

News from the Sami Cultural Center of North America

Winter/Dálvi 2014-15



THE SAMI CULTURAL CENTER HAS A NEW HOME!



The Sami Cultural Center of North America is pleased to announce that on August 15, 2014, we moved into a two-room suite in the Lakeside Professional Building in Duluth, MN, where we have space for an office, library, storage, some display area, and meeting place. This enables us to carry on our educational, exhibit, and publication activities in a dedicated place. The Center has a sizable library of books about the Sami people and the Alaska Sami projects that are available for research on site. The non-profit organization Sami Cultural Center of North America was started by a group of North American Sami descendants who have been doing programs, publications, art exhibits, and research for over 20 years. The new address is 4915 East Superior St., Suite 205, Duluth, MN 55804. The email address is samicenterna@gmail.com and phone 218/525-4757. We are so appreciative of generous donations from many individuals and grants from Finlandia Foundation National (for our web site and archival supplies) and the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation that have made this possible.

Faith Fjeld, Founding Organizer and Board Member of SCC (1935-2014)

The Sami Cultural Center family is very saddened at the passing Faith Fjeld, founding organizer and board member of the Sami Cultural Center, on October 18 in Moab, Utah. Her legacy as founding editor of *Báiki: the International Sami Journal* and as one of the organizers of SCC is great. Her sustained work as writer, artist, culture bearer, and editor has contributed enormously to the Sami North American community. She made connections all over the world—her network was far-reaching and deep and she is the reason so many of us are a part of the North American Sami family.

Her extensive research and work on the Alaska Sami story continues to educate through exhibits and publications. She was very excited to see the dream of a physical space for the Sami Cultural Center realized and was able to participate in its dedication via phone on August 31. So it is with both sorrow at her passing and joy in her legacy, we celebrate her life and extend our sympathy to sons Clay and Bruno and granddaughters Ruby and Olivia.

The library at the Sami Cultural Center, which contains many books from Faith's collection, has been named the Faith Fjeld Memorial Library in her honor.

A more complete obituary and life story can be found at <http://www.baiki.org/content/FaithFjeld.htm>.



A celebration of Faith's life will be held beginning at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 24, 2015, at the Lafayette (Park Point) Community Center, 3026 Minnesota Avenue, Duluth, MN.

EXHIBITS AT MN DISCOVERY CENTER



The exhibit *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska*, which was produced by the Center along with *Báiki: The International Sami Journal*, was on display at the MN Discovery Center, Chisholm, MN, May 3 through August 31, 2014. The exhibit honors the Sami families who came from Norway in 1894 and 1898 to teach reindeer husbandry to the native Inupiaq and Yup'ik people of Western Alaska. The exhibit included historic photographs, family stories, *duodji* (useful items made beautiful), traditional clothing, and a full sized and furnished *lavvu*—a traditional Sami dwelling. Some of the items from the exhibit will be on display at the Center until it is moved to a new, as yet to be determined, location in 2015.

The exhibit was held in conjunction with an exhibit of photographs by Erika Larsen—*Sámi - Walking with Reindeer*. A gala opening weekend was held May 3-4, which included a lecture by Hugh Beach, gallery talks, craft demonstrations, and a North American Sami gathering and dinner. The exhibit closed the weekend of August 30-31 with a presentation and gallery talk by co-curator Nathan Muus, drum making demonstrations by Mel Mattson, and the rededication of the Sami *goahiti* on the grounds of the Discovery Center.

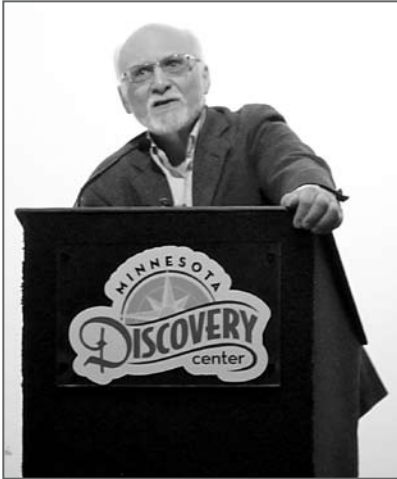


A group photo taken during the opening of the *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska* exhibit.

