
Finger Lakes Finns

Volume 15, Number 4

NEWSLETTER

November / Marraskuu 2011

Yes, Santa helps!

By *Sonja Passi Seamon*

It was December 17, 2010 about 11:30 in the morning on Route 13 in downtown Ithaca, and we were stuck in traffic. My son, Harry, daughter-in-law, Denise, and I were on our way to do some Christmas shopping. The traffic was backed up and hardly moving. Apparently, there was a woman whose car had broken down. I started thinking how I would feel if my car broke down in the midst of holiday traffic with so much to do. I know I would be at my wit's end!

It was then that we saw him. Santa had pulled his vehicle onto the shoulder and was getting out of his car to help the damsel in distress. We all shouted at the same time, "IT'S SANTA!" He looked like the real deal with his own natural gray beard and familiar red suit. We watched him as he greeted the young lady in the car and quickly went to work under the hood. What a sight to see!

As I'm getting older I find myself on edge even under normal stress. But seeing Santa helping the distressed motorist brought the biggest smile to my face and to many other motorists as well.

The spirit of Christmas is alive!



Home for the Holidays Exhibit

November 25, 2011 – January 1, 2012

*Roberson Museum and Science Center
Binghamton, NY*

Richard and Janet Ahola will once again decorate a Christmas tree in Finnish style for the Roberson Museum's fine annual holiday display. We appreciate their creativity, and the time and effort they put into this project. Roberson Museum's Home for the Holidays exhibit opens to the public on November 25, 2011. This year, in addition to the International Christmas Tree Forest, visitors can enjoy Community Showcase Trees, and see the entire Roberson Mansion decorated for the holiday. Friday evenings and weekends during the exhibit include seasonally oriented planetarium shows. Also, don't miss the museum's newly expanded toy train layout, anticipated to be three times larger than the previous layout.

Driving directions, museum hours, and admissions information can be obtained by calling the museum at (607)-772-0660, or viewing their website: <http://www.roberson.org/>



Performer of the Year Concert By Jeanne Pakkala Frandsen

Excerpted from Jeanne's *Finger Lakes Finns News* article originally published in the October 2011 issues of the Finnish American Reporter.



The September meeting of the Finger Lakes Finns was held on the 18th at the Newfield Fire Hall, Newfield, New York. After our regular meal, short meeting, and raffle, we were entertained by Mr. Wilho Saari, Finlandia Foundation's Performer of the Year for 2011.

Mr. Saari told us that he didn't start playing the kantele until he was fifty years old although kantele players were in his family, starting way back with his great-great-grandmother, Kreetta Haapasalo, one of Finland's notable kantele players. During the performance, Mr. Saari's lovely wife, Kaisa, told us a little about this ancestor, who played the kantele to feed her large family during times of famine in Finland.

Mr. Saari is an exceedingly capable musician, as well as a kind and endearing gentleman. His ability on the kantele is outstanding. Those fingers move across the strings and bring out the most beautiful music, much of which he has composed himself. I can't remember how many pieces of music he has written in his career, but it is a large number.



He played some Finnish songs for us, and some American songs like "The Tennessee Waltz" which we hummed along to. He played songs from other countries also. We appreciated and enjoyed him very much.

At the end, he and his wife played and sang a song* which his great-great-grandmother had written years ago, and it was beautiful.

*Editor's note: The song is Kreetta Haapasalo's *Mun kanteleeni*, or, *My Kantele*, and is included on Mr. Saari's CD, *Vilhon Vintiltä*.



What is Hope?

*Hope, the welcoming hand to a stranger
Hope is why we vote
It carries us into the future
Hope is the hospital nursery, babies sleeping
Grandparents smiling, peeping
Hope continues, mothers caring for children
A cat nursing kittens
Hope is why snowsuits have attached mittens
Hope is the gardener planting seeds
with no assurance of harvest
but a guarantee of weeds
Hope helps the community thrive
Hope keeps us alive*

Lisa dC-Koski

Finnish Classes Starting Soon

Maija DeRoche is offering a series of 10 classes of basic Finnish, both conversational and structural, from January to May of 2012. The classes will be held on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm (or later if need be) at the Montour Falls Memorial Library.

The fee is \$50.00 per series, payable in full at the first class or incrementally as \$5.00 each class.

Interested students can pick up a registration form at our regular meeting, or contact Maija DeRoche directly at (607) 535-9521 or jderoche@stny.rr.com.

