

At FinnFest, heritage on display

Finnish-American Folk Fest coming to Naselle

By NICK NIKKILA
EO Media Group

NASELLE, Wash. — With the start of the biennial Finnish-American Folk Festival a few weeks away, the festival planning committee has now shifted into a higher gear and anticipation of the event is running high.

The event, which has come to be known as FinnFest, is scheduled to take place on July 29 and July 30 with the worship and closing ceremonies on July 31.

FinnFest has taken place on every even numbered year since 1982 at the school in Naselle, often referred to as “the little village with the big heart.”

The theme for this year’s festival is “My Finnish Memories,” and is dedicated to honoree Anna Wirkkala Ehrlund. Ehrlund, now in her mid-90s, is one of the founders of the festival and a much loved local historian.

Debbie Littlefield, a Naselle artist, has created an exquisite piece of artwork that depicts Ehrlund, dressed in Finnish clothing, sitting on her favorite bench recalling memories of the past. Thanks to the efforts of festival committee member Jan Wolfe, that artwork can be found on a number of items such as coffee cups, tote bags, aprons, T-shirts and sweat-shirts which will be available for purchase during the festival.

The festival hosts a golf tournament on July 28 at the Peninsula Golf Course in Long Beach. It is a team scramble event scheduled for a shotgun start at noon. Pre-registration is required and the application can be downloaded from the festival’s website www.nasellefinnfest.com. The winning team is entitled to possess the sought after champions display for the next two years.

Haleigh See has, once again, organized the Paavo Nurmi run/walk which will begin at 8 a.m. on July 30. The registration form can be downloaded from the above mentioned website. The 5K run/walk is a fun event and pre-registered participants receive a commemorative T-shirt.

Attendees can also participate in the wife carry and other competitions that will take



EO Media Group/File Photo

Naselle’s Finn-American Folk Festival, held every even-numbered year, is coming up. These girls participated in 2014.

place on the football field under the direction of Rob Dalton.

Performance chairman Lyle Haataja and his committee have lined up an array of talented musical performers for the festival. Performances will take place outside in the stadium as well as in the school commons on July 29 and July 30.

One new group of performers is creating quite a buzz. It is the Laulaa Out Loud children’s choir made up of local children between the ages of 3 to 11. The choir, under the direction of Becky Underhill, is scheduled to perform during the festival opening on July 29

and again as the opening act on July 30 in the school commons. Local girls, under the guidance of See, will perform the Maypole dance.

Cultural programming chairman Anita Raitakka has arranged a number of lectures, films, displays and instructional programs which will take place in various classrooms. These include presentations by local historian and author Bryan Pentilla and an introduction to the Finnish language for children by See. A 58-minute film entitled, “This is my Childhood; Finland at War,” will be shown on July 29. Lectures will cover a variety of topics, such as: why Nordic emigrants settled in the Lower Columbia; the

History of Longview/Kelso Finns; Sami Shaman ancestry; and the successes and frustrations of tracing family genealogy.

The Tori, a marketplace for Finnish and American crafts will be open in the school’s gymnasium. Outside, various food vendors will be available with a variety of Finnish and other food items. In addition to the vendors’ food booths, the local Alpha Theta Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha will have a Pannukakku (Finnish oven-baked pancake) breakfast from 7 to 10 a.m. July 30. The Grays River Grange will be serving a salmon dinner from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. later that same day.

Pokemon players are trespassing, risking arrest or worse

Craze drives players to wander around

By BEATRIZ COSTA-LIMA
and MARY HUDETZ
Associated Press

PHOENIX — The “Pokemon Go” craze across the U.S. has people wandering into yards, driveways, cemeteries and even an off-limits police parking lot in search of cartoon monsters, prompting warnings that trespassers could get arrested or worse, especially if they cross paths with an armed property owner.

Since the release of the smartphone game last week, police have gotten a flurry of calls from residents about possible burglars or other strangers prowling the neighborhood.

