Pianist Ruusamari Teppo has both a direct family connection and a research connection to Finland’s beloved composer, Jean Sibelius. While listening to her play the music of her great-great-grandfather, audiences can sense her deep and personal connection with his music. Although she never had the opportunity to meet the great composer, her mother, who was 16 years old when Sibelius died, has shared memories of him with her daughter.

Continued on page 5
Word from the President

Hvät Ystävä:

W e are quite pleased with the success of our programs of the past few years, notably through the Jean Sibelius 150th and Finland 100th anniversaries in 2015 and 2019. During this period we have experienced growth, with additional chapters joining Finlandia Foundation.

However, we need to respond to changing times and rejuvenate ourselves. Last year, in our 65th year, we established a board committee to come up with recommendations of how we can best meet the challenges of the future, remain relevant and become the “go-to” Finnish-American organization.

There are many demands we must address, but one of the most important is how to meet the interests of the younger generation—not only of children but millennials, those in their early 30s. We will report on these efforts, in this newsletter and through other communications over time.

Another area of importance is fundraising. We will need to double our efforts to be able to support the chapters in arranging relevant programs, as well as in our existing and new programs, scholarships and grants. As you’ll see in this newsletter, these exciting efforts would greatly benefit from expanded support. We very much welcome your participation in our fundraising—your contributions are so essential for FFN to function in a meaningful way.

As a demonstration of the wide range of important programs we support, this newsletter contains an article about SFK, the memorial ski march of the Swedish volunteers, who came to Finland’s support during the 1939-40 Winter War. The rigorous event takes place every five years; the next will be held in March 2020, marking the 80th anniversary of the ending of the Winter War at the time that Marshal C. G. Mannerheim delivered thanks to the Swedish volunteers.

A group of dedicated Finnish-Americans, including Juha Mäkipää, former FFN president and longstanding treasurer, undertook substantial fundraising 15-20 years ago to support the SFK memorial ski march. The resulting SFK Fund was established with Finlandia Foundation National, which is credited as sponsor of the SFK 2020 Ski March. Please see the story on page 19.

The FFN Board of Trustees will meet next in early October in Helsinki. We last met in Finland in 1998, more than 20 years ago. Our Fall News will carry the report.

Wishing you an enjoyable spring and summer,

Ossi Rahkonen

The newsletter is produced twice yearly by the FFN Communications Committee: Jacqueline Horyja, chair, and Katarina Lehkonen, Betsey Norgard and Tarja Silverman.

Additionally, FFN produces a monthly, free e-news; sign up to receive it at the FFN website.

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Lecturers of the Year Present Finnish Cuisine

By Hilary-Joy Virtanen
FFN Trustee and LOY Committee Chair

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nish cuisine will be the focus of the 2019-2020 Lecturer of the Year program as Soile Anderson and Eleanor Ostman co-present on aspects of Finnish foodways. Authors of the book Celebrations to Remember: Exceptional Party Decor and Fabulous Food, they are well-regarded in their home region of Minnesota and far beyond.

A native of Finland, Soile Anderson (above right) relocated to Minnesota, settling in the Twin Cities area. Soile was already successful restaurateur and spa hotel owner in eastern Finland before she came to the U.S. to study fast food; she planned to bring that concept back to her native country, where it was then unknown. Instead, she stayed in America to found The Deco Restaurant, Taste of Scandinavia bakeries, and the Finnish country, where it was then unknown. Instead, she stayed in America to find The Deco Restaurant, Taste of Scandinavia bakeries, and the Finnish Bistro, where she served the likes of Barack Obama, the King and Queen of Norway and the Dalai Lama. She has also been featured in Martha Stewart Living magazine. In 2017, she was inducted into the Scandinavian American Hall of Fame.

Eleanor Ostman (above left), a full Finn, was born and schooled in Hibbing, Minnesota. At Macalester College in St. Paul she studied journalism, and was food writer for the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Her popular 30-year “Tested Recipes” column was the basis for her cookbooks Always on Sunday and Always on Sunday Revised. She and Soile met in the 1980s and a lifelong friendship developed, which blossomed into joint food demonstrations and talks. The pair will present in the Detroit area at FinnFestUSA 2019, where Soile will serve as the curator of food.

As Lecturers of the Year the two offer dynamic presentations tailored to the interests of their audience, with focused programs around the themes of their book. They will serve as LOY from July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. As always, FFN will pay for the lecturers’ travel to and from the venue, while the local hosting chapter will be responsible for lodging and meals, local arrangements and an honorarium. Find more information at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

To book a presentation, interested chapters must contact LOY Chair Hilary-Joy Virtanen at hilary.virtanen@gmail.com.
Changes to Performer of the Year Program

By Betsey Norgard
FFN Trustee and POY Committee Chair

After more than 20 years, some changes were recently made to the very popular Performer of the Year (POY) program.

Starting in 1996 when kantele artist and singer Merja Sorja was named the first POY, the program has sought to discover and highlight Finnish and Finnish-American talent, to give these performers opportunities to be seen and heard at the invitation of FFN chapters.

