



Finnish Center Association

FCA News

FOR MEMBERS OF THE FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION

APRIL 2022

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Hello FCA members and spring greetings!

As we head into a new (hopefully covid-free) season, we want to take a few minutes to introduce ourselves as the new co-chairs of FCA for the upcoming year. Former Chair Mary O'Brien has faithfully served the organization over the past three years and we are deeply appreciative.

To enhance the team effort, the Board of Trustees elected to have co-chairs for the foreseeable future, and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve FCA in this role. We hope our contributions will be valuable to FCA and its mission to preserve Finnish culture by offering opportunities for FCA members and guests to build friendships and share Finnish cultural experiences. We will be working in close tandem with Vice Chair Kathryn Hill, and the incumbent officers and committee chairs. We welcome new board member Ed O'Brien who, as first alternate, has assumed Mary's seat.

We also want to welcome you all back for more in-person events at FCA, which are resuming now that covid cases have declined. We are gearing up for another fun Juhannus celebration on June 25! For a complete calendar, please refer to the FCA website (finnishcenter.org) or stop in to FCA in person. The gift shop is open, as well, and the gardens will be blooming soon. We look forward to seeing you, as always.

With gratitude,

Roger Wanttaja *Christine J. Manninen*

Roger Wanttaja and Christine Manninen
Co-chairs, Board of Trustees

THANK YOU TO THE PASTY-MAKING VOLUNTEERS

We have not yet properly thanked all the volunteers that helped on our very successful pasty event on Saturday, March 26, so here is a shout out to those loyal workers. On Friday to perform the peeling and dicing of the vegetables were Larry Gersky, Jess Hatten, Gene Kramer, Mare Kramer, Bob McAlpine, Sandy Reidenbaugh, David Sharpe, Sherrill Tedford, and special thanks to John Saarinen. The Saturday crew consisted of Kendra Dinsdale, Karen Gasinski, Helena Hatten, Kathryn Hill, Nancy Jacobs, Frank Gottberg, Vickie Kimler, David Koskela, Katy Koskela, Luise Leppanen, Norbert Leppanen, Norbert W. Leppanen, Neil Manley, Nancy McClenahan, Susan Trescott, John Welsh, Martha Welsh, and Brian Winkler.

Special thanks also to Nancy Rajala who was there on Thursday to make the dough and again on Saturday to organize the cooling and packaging of the pasties. You all had a specific job to do and were an integral part of the process.

Paul Rajala
Pasty Coordinator



SPRING IS MY FAVORITE SEASON

by Christine Manninen

The vernal equinox, with light and darkness of equal time length, marks the start of spring.

Spring has always been my favorite season, beginning renewal and new growth all around us. It was my mom's favorite season, too.

There is a special happiness in the air in the spring. People and animals slowly emerge from their winter hibernation as the light grows longer and the temperatures warm. March winds give way to April showers and greens begin to replace the drab browns of winter. Bulbs burst from the dirt, bringing with them bright blooms of tulips and daffodils. The ferns poke up and begin to unfurl their fronds. The trees miraculously bud and the leafy canopy is restored. The birds arrive with their familiar early morning chirping.

With longer daylight we spend more time outdoors. Grills return to porches and backyards, and we hear the giggles of kids running around. There's a coolness below as the snow and ice melt beneath our feet and the warmth begins to penetrate. Runners, cyclists and walkers increase as we all long to shed some winter weight and feel the sun on our faces. The air is fresh.

Of course, spring also brings many chores like mowing the lawn and tending to gardens. Potholes appear on our roads, as if trying to wake up from our winter slumber. Spring cleaning begins in many homes, washing windows and shaking the dust of life from rugs and curtains. The mosquitos, ants, flies and other insects return, too, for their time in the sun.

Spring is a time for reinventing ourselves. More than any other time of year, our hard work is tempered by joy and anticipation.

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(248) 471-3802
tapiola@ameritech.net



SUNSHINE LADY

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



#PeacefulMind#PeacefulLife

No matter what you do, someone
will always talk about you.
Someone will always question your
judgement. Someone will always
doubt you. So just smile and make
the choices you can live with.

