

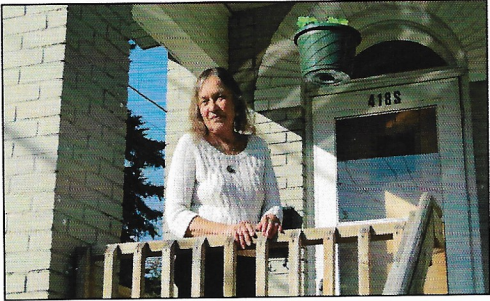
BAIKI

THE INTERNATIONAL SAMI JOURNAL
ISSUE #38, SUMMER 2015



REMEMBERING FAITH FJELD

IN THIS ISSUE



Faith Fjeld in 2012
photo by Kiersten Chase

This special issue of *Báiki* is produced in memory of founding editor Faith Fjeld with contributions from *Báiki* writers, artists, and friends ~

Muriel Antoine, Liz Carlson, Ruthanne Cecil, Kiersten Chase, Anne Dunn, Tim Frandy, Harald Gaski, Elina Helander-Renvall, Pearl Johnson, Solvieg Arneng Johnson, Bruno Kark, Rauna Kuokkanen/Philip Burgess, Vicki Lantto, Hans Ragnar Mathisen, Cari Mayo, Ham Muus, Nathan Muus, Brad E. Nelson, Nancy Olson, Kurt Seaberg, Karen Hilja Weaver, Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, John Weinstock, Aina Wiklund, Marlene Wisuri.

Báiki: the International Sami Journal

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THE HOME THAT LIVES IN THE HEART



The famous map, *Sápmi: Land of People Without Borders*, done by Hans Ragnar Mathisen - Keviselle - was printed in Issue #2 of *Báiki*.

"Báiki" [bye-h'kee] is the nomadic reindeer-herding society's word for the cultural identity that survives when people move from one place to another. *Báiki: the International Sami Journal* grew out of the search for Sámi connections world wide by people in North America. After its appearance in 1991 the Sámi presence in the United States and Canada was finally acknowledged. The *Báiki* logo was designed by Faith Fjeld, *Báiki*'s founding editor and publisher, using pictographs from Sámi Drums. The reindeer symbolizes subsistence, the *lavvus* [Sámi dwellings] symbolize the extended family, the mountain behind symbolizes the Mother Earth, and the *njalla* [storage shed] symbolizes traditional knowledge preserved for new generations.

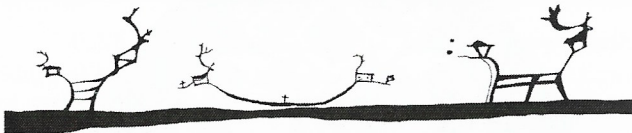
The "Sámi" [sah-mee] — also spelled "Saami" or "Sami" — are the Indigenous People of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula. The Sámi area in the North is called "Sápmi" [sahp-mee], and in the South "Áarjel Saemieh" [war-yel sah-mee-eh]. The nine Sámi languages are related to the Finno-Ugric, Samoyedic, Uralic, and Altaic language groups. There are about 80,000 Sámi People living in the Nordic countries. It is estimated that there may also be well over 30,000 people living in North America who have Sámi ancestry. Some are the descendants of the reindeer herders who came to Alaska and Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and some are the descendants of Sámi immigrants who settled in the Midwest, the Upper Michigan Peninsula, the Pacific Northwest and parts of Canada during the same period.

The Sámi refer to their spiritual belief system as "the Nature Religion." Sámi society has traditionally been organized into *siidas* or *samebys* — semi-nomadic extended families who hunt, fish, farm, and harvest together according to Nature's subsistence cycles. This worldview and way of life is still a part of Sámi society wherever possible.

Sámi history parallels that of the earth's other Indigenous Peoples. Colonization and genocide began in the Middle Ages after contact with European missionaries, traders, and scientists. Sámi areas were divided by national borders, and Sámi children were removed from their families and placed in boarding schools where they were taught to think and act like the colonizers. Conversion by the church and assimilation by the state set the stage for the abuse of the Sámi natural resources.

Today the Sámi are incorporating new technologies in the revival of their languages, the *yoik*, and other traditional arts, and the Sámi are in the forefront of the worldwide post-colonial renaissance of Indigenous voice and vision. Moreover, having their own parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland, the Sámi relationship with their former colonizers is improving as well.

BÁIKI EDITORIAL PAGE



In the fall of 1991, the first eight-page issue of *Báiki: an American Journal of Sami Living* was published with Faith Fjeld as the founding editor. For the next 23 years, Faith devoted her time and energy to the publication of 37 issues that included non-fiction, stories, poetry, art, book reviews, letters, photographs, and news of the Sami North American community. The journal went through several name changes including *Báiki: the North American Journal* and *Báiki: the International Sami Journal*. With the first appearance of *Báiki* and throughout its history, it served as a catalyst bringing together far flung Sami descendants and it provided information about Sami history and culture that was difficult to obtain from other sources, especially in the pre-social-media times. Faith solicited writers, scholars, and artists from all over the world as contributors and commentators who freely shared their knowledge and talents. The look of *Báiki* changed as advances in technology made more sophisticated graphic design possible. Faith's skill as an artist and graphic designer made the publication a thing of beauty and she was proud of what she termed "the *Báiki* look."

With the publication of this Issue #38, the subscription-based printed *Báiki* will end in accordance with Faith's final wishes. However the work of *Báiki* will continue through occasional special publications, the *Báiki* web site and Facebook group, programming, and sponsorship of exhibits. The Sami Cultural Center of North America will continue to serve as the 501(c)(3) fiscal agent for *Báiki* and its activities.

We know that Faith planted well the seeds of the North American Sami movement, and her passing will not end her legacy. Her work with community building has brought together many who are carrying on the work of preserving indigenous values.

It is only fitting that we harken back to Faith's vision as she began the journey that was *Báiki* as she wrote the following editorial in Issue #1. Her vision was clear from the very beginning and while it may have grown over time, she remained true to her original dream.

Faith's words in 1991:

It is my hope that *Báiki* will represent the re-awakening of the Sami spirit in America, a spirit that has been dormant for many decades. I believe that the appearance of this journal is proof in black and white that indigenous roots and spiritual connections survive the attempts to destroy them. The clandestine immigration of thousands of our ancestors to America under the guise of being "Norwegian," "Swedish," and "Finnish" has created generations of descendants whose Sami identity has either been totally lost, or treated like an amusing family joke to be disclaimed whenever it surfaced. Museums and festivals that feature Scandinavian-American cultures often relegate us to the status of token mascots. Supposedly well-researched books and scholarly papers on Scandinavian-American Immigration ignore us completely. By now our numbers must have at least tripled and yet census figures fail to record the Sami presence in America! Nils-Aslak Valkeapää has called us "Europe's forgotten people" but we are America's forgotten people too.

Not knowing who I am and where I am from, it has been difficult for me to "fit in." I am drawn to Indian America but I am not American Indian. I am attracted to the black and Latino cultures of America, but I am not from Africa or Latin America. I have heard that our origin is in Asia, but I am far from the keepers of oral tradition who could tell me if this is true. And so I have sat amongst the Norwegian Americans eating their holiday lutefisk and singing their Lutheran hymns—feeling like a sojourner, personifying the meaning of the word "Lapp." I have allowed myself to be an "outcast" while longing to connect with the Sápmi of my "Norwegian" grandparents and the Sápmi of my own "American" self.

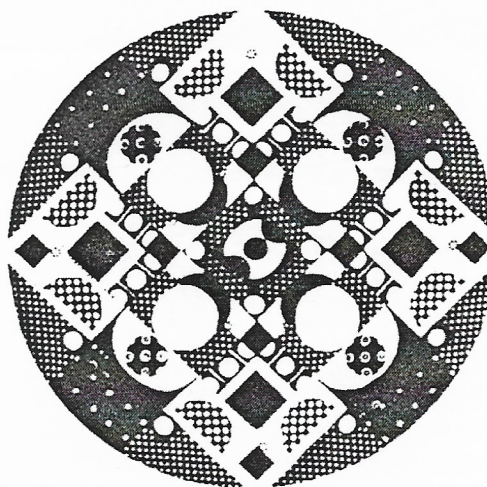
To believe that my indigenous roots died when they were pulled up and transplanted is to ignore the fact that indigenous peoples are always in the process of migration and relocation; mobility and flexibility are integral to the indigenous way of life. To believe that my spiritual connections are limited by time and space is to forget that relationships are circular as the Indigenous continued on page 4...

...from page 3

have always known, not linear as the assimilated seem to think. To believe that I can cease to be Sami is to deny the emotion and yearning that stirs in my Sami-American heart!

So this journal will celebrate the survival of Sami roots and Sami connections. *Báiki* will provide a medium wherein we can define the Sami Way of Life in the 1990s. We will look the world in the eye and declare: "This is who we are, and this is where we are from!" We will provide an opportunity for Sami-American artists, poets, and writers to express themselves, and we will offer a place where the artists, poets, and writers of Scandinavian and Russian Sápmi can communicate with Sami America. Together we will come to a new understanding of the Sami word *madii*. *Madii* is an overgrown path that leaves a trace waiting to be uncovered. I believe that we Sami are about to uncover this path.

faith fjeld



Mandala by Faith Fjeld



I have not planned to become something
and what I do is not a job
I am not collecting money or property
I am not saving my life for the future
I belong to the wind
but I live
and this seems to be the intention of life
today I live, here and now
and if that is too much
I won't be alive tomorrow
that is the way it is and so what

poem and illustration by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää -
Áillohaš - from his book *Trekways of the Wind*
first appeared in *Báiki* Issue #11.

FAITH LORRAINE FJELD ∞ Oskuvárri

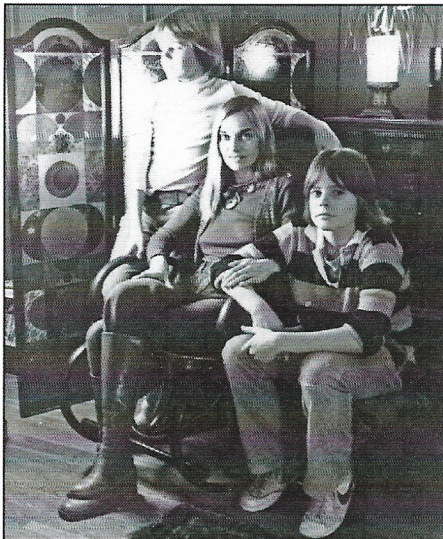
1935 - 2014

Pathfinder - Editor

Faith Fjeld, pathfinder of the Contemporary North American Sami Movement and Editor of *Báiki, the International and North American Sami Journal* passed away on October 18, 2014, in Moab, Utah. She was born on June 2, 1935, to Dr. Lawrence Field and Lorraine (Simerson) Field in Kalispell, Montana. She has been lovingly referred to as “the Grandmother of the contemporary North American Sami Community.” Her Sami name, Oskuvárri, means literally the same as her given name— “Faith Mountain or Faith in the Mountain.”