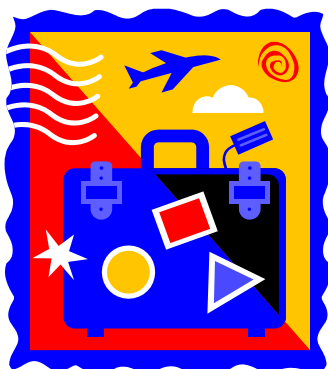


Salolampi Language Camp

Our membership coordinator, Richard Winkky, (below picture: front row, second from right) attended Salolampi's Fall Adult Week in September. He sent this picture of the attendees and encourages our members to consider attending this wonderful Finnish language and culture immersion camp in Northern Minnesota.

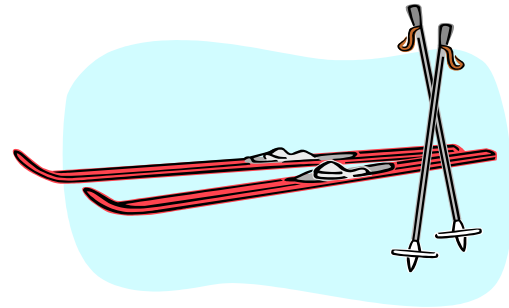


Summer 2012 Finland Tour



Join the Finger Lakes Finns cultural tour to Finland, July 17 to 27, 2012. The tour will fly Finnair direct from New York to Helsinki. Cost includes airfare, English speaking guide, private coach, lodging, and more.

The price is approximately \$3,000, but may change depending on currency exchange rates. If you would like an itinerary and more information about this fabulous tour, send an email to jeanlindblad@yahoo.com or call 607-229-3012.



Are these names familiar to you?

Järvinen, Peltonen, Karhu, Harju, and Laasanen?

Perhaps you'll recognize those names from the various pairs of cross-country skis you've owned and used over the years. More than enough snow for skiing will most likely arrive in the Finger Lakes region soon. Here are three ways to reconnect with those skis this winter.

The Cayuga Nordic Ski Club (CSNC) typically holds an annual ski race in January, at Hammond Hill State Forest in Dryden, New York, as well as organizing local and regional ski tours. CSNC welcomes new members, maintains a website, and publishes a newsletter. Find the club on the Internet at: <http://cayuganordicski.org>.

If you never cared for fiberglass or composite skis, you'll enjoy the information and discussion on this wooden-ski focused website: <http://www.woodenskis.com/>. The website's byline says, "Dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of skiing with wooden skis." The site has information about wooden ski brands and manufacturers, along with many photographs of wooden skis. Included are details and photos relevant to each of the Finnish ski manufacturers named above.

Skiing has a long history in Finland. FIS, the International Ski Federation, has an interesting timeline of the history of skiing on its webpage: <http://history.fis-ski.com/>. According to this site, the word "ski" was first introduced in 6,000 B.C. from the Finnish word "suksi." There are hundreds more ski-related facts to marvel over on FIS's timeline.

Finnish Music Camp Program
By Jeanne Frandsen



Left to Right: Joan Jedele, Doug Bayer, Megan Ludgate, Michael Ludgate, Katrina Mackey, Aara Edwards

At the meeting of the Finger Lakes Finns on October 16, 2011, Katrina Mackey gave an excellent program and slide show detailing her experiences at the Finnish Folk Music Camp which she attended from July 12 - 14, 2011 at Camp Lahti, near Hancock, Michigan. Camp Lahti is right on the shore of Lake Michigan, and was formerly a Finnish farm and home to a commercial fisherman.

Some of the classes she took while there included Beginning Fiddle, Familiar Finnish-American tunes with Carl Rahkonen, Arto Jarvela's Master Class, and Fiddle Tunes from Finland, and then there were rehearsals for the Student and Faculty Concert, held on day three.

At Sunday's Finger Lakes Finns' program, Katrina and a group of local musicians she had assembled played several pieces from camp, including a waltz, a schottische, and a polska. These tunes were very enjoyable. The members of the band were Aara Edwards, fiddle; Doug Bayer, tenor ukulele; Joan Jedele, guitar; Megan Ludgate, flute; and Michael Ludgate, mandolin.



This program made for a lovely afternoon of excellent musicianship and talent and everyone enjoyed it very much.



Hyvää Joulua ja
Onnellista Uutta
Vuotta!

Merry Christmas
and a Happy New
Year!



Native Holly botanical illustration, top, and wreath photo, above, by Michael Ludgate

A Word from Our President

Lisa dC-Koski



As fall changes toward winter, we remember joyfully the Fall Festival of our September meeting when we enjoyed Wilho Saari's Finlandia Foundation Performer of the Year kantele concert. Everyone was transfixed by the performance. Many thanks to all who helped to make the September festival a huge success.

