

## Endowed Chair in Finnish Studies at the University of Washington?

Gunnar Damstrom, editor

The dream of creating a Scandinavian & Baltic Studies Center at the UW did not materialize for now. The fundraiser goals were not met. However, let's not hang lips. We need to focus on more important issues.

At an Advisory Board meeting early October David Hodge, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences talked about the impact of the continuing reduction in State and federal support for the UW. Due to the budget cuts the College has over the last two years had to reduce almost 50 faculty from its program and more cuts can be expected. On a direct question, Mr. Hodge said the Finnish Program is imperiled.

There are many compelling reasons why the Finnish community and corporations should support the effort to create an Endowment Chair in Finnish Studies. Such a Chair would:

- secure the Finnish Program in an uncertain financial environment;
- expand coursework in Finnish language and culture;
- attract new students to a newly established Major in Finnish;
- enhance educational, cultural, and economic exchange with Finland, and
- support an ongoing series of public cultural events.

In 2003, a very successful program of public lectures in Finnish literature, culture, politics, film, and other subjects brought hundreds of visitors to campus to explore and celebrate Finland, its rich heritage, and its many contemporary influences. Funded by a one-time grant from the UW's Simpson Center for the Humanities, the Finnish Lecture Series provides a model of activity that can be continued with the funding and support only a Chair would make possible. A Finnish Chair would continue to bring both

recognized public figures and new influential leaders whose work centers upon Finland, and the entire region would benefit from this permanent increase in outreach and education. The lecture series in 2003 should also be seen as a continuation of an ongoing tradition of cooperation between the Seattle Finnish community and the University of Washington. FinnFest was hosted on the UW Campus in 1989 and 1999, bringing thousands of visitors to Seattle to renew, study, and celebrate Finland's culture.

The Scandinavian Department and FACC-NW are arranging a meeting December 15 at 7.00 p.m. at the University of Washington Burke Museum. A proposal will be made to create an Endowed Chair in Finnish Studies at the UW. Please plan to attend. I would value your participation as a personal favor.

## The Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington

The Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington was established in 1909 by a special act of the Washington State Legislature. During its history, the Department has grown from a one-person institution to comprise a teaching staff of twelve full-time faculty in Scandinavian and Baltic Studies.

The Scandinavian Department began offering an M.A. program in 1948 and has offered a Ph.D. program since 1967. Graduates from the Department have established careers in business, the professions and education. Graduate seminars are offered in Scandinavian literary genres, medieval literature, mythology, folklore, drama, film, politics, history, Old Icelandic and linguistics. On the undergraduate level, the Department offers majors in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and Scandinavian Area Studies as well as minors in Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, and Scandinavian Area Studies. With a total enrollment of approximately 37,000 students at the University of

Washington, the Scandinavian Department enrolls 2,000 undergraduates annually in its many courses. For the fall quarter of 2004 about 700 students registered in one or several of the programs offered.

The Scandinavian Department operating budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003 was \$859,020. The program was funded 79% through State support and tuition fees, 12% through private gifts and 9% through endowments. The endowment principal amounted to \$1.35 million.

The operating budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2004 was \$788,459. The program was funded 73% through State support and tuition fees, 18% through private gifts and 9% through endowments. State support fell 5% and private giving increased 50%. The endowment principal grew to \$1.54 million.

The Finnish program is comprised of one tenure-track Professor and one Lecturer. The Professor's position is funded by State support and tuition income, and the Lecturer position is sponsored 50% by Finland's Ministry of Education (CIMO) and 50% by state and tuition income. Of the Department's total endowment of \$1.54 million, 3% is dedicated to the Finnish Program (I'm blushing).

The Scandinavian Department Advisory Board constitutes a group of advisors and friends which acts as a liaison between the Department and the Community. Meeting quarterly, the Advisory Board offers advice on how the Department can meet its community service commitments. In 1996, prompted by the repeat cuts in State support, the Advisory Board began discussions on ways in which private fundraising could strengthen the program and guarantee the success of Scandinavian studies at the University of Washington. In January 1997, a representative from the Baltic Community joined the Advisory Board as a regular member and liaison to support the continued development of Baltic Studies in the Department. Subsequently representatives of all three Baltic communities have become active and contributing members of the Board.

The Baltic Community has an ongoing program to build endowment for the Baltic Studies program of \$3 million. The fundraising drive is well underway and donors have already pledged \$0.75 million.

### Crayfish Party

One of the major cultural events arranged by the FACCNW is the annual crayfish party. This year Anna Liisa and Pentti Rinne hosted the (member only) party. Jussi Mikkola, Pentti Rinne and Gunnar cooked the crayfish according to the ancient Finnish ritual. This year the bugs cost 40c each. Not bad considering the price at the Helsinki Public Market, US \$4.00 each.



Judging from the happy faces the event was a great success



## Finnish Bazaar

Captions from the Finnish Bazaar November 13 at the Nordic Heritage Museum



Bargaining at the desk of the Swedish Finn Historical Society.



The crew at the desk of the UW Scandinavian Department Finnish Program



Bargaining at the desk of Finlandia Foundation



Bargaining at the desk of the Finnish Lutheran Church