

usage in Finnish communities, the researchers traveled across Canada and the American Midwest, then to Grays Harbor and the Lower Columbia region, where they interviewed Finnish residents.

At the time, Sue Pakenen Holway was already collecting historic photographs and writing down stories from local immigrants. Korhola encouraged her to continue the work and expand her contacts. Holway, alongside others in Naselle who were intrigued with Finnish heritage, thought an outdoor festival displaying arts, music, crafts and food might be an appealing way to share their findings.

A group of interested organizers in the region soon applied for a grant from Humanities Washington, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts. They then recruited more than 60 volunteers to create a single-day event in 1982 at a local school.

They expected that perhaps a few hundred people might attend the new festival, but were astounded that over 3,000 partook in revelries that lasted until midnight. Thus, Naselle's Finnish American Folk Festival was born.

This year's festivities begin at 10 a.m. on Friday with films, cultural programming and workshops in the commons of the Naselle School building. Welcome ceremonies and Maypole dancing will be held at noon.

Late afternoon on Friday will be filled with performances, including from the Soitorasia Finnish-American Trio. The group will be honoring Wilho Saari, a late kantele player. Later, author Karl Marlantes and singer-songwriter Eeppi Ursin will each take the stage.

"We are so excited to have Eeppi Ursin with us (on) both Friday and Saturday nights," Barb Swanson, one of the festival's organizers, said.

A flurry of events are scheduled for Saturday, starting early with a Pannukakku pancake breakfast and "Paavo Nurmi" run and walk at 8 a.m. Also slated are competitive games such as the wife-carry contest, boot toss and Nokia phone toss. An opening ceremony will begin at 10 a.m., when contest winners will be announced.

"There's so much to do. There will be special activities for kids, the tori marketplace with so many things to buy and eat," Swanson said. "There also will be food demonstrations all day making Finnish specialties like pancakes, rye bread, flat bread or cinnamon rolls and exhibits of vintage items and art," she added.

Grays River Grange will sponsor a salmon dinner from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, while more musical performances



Natalie St. John

Maypole dancers perform at a previous festival.



Singer-songwriter and pianist Eeppi Ursin is scheduled to perform during this year's festival.

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**Barb Swanson**, Finnish American Folk Festival organizer

will be held at the Grabenhorst-Hall Fieldhouse. Performances from the Nordic Viking Scandia Dancers and the Katrilli Dancers will follow.

"We'll have seven class reunions going on during festivities," Swanson said. She notes that the reunions are a festival tradition.

More Saturday evening entertainment is

slated later, including violinist Kim Angelis and pianist Jennifer Goodenberger.

On Sunday, a nondenominational worship service will be held at Rueben Penttila field. Coffee and pulla will be served afterwards.

Who knew that a professor from Helsinki, Finland, and his curious assistant would spawn such a delightful event?



Maypole dancers smile in costume during a moment's pause at a previous festival.