She spent most of her childhood in Montana where her father was a Western Norwegian Lutheran Church bishop. He was also author of a number of humorous Christian Lutheran narrative books, and later was a professor at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Her mother was a lifelong teacher, unusual for a woman of that time. She often remarked about her strict Lutheran upbringing. Faith graduated from Murray High School in St. Paul, MN, and St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN, in 1957 with a degree in Art.

After she married, she lived in several places including Denver, San Francisco, Japan, England, and the Netherlands, where she worked as an editor (*Denver Magazine*), artist, and fashion model. In the early 1960s Faith was active in the civil rights movement and in Another Mother for Peace group, among other activities.



Faith with her sons Bruno and Clay Kark.

Following her divorce, she settled in San Francisco on Fillmore Street in the late 1970s. It was there that she spent a happy part of her life raising her two sons, developing her work as a fabric collage artist, and being an active part of the famous San Francisco jazz community, centered right in her SF Fillmore district. She also made banana bread, a lifelong specialty, that she sold at a local restaurant to help make ends meet. As her kids became young adults, she became a student again, doing graduate work at San Francisco State University in American Indian Symbolism.

Faith became very involved with the Bay Area American Indian community, participating also in the sweat lodge, and at times she traveled and stayed for extended periods of time in western South Dakota Lakota reservations, learning and living. It was there that she eventually understood, through communications, that she had extensive Sami ancestry on her father's family side. She was encouraged to explore this.

She attended the World Congress of Indigenous Peoples conference in Panama in 1984. This opened the door to meeting Sami community activists at that time, who invited her as a special guest, to the 1990 WCIP meeting in Tromsø, Norway, Sápmi. From there, she enthusiastically met her Sami family and lifelong Sami leadership friends. She was able to travel nearly the entire Sami homelands of Norway, Sweden, and Finland area, Sápmi, for some months, over several trips. From this, she started developing the first issues of the new North American Sami Journal publication, *Báiki*. Faith interviewed many of the activists, leadership, family, and friends as she encountered them. It was a time during ongoing Sami civil rights and environmental struggles that were not always easy, and led to the founding of the Sami parliaments in the Nordic countries. She also met her South Sami family, among them the Nordfjell family, who presented her with her own *gakti*, traditional Sami clothing, from her North Trøndelag, Norway, Sápmi area.

Faith became the founding editor of *Báiki: the North American/International Sami Journal*. The first issue, Fall 1991, was composed and written in San Francisco, California, though the return address reads Duluth, Minnesota. Through *Báiki*, and through her writing, lectures, classes, and exhibits she became a leader and inspiration for the North American Sami Reawakening Community—connecting countless Sami descendants with each other and their heritage. We might liken Faith, from her historical impact on the overall North American Sami movement as a “pathfinder,” to Elsa Laula Renberg. Faith even shares a resemblance to Elsa in stature, as well as in “strong personality,” and perseverance.

continued on page 6...

Having already started the “California Siida” Sami activities group, which began participating in local and statewide activities that continue to this day—Norway Days, Thousand Oaks Scandinavian Festivals, Indigenous Day Pow Wow, Solstice-Christmas Sami Gathering—Faith moved to Duluth, Minnesota, in 1992. She helped found “the Great Northern Siida” (northern Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan) for lack of a better name. In 1993 she moved to Minneapolis and did the same there, the “Minneapolis Siida” has been a unique community group until today. In 1994 Nathan Muus became co-editor of *Báiki* with Faith, and they were associated from that time.

Wherever Faith was, Sami events, gatherings and activities happened. Witness the first annual or semi-annual larger North American Sami gathering, “The Siiddastallan” (a gathering of people and reindeer), held in March 1994 at the Minnesota Zoo. Siiddastallans are still held in conjunction with larger gatherings such as Scandinavian events, Finnfest, and sometimes as stand alone Sami North American events.

In 1997 both Faith and Nathan moved back to Oakland, California, and opened the *Báiki* office in downtown Oakland, in conjunction with the SAIIC—South American Indian Information Center. In their large garden backyard was a big lavvu tent, which hosted many community gatherings. In 1998 the historic Centennial Manitoba reunion of the Alaska Sami family descendants and friends was held in Poulsbo, Washington, near Seattle, including some 25 relatives from Sápmi. Faith and *Báiki* staff visited the Seattle area many times throughout the many years of *Báiki* efforts. During this time Faith was also the associate writer for her neighborhood newspaper, *The New Fillmore*, writing and editing every week. She also worked part time for many years of her life in the Bay Area, at a neighborhood hardware store, arranging the window displays, among other things.

From 2004 Faith lived in Alaska for five years, connecting with Sami and Native Alaskan Yup’ik and Inupiaq families, researching with Sami Alaskan descendants and co-curating, with Nathan Muus, the exhibit *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska*, which has traveled throughout rural Alaska, and the US, most recently at the Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, and the Minnesota Discovery Center in Chisholm, Minnesota. Faith also worked for a time at the Alaska Native Heritage Center as a public consultant regarding Sami culture and impact on Alaska and North America. Lois (Sara) Stover of Kodiak, Alaska, worked closely with the exhibit as well, and extensive input came from countless other Alaska Sami family communities. Faith’s work in Alaska was supported in many ways with one of the major funding sources being the Shared Beringian Heritage Program of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Faith was a founding organizer, with Marlene Wisuri, and a board member of the Sami Cultural Center of North America in 2011. She had moved from Alaska to Duluth in 2008, site of the huge Finnfest that featured the Sami, partly to assist in the beginning of the Center, which has realized the dream of a physical space for North American Sami education, research, and community activities. While in Duluth she continued her publishing and educational work, took many interesting road trips, entertained numerous visitors, and connected with the Native community of the area.

She was long active in indigenous and environmental issues. Her life was filled with family, friends, and meaningful work. Some of Faith’s favorite passions included gardening, jazz, cats, public speaking, travel, scrapbooks, thrift stores, reading mystery novels, and cooking.

Other highlights include three visits with other associates to the Sami Council to present the work of *Báiki* and to ask about representation of North American Sami, and the extended Alaska Sami families and descendants gathering at Easter time in 2008 in Kautokeino/Guovdageaidnu, Norway, Sápmi.

Faith was the chief editor for 37 issues of *Báiki*, published from California, Minnesota, and Alaska, guest writer for the Sons of Norway *Viking Magazine*, the Vesterheim Norwegian American Museum magazine, other magazines and books, and the exhibit catalog for *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska* in 2012. Her articles have also been reprinted many times over in other books and publications. At the time of her passing, she was near completion of the anthology *The Return of the Sami Spirit*, which will be finished and published in her honor.

Faith was preceded in death by her parents and infant sister, Ruth. She is survived by sons Bruno Kark of Emeryville, California; Clay Kark of Moab, Utah; granddaughters Ruby Fjeld and Olivia Kark; partner and associate Nathan Muus; and many friends and colleagues from around the world who remember her with love and gratitude.

A celebration and ceremony of her life was held one week after her passing near Nevada City, California, on Maidu Indian land, and in Moab, Utah—both gatherings of family and friends. A memorial event will be held in Duluth on June 24, 2015.

Obituary edited from the *Báiki* web site: www.baiki.org.



**Ассоциация «Оленеводы Мира»
Association of World Reindeer Herders**

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
Observer status to the Arctic Council

Специальный консультативный статус при
Экономическом и Социальном Совете ООН
Статус наблюдателя в Арктическом Совете

Our ref.

Our ref.
JMT/14

Date:
Oct. 20, 2014

LETTER OF CONDOLENCE ON FAITH FJELD'S DEATH

It is with sadness we received the message of Faith Fjeld's death.

We knew Faith as a pioneer for the descendants of reindeer herders who went to Alaska in 1890s in the American state service.

We also had the pleasure of working with Faith on the Alaskan Sami descendants' visit in Kautokeino in connection with the "Kautokeino reunion" in 2008, as we remember back to with pleasure. Faith made great efforts for the Samis, living in the United States, and we are certain that her efforts will bear fruits forever.

We pray for Faith Fjeld's soul to rest in peace.

On behalf of the
Association of World Reindeer Herders

Johan M. Turi
Secretary General

On behalf of the
International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry

Anders Oskal
Executive Director



A letter of condolence from the
Association of World Reindeer Herders,
October 20, 2014.

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Fax: +47 78607671
www.reindeerportal.org

Office in Russia:
Nevsky prospect, 128 St-Petersburg
Telephone: +7 911 916 97 80

Photos from the Báiki archives.

REFLECTIONS OF FAITH by Nathan Muus

When I first met Faith, early winter 1994, in Minnesota, we very quickly became great friends. We had a lot in common to begin with, and we seemed to grow into each other's lives. I was also amazed to be part of what was the Sami North American center of ever changing events and information. We were always on a mission, be it getting the next issue of *Báiki* composed and out, preparing for another trip to a community festival or the next exhibit, often at some distance, and community building, both local and international. Our home was a center of communication at a time when Facebook was not yet invented, where we worked on websites and other communications. Some of my roles: friend, partner, collaborator, curator, librarian, archivist, co-editor, sounding board, cheerleader, protector.

But we had other interests that tied us together; we loved listening to good music—Faith particularly loved jazz. We had American Indian community friends and events and family ties to the older Norwegian American Lutheran Church. Faith's father Laurence, professor and writer, had been one of my father Ham's favorite teachers at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and we spent some considerable time catching up on family lives and history.



Faith Fjeld and Nathan Muus in Oakland, California.



We always had a warm, welcoming home that included many visitors, friends, family, and neighbors stopping by for a visit or for any of our frequent community gatherings, which often included a fire and circle in the lavvu—both in Minneapolis and Oakland. A favorite weekend event was gardening day with the neighbors outside in the sun. It didn't hurt that Faith was a great cook either.

Our home was also the *Báiki* office and archive for much of the time. Except for the five years we maintained the official *Báiki* office in downtown Oakland. It was what we did. My role as co-editor involved occasional writing, reviewing, proof reading, advocating for inclusion of something, and debating details (some I lost, some I won). The journal certainly has been a vehicle for larger community activities and as such it has a life of its own.

One of the comments received from a well-wisher recently said "I am a close associate of Laila Spik, and when we met Faith on one of her visits to Sápmi, we felt that we were meeting an important representative of the North American Sami community." True of course, she did represent many. Her son Clay Kark said "I remember when Faith was a graduate student in San Francisco—look at the community she has made since that time with her vision of a Sami American community".

As a partner, I was close to Faith's many talents, among them, humor, grace, beauty.

I asked her what would she like to say to folks? She said, "That we started a great work and revitalized an Indigenous immigrant community, and that the work be respected, as a gift for not just the last 25 years, but for the future. Our vision and work must continue." And indeed it will endure, and will continue!

A YOUNG FAITH by Pastor Ham Muus

“...you do not get the power of the Vision until you perform it on earth for others to see...” Black Elk

It was at an informal youth gathering at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church that I first met Faith. She was the “newby” in the parish youth group. She had only recently arrived in St. Paul from western Montana. Her father had been called to teach at Luther Theological Seminary following years of pastoral service out west.

