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Newsletter  
**FinNALA**

Finnish North American Literature Association

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Volume 3 Number 1

Winter 2009

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### 2009 Membership Renewal

This is a reminder to renew your membership, either online or by check to FinNALA, at 47283 Huron Street, Atlantic Mine, MI 49905. Renew promptly to make sure you receive the inaugural issue of *Kippis!*, our new literary journal.

### Welcome New Members

Elissa M. Della Rocca, Mary Caracker, Kate Laity, Sirpa Bagman, Burt Rairamo, Grace Roinila, Rekha Ambardar, and Shane Hirvi are the latest members of FinNALA. We are glad to welcome them.

These members are added since Finn Fest and, thus, our total numbers have grown to forty-three.

### Membership Meeting Report

The membership meeting was held at 2:00 p.m., July 26, 2008, at Finn Fest in Duluth. Present were B. Virtanen, F. Wiideman, G. K. Wuori, J. Johnson, J. Aukee, S. Matson, K. Dierking, and S. Packa. The meeting was chaired and minutes were taken by B. Virtanen

#### *Membership:*

It was reported that we now have 36 members in FinNALA.

#### *Journal:*

FinNALA has received a Finlandia Foundation grant of \$1,000 for support of a new literary journal. The name, *Kippis*, was suggested, and I have added the exclamation point, thus: *Kippis!*

#### *Financials*

Our membership fee is only \$10. Most thought it should be raised.

An additional charge for the literary journal was suggested so that membership might remain constant with added cost for subscription to the journal.

Advertising on the website and in the journal and the newsletter were discussed as possible sources of revenue.



Jim Johnson reading at FinnFest

#### *Website*

It was suggested that the visuals of the website should be improved. B. Virtanen noted that this may happen if the website is moved to the Finlandia University webspace. In addition, she noted that she might be able to use work-study students to

add information to the site and to upgrade some of the features.

It was also noted that the website could use a blog or chat feature to allow individuals to communicate with one another. B. Virtanen thought that she might be able to add a chat or discussion board feature accessible by members only. It was also suggested that the website explore software to upgrade the online bibliography.

### *Meetings*

The cost of supporting a booth in the tori was noted as prohibitive of further meetings in the tori. Because next year's Finn Fest is designed as a cruise, we collectively decided that a presence there was not an issue. We decided to request a room dedicated to our use for presenting literary work at Finn Fest in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

In addition to requesting a dedicated room for ongoing literary activities, the membership suggested that the workshops could be scheduled for morning, the readings could be scheduled for the afternoons, open microphone readings could be held in the evening, and FinNALA membership would oversee the staffing of the events so that only one person would not bear the bulk of the responsibility.

The dedicated room, it was also suggested, should replicate a coffee house venue, where people might come and go as they wished as the events continued. As well, food and beverages, especially coffee and pulla, might be served.

### **Packa to Judge Creative Writing Contest**

*Kippis!* sponsored a creative writing contest to support its inauguration. Sheila Packa coordinated the judging and Beth Virtanen received and prepared the manuscripts for judging. As this newsletter goes to press, there are approximately two

dozen entries. The revenue from the contest totals slightly less than \$10 per entry because of the fifty-nine cent fee collected by PayPal for those who enter online and because of the exchange rate for the Canadian dollar.



Sheila Packa reading at FinnFest

### **Reading Series at Finn Fest**

The reading series at Finn Fest went extremely well in spite of some difficulty with the noise in the tori. The readers included Donna Salli, Harry Siitonen, K. Alma Peterson, Sheila Packa, Lauri Anderson, G. K. Wouri, Jim Johnson,



Donna Salli reading at FinnFest

Beth Virtanen, Kirsten Dierking, Steve Lehto, Suzanne Matson, Diane Dettmann, Lisbeth Holt, Börje Vähämäki, Diane Jarvenpa, and Josef Aukee. In the future, we plan to request room space for literary readings at Finn Fests.

### **Virtanen at Finlandia University**

FinNALA President Beth L. Virtanen has accepted a position as Professor and Paloheimo Scholar at Finlandia University, commencing in 2008. Her work is primarily in the research of Finnish North American Literature. Her current project centers on a project leading to an anthology of Finnish North American Literature that is under contract with Edwin Mellen. The text is expected to appear in print sometime in 2010 and will be published in copy suitable for purchase by research university libraries and other academic audiences.

As part of her Paloheimo duties, Virtanen presented two lectures in the fall semester, one on religion and politics and the other on generations in Finnish North American Literature.



G. K. Wuori reading at FinnFest

### **Authors at Work**

G. K. Wuori's short story, "Upper Husbands," will be appearing in a print anthology commemorating the first fifteen years of the literary journal, *Literal Latte*, published in New York City. Also, he is pleased to announce that he has finally gained fame on YouTube with a short story, titled "Leaves," that originally appeared in the online journal, *Mad Hatter's Review*. The story was made into a video by two local university students and can be found by going to YouTube and typing "Wuori" into their search bar. It's not a lot of fame. Just a little.