To be selected as POY, a performer had to be nominated by an FFN chapter or trustee—rather than directly applying. This process may have seemed daunting to would-be POY, and may have caused the decline in the number of nominations FFN has received. Additionally, in the last few years, when more older and professional musicians have been selected as POY, we’ve lost the original purpose of “discovering” and presenting young and new talent.

What has been obvious, however, is the popularity of the program among chapters that enjoy lesser-known artists with high-quality programs. So, some changes to the program were recommended and adopted at the recent board meeting.

First, the committee returned the POY term from the current September 1 through August 31 period back to a calendar-year schedule.

More significantly, the committee eliminated the nomination process and will make its own selection of a POY at its regular fall meeting. This matches the selection process for the Lecturer of the Year. Announcement about the 2020 POY program will be made later this year.

Performers who are interested in becoming POY are encouraged to contact POY coordinator Betsey Norgard at bjnorgard@gmail.com to be considered for selection. The POY program is not restricted to musicians—high-quality, interesting programs of varying areas of talent are welcomed, including comedians, storyteller, dance, etc. Read about past POY at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

Blue Bird Alights in U.S.

Finlandia Foundation National is a sponsor of an ambitious U.S. tour by Finnish cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian. The duet kicked off their tour at the Embassy of Finland in Washington, D.C. in November 2018, and continued with several appearances in California in March. The schedule spans three years, and their program is available to FFN chapters. The duo will return to perform in November 2019, April 2020, and September-October 2020.

As described in fuller detail in the Fall 2018 FFN News, concert hosts have a choice of three musical themes: Finnish Jewels featuring pieces by Finnish composers, the multimedia Sibelius Inspiration; and The Blue Bird, a new work by Finnish composer Jonne Valtosen.

The musical duo recently released Luinto Sininen (The Blue Bird), a combination children’s book and CD. This is their second such effort, which is compatible with their ongoing mission to engage children in classical music. Their first such collaboration, Soive Metsä (Melody Forest), features the work of Jean Sibelius and was released in 2015 in honor of the 150th anniversary of the composer’s birth. It quickly reached certified gold status, and was the first Finnish classical chamber recording to have sold more than 10,000 copies. By 2017, with sales topping 20,000, Soive Metsä was a platinum best-seller.

Both books are illustrated by Katri Kirkkopelto. Currently, they are available only at live performances and online at: store.charmi.eu.

Find more information about the duo, their programs and books, and hosting a performance at the FFN website, FinlandiaFoundation.org.

The Music of Sibelius, with a Personal Connection

Ruusamari Teppo began playing piano in Finland at the age of five. After graduating from Sibelius High School, she studied in Paris for three years, and earned artist certificates from music schools in Prague and Budapest, funded by scholarships from the Finnish government.

Since 2001 she has studied at the University of North Texas with Vladimir Viardo, a Van Cliburn international competition winner. In the fall, she will complete her doctoral degree in collaborative piano, studying some of the lesser-known music of Sibelius. In recent years she has performed in the U.S., throughout Europe and in South Africa.

If your chapter would like to invite Ruusamari Teppo to perform a concert, FFN will cover round-trip travel costs to your location. The chapter’s responsibility will be paying a $500 honorarium, plus providing local accommodation and local transportation.

For more information contact FFN trustee Betsey Norgard at bjnorgard@gmail.com.

The Music of Sibelius

Continued from page 1
FFN Grants 2019

By Jacqueline Harjula | FFN Trustee

FFN is delighted to have received so many innovative grant requests. The submissions included activities ranging from music, film, travel, writing, theater, composition and sports, to archival work, hall and log cabin renovation, energy conservation projects, design and research, architecture, social media and a heritage park. Fifty individuals or groups submitted applications for a total of $193,488. Requests were received from across the U.S., with eight from California; six each from Michigan and Minnesota; five from New York; three each from Massachusetts and Washington; two each from Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Oregon and Texas; one each from Arizona, Connecticut, Montana and Pennsylvania; plus five from Finland.

The review committee of FFN trustees was chaired by Richard Ahola and included Anita Smiley, Päivi Tetri, Katariina Lehtonen and Jacqueline Harjula. We worked diligently to equitably allocate the $115,000 budgeted for grants in 2019, and were able to support 37 of the requests. As a new member of the committee, it was a privilege to be part of the day-long meeting to discuss each request prior to the final decisions.

1. **MUSIC**

A Finnish accordionist, Matti Pulkki, will receive funds to commission a new work by the composer and composition professor for the Manhattan School of Music, Reiko Fűting, and to organize two events in September: a concert and an open workshop, and a seminar about the accordion as an important instrument in the Finnish culture and part of the identity of the Finnish immigrants.

2. FFN Performer of the Year **Juli Wood** will print DVDs from a 2018 performance at Bethany College in Mankato, Minnesota, and donate the proceeds of the sales to Saloömpi Language Village. Juli plays jazzed-up Finnish folk tunes on her saxophone, and sings familiar American jazz songs in Finnish.

3. **Play The Groove** (PTG) is a music education curriculum. This grant will assist with the expenses related to a two-month residency at the University of the Arts Helsinki’s CERADA Research Center. The objectives are to map PTG to the Finnish national curriculum and create a model for other international adaptations to incorporate creative music-making in classrooms.