It was clear from this initial experience that there was something very special about Faith Field (Fjeld). Not only was she a strikingly attractive girl, but also she commanded attention through her quiet poise and sense of place. She seemed to embody a kind of personable “hospitality” which marked her as exceptionally insightful. Faith’s peers quickly embraced her and warmed to her spirited presence.

Much will be written and remembered about Faith’s perceptive...yes...profound life journey. Her capacity to meet challenges, her agility in maintaining focus, her commitment to human rights and civil justice, her literary genius, her durability, her passion for the indigenous, and so much more. Those of us who had the chance to “walk” a few steps with Faith were blessed... and humbled. She captured the vision and nurtured it in a vibrant soul. She enabled that vision so others could see.

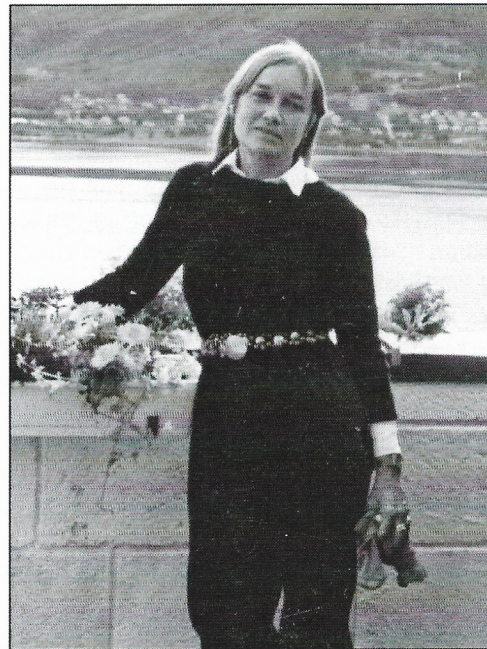
Consider these words: “So this is now the mark by which we all shall certainly know whether the birth of the Lord Christ is effective in us; if we take upon ourselves the need of our neighbor...” Martin Luther

We know Faith to be “Gift.” Through her Christly life and shared vision we are encouraged to “keep the Faith honoring her high calling.” Warm spirit winds surround her in eternity.

A thought by Solveig Johnson as related to Faith Fjeld in *Báiki* issue # 26:

“Learn how your ancestors survived, then try to make your life an example for your children to live by. Teach them to respect nature by only taking what they need, and not leaving anything behind but a footprint.”

Long time friends and leaders of the North American Sami community Solveig Johnson, Faith Fjeld, and Cari Mayo, November, 2013.



A young Faith...

A REMEMBRANCE by Cari Mayo

Faith was a freshman at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, when I was a senior there. I had observed this beautiful co-ed whose reputation as a gifted art student had come to my attention. Many years later I became a close friend of Faith’s through the Sami Siida of North America and as editor of *Báiki*. We continued working together for the formation of the Sami Cultural Center of North America in Duluth, Minnesota. I miss Faith as a leader and a friend.



Photo by Marlene Wisuri.

FAITH FJELD: TRAVELER, COLLEAGUE, FRIEND by Ruthanne Cecil

"I want my grandkids to understand why I am the way I am..." (Faith, c. 2011, to explain why she intended to write *Banana Bread Stories*).

Faith looked twenty years younger than she was, well into her seventies. It was only towards the end that she began to look tired and worn by pain, but even then she held herself proudly, and looked strong. She was strong. Few knew the pain she was in, and some who didn't know, were critical and unkind. She bore that too... she would have welcomed understanding, but not at the risk of receiving pity. She had remarkable strength.

Born near Glacier National Park and Kalispell, Montana, her early college years and marriage occurred in Minnesota. Her academic career took a side course for wifedom and motherhood, like so many women in the 1950s. She traveled where her husband's work took them: Holland, Japan, Denver, San Francisco. But in the turbulent sixties and early seventies, she changed course, awakened to the jazz scene, and became a single mom in San Francisco's Fillmore District. She baked banana bread and sold it in the neighborhood, and took a part-time job in a hardware store to help support her two growing boys. She then finished college and went to graduate school at San Francisco State College, in Native Studies, and spent some time living in Indian country. With a small inheritance she traveled to Sápmi, then began publishing *Báiki* in 1991.

Twenty years ago, when I met Faith, we were two young grandmothers, aged 49 and 59 respectively. I was the younger, although you couldn't tell by looking at us. She phoned me out of the blue one afternoon in 1995 from San Francisco. I was in my dorm at law school, and she had just moved back from Minnesota. We had never met, but she had received my request for an entire set of the back issues of *Báiki*. She called to invite me to a workshop series she was starting in her home.

Of course I was thrilled. My uncle Elmer Josephs had recently done the research and written in the family newsletter about our Finnish Saami heritage. He had also told me about *Báiki* magazine. I felt that I was starting yet another "new journey" in life—one that would take me deeper into the forest of my past. I attended the Sami workshop series, held where she was house-sitting. So began our journey together as friends, and so began my traveling years.

Living in poverty had often been a part of her life, and mine too. How to "live richly" while poor, was part of the "Bohemian lifestyle" of both the jazz culture, and the later hippies who emulated it. Our life experiences were similar in many ways—mid-life career changes, publishing backgrounds, the men in our lives, single parenting, grown sons, graduate schools. Nathan Muus moved out from Minnesota around 1996 or 1997, and Faith and Nathan crashed a few months on an office floor before getting an apartment in old West Oakland, part

of a block of urban artists we called "the Ranch." They put a lavvu up in the back yard, of course, and there was a vegetable garden and fruit trees and lots of cats. Actually it was pretty cool, for Oakland.



Ruthanne Cecil and Faith Fjeld.

She was a great friend, and Nathan too. Besides a fascination with all things Saami, we shared interests in jazz, thrift stores, yard sales, old books, evening glasses of wine, discussions of activism. She was remarkably witty and fun, and we often shared laughs, as well as stories of our past lives and loves. I moved back to Arcata in 1997 (up north in redwood country) but I always stayed with Faith and Nathan at the "ranch" on my way through. The three of us would stay awake late, catching up on gossip and discussing our shared interest in all things Saami, social justice, and the environment.

Inspired to travel by Faith, but funded by my nonprofit work, my first trip to Europe and Sápmi was in 1999. My previous adventures had been by Greyhound bus, so international flights were a big leap. I lacked courage, and was timid about international travel. Faith could travel alone, was comfortable with flights and logistics. This amazed and inspired me. I soon learned that international hostels were both affordable and surprisingly pleasant. This opened the door to low-budget travel, and the rest of my life.

There were numerous trips to Alaska, especially after Faith took another "leap of Faith" and moved north in 2004. Faith, Nathan, and I were a research team for a project tracing the descendants of the 130 or so reindeer herders who traveled to western Alaska in 1894 and 1898 under contract with the US government to bring herding skills to the Inupiat and Yu'pik peoples of that area. Faith decided to focus on in-Alaska research and a series of exhibits in various venues around the state. I helped seek grant funding. It became a ten-year project that led to rich relationships between Alaska and Norway, a series of museum exhibitions in Alaska and the lower 48, workshops, articles, reports, and an exhibit catalog. The exhibits continue to current times, most recently in Iowa and Minnesota.

This was just one small part of the work that Faith and Nathan were doing during those years. There were periodic issues of *Báiki*, totaling 37 during her life. There were dozens of workshop series. There were information tables at cultural festivals, several each year. There were women's gatherings, film and speaking events, hosting of Sami visitors, often with speaking venues. There were gatherings, symposiums, meetings, and family reunions. Even an Alaska art auction and fundraising raffle. We were invited to Røros Norway in 2006 to present our work to the Saami Council. Faith spoke and I presented a research paper. We also attended a South Sami cultural festival and a Mari Boine concert at the same venue in Røros. Another memorable event was an intertribal potluck hosted by the Athabaskan Village of Eklutna, located near Anchorage. The event was organized to honor three Sami guests from Norway: Ole Henrik Magga, Harald Gaski, and Kristina Utsi, who were in Alaska to present a multimedia honoring of Nils Aslak Valkeapää, and to attend Arctic Cities events as well. At that time, Magga had just been named indigenous chair of the newly formed United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. I felt privileged to be able to attend these events and others, which were always a deep learning experience.

Faith's office was often in her home, especially in Anchorage and in Oakland. The *Báiki* office in Oakland still houses Nathan's rather large (and impressive) collection of Sami books, duodji, and other collectibles. This grassroots work was mostly cultural and educational, but some of it also involved environmental activism: we participated in planning a few events focused on climate change in the arctic. Faith corresponded with hundreds of people via email, and had many phone friends as well. And near the end of her years, Faith helped out the "Idle No More" group active in Duluth and throughout Canada and the United States.

But Faith was never idle. It was all of a piece: home/ work/ friends/ community/ family.

It was all a *siida* (a reindeer family unit) of sorts: not a formal organization, but a community. She understood that.

Always the nomadic, Faith journeyed through the valleys and foothills and fjelds of life, dreaming of mountains. (Oskuarri / Trosfjell) The mountains in her dreams were filled with notes of jazz piano. She fully expected to hear a jazz singer, in the next realm. She carried her cancer along from 2005 to 2014, like an extra unwanted backpack outside of her body, on a long journey, hardly ever mentioned, and without complaint.

For Faith, perhaps one of the hardest lessons was learning to let it go, to stop working, to rest and simply to enjoy her remaining time, with family, friends, and nature. She never called her creativity "work," yet she knew the brief joy that comes when tasks are done, and an event is over or a product is published. However, then she would simply keep on, starting one project as soon as she finished another. As her ability

to produce lessened, she never caught up. There was always another issue of *Báiki* to do, and the ever looming books she wanted to write, festivals to attend, lectures to give, workshops and events to plan, guests to visit with, phone calls and emails to make. She was 79, but she never "retired." Those around her felt it had become work, and could see how the cancer was ebbing her strength, but she always called it "just the way I live..." and so we came to understand that this was the way she wanted it.

Yet in another way, she was never "behind," because that which didn't get done, "wasn't meant to be." Like the genie trickster that invaded her computer periodically and enforced some needed downtime, the material world was peopled with forces that made certain things happen and other things not. There was a bit of magic in all of it.

That was Faith's journey. No matter where she traveled, she was always aware and alive. She paid attention to details, pronounced names correctly, got to know people, learned about families and cultures. Faith was a bridge, an emissary, an unofficial ambassador between two communities on two continents, related members of a cultural "diaspora" of first peoples who had become immigrants in their original home, and immigrants again, in their new one in North America. She listened and understood the roles and responsibilities people had in their societies, and respected and honored them. She introduced them with proper protocol, like the diplomat she was.