Elections were held at our October meeting, and we would like to welcome Virpi Loomis, who has worked on several FLF projects in the past, to the office of secretary. We thank Jeanne Frandsen who has been a great secretary for four years. Sonja Seamon will continue as vice-president, Helen Sunderlin continues as treasurer, and I, Lisa Koski, will continue as president. We appreciate the steadfastness of the three officers remaining "on duty" for another year. Also, I would like to thank Oiva Vesa and Mary for taking over the transport of the library box from Richard Koski, who has done it for a few years. We are able to continue our Finger Lakes Finns organization when many members share in the total endeavor.

Also at our October meeting, we were treated to a wonderful program by Katrina Mackey. See page four for more information.

Looking forward to our November meeting when we will begin the distribution of poinsettias to our shut-ins, and then to our Christmas festivities at the December meeting.

Mission Statement of the Finger Lakes Finns

The Finger Lakes Finns is organized to promote cultural and educational appreciation of Finnish heritage and customs, to provide a social setting for enjoying old and new friendships in the Finnish tradition, and to pursue charitable community activities.

Membership shall consist of persons of Finnish descent, those married to persons of Finnish descent, and any other persons interested in the work and activities of the society.



Finger Lakes Finns Officers

President: Lisa dC-Koski

Vice President: Sonja Seamon

Treasurer: Helen Sunderlin

Secretary: Virpi Loomis

Membership and Change of Address Coupon

Join ___ Change ___ Renew ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

To join/renew Finger Lakes Finns membership, send \$10 annual dues per person, payable to

**Finger Lakes Finns,
c/o Richard Winkky,
819 Veteran Hill Rd.**

Horseheads, NY 14845-7262

Please send address changes to the same address.

Donations to the Finger Lakes Finns

If you would like to donate to the Finger Lakes Finns, please indicate whether you want your donation to go to the scholarship fund or the general fund. If you want the donation to be made in memory of someone, please indicate who it should be in memory of and to which fund it should go.

We would like to acknowledge your gift in our February 2012 newsletter. We will not print the dollar amounts of the gifts. *If you wish your donation to be anonymous, let us know and we will not print your name.*

Make checks out to Finger Lakes Finns, and send to our Treasurer, Helen Sunderlin, 3065 N. Triphammer Rd., Lansing, NY 14882.

Thank you.

As a non-profit organization, contributions to the Finger Lakes Finns are deductible in accordance with tax laws.

Coming Events

Nov. 20, Sunday, 1pm, at the Newfield Fire Hall: FLF dish-to-pass luncheon, business meeting, and a showing of the film "The Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World's Most Surprising School System." Also, we'll be distributing Christmas poinsettias for our shut-ins.

Dec. 18, Sunday, 1pm, at the Newfield Fire Hall: FLF dish-to-pass luncheon, business meeting, pikku joulu Christmas party with ham dinner and entertainment.

Jan. 15, Sunday, 1pm, at the Newfield Fire Hall: FLF dish-to-pass luncheon, business meeting, and program.

Jan. 15: Newsletter deadline for submission of articles, poems, photos, and notices for the Feb. 2012 issue (see right*).

Jan. 24, Tuesday, 6-10 pm, Toivo plays Finnish, Tex-Mex, Cajun, and original music at Maxie's Supper Club on W. State Street in Ithaca.

Feb. 19, Sunday, 1pm, at the Newfield Fire Hall: FLF dish-to-pass luncheon, business meeting, and program.

Membership

For membership, please use the form in this issue or at www.FingerLakesFinns.org. Mail the form with your check or money order, payable to Finger Lakes Finns, c/o **Richard Winkky 819 Veteran Hill Rd., Horseheads, NY 14845-7262**. Membership in Finger Lakes Finns is open to anyone of Finnish origin or with an interest in Finnish culture. **Dues are \$10 per person per calendar year**. Payment may be made at any time during the year, but covers membership only for the remainder of that calendar year.

Help us provide information and activities for Finns and Finnish friends to enjoy. You do not need to be a member to attend our meetings and activities, but your dues entitle you to continue receiving this newsletter and to vote on all FLF business at our meetings.

* Published February, May, August, and November. We welcome members to contribute content sent to: FLF Newsletter, c/o Katrina Mackey, P.O. Box 54, Jacksonville, NY 14854, [Email coalesce@fltg.net]. Newsletter Editorial Committee is Katrina Mackey, Richard Koski, Jim Loomis, and Lisa dC-Koski. **Submissions for the newsletter are due on the 15th of the month before publication.**

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