Ernest Hekkanen has just finished a collection of poems entitled *Wintering Over: Poems Strewn on Snow*. His latest book, *Of a Fire Beyond the Hills*, is being considered for a Stephen Leacock Memorial Award.

Don Hagelberg appeared on local PBS radio station KALW discussing "restorative justice" and "rehabilitative imprisonment" on the program "Your Call" at the end of the year as well as reciting "On the Death of White Animals" during a program on the disappearance of Polar Bears from the Arctic. He described their absence as, "the canary in the cage which the miners took with them to make sure that the air was not poisoned. When the canary died, the miner knew that he had only a little bit of time left."

Don made appearances at The Barking Dog Coffee House in Boyes Springs as well as the Poetry Slam at the Santa Rosa Library not to forget his rendering of "Do Not Look Too Closely," his poem which argues for the reparative function of marriage.

He will appear at the Healdsburg City Hall for the Healdsburg Literary Saloon on January 18th to deliver his poem on Czeslaw Milosz, the Polish Nobel Prize winning poet.

The Finnish memoir, *Miriam, Daughter of Finnish Immigrants* by Diane Dettmann and Miriam Kaurala Dloniak, was released last summer. Diane read from the book at the FinNALA booth at Finn Fest 2008 which helped launch the book into a broader community of readers.

In November Diane presented the book to the *Finnish American Cultural Activities, Inc.* group at the International Institute in St. Paul, Minnesota where it received a very positive response.

The book was reviewed in *The Finnish American Reporter* in January. Karen Douglas, the reviewer, said the book is a “family treasure” that shares the family’s pride in their Finnish heritage and provides insights into the Finnish culture.

The Crossing Cultures book club at *Back to Books* bookstore in Hudson, Wisconsin selected the book for their January read and invited Diane to join the discussion.

Diane extends many thanks to Beth Virtanen and FinNALA for all the inspiration and support. *Miriam, Daughter of Finnish Immigrants* (Outskirts Press, 2008) is available online at Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other online bookstores.

To order your copy or contact Diane visit her website at <http://outskirtspress.com/dianedettmann>.

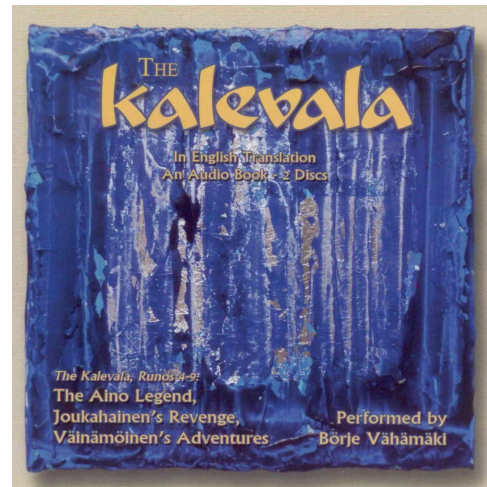
Börje Vähämäki is pleased to announce that the *Kalevala* audio book, Number 3, Runos 10-15, will be released in the spring by Aspasia Books. (The first CD in the *Kalevala* series is pictured below.)



First in *Kalevala* CD series by Aspasia

Volume 3 includes the tale of Ilmarinen’s forging of the Sampo and the story of Lemminkäinen, including his abandonment of his wife, his courting of the daughter of the Mistress of Pohjala, his

death and his return to life through the efforts of his mother. The second CD in the *Kalevala* series is pictured below.



Second in *Kalevala* CD Series by Aspasia

It will be for sale at Finn Fest 2009 on the cruise ship and will also be available through Aspasia Books and its website at <http://www.aspasiabooks.com/index.php>.

### What’s Happening

--translated from online *Helsingin Sanomat* by H. Siitonen

Kom-Theatre's spring premiere is “Kalavale.” Helsinki's Kom-Theatre's new spring production will be “Kalavale—Kansalliseepos” (“Fish Story-A National Epic”—Note the play on words with Kalevala.-HS). It will be based on Arti Salminen's (1959-2005) novel of the same name. Adaptation to the stage has been done by Pekka Milanoff, who will also direct the satire. The cast includes: Juho Milanoff, Niko Saarela, and Pekka Valkeejärvi. Opening night is on March 7.

### Heikinpäivä in the Copper Country

The Bear Rolls Over! (Karhu kylkeänsä kääntää!) The main events are scheduled for January 24 and 25<sup>th</sup> but activities continue from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>.

In 1999, the Finnish Theme Committee of the City of Hancock created Heikinpäivä, a new Finnish-American celebration. Its themes are taken from Finnish folk saying associated with the name day for Heikki (Henrik's day, 19 January).

Finnish speaking residents of the Copper Country still recall the Finnish proverbs their parents and grandparents brought with them, particularly, the weather proverbs connected with St. Henrik's Day: (1) "Karhu kylkeänsä kääntää" (The bear rolls onto his other side), (2) "Heikki heinä jakaa" (Heikki divides the hay) and (3) "Talven selkä poikki" (winter's back is broken). The bear—an ancient Finnish and Saame symbol—figures well in the celebration. Although a Hancock City event, the Heikinpäivä spirit has spilled into neighboring communities. From Calumet to South Range, activities abound. See the event website at <http://pasty.com/heikki/>.