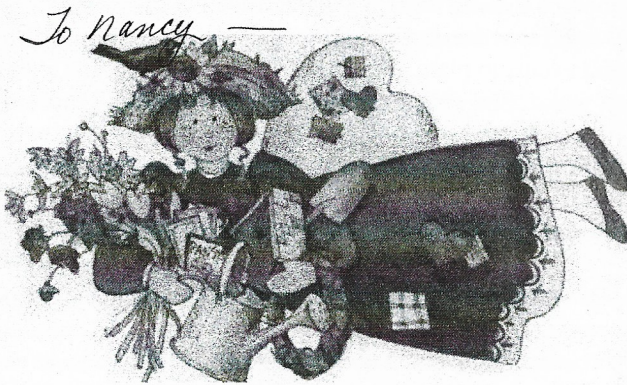
Yet it seemed effortless. Never the "anthropologist," always the human, she listened and learned through observation and interaction, not through objective questioning. When I asked questions, which was often, she would correct me for it, and I would defend myself and say it's just me. Such criticisms stung, but perhaps she was right. Too many questions, and one is no longer "in the moment," experiencing what is right there in front of you. Assimilated behavior, especially intellectual and academic, can be habitual. Now that she is silent, I must criticize myself.

At the memorial for Faith in late October 2014, in a Maidu pit house in the foothills of the Sierras, a row of older women sat on chairs near the fire. The younger folks in their fifties to thirties, and the kids, sat on the floor. We had feasted on salmon and deer, and eaten hearth bread and vegetables and salad. There were over thirty of us. It was dark except for the campfire and a lantern. There were tears, and silence, joiking, laughing, and stories. Anno called those of us in chairs, "aunties." It was a term of endearment. It was timeless. Faith was still there, among us, even though she had passed over.



MEETING IN TORONTO by Anja Kitti

I first met Faith here in Toronto at a University of Toronto Sami Symposium. There had been some informal meetings of a few Sami friends at the Lutheran Church here, but a formal academic meeting was a new concept. Faith had been invited to be on a panel, and she alone had a down-to-earth, grass-roots point of view, which didn't inspire too much response from this academic audience. However Faith and I were both in *gakti* and really connected right away. She stayed on in Toronto a couple of days so I could show her the sights. We had coffee and a picnic on the rocks at Scarborough Bluffs where we shared our histories and formed an immediate bond. We felt like sisters. Faith told me about the Reindeer Festival to be held at the Minnesota Zoo in February of 1994. I traveled to Minnesota and met so many from the Sami community there, which was the beginning of our long association. It was such a wonderful experience to know Faith—she gave so much of herself to her research and to the community. During her last months in Utah, I called her often and we were making plans to get together with others at Cari Mayo's for the solstice. She didn't want to give up, but she didn't make it until then. I miss her very much.



Here is Faith's Famous Banana Bread

*Grease a 9" baking pan.
Measure into a large bowl:
1 1/2 cups white sugar
3/4 cup Crisco
3 eggs
mash and add:
5 or 6 brown spotted
bananas
Sift together and add:
1 1/2 cups white flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
3/4 tsp. salt
mix together and pour into
baking pan. Place in preheated
350° oven. Bake an hour
or until top springs back.
Serve to your loved ones on
special occasions.*

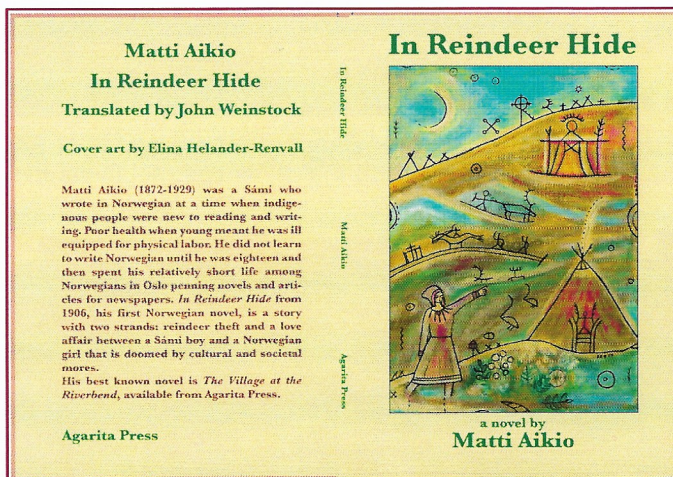
Faith's famous Banana Bread Recipe in her own hand.
Courtesy of Nancy Olson.

Faith Fjeld and Anja Kitti before the
FinnGrandFest '05 parade in Marquette,
Michigan.



REMEMBERING FAITH by John Weinstock

Faith Fjeld had a larger than life impact on many other people through her *Báiki* efforts over nearly twenty-five years. There are the articles in English on aspects of Sámi culture and language that are accessible to the many North Americans with Sámi roots. As is well known the Sámi were subject to harsh assimilation in Norway, Finland and Sweden beginning in the 19th century, though the origins go back much further. Then came the social Darwinistic policies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that viewed the Sámi as primitive and inferior to their fellow Scandinavians. Many Sámi children were put in boarding schools and thereby lost their native language. Others emigrated, for example from Sámi core areas to large metropolitan cities such as Oslo, Helsinki, and Stockholm where they could more easily blend in, or they left Scandinavia altogether and emigrated to North America as did Faith's forebears. Sámi descendants faced a great burden: the suppression of their language and culture over such a long period had lasting effects. Delving into ones murky past was a difficult task at best. In my view one of Faith's great achievements was to help pry open peoples' memories of their ancestors and origins or to get them to begin searching. And she began this process early by discovering her own Sámi ancestors; my own path to the Sámi came from their great and ancient skills as skiers. She had the courage to put her "faith" in her forebears, even when looking into one's past was almost a taboo. Now it has become a commonplace for many majority Scandinavians (and North Americans) to be curious about their roots, which thanks to contemporary genetic analysis show that there has always been extensive intermarriage among Sámi and others. One result of this is that people have wanted to know more about that great aunt who never spoke of her background or the distant cousin no one knew much about. And many of these people have recorded their findings in a myriad of recent books and films. I have dedicated my translation of Matti Aikio's 1906 novel *In Reindeer Hide* to Faith.



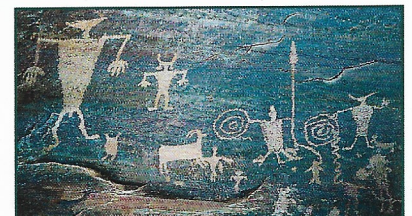
Matti Aikio's book *In Reindeer Hide* has been published in English with a translation by John Weinstock and cover art by Elina Helander-Renvall. It is dedicated to Faith Fjeld.

to my mind a picture, a piece of art, Faith sent to me while she still was staying in San Francisco. It was a *mandala*. A mandala can symbolize a thought that life's circle is never ending, and I think that this specific mandala was in addition a metaphorical and spiritual statement of Faith's journey through life, a nomadic symbol, referring to a wide hoop of community. There is a tie between the former and the latter signification. Both locate Faith in those relationships, lands and traditions she loved and appreciated. Giitu Oskuvárri! Thank you so much.

Our friendship will always be treasured in my heart.

IN MEMORY OF FAITH by Elina Helander-Renvall

Faith was a good friend. I have always paid much attention to Faith's ability to apply and generate visions and ideas that have been and still are nourishing to others. She has done lots of good things for the Sami culture and community. In the *No Beginning, No End* interview (Nordic Sami Institute, 1998), Faith told me that everything is symbolic in her life. Symbols indicate that life is a personal dream and also a group dream. The last letters and pictures we shared in 2014 were in fact about symbols and inscriptions in stone, as the petroglyphs of the Moab area interested her a lot. In that context, Faith mailed me some pictures of the rock art in Utah. For me, petroglyphs as manifestations of reality are some kind of memories in the sense that they make thoughts and emotions spatially visible and real, before and after. In addition they remind us of the center and the current state of our being. This brings



Moab, Utah, petroglyphs.

HONORING FAITH WITH ART

Báiki has always featured the visual arts with stunning covers, numerous reproductions and exhibit reviews, as well as countless reviews of music, books, and movies. Poetry has been an important element since the very first issue. And of course, the art of storytelling has been part of the magic. It is only fitting we honor Faith and her steadfast support of the arts with this beautiful work.



Brad E. Nelson ~ *Safe Passage*, mixed media, 2015.

Vicki Lantto ~ *Still Life in Faith's Kitchen*, photograph, 2013.

"Friendship and hospitality radiated from Faith's kitchen. Chicory coffee, banana bread, wonderful soups, and conversation, nourished all who visited." Vicki Lantto



Muriel Antoine ~ *Daughter of the Midnight Sun* (life mask of Faith Fjeld), mixed media clay, 1990.



Toward a Deeper Dawn
a prose-poem by Anne Dunn

They say that dreams are born at dawn and I know that this is true. But as I near the end of my earth-walk I can testify that dreams are born in twilight, too.

In the afterglow of another day I have often pondered: did this long journey carry me no farther than a desperate old age? Is this the reward for a well-spent life? How can I be bold in this hopeless hour? Is all my history torn by winds? Have owls plucked away my courage? Do the long black sleeves of sorrow drag me to a dreamless grave? How can I carry so much grief? How did I arrive at this lonely end?

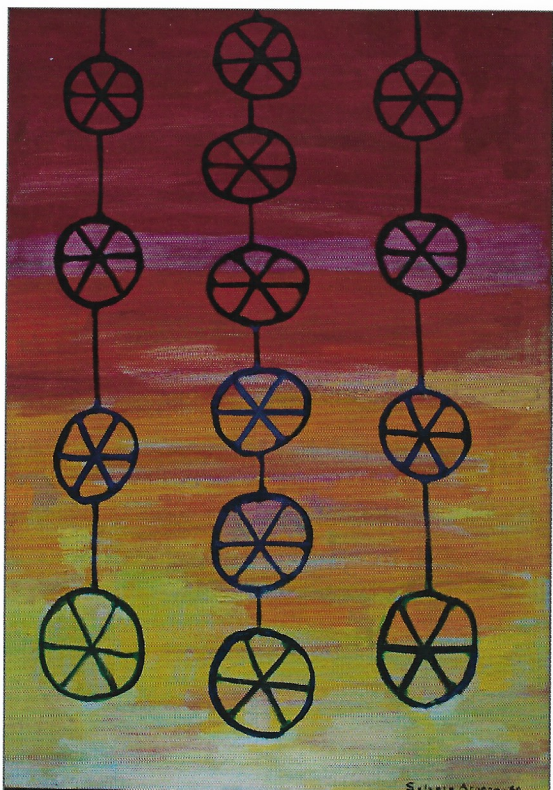
Night grows cold beneath a howling sky. But cricket songs stir golden memories of lovely times long gone. The wind wanders over the hill to caress the sighing leaves. The old moon escapes a tangle of dark clouds and I hear winter singing in my bones.

But turning toward a deeper dawn I refresh myself and wash my face. I brush my hair and trim my nails. I don the golden gown of summer, fling myself into the river and swim joyfully away. I leave no mark of my crossing. Soon I'll stand with friends and family already gone to the other side. We'll speak no more of yesterday but life on other grounds.