- UNKNOWN



EXCITEMENT IN FINLANDIA GARDENS

I know that you can't compare the excitement in our gardens with that in the greater world. However, I find that if you are tuned in to nature then there is exhilaration in the gardens at the FCA. One example is the turkey vulture we have seen in the wetland, dining on a deer carcass. It has been seen several times soaring high above the center and swooping down at the rear of our property. Now that is something unusual. Unanticipated events were the two windstorms that each toppled over twenty of our garden items requiring resetting and repair. No doubt a result of global warming. Another surprising aspect of our garden adventure are the items that people leave for which we are to find purpose. These we use, or gift away to someone and we often receive a donation. Delight comes from the return of seasonal wildlife. First the birds arrive, then the chipmunks, insects, etc. Last year we even saw a small garter snake. Of course, the appearances of crocuses and other spring bulbs beginning in late February and ending with the Siberian aster, blooming as late as November, provide pleasure and are sublime. Human visitors are delightful as we meet FCA members, residents, and visitors from all over the world. Last year we had a turbaned Sikh from India as well as Asian people from the far east. I guess excitement can be subjective but finding a good book in one of our three Little Free Libraries, locating a quiet place to read, and enjoying a cool bottle of water that is provided by the gardens can be all the excitement one needs at this time in our history.

by David Sharpe, a garden advocate

THE MAKIN' OF JAZZTOWN

by Ben Makinen

[Editor's Note: *Evert Makinen was a long-time member of the Finnish Center and was the uncle of Mary O'Brien. His musical talents were often displayed in his singing as a baritone, section leader, and soloist in the Finlandia Male Chorus. He became director of the group in 1978 and continued into the late 1980's. He also composed and arranged music for the chorus and played trombone in the Finlandia Brass. The following article is from his grandson, Ben Makinen.]*

The spirit of my mentors and ancestors were always near as I struggled through many obstacles on the path to completing my first feature length documentary film titled JazzTown (2022). This is a film that highlights the lives and the music of jazz masters who were gracious and kind enough to have welcomed me upon their stages and to have taken me under their wing as I made the transition into a full-time professional drummer back in the late 1980s in Denver, Colorado. The motivation to start filming came in large part from the musical legacy of my grandfather Evert Matthias Makinen who directed and sang with the Finnish Cultural Association. He led such a marvelous musical life, but having been raised over 2000 miles away in Washington state, I was mostly unaware of his passion for playing the trombone, singing, directing, and composing marches.

I was in my 30s when I released my first CD of original compositions (Lost Lullaby) and, while visiting for a family reunion in Manistee, grandpa was quite keen to learn how I had used a synthesizer to layer the sounds of ocean, piano, flutes and percussion. He too in fact had a simple electric keyboard at home that he used for the composition of chords and melodies for his marches. Although he much preferred the sounds of classical music and marches to those of the modern jazz and electronic music I was involved with, he and I felt quite at ease speaking music together. I had also performed as a percussionist with the Central City Opera and the Colorado Symphony and grandpa enjoyed hearing the trombone players of the early jazz years circa 1930s, so we found a lot common ground to explore. The love of music really has no boundaries. I was thrilled to discover that I must have inherited musical genes from my Finnish side.

My daughter Dakota and I drove from Denver to visit grandpa a week before he passed in February, 2009. We brought fresh berries from our drive up US 31. Grandpa had very little interest in food at the time - he said it was mostly flavorless. But after savoring a Michigan berry in his mouth for a long and silent Finnish minute, his eyes returned to the present and he said the flavor reminded him of being a boy in Kaleva finding wild berries to eat. Soon after he wished to lie down. Alone with him at his bedside, I began to search for what I knew

(continued on page 4)

JAZZTOWN (continued from page 3)

would be my last words with him. He had been staring at the ceiling and just as I was about to say something grand and sentimental he began describing his search for a melody and rhythm - a musical passage for a march he had been composing that would have the clarinets playing a 3 against 4 pattern with the percussion section! And in an instant any awkwardness of saying goodbye was melted away and I held his hand while he continued to describe the music he heard in his head.