Center board members Dawn Nixon, Cari Mayo, and Nathan Muus on the exhibit closing weekend.



PROFESSOR HUGH BEACH VISITS MINNESOTA



Hugh Beach talks at MN Discovery Center.

Rain, snow, and howling winds off Lake Superior did not seem to dampen the enthusiasm of Swedish visitors to Minnesota, Hugh and Annie Beach. After growing up in a Swedish-American family on the east coast, Hugh Beach did a stint in Sweden as a reindeer herder following his graduation from Harvard in anthropology. He decided to remain in Sweden and received his PhD from Uppsala University, where he has now taught for many years. His reindeer herding experiences in Sweden, Norway, Alaska, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia have led to the publication of many books and articles on the various economic, political, and cultural aspects of the industry including the popular *A Year in Lapland: Guest of the Reindeer Herders* (originally published by Smithsonian Institution Press and now in print with the University of Washington Press ISBN 978-0295980379).

While in Minnesota, Hugh made several presentations on the contemporary conditions of the reindeer herding culture and economy including at the Cloquet Public Library, speaking on *The Sámi in Sweden Today*. At the University of Minnesota Duluth his topic was *Long-term Effects of the Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster on the Swedish Sámi*, where the program was sponsored by the Kathryn A. Martin Library, the American Indian Learning Resource Center, and the Royal D. Alworth, Jr. Institute for International Studies. While at the Minnesota Discovery Center, Chisholm, MN, he presented an overview of *Contemporary Reindeer Herding in Alaska* (1980s, 2010) in conjunction with the opening of the exhibit *The Sámi Reindeer People of Alaska*. A hit with the elementary students at the Grand Portage Ojibwe School was his hands-on demonstration of reindeer lassoing techniques. The North House Folk School in Grand Marais also hosted a community gathering and presentation.

Hugh and Annie Beach's visit was organized and sponsored by the Sami Cultural Center of North America and *Báiki: the International Sámi Journal*. Hugh Beach's travel was supported by the Royal Academy of Arts and Letters, Uppsala, Sweden.

ERIKA LARSEN SPEAKS AT MN DISCOVERY CENTER

The videos and photographs of documentary photographer and writer Erika Larsen captivated an appreciative audience on June 14th at the Minnesota Discovery Center, Chisholm, MN. Her photos were taken during her four-year photography project among the Sámi. Erika chose to live as a *beaga* (housekeeper) for the reindeer herding family of Nils Peder and Ingrid Gaup while photographing near Kautokeino, Norway and Gällivare, Sweden. From that intimate vantage point, she was able to immerse herself in the culture, language, and land of the northern Sámi. The resulting photos were featured in a *National Geographic* article, a stunning coffee table book *Sámi - Walking with Reindeer*, and the 20 photograph exhibit of the same name at the MN Discovery Center. She speaks, both with photographs and words, of the connection of the present day Sámi with their rich ancestral heritage through nature and the land. Although coming as an outsider, she looks to the Sámi as teachers, “Through the Sámi I hope to better understand our role as stewards of the earth. It is inevitable when spending time in a more nature-based culture that one must recognize the cycles of life and death and therefore begin to evaluate man’s role within this circle.”

In an informal gallery talk following her presentation, Erika contacted a friend in Sápmi on her cell phone and the audience was treated to a yoik honoring the Alaskan Sami, who are the subjects of the companion exhibit *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska*. Erika’s exhibit was sponsored by the Sami Cultural Center, which hosted a dinner in Erika’s honor in Duluth following her appearance in Chisholm.



Erika Larsen signed copies of her book.

THE REDEDICATION OF THE GOAHTI AT MN DISCOVERY CENTER



The Sami Cultural Center sponsored a rededication of the *goahti* at the Sami Camp at the MN Discovery Center on August 31. Built during the summer of 1996 by Ilmari Mattus assisted by Anssi Mattus, Charlie Mayo, and Oiva Ylonen, the traditional Inari Sami turf house was renovated last summer. The restoration of the *goahti* in combination with the summer exhibits and programs have inspired renewed interest in the Sami.