Perhaps I will look back one more time to see the dark mountains I passed through. Where I traveled alone without a star. I will listen for your song. Praise me, if you can.



Karen Weaver ~ *Share Your Knowledge: a Portrait of Faith Fjeld*, acrylic on canvas.



Solveig Arneng Johnson ~ *Bells*
oil on canvas.



Bruno Kark ~ *Pedestal Boat Vase*, slab built stoneware.

FAITH FJELD REMEMBERED

by Hans Ragnar Mathisen

I do not remember exactly when I first met Faith Fjeld, but I was very busy at the time, and flatly said, as she came, that I could spare 15 minutes. She had contacted me by post and/or phone, I do not recollect exactly. This may seem arrogant, I know, but please remember that an active person of some merit or position in any field in any people is prone to inquiries, and at times almost constantly bombarded with requests for this and that, and after giving a lot of time to chance visitors, one gets tired, and even fed up, probably rejecting some who would have deserved better. Today information consultants are well-paid full time workers, which at least I was not. My 15 minutes must be seen in that light. However, it turned out that I took her on a few days' trip to the northern and eastern part of Sápmi in Norway, so I certainly had a change of heart, and never regretted it! The first letter of hers that I answered gives an idea of the activities on both sides at that time.

Faith Fjeld, San Francisco, USA
Romssavárdu 30.5.91

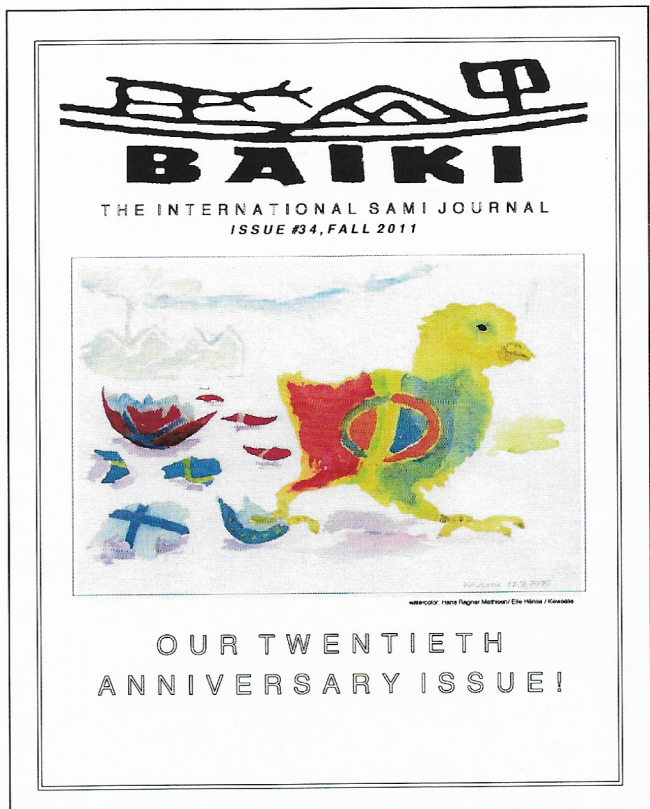
Dear Faith Fjeld,

Thank you for your letter of May 12th. It sounds to me like quite an adventure that a Sámi publication is put out in America! A very good idea! I am all for that, as well as for the ideas and suggestions you mention in your letter. In fact I wish more Sámi here in Sápmi would be as enthusiastic as you are. As for the black & white map of Sápmi, the only one I can think of is a black & white version of my map, which I enclose. Hope you can use it. As for the colour version it is nearly sold out (of course, the largest version has been sold out a long time ago!), but by the time you come to Tromsø, I am sure I will have printed a new edition of it. I am planning to do so anyway. Then you could bring them back with you as you suggested. I recently completed 2 maps, one of Troms county, and the other of Áltá area. On the reverse side of the Áltá map are some texts about the rock-carvings and the Áltá dam project-issue, both in Sámi, English and Norwegian languages. (Unfortunately with some printing errors...) In that way you will have better use of it. By the way, I am not the chairman of the Romssa Sámi Searvi any more; the reason is that I wanted to concentrate on my creative artistic work more. After all I have a grant to do so!

Please give my regards to the Johnsons and others who may know me. I look forward to receive some copies of *Báiki*, since it will have some interest here, too, especially the first issue. Undoubtedly you will send copies to the Sámi media here. Thank you for the photograph. I wish you the best of luck in your work, and look forward to hearing from you again.

With best regards,
Hans Ragnar Mathisen

We already had common friends in Duluth, the Johnson family, and more to come. I gladly contributed illustrations texts and even poetry to the *Báiki* journal, including some covers in full colour, for a fee, of course: a running subscription! Being in charge of the NANA festival & Indigenous Days, we invited Indigenous artists from her artist friends, at a collective exhibition, as well as a painting exhibition of Solveig Arneng Johnson, at Arctic Gallery.



Work by Hans Ragnar Mathisen / Elle Hånsa / Keviselie has appeared in many issues of *Báiki* beginning with his iconic map, *Sápmi: Land of People Without Borders*, in Issue #2. His painting was used on the cover of the 20th Anniversary Issue #34, Fall 2011.

I met her several times in Sápmi, and we had interesting discussions, among other topics the idea of making a formal agreement or co-operation with the Native Americans on one side, and Sámi Americans on the other, to avoid being put in the same category as other white colonialists. This, of course, is not a simple issue, but it is worth discussing, at least.

One of the last times I talked with her in person, was when she was around 70. I was really surprised when I heard her age at that time, I found it unbelievable, because she both looked and acted as a much younger person, at least in my view. She said she needed to go back home to think about how she should spend her coming years. Now that I am approaching the same level myself, I take inspiration from her dedication to fight for Indigenous as well as all peoples, by taking part in activities that are easily overlooked by too many, although they are most in need of them.

Peace be with your memory, dear Sister!



ON THE PASSING OF FAITH FJELD

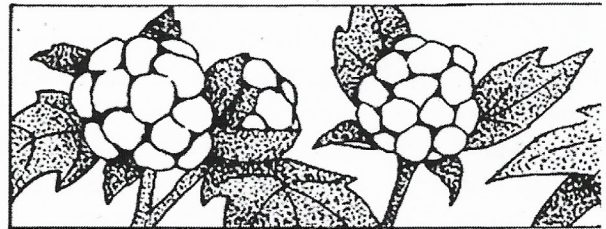
by Kurt Seaberg

Before I met Faith I never met anyone, outside of my family, who had Saami heritage. She brought together this far flung diaspora in North America, from the West Coast to the Midwest and beyond. Her commitment and enthusiasm brought together a lot of great people I will never forget. I met Nils Aslak Valkeapää (Áillohaš), Hans Ragnar Mathisen, Johan Mikkel Sara, and many others through her. I was able to meet Mari Boine and Wimme Saari in person, when they performed in Minneapolis and we hosted a gathering for them afterwards at Faith's home. *Báiki*, the journal she started, encouraged me to further research and explore my own roots, writing articles and making illustrations that appeared in its pages over the years. *Báiki* was the magnet that brought together all sorts of talented peo-

ple, and Faith was always open to new ideas that pushed the boundaries of identity and culture.

Faith Fjeld's lasting contribution for me will always be her ability to link Saami identity with that of Indigenous peoples at home and abroad. Her experiences researching and living amongst Native Americans before she was led back to her own roots taught her that there was a fundamental difference between the extractive, colonial mindset that dominates Western industrial societies and the vision practiced by Indigenous peoples that tells us that "what we do to the earth we do to ourselves." In other words, Indigenous thinking informs us that we are in a sacred relationship with nature—indeed, we are a part of it—and must learn to adapt and align ourselves with the natural world and not be the conquerors of it. From the very beginning Faith was determined to make *Báiki* into something much more than a journal about an interesting, little known ethnic group, but rather one that was relevant to the crises of our time. There was an alternative to the Western, Capitalist paradigm that is now threatening all of Creation, Faith believed, and that was the Indigenous way of life, a way of life that may turn out to be the road to our very salvation. So she was willing to publish my articles concerning local, Indigenous-led, environmental campaigns because she knew instinctively that there was a connection between what Saami people were struggling with in Sápmi—whether it was mining, deforestation, destructive dams or radioactive fallout from Chernobyl on reindeer pastures—and the land rights struggles of Indigenous peoples throughout the world. I will always remember and be forever grateful to her for the way she carried this vision through each and every issue of *Báiki*.

Faith will be sorely missed in the North American Saami community, but my hope is that we will continue her vision to make *Báiki* and our Saami-American movement into a beacon of hope in these troubled times.



Cloudberries, Detail of a drawing by Kurt Seaberg, which appeared on *Báiki* Issue #14, 1995.



Illustration by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää.

PARTING THOUGHTS

Faith and I were thrown together unavoidably years ago by our interest in Saami immigration to Alaska. In the early 1980s I had completed a stint herding reindeer with the NANA Regional Corporation based in Kotzebue, returned to Sweden, and published my brief account of the Saami who had braved the Atlantic crossing and then the crossing of the continental United States to find new homes and to teach herding to Inupiat and Yup'ik Eskimo hunters in the Alaskan Northwest.

All the while Faith was at work on a larger project: the rekindling of Saami spirit and identity in North America. No one has done more for this effort than Faith. Her energy was boundless. Not only are her accomplishments for the Saami revival in North America too many to enumerate here, but it is also thanks to Faith that many families have made contact across the ocean to refill their ranks of lost loved ones and to discover unknown descendants.

I could be of some help to her when she went to Alaska and then when she, together with her strong network of co-enthusiasts, put together a powerful traveling exhibit of the Saami heritage in North America. She visited me in Sweden and then, in turn, helped me renew my Alaskan contacts when I went back after 28 years to visit my old herding friends on the Seward.

I traveled to Duluth last year where I had hoped to see her again. Alas, it was not to be, for her illness had already progressed too far—a few parting emails, and suddenly she was gone, leaving a huge vacuum.

I recall the words of the Saami recorded by one of the earliest missionaries that when a spirit such as hers departs this world through the mountain pass, the wind is of such force that “the sands and stones do fly about like hail.”

Farewell Faith,

Hugh Beach

March 2015

FAITH MUITUN by Rauna Kuokkanen and Philip Burgess

We miss Faith – Rauna first met her in 1994 in Montreal where she gave a talk at Concordia University’s Simone de Beauvoir Institute. We stayed in contact ever since and visited with her in Oakland in late December 1999. The most recent visit was at Easter 2007 when we hosted Faith for a week in Guovdageaidnu. It was a fabulous and unforgettable week of listening to her stories ranging from her youth in London to the reindeer station in Alaska and a lot in between. Her stories captivated us and we learned a new side of Faith listening about her time in Swinging London in the 1960s, hanging out in Soho, working as a model, mixing with celebrities. And her Sami story of course: *Báiki*, the Manitoba Expedition, her struggles to keep the North American Sami movement going. Philip filmed an interview with her about the moving of reindeer and herders to Alaska. Faith brought the old story to life with her skillful telling. Faith had such a genuine interest in people and everywhere she went she shared her warm and welcoming spirit. And honesty. Her complete disinterest in status, show, or political gain was so refreshing. She was such a strong carrier of the Sami American story and she treaded the path with great caution, taking great care not to make politics with the rediscovery of this little known migration. She still walks with us, we think and talk about her often. Our little boys would have no doubt enjoyed meeting her and most likely would have adopted her as one of their many grandmothers. With her passing Sápmi lost a great friend.