So far, few tickets have been issued, and there had been no reports of arrests or assaults through Wednesday on trespassers playing the game, whose object is use the phone’s GPS technology to find and capture animated creatures in real-world places.

“Be careful where you chase these Pokemon or whatever it is you chase because we have seen issues in other places with people going onto private property where a property owner didn’t want them on there,” said Assistant Police Chief Jim McLean in Pflugerville, Texas.

Legal gray area

Some players have expressed worries on social media that the game could result in a fearful property owner pulling a gun — a scenario that could fall into a legal gray area in the nearly two dozen states with “stand your ground” laws that allow people wide latitude to use deadly force when they believe they are in danger.

McLean’s department posted a Facebook warning Monday after officers spotted a man playing the game in a section of a police parking lot where the public isn’t allowed. The player had to pass keep-out signs and go over a fence or under a gate to reach the area.

“I’m not sure how he got back there, but it was clear what he was doing,” McLean said. “He was playing a Pokemon game with his phone up in the air.”

In Utah, Ethan Goodwin, 17, of Tremonton, was slapped with a trespassing ticket that he worries could cost him up to \$200 after he and a couple of friends went on an early morning Pokemon chase at an abandoned warehouse. He managed to catch three creatures.

“I wouldn’t say it was worth it, but I would say I’m glad I have the Pokemon I have now,” he joked. He added: “It’s a dumb game, really, really stupid.”

Be aware

Every time the app is opened, a warning from game maker Niantic pops up,



AP Photo/Mark Thiessen

A sign at the National Weather Service in Anchorage, Alaska, Tuesday informs Pokemon players that it’s illegal to trespass on federal property. The staff started noticing an uptick of people in the parking lot after the location was included as a gym in the popular game.

telling players to be aware of their surroundings. Players must also agree to fine print saying they cannot

enter private property without permission.

There’s also a disclaimer that says Niantic is not lia-

ble for any property damage, injuries or deaths that result while playing.

But those warnings don’t seem to be getting through.

In Phoenix, police have started posting humorous and colorful warnings on social media, saying chasing the orange dragon Charizard is not a valid reason to set foot on someone else’s property.

Nor is chasing the cat-like Mewtwo, according to Boise, Idaho, police. They posted a Facebook message saying officers responded to several calls about players trespassing on private property and illegally trekking across parks after dark.

Watch for traffic

Gamers are also being warned to watch for traffic while playing and not to drive while on the app.

One woman told WPXI-TV in western Pennsylvania that her 15-year-old daughter was hit by a car while playing the game and crossing a busy highway. The girl was hospitalized with an injured collarbone and foot, as well as cuts and bruises, said her mother, Tracy Nolan.

Capt. Michael Fowler with the Hanahan, South Carolina, police said his department in the city of about 20,000 has gotten a few suspicious-activity reports related to “Pokemon Go,” including multiple calls from a woman who feared for her safety as she watched cars go in and out of a church parking lot across from her house.

“I didn’t know what was going on. The last time I heard about Pokemon was back in the ‘90s,” Lynn Menges, 59, said.

Lt. Lex Bell, of the Unified Police Department in Utah, said officers outside Salt Lake City have responded to similar calls. Most come after dark, with residents saying they believe motorists driving slowly through their neighborhood may be casing their homes. In one instance, a woman mistook a few glowing cellphones for flashlights as players hunted characters near her daughter’s car.

Several cemeteries, including Arlington National outside Washington, have expressed worries about players on their grounds.

At Mobile Memorial Gardens in Alabama, president Timothy Claiborne said he has seen visitors walking or driving around with phones in their hands, playing the game. He asked people in about three dozen vehicles to leave over the past couple of days, earning him the title “chief of the Pokemon patrol” from the staff.

“I just think we need to continue to have respect not only for the dead but for those who are grieving the dead,” he said.

Hudetz reported from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Associated Press writers Jonathan Drew in Raleigh, North Carolina; Hannah Cushman in Chicago; and Samantha Shotzberger in Phoenix also contributed to this report.

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