Students from the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University visited the Center during September to do research and interviews in preparation for their trip to Sápmi in early January to do a documentary film. They belong to the student non-profit group *Extending the Link* (<http://www.csbsju.edu/center-for-entrepreneurship/student-run-ventures/extendingthelink>). Their mission states: “Through the creation of annual documentaries, ETL fosters discussion on global issues. By applying these documentaries as vehicles for positive social change, ETL inspires and empowers students, faculty, alumni and the greater community to work for improved social justice at home and abroad.”

They saw the presentation on the North American Sami Reawakening and shared a lively lunch with Center volunteers. They also interviewed Sami elder Solveig Johnson and became acquainted with the fine Sami collection of literature at the Kathryn A. Martin Library at the University of Minnesota Duluth.

STUDENTS PAY A VISIT TO THE CENTER



Extending the Link students look over research materials available at the Center.

WANT TO HELP?

The Sami Cultural Center is operating as an entirely volunteer organization. There are many immediate and future volunteer opportunities if you would like to participate in the exciting work of establishing the Center.

VOLUNTEERS AND COMMITTEES NEEDED ~

- * TWO to THREE BOARD POSITIONS
- * STAFFING FOR OUR OPEN HOURS
- * WORK DAY: We are in need of people to help with a couple of work days—small painting projects, cleaning in the kitchen, storing objects archivally
- * FUND RAISING: researching available funding sources, grant writing, mailings, and donor solicitation
- * WEBSITE: helping develop content and maintain the SCCNA website
- * LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES ORGANIZATION: helping to organize and record the library and collections
- * HOSPITALITY: hosting visiting culture bearers and other guests

If you would like to help in any way, contact the Center at 218/525-4757 or email samicenterna@gmail.com.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Center is open on Tuesdays 3 - 7 p.m. or by appointment at other times. (Use the Pitt Street entrance when visiting the Center.)

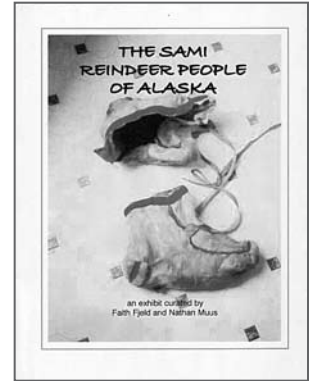
Sami Cultural Center of North America
4915 East Superior St., Suite 205,
Duluth, MN 55804.
email: samicenterna@gmail.com
phone: 218/525-4757.

DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTION

The Center has received a number of donations to the collections including two men’s gaktis, numerous books, research articles, CDs and records, a reindeer hide purse, prints, several “Sami” t-shirts, a child’s gakti, and more. Many thanks to donors who are generously adding to the material for research and display. Maybe a t-shirt exhibit in our future?

ITEMS FOR SALE AT THE CENTER

A 54-page exhibit catalog features a history of the Alaska Reindeer Project by Faith Fjeld, historic photographs and stories from the exhibit, a list of Reindeer Project families, and an extensive bibliography. The catalog is available from the Center at a cost of \$10 plus \$4 S & H for 1 copy, \$2 for each additional copy. MN residents add 69¢ tax per copy. Canadian orders are US\$10 plus US\$5 shipping. European orders are US\$20 including shipping.



Also see Sami flags, pins, and bumper stickers for sale at the Center.

Watch for the launch of our new web site coming soon and join 700 others and like us on Facebook at Sami Cultural Center of North America!

There are no membership fees, but your tax deductible and much appreciated gift to the Sami Cultural Center of North America will help fund the work of the Center.

Here is my gift of _____ to help with the work of the SCCNA. My gift is in honor of: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

My gift is in memory of: _____

Please send an acknowledgment of this gift to:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

My employer will match this gift. Enclosed is the company’s matching gift form.

I prefer not to receive an appreciation award.

Please send your contribution to ~
Sami Cultural Center of North America
4915 East Superior Street, Suite 205
Duluth, MN 55804

On-line donations can be made using this link:
<https://givemn.org/donate?s=sami+Cultural+Center+of+North+America>