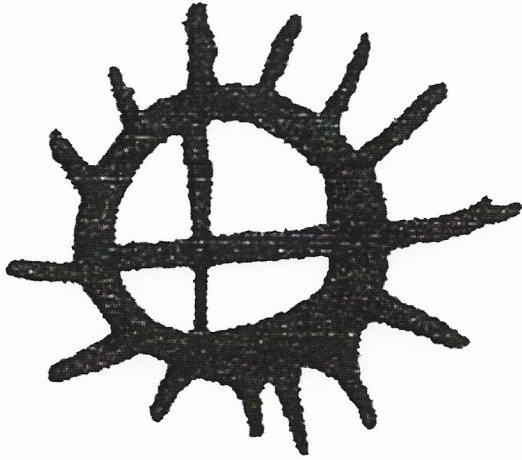
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Faith Fjeld and Olav Mathis Eira of the Saami Council share a moment of relief in Røros, Norway, after her presentation to the Saami Council in 2006.





**OSKU VÁRRI: a poem remembering Faith Fjeld**  
by Harald Gaski



In your home region of Sápmi, the land of your ancestry  
the Báiki you learned of quite late in your life  
the family names were the names of the mountains  
the grazing land of the reindeer, the home of the sijt.

Your fjeld was without the extra designation  
of the likeness of Dun or Kapp or a geographical guidance  
You were a Fjeld solid as rock, in you was a Faith  
strong as the sinews of the Son of the Sun.

He came from the South, the ancestor of the people.  
travelled far to the Giants' land to find him a bride.  
From their union stem the Sami, who were given the duty  
to watch over reindeer and care for the land.

In Sami belief some mountains are sacred  
The home in your heart is the home of your fjeld.  
In your name and your mission fjeld united with faith  
the osku to believe with and the mountain to trust.

In remembrance and homage: you were a poem,  
written in the letters of the rays of the Sun.

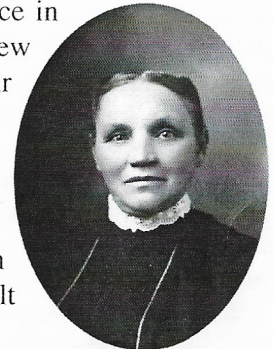


**FAITH'S GAKTI**

In April 1994, the Sons of Norway *Viking* magazine did an issue focused on the Sami people—the same year as the Winter Olympics. That issue, with Nils-Aslak Valkeapää on the cover, included a profile of Faith Fjeld as editor of *Báiki*, and a photo of her holding a photo of her Sami grandmother, Kari Nordfjell. Authored by Pam Mellskog, the following paragraphs are excerpts:

“My mother says you’re my third cousin,” said Faith Fjeld’s new acquaintance in Norway at a 1993 international conference about indigenous peoples. Before Fjeld flew back to her home in downtown Minneapolis, she and her new relative clarified their familial connection and Fjeld accepted a gift.

The royal blue wool *gakti*, or dress, with simple green and red trim around the flared hem, fit. “I felt like Cinderella when I tried it on, because it seemed made especially for me,” says the 58-year-old editor of *Báiki*, the *North American Journal of Sami Living*. But she treasures the words spoken when the gift was presented even more. “My cousin gave me the dress,” Fjeld continues, “and just said, ‘We always felt like someone would come back.’”



Faith's Grandmother  
Kari Nordfjell

THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH pictures Faith in her blue wool *gakti*.  
Photo from the *Báiki* archives, January 1999, Hancock, Michigan.



## COFFEE BREAK AT BIG HURRAH CREEK by Pearl Johnson

In 2000, Faith Fjeld traveled to Nome to contact descendants of the Reindeer Project and to seek support for her research from the Kawerak Reindeer Herders Association (RHA). After meeting with Rose Fosdick, Director, Reindeer Herders Association and Vice President, Natural Resources Division, Kawerak, Inc., she was invited to give her presentation at their annual meeting.

At the annual meeting when Rose Fosdick saw Faith for the first time wearing her blue *gakti* and reindeer skin boots, sharing the hopes and dreams for her project, she said it was "inspiring." Due to the strength of her presentation, the RHA gave her their support.

By 2003, Faith was known by the RHA members when her work with Lois Stover was presented to the RHA a second time. After the presentation, the RHA adopted a resolution titled: "Support for The Sami: Reindeer People of Alaska Traveling Exhibit."

When Faith Fjeld moved to Nome in 2006, she had already worked at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage, Alaska, giving presentations on the Reindeer Project. She had also lived in Kotzebue, worked for the Western Arctic National Parklands, and had connected with Sami direct descendant and herder Tess Sheldon.

In Nome, while she worked at the Bering Land Bridge Visitors Center, Faith also gave evening presentations on her traveling exhibit. She used a guest book for visitors to write comments on reindeer herding memories and stories. Because she had a natural warmth for people, they responded by sharing their remembrances of that special time in our history. She also befriended past herders Dan Karmun of Deering and Faye Ongtowsruk of Wales, and direct descendants Pete Larsen, Jr. and Andy Miller of Nome and always contacted them on return visits.

With assistance from Park Ranger Fred Tocktoo of the National Park Service, her traveling exhibit was taken to the villages of Teller, Brevig Mission, Shishmaref, Wales, and Unalakleet, and met with the local people, documenting their reindeer herding stories. She also brought the exhibit to Provideniya, Russian Far East.

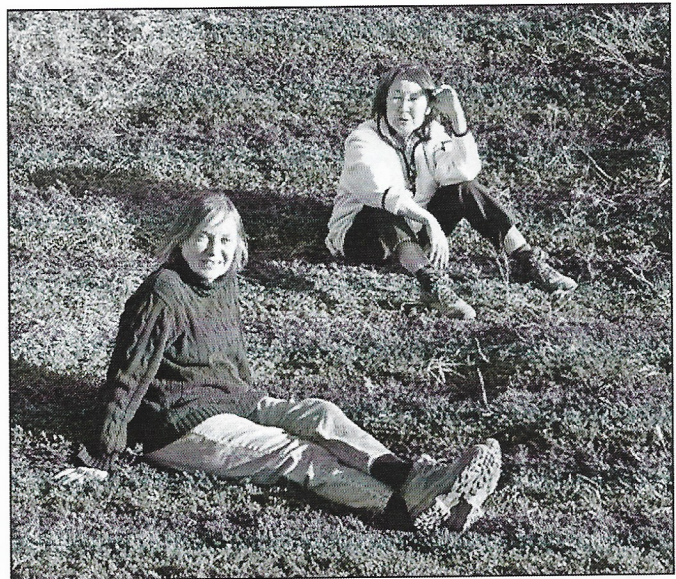
She loved it in the Bering Strait Region, got along with people and was willing to share her knowledge and listen to their experiences and stories, wherever she went.

On Faith's legacy, Rose Fosdick says, "Faith was interested in the history and documented the information before it was lost. She made us become interested in the history of the Sami people here."

MaryJane Litchard: "Faith made us aware that the Sami reindeer herders had helped our people in this area by teaching

herding skills, the design of reindeer boots and why some people here had Sami names. It was very educational."

MaryJane Litchard and I will never forget spending a wonderful day with Faith in the spring of 2008, driving on the Council Road out of Nome, Alaska, which follows the Bering Sea coastline for 33 miles then turns inward to the low hills following the Solomon River and eventually stops at Council 72 miles away. I had invited her to see where the herding places and gold mining had occurred, places where her relatives had been.



Faith Fjeld with Pearl Johnson, Spring 2008, at Nuuk, East of Nome, Alaska. Photo by MaryJane Litchard.

It was a sunny day and though most of the snow had melted, patches of deeper snow were seen. The rivers had crested and broken ice chunks were scattered along the banks. Sounds of the migrating birds were heard, the brown tundra from the winter was taking on a pale green haze. Just past Cape Nome, we showed her an ancient village at Nuuk by Safety Lagoon, a site 15 miles east of Nome marked by deep circular recesses where *inii* (Inupiaq) or sod houses of various sizes once stood. Faith had made Banana Bread for the picnic, and it was there that Faith, after asking if she could, sprinkled tiny pieces of her banana bread as an offering, at the entrance of a family sod home.

About 41 miles out in an area called Quigley's, across the river from a dilapidated mining dredge, I showed them the Aukongak family reindeer corral, no longer used, graying and overgrown. Their reindeer herding camp was just across the Solomon River next to my family cabin. Sigfreid Aukongak of Golovin, who had wed a woman of Sami heritage, Mary Abloogalook, had the reindeer herd which had passed on to their sons and eventually went to a family from Nome. It was



in the fall, about 10 years ago when I first saw reindeer in rut in this area and the reindeer still continue to traverse through here.

We then went to the East Fork bridge to dig for *machu* (or *masu*, a sweet edible root) where MaryJane, using her grandmother's age-old "machunaq," a tool made from reindeer antler and a nail, designed for digging roots, taught her how to dig it up from the hard rocky soil. MaryJane still remembers how happy Faith was, smiling and beaming because she just learned how to harvest an edible root in the traditional way.

On our way back to Nome, we stopped for lunch next to the confluence of Big Hurrah Creek and Solomon River across from Aukongak camp and near the reindeer corral. After lighting a small fire and rinsing the machu in the river, we picnicked on the bank eating the freshly picked roots with our meal. A warm refreshing breeze on our backs, the first tender grasses and flowers sprung out at our feet. As we drank our coffee with her banana bread, enjoying the outdoors, there was Faith drinking the chicory coffee that she dearly loved.

These moments that MaryJane and I still so vividly remember are fresh in our memories because they mean so much to us.

On her passing, a great voice for research, preservation of knowledge and goodwill between the Alaskan and Sami descendants of the Reindeer Project is gone.

Through her involvement in the *Báiki* Journal and her outreach work in Alaska, the Sami and Alaska Inupiat and Yup'ik international connection was strengthened. Her studies have shown that two distinct and different peoples can work together and still do despite distance and language barriers. There has never been any hostilities or dissension between us.

Faith showed that despite maneuvers by my government to divide and distance our peoples through changing regulations during the formative years, their determination to rise above the politics, has kept the Reindeer Project alive. To this day, Western Alaska is still reaping the benefits through the Reindeer Herders Association with eleven active reindeer herds which are studied and inoculated against disease by the University of Alaska. We have a reindeer meat and by-products industry. The University of Alaska Fairbanks and Northwest Campus in Nome have studies on reindeer husbandry, teaching classes on tanning reindeer hides, and creating reindeer leather goods. And descendants, researchers, and visitors from Norway, Sweden, and Finland arrive yearly to connect to their past. We will always remember Faith as the force and guiding light that elevated the work and dreams of our ancestors—the teachers and students. I personally am so grateful for her influence in my life and the respect and love she had for my people.