After my grandfather died I felt regret that I had not done a better job documenting his musical accomplishments in life. I would not let that happen again and that is the instant I committed to making JazzTown as a way to preserve the stories and accomplishments of my elders and mentors, before they died. And thus began the hardest thing I have ever done in my life.

I did all the filming, editing and soundtrack composition by myself, stumbling and learning as I went, and JazzTown took 12 years to complete, while trying to maintain a career as a drummer and remaining supportive as a father, during which time I went through two divorces, the death of my father, near bankruptcy, and eventually the selling of my drums, recording gear, car, and finally my home to get the film done. The process has been astounding... and just two weeks ago all of my film gear was stolen from our apartment... On the bright side I am now remarried in Bali, Indonesia, with a 2 year-old boy named Matteo. Dakota is now a 20 year-old in her second year of college with a 4.0 on a full-ride scholarship, and I have an award-winning film close to securing a distribution deal. Through it all I have felt both my father and grandfather's spirit at my side giving me strength and encouragement to forge ahead. With a bit of luck and plenty of SISU I plan to build a small home here on this island, replace my film cameras, and continue my work as a filmmaker. JazzTown is currently available from my website www.benmakinen.com for a donation in any amount of your choosing. You will then be sent a private link to watch the full length feature film JazzTown!

Keep a look out for my short film Who Killed Jazz which is currently garnering excited fans and awards on the film festival circuit and will be made available to the public by this summer.



Evert Makinen is pictured center with the 1973 photo of the Finlandia Brass.

MEMORIALS

In memory of **Christopher Donald Ruby** (3/1/22), nephew of FCA member Mary O'Brien, a donations has been made by Kathryn Hill.

In memory of FCA life member **John Robert "Bob" Malmstrom** (2/12/22) donations have been made by Linda Dolejs, Barry & Barbara Hiscox, John & Marisa Macinnis, Dominic & Marlo Pizzo, Darlene Siekas, Pauline Siekas, Robert & Karen Siekas, Mary Stapleton, and Karen Williams.

In memory of **Tilly Pirkko-Leena** (12/23/21) mother of FCA member Ilona Takakura, a donation has been made by Kathryn Hill.

In memory of FCA life member **Cortland Book** (12/18/21) a donation has been made by Dr. Alice Dubpernell.

In memory of FCA life member **Hannah Carlson** (9/6/20) a donation has been made by Edith Niederer.

In memory of **George W., Walter, and Robert W. Erickson** a donation has been made by The Columbus Foundation.

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, Soitoniekat/FinnFolk Musicians and Finnish American Singers. If a donation is undesignated, it goes to the General Fund for expenses of the Finnish 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 W. Eight Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48335. You may also direct your donation toward the Elders' Housing, but then your check must be made out to FCA Senior Housing. Memorial donations can now be made online on our revised FCA website; finnishcenter.org.

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

If you know of a member, parent or child of a member who is passed away, please contact the FCA.

FCA BAKERS

The FCAA bakers will meet again in the kitchen at 9:00 am on Thursday, May 5. Contact Paul Rajala if you would like to join us in some bread baking.

prajala@comcast.net
(248) 921-0831



Daffodills in bloom
In the Finlandia Gardens.

FINNISH CENTER ASSOCIATION



35200 W. Eight Mile Road
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Current Resident or

FCA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR _____ RENEWAL

Date _____ Phone: _____ email: _____

Applicant _____

Applicant/Spouse _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Signature _____ Are you of Finnish descent? _____

- Annual membership, single, one vote \$50.00
- Annual membership, senior* or youth*, one vote \$25.00
*Senior, over 65 years, youth under 30 years of age
- Annual membership, couple, two votes \$100.00
- Annual membership, family, one vote \$75.00
- Life membership, one vote \$500.00
- Life membership, senior, one vote (see membership for details)

Amount enclosed _____

Please make check payable to FCA and send to Finnish Center Association, Membership, 35200 W. Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48335-5108

Recommended by: _____

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