### **Cover Designs for *Kippis!***

Two cover designs have been proposed for the first issue of *Kippis!* One is with a title box with white lettering on a black background and the other is for black lettering on a white background over a black-and-white photo of snow on spruce branches. Both are included on the following two pages. The final choice of designs rests with the printing costs, but the votes from the membership and interested public have gone heavily toward the darker design.

### **Weather Works by our members**

#### **From Southern Ontario**

--by Kaarina Brooks

Got up this morning to shovel the end of the driveway where the snowplough had pushed a snowy barrier. Thermometer read -25 C, and although I was wearing a parka and heavy gloves, it got too cold to finish the job. I guess I wasn't putting enough

OOMPH into my shovelling!

P.S. The man of the house flew to Egypt last night for a holiday. Smart man!

#### **Boston Weather Haiku**

--by Suzanne Matson

Mercury sinking  
to fifteen degrees, my dog  
left the door open.

#### **From Northern Illinois**

--by G.K. Wuori

I must be delirious. Just came back in from yet another snowblowing session - another six or eight inches last night. I'm as weary as the bending boughs on my snow-laden evergreens, but undefeated.

#### **From Oulu, Finland**

--by Raija Taramaa

Two days ago, it was raining cats and dogs in Oulu, Finland, but today we are having the first really cold day this winter. Twenty below (C), and the sun is shining. A beautiful day through my window. Trees are so beautiful, hidden under their snowy cover and the sun is glimmering on their frosty branches.

#### **From Beaverton, ON**

--by Börje Vähämäki

We have absolute calm, thundering quiet with the exception of the loud bangs in the corners of our wooden house or the crushing sound when the sole hits the snow.

#### **From Sointula Ranch, CA**

--by Paula Erkkila

We at Sointula Ranch have been gratefully deluged numerous times in the last two months, including getting lambasted by the tail end of a Pacific typhoon. This sunny 70 degree respite is pleasantly warming after a cold front that required covering and uncovering the citrus trees. We, however, earnestly beseech our dear Rain Goddess, to

bring on more storms, to end this three-year drought. We thank her for watering the plants and trees, and for helping to nourish the sacred and divine rutabaga I excitedly pulled out this morning, and the mouthwatering garden-fresh broccoli I munched on for breakfast.

From the mountains of Cazadero, the second rainiest area in California, "Let it rain, let it rain, let it rain!"

### **From South Florida in January**

--by Lis Holt

South Florida in January is a study in antique gold. We sit sipping wine in sun-splashed patios amidst mango-hued hibiscus blooms. Flirtatious breezes toy with our burnished hair.

### **From Carmel Valley, CA**

--by Josef Aukee

How can I speak of winter? It is 75 degrees on January 11th. We drove from Carmel Valley down to Big Sur to find eight or nine condors flying above or perched majestically on the cliff while spouts from migrating whales danced in the sun-drenched Pacific. On the way home, we had blueberry muffins with our feet in the cool tide pools. I think I got a tan.

### **Atlantic Mine, MI**

--by Beth L. Virtanen

The weather is odd. It's cold. It snowed, but not much--cold air doesn't like to pick up water. Still, the sky is bright white because the cold air has picked up some water. It's still. The birch tree out my window has a couple of inches of snow balanced atop its naked limbs. The evergreens hang with the weight of their load. If only the wind blew, . . . but it doesn't. The sky glows eerie white over the still and frozen landscape.

### **Newsletter Publication Team**

Beth L. Virtanen, PhD, Editor  
Sirpa Kaukinen, Associate Editor

### **70th Finnish Canadian Grand Festival**

The 70th Finnish Canadian Grand Festival will be celebrated where the festivities first began, in Sudbury, Ontario.

Most of the events will take place at the local Laurentian University campus, others at the Wanup Hall as well as the lovely Finlandia Village. Religious services will be offered at the local churches. The city of Sudbury will make their buses available for shuttle service between the sites. Hotel reservations can be made at the Radisson, Marriott, Holiday Inn and the new Hilton Hotel.

The organizing committee promises 'something for everyone' and encourages visitors to bring their families along. As usual there will be music, plays, seminars, tori, an art show and outside events such as the cellphone throwing Canadian championship, boot flinging and wife carrying as well as golf. Plays will be presented in both English and Finnish languages.

Pre-registration is preferred and is only \$12.00 or \$15.00 if you register at the festival. For information please go to: [www.finlandiavillage.ca/suurjuhlat2009](http://www.finlandiavillage.ca/suurjuhlat2009) or to contact anyone on the organizing committee go to: [suurjuhlat2009@finlandiavillage.ca](mailto:suurjuhlat2009@finlandiavillage.ca)

### **FinNALA Board**

Lauri Anderson, Finlandia University  
Varpu Lindström, York Univ. Toronto  
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Borje Vähämäki, University of Toronto  
Beth L. Virtanen, Finlandia University  
Marianne Brown, Independent Scholar  
Fran Wiideman, Michigan Tech. University

### **FinNALA Officers**

Beth L. Virtanen, President  
G. K. Wuori, Vice President