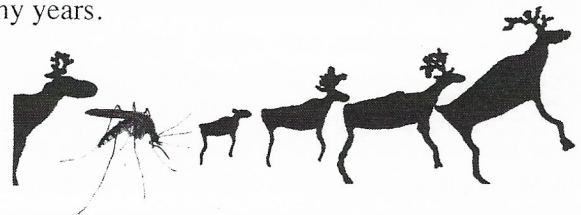
Photo by Marlene Wisuri

Faith Fjeld, Lois Stover, and Pearl Johnson at the installation of *The Sami Reindeer People of Alaska* exhibit at the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, Iowa, December 2012.

Lois is a direct descendant of one of the original Sami herder families who were hired to travel from Norway to Alaska to teach reindeer herding skills to the Inupiaq and Yup'ik in 1898.

### ***FAMILY TIES* by Lois Stover**

I must write a few words on Faith Fjeld's help in many instances. Faith and I got acquainted first by phone and mail and then on one of my trips to California I looked her up and I realized right away what a treasure she was. I had been curious for years about our Sami background but didn't learn the full story until Faith and I began looking into it and backtracking to find all the correct information. I soon determined that it was indeed a fascinating story and an important part of Alaska's history. We continued gathering facts and tying them together. She became one of our family. She was loved and respected by all my family including Aunt Bernie and Elias Venus. I will always remember the fun gatherings including the trip to Norway in 2007. What a great event. With Faith's guidance and Nathan Muus's help we put together many traveling exhibits. She will be remembered and loved by our family for many years.





## ROAD TRIPS AND OTHER TREASURES

by Marlene Wisuri

In August of 1991, *The Finnish American Reporter* published an article entitled “*Báiki Celebrates Survival of Sami Roots and Sami Connections.*” The article stated: “With the publication of the first issue of *Báiki*, the *American Journal of Sami Arts*, Americans of Sami descent have stepped out of the shadows and asserted their place among the other Nordic immigrants to America. With this publication they are ready to ‘celebrate the survival of Sami roots and Sami connections.’” It continued, “In the first issue most of the articles are concerned with answering the questions ‘What is a Sami?’ and ‘Who are the American Sami?’” Faith Fjeld, *Báiki*’s editor, addressed the question of Sami identity in her editorial (see page three for the full text).

At the time I read this I was living in Providence, Rhode Island, doing graduate work at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth where I was exploring how I could use my Finnish and Sami heritage in a visual arts context. I knew of only a couple of other North American Sami—Mel Olsen, with whom I had taught at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and I had heard of Rudy and Sally (Solveig) Johnson in Duluth. I decided I must call this Faith Fjeld and see what the new journal was all about. Little did I realize that the resulting hour and more phone call would be life changing. It was the beginning of a deep friendship that continued until our last phone call a day before her passing last fall and still continues through the memories and the legacy of her work.

There are many who are speaking of her mark on the Sami and North American Sami worlds, but it is the friend, who was like the sister neither of us had, I’m remembering as I write. Faith had a tremendous capacity for friendship as witnessed by the number of people who counted her as a friend. She was generous with her time and more than willing to share what she knew and was passionate about. She was a lively companion with wide ranging interests and a wicked sense of humor. She liked nothing better than to put on a pot of soup, light some candles, and entertain a congenial group that would share stimulating conversation and many laughs. In keeping with her nomadic spirit she loved road trips, whether they took place in Sápmi, Alaska, or northern Minnesota. During those last years in Duluth, I usually drove as we traveled to Madison for the SASS conference, to Decorah to the Vesterheim (twice), a couple of times to Rosemount

to visit Aina, to Moorhead for Hjemkomst, to Walker for the Indigenous Film Conference, to Grand Marais to the Winterer’s Gathering, to Houghton for Finnfest, and countless local outings including the not-so-fun trips to the hospital. Faith enjoyed a cup or two of coffee in the morning. She was very particular about her coffee only using French roast with chicory, so when she traveled she often took her own coffee pot along and boiled her own strong stuff. And everywhere she traveled, she would try her all time favorite—spinach salad—at the local restaurants.



Anne Dunn, Faith Fjeld, and Marlene Wisuri stop to visit the giant Paul Bunyan in Akeley, Minnesota, while on the road to the Hjemkomst Festival in Moorhead, Minnesota in 2009.

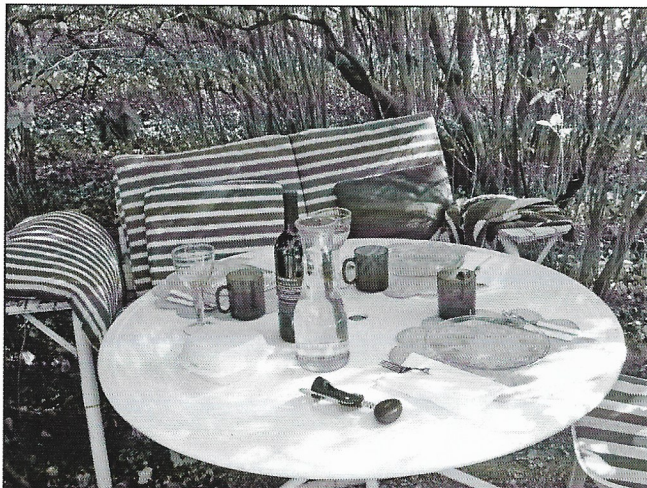
No matter where in the world she landed, Faith had a way of making a home reflecting her personal sense of style and values. She was able to tie an assortment of flea market and thrift store finds into an aesthetic statement that somehow was just “her.” And she did so enjoy shopping at the thrift shops and when we were on one of our expeditions, we had a hard time passing up a good rummage sale. Her collection of Santas became a seasonal source of enjoyment for both her and her visitors. She had a green thumb and rose to the challenge of reviving poor drooping plants. She would test the soil for moisture as she passed plants in public places and gave them a drink if she thought they seemed dry. Her apartments



were never without greenery and cats. The death of well-loved companion, Mrs. Boo, shortly before Faith left for Utah was a devastating blow and the attempts to replace her just didn't work out very well.

Faith had close and spiritual ties to the natural world—rising early every morning to greet the sun. Sitting in the sun was a comfort and pleasure to her. The large fallen birch tree in the back yard became a treasured friend and she always slept with a window open no matter the outside temperature. Her concern for the environment and the future of the planet was a driving force in much of what she accomplished. Exploring the petroglyphs in the Utah desert brought deep satisfaction during her last year bringing to full circle a long held interest and connection.

I was so pleased that Faith was able to participate in the dedication of the new space for the Sami Cultural Center of North America via speaker-phone on August 31, 2014. We had shared the dream of having a place for North American Sami to gather and carry on the work of the community, and had shared the ups and downs of making the Center become a reality. Although she never saw the Center in person, it is an embodiment of her spirit and life work. The library at the Center has been named the Faith Fjeld Memorial Library and contains many volumes from her collection. I feel her presence there when I sit in her rocker and so wish we could share cups of her favorite artichoke tea and visit and laugh and plan and remember.



The lunch table set in the grove at Aina's house in Rosemount, Minnesota, on one of the many road trips with Faith, September 2013.

## MEMORIES OF FAITH FJELD

by Aina Wiklund

My friendship with Faith began when the *Báiki* office was located in Minneapolis. Through the years I admired her unselfish dedication to promote the Sami culture and her unpretentious character. Her focus was to serve. Faith had Sami relatives in both Norway and Sweden.

After the move to California our communication continued by E-mail and telephone calls.

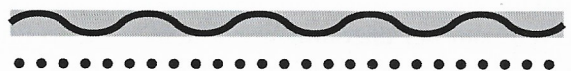
One of many pleasant memories was the time Faith came from California to take part in a two-day American Swedish Institute event focusing on Swedish provinces above and around the Arctic Circle. Samis from Swedish Sápmi were invited to take part. Four Samis stayed at my house, Faith, Anna-Stina Svakko from Sápmi, Nathan Muus, and Barbara Tan. When taking part in Siidas and other Sami gatherings I learned that there is always a happy, fun, interesting, and feel-good spirit where Samis gather and so it was at my house that time. When a coyote in close view strolled by the living room window, while we were eating, the Sami spirit soared.

After some years in Alaska, at two locations, Faith stayed with me a few days on her way to settle in Duluth. Again I admired her. She seemed so frail where she stood at the airport leaning on her cane, surrounded by luggage and a cat cage holding a most interesting feline, Mrs. Boo. A dying, old Alaskan wanted Faith to adopt his cat and it became Faith's dear companion. In Duluth she could discard her cane after hip surgery. She felt at home there, was happy and very productive.

*Báiki* has been like a star following the journey of the Samis and connecting them from Sápmi to U.S. lower states and Alaska and on the way illuminating the Sami history and culture. When returning to Minnesota, where the journey began, that star stopped in Duluth, the heart of Sami immigration to Minnesota.

Faith was grateful and at peace to leave unfinished work in very capable hands of the trusted friends whom she had worked with closely.

What a great legacy Faith left!





Faith felt strongly that the younger folks of the Sami community would be the bearers of tradition and values and their quest for knowledge should be nurtured and supported in quiet ways. Following are the accounts of three people who felt Faith's support and friendship very personally.

### **WHERE THE EMBERS MEET THE DAWN** by Tim Frandy

Even though I only met her little more than a decade ago, and I spent far too few days in her company, it feels like I've always known Faith. It was as if our friendship possessed a certain timelessness to it, unchanging and steady, outside of the supposed linearity of the time and distance that separated us. It was the sort of relationship you carry with you, wherever you go. It was always there, rattling around in my pocket, aside my pocket knife, my pen, and my house-key. These are the things you carry with you, that grow into you and become a part of you, that become indistinguishable from yourself.

Although I never really knew Faith as well as I would have liked, I am grateful our paths crossed when they did. Though I had met Faith a few times before, I really got to know her when she was living in Fairbanks and doing research on the Alaskan Sámi in the mid-2000s. I was visiting Fairbanks for an academic conference, and Faith had arranged a meeting of Sámi scholars with Alaskan indigenous scholars. The gathering proved to be wonderful and stimulating. I was in my mid-20s at the time, was beginning to learn to speak North Sámi, and was reading everything Sámi that I could get my hands on. I was also the youngest one there, and honored, shy, and nervous to be in company I so respected. It was Faith's presence during these days that helped me feel like I belonged, both as a scholar and as a member of the Sámi American community. This is a gift in my life that I still carry with me.

Faith offered me much encouragement during those days in Fairbanks, and in the years beyond. She treated me and my work with more respect than I perhaps deserved, and her encouragement helped me to find my own path, and to grow into the person I am today. I know I am not the only one to benefit from Faith's guidance.

