut tracks in the snow through the parks and across the frozen lakes. "Here you can more or less just step out of your door and go," Vehmas says. And the Finns do just that. Half of the women, and a third of the men, say that they bike to work. Says Ossi Aura, who is an occupational health care specialist at the health care company, Terveystalo, "Nowadays 90% of employers support their employees' physical activity in some way." Each year, Finnish employers spend an average of about \$225 per employee for physical activity, which means anything from gym vouchers to providing workout facilities and saunas. Today, one reason employers tend to support their employees' physical activities is because of a tax break. Businesses can deduct money spent on employees' physical well-being. "We have a lot research showing that investing in work well-being will bring back as much as six times the money invested," says Matleena Livson of the Finnish Sports Confederation. "Because you reduce sick leaves, you improve the cohesiveness and good spirit, and you improve employer image at the workplace." Aura and Livson say that it's understood in Finland and other Nordic countries that healthy employees do better work. They also don't have as many sick days, and staying fit, especially by playing sports together, could help build company cohesion and loyalty. Physically active people also save the health care system a lot of money. According to the World Health Organization and the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs & Health, they estimate that people who bike and walk save the health care system as much as \$5.5 billion each year.

Vallila Interior, a renowned Finnish textile design company has launched its Vallila Collection on U.S. retail giant Target's online store. The collection consists of colorful accent furniture, featuring Vallila's prints. The Vallila collection features eight designs, which got their inspiration from the street corners of Helsinki and the Finnish forests. Vallila Interior is a family-owned Finnish textile, rug, and wallpaper design company based in Helsinki. The company was established in 1935 and it began designing print fabrics in the mid-sixties. Check out their web site at www.vallilainterior.fi. Target Corporation was founded in 1902, and it is the second largest discount retailer in the U.S.

Having a sweet tooth "could be" a bit cheaper for Finns in the future, after the government announced that it will remove a tax on candy and ice cream, starting in 2017. The government imposed a tax of about 45 cents per pound in 2011 in an effort to curb sugar consumption. It is expected that the tax will bring in about \$120 million this year. But now the European Commission has told the Finnish Ministers that the tax system unfairly favors Finnish producers because the sweets tax is on top of the import duties. According to the Taxpayers Association of Finland, it would mean that a quart of ice cream would cost about 50 cents less than it does now, but it's not clear if this will be passed on to the customers. While some Finns on social media are worried about the effects that cheaper sweets will have on the nation's health, many are skeptical that there will be any price change at all. "In Finland prices go up even when taxes go down," was one person's comment. "The shops will pocket the price difference and that will take care of the citizens' health issue," was another comment.

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And finally, Heikki, an elderly gentleman, was working out at the gym, when he noticed a sweet young thing walking in...

He asked the trainer, who was standing next him, "What machine should I use to impress that Lady over there?"

The trainer looked Heikki over and said, "I would recommend the ATM machine in the lobby, Sir."

Thanks, Leena Floyd, Windsor, Ontario

Markku Ketola
marketola@yahoo.com



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER

Wednesday, November 18 at 6:30 pm

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