Faith impacted many of us in the second wave of Sámi Siida of North America members. It is not always easy to bridge these generational gaps, and to purposefully invest such time and energy into the personal growth of younger community members. But this is the work that makes one an elder, and not merely an older person. Our fledging community needs elders, and Faith took on that role with even a youthful energy. This is part of what she leaves behind, and so many of us are better for it.

I know that Faith is still with me, with us. I hear her whispers from under the wing of the chickadee that sits near me in a pine forest. I feel her presence in the twilight of dawn on a cold November morning, where the browns and yellows of late autumn are washed clean in the white snows and deep cold of winter. I see her dancing alongside me when I am in the backcountry on skis, when the brisk winter wind whips up a new-fallen snow into a spinning cloud, a skirt's hem on a twirling dancer, before settling into a sea of drifts. I see the glimmer behind her eyes reflected in the northern lights that descend onto the melting ice of Lake Superior, where the crystals of honeycomb lap against each other in the water like millions of bells chiming in chorus. I hear her in the waters of rivers that endlessly bubble and spill over rocks and rapids, as my canoe slips gently over them. I carry her with me in my heart, where she is part of all things, in that special place where all the good and timeless things of the world gather together, to sit around a fire and sip on coffee, laughing and smiling until the orange light of the embers finally meets the colorful breaking of dawn.







Center of the World  
Elina Helander-Renvall

## A TRIBUTE TO A GENEROUS MENTOR

by Liz Carlson

When I first came to know about my Saami heritage over ten years ago, I wanted to learn more. Luckily, a google search led me to the *Báiki* website and to Faith. Faith became a mentor to me and has had a profound influence on my life; generously inviting me into community gatherings and events, connecting me to many other North American Saami people, sharing her cultural and spiritual knowledge, and providing guidance and opportunities that would further my scholarship.

I have fond memories of the first time I met Faith in person in 2005 during a Grandmothers' Gathering in Mesaba Co-op Park near Hibbing, Minnesota, where we sat together by the fire, sang, shared, and I took part in my first wood-heated sauna. I was struck by the spiritual kinship and acceptance I felt with Faith. Upon returning from the gathering, I quickly ordered all of the back issues of *Báiki*, and was so moved by them. *Báiki* has provided a foundation of my self-discovery regarding what it means to be a North American Saami person.

Faith took an interest in my academic work and invited me to write an article for *Báiki* regarding intergenerational trauma and Saami North Americans, which was published in 2007. The people and literature she connected me with as we collaborated on this article (notably Anno Nakai, and Harold Napoleon's *Yuuyaraq*) have had a profound influence on the shape my scholarship was to take during my doctoral studies, which began shortly afterwards. Because my scholarly focus has been colonialism and decolonization, through our intermittent email

correspondence, Faith and I developed the idea for my second contribution to *Báiki* which explored the multiple identities of North American Saami peoples as both colonized and colonizer which was published in 2009.

At Faith's invitation and with her generous hospitality, I was able to spend time with her again at the 2010 Summer Siidastallan in Duluth that was co-hosted by the Saami Siida of North America and *Báiki*. It was a wonderful time of sharing, learning, and visiting during which we also attended a screening of the amazing film *Suddenly Saami*. I will always remember my spiritual conversations with Faith during visits at her home, and during the 2012 Siidastallan event in Stacey, Minnesota. Notably, we explored questions of what it would mean for North American Saami to have collective spiritual practices or ceremonies, and the importance of seeking spiritual sanction for this that takes into account both who we are and where we are. This would necessitate, we felt, the involvement of Elders and spiritual knowledge keepers from both Sápmi and from the traditional lands where we were now residing. We worked together to begin this journey along with others who attended an Anishinaabe ancestor ceremony several years ago, and I believe that Faith will continue to help facilitate this work from the other side.

In many ways, I see Faith as having been the glue behind the North American Saami community as I have known it. I am so grateful for everything she has taught me, and for her kindness and generosity over the years. Her presence will be greatly missed by me, and I am sure by countless others.



## PATHFINDER

by Karen Hilja Weaver

In 1987, when I was ten years old, my father brought my brother and I to see the film *Ofelaš* or *Pathfinder*. It was the first feature length film created by Sami people in their own language, full of action, bravery, romance, and exploration of personal identity. We loved the movie and as we walked out of the theater my father said, "We are Lapps, but don't say this around your Grandma Hilja. She doesn't like it." I didn't even know what Lapps were, but my curiosity was awakened.

When my father was nine, he was assigned a school project of writing a report about a foreign country. When he told his mother about the assignment, she proudly recommended Finland, her family's homeland. In his research my father found photographs of Finns and Lapps. He asked his mother why they looked like Lapps if they were Finnish. His mother replied heatedly that, "Lapps were stupid, and ugly, and dirty, and don't ever talk about it again." She cried and lit a cigarette.

Based on her reaction, I can only assume that even in Anandale, Minnesota, in the 1920s, some form of discrimination or humiliation impacted my grandmother because of her Sami background.

When her mother emigrated to North America she was discouraged from traveling via New York due to the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1916. Because of her dark hair and slanted eyes, my great-grandmother came by way of Canada.

Like most people, I was intrigued by the forbidden. I went to the library and secretly found books describing Lapps having the roundest skulls and the sharpest teeth among European peoples. They feed their infants blood and marrow, hanging their cradles in trees. I did not understand words like Mongoloid. I could not recognize or understand the overt racism, but I could see my narrow slanted eyes mirrored in the photographs and I filed all of this information in my heart.

My family went to my grandmother's house for dinner one night. I found the corners of some papers sticking out from underneath her couch. I exhumed the sixth issue of *Báiki* from its hiding place, twelve pieces of paper folded in half and stapled. Grandma said, "That's garbage, you can have it if you want."

I read and reread that copy of *Báiki* for the next year. One day I saw a flier in a café for a class about Sami culture. I visited Faith Fjeld and the *Báiki* office in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I felt I had come home.

Charismatic and wry, Faith Fjeld became my friend. Fifty-nine at the time, she was 42 years my senior. She always treated me as an equal, talked like a sailor, and shared stories

of her adventures with me. I sometimes cut high school to edit *Báiki*. This once afforded me the pleasure of eating Faith's beef minestrone with Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, the Sami poet laureate of Finland at the time.

We went on road trips together, I stayed with her in San Francisco, and later we lived in the same community in Duluth, Minnesota. Faith and I were friends for 20 years, until her passing in 2014 at the age of 79.

As a younger person, I identified with what I learned about the history and culture of the Sami people. I felt alienated by the urban, consumer American culture and dismayed by environmental destruction. I wanted to find a place I belonged. It made sense to connect to indigenous identity, to disassociate from my White guilt and an ancestry of colonialism and destruction of the earth.

I traveled to Sápmi at the age of 21 to learn more about the Sami people and perhaps to see if I might find a new home. I was amazed to realize I am an American. I didn't fit in. I didn't know anyone. I didn't speak the language. I became front page news, complete with a photo, in a little Arctic town where the people were tickled, confused, and maybe a little embarrassed by this American Sami woman.

I have ancestry from almost every country in Europe. I recently found out I am as much Ogallala Sioux as I am Sami. The fact is I am a human. From early childhood my life has been rooted in nature and handwork. I share with hand and heart. Unsurprisingly, I identify with indigenous culture and now understand the wisdom of indigenous cultures is a gift to all human beings.

It is understandable that in crafting my identity as a young person I want to distance myself from a history of personal and ancestral violence by identifying with a culture I perceived as peaceful. What does it mean to have indigenous ancestry from Sápmi when you were born in America? Years later, I am involved in the ongoing process of examining these questions and shaping my identity with the desire of moving toward loving integration of all my stories' threads.

We have much to learn from indigenous cultures around the world. I am now able to recognize the wisdom and beauty of my European heritage as well as my indigenous ancestry. With a general lack of cultural continuity and institutional endorsement of consumer culture worldwide, we hunger for meaningful rituals to mark passage of the seasons and milestones of our lives. We need the teachings of living in reciprocity with our environment, giving back, giving thanks. Now I understand the importance of celebrating and honoring all humanity and All Our Relations.



Truly, the ancestors live in all of us. They whisper in our dreams, the curve of a cheekbone, and the creases of our hand. Listen. They will lead you home. Listen. They will feed you. Give thanks. They gave all they had that you might live.

Karen participating in a Sami Women's Gathering, organized by Faith, in Superior, Wisconsin, October 2011.



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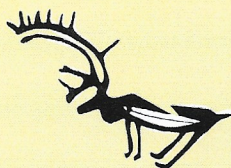
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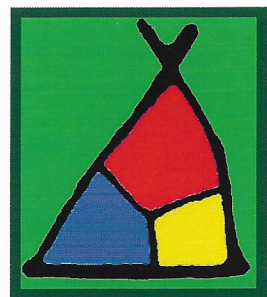


## SAMI CULTURAL CENTER OF NORTH AMERICA



A long held dream of Faith Fjeld's and others in the North American Sami community was realized when the non-profit Sami Cultural Center of North America was opened in August 2014 in Duluth, Minnesota. The Center houses an office, library, collection storage, a display area, and a classroom/meeting room/project room. The Center has a sizable library of books and other materials about Sami topics and the Alaska Sami projects that are available for research on site. The library has been named the Faith Fjeld Memorial Library.

The Sami Cultural Center's address is 4915 East Superior St., Suite 205, Duluth, MN 55804. The email address is [samicenterna@gmail.com](mailto:samicenterna@gmail.com), phone 218/525-4757, and web site [www.samiculturalcenter.org](http://www.samiculturalcenter.org). We are so appreciative of generous donations from many individuals and grants from Finlandia Foundation National and the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation that have helped make the Center a reality.



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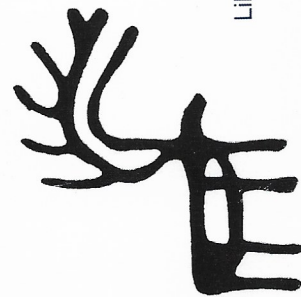
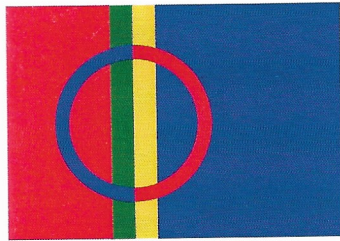
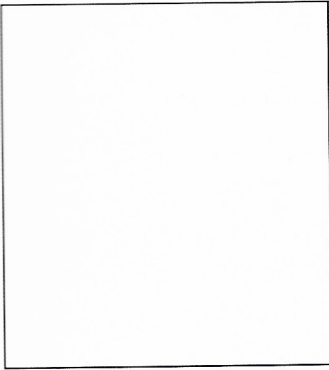
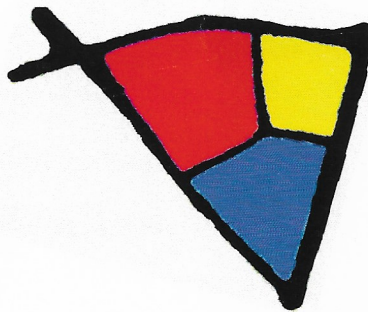
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