4. **The Vappu Spring Gala** features a musical celebration of Nordic culture at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle, welcoming spring with a concert of joyful music. Funding will assist with marketing the event.

5. **A Finnish Evening at the Biltmore** will showcase cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian. Speakers at this event in Arizona will enable guests, including local business and government leaders, to learn more about Finnish culture, traditions, and history. The small but vibrant FFN chapter, Finns and Friends of Phoenix, plans to take this club to a new level of abilities and to advertise FFN locally.

6. **A Vappu Fundraising Event** at Balboa Park in San Diego will allow guests to enjoy traditional Finnish food, games, children’s activities and music. Hosted by the San Diego Suomi Koulu to assist with the school’s annual budget, this event expects 200-300 attendees. POY Juli Wood will perform.

7. The Finnish School of Seattle has invited two children’s music educators from Finland to visit their school. They will offer workshops for children that will include experiencing music through songs, movement and playing instruments. A regional training day for Finnish school teachers will be offered. The grand finale will be a community concert at the Nordic Heritage Museum.
8. Rent Romus and Heikki Koskinen present, Monoline, an original musical project inspired by the mythic prose of cultural identity found in the Kalevala. The debut will take place in California at the Berkeley Finnish Hall and is sponsored by the FF San Francisco Bay Area Chapter. This event expects to significantly attract new audiences, of both American and Finnish descent, to the historic hall’s future programming.

9. Rockport Legion Band will present a concert of Finnish-American music in July at the American Legion Bandstand in Rockport, Massachusetts. The band was founded in 1933, and half of its original members were Finns. Local school youth are scheduled to augment the band at this concert. The Cape Ann Finns are gathering historical material about the band that will be archived.

10. Kolevala The Musical is a grand scale musical production emphasizing the sacred bond between nature and humankind from a unique female perspective. It is set to a jazz/pop and traditional Finnish folk music score. After funding that assists with a staged reading, the ultimate goal is opening the finished production to the public. This show will have a cast of 15-20 performers and an instrumental ensemble of 10-20 musicians.

11. Aniara: Fragments of Time and Space represents a collaboration between The Crossing, a professional chamber choir, and the Helsinki-based theater company Klockrike. Together they will premiere a new choral theater production in Philadelphia in June, performed by an international team that includes both Finnish and American artists. It is a story about time running out and the impossibility of avoiding the consequence of destroying earth.

12. A Finnish-American Theatre production in Massachusetts will include one-act plays and selections from full-length historical drama, comedy and folk plays, based on performance that were presented in four local Temperance and Socialist Halls from 1900 to 1940. The evening will end with performers and audience members telling stories and singing together, the patriotic stanzas to Sibelius’ Finlandia.

13. Sirkka is a 60-minute documentary film about the life of 98-year-old Sirkka Tuomi Holm, whose intriguing past has included time as an actress, a WWII veteran, and an activist for progressive causes. Her column in The Finnish American Reporter is a favorite of subscribers. This film is being created in partnership with the Finnish American Heritage Center.

14. The Lady and the Accordion is a documentary film on the culture of Finnish American immigrants in the early 20th century as seen through the life story of Viola Turpeinen, a unique musician. The film will include new interpretations of Viola’s music by Finnish accordion artist Riitta Kossi.

15. Grant Continuation A 2018 grant made possible a feature film about a late Finnish pop singer. So much material was uncovered during its production that a companion documentary film with cultural significance has been proposed. The documentary will be released concurrently with the feature film.

16. A grant awarded to the Finnish Film Gala in Hollywood will support Finnish film producers in their possible Oscar or Golden Globe bids, as well as provide actors and directors a chance to promote themselves to the LA film industry.

17. Those Who Came Before Us: People of the Waterfront is a three-part series documenting the lifestyles and beliefs of ancient Finns and their indigenous lives, from folk religion to wedding ceremonies. Funds will support travel to Finland to gather information.

18. Her Excellency, Tarja Halonen, a 20-minute documentary, will feature interviews with President Halonen, relevant scholars and leaders in Finland, and Finnish-Americans at a gathering in Berkeley, California. This grant will support travel costs for the film crew.

19. Finland’s Mid-20th Century Wars: Immigrant Families Remember will record the stories, artifacts and music of people who came to the U.S. after the 1945 wars. Finnfolk, the “house band” of the Finnish Heritage Center, will perform tunes that were emotionally important to Finns during the war years. The video project will be presented at FinnFest USA 2019 in a workshop designed to inspire people to preserve significant history of their own communities, and to describe how to carry out the preservation videoing.

20. Footwork and Fiddles to Finland is the fourth of the tour of the Kivajat Dancers from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, who have been invited to perform at the Tanssiva Turku, a children’s international folk dance festival. The trip for 30 dancers and fiddlers will be assisted by a travel grant from FFN. These talented young people also perform all year at nursing homes, cultural festivals and Finnish celebrations.
21. Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras (CYSO) will tour Finland and the Baltics and perform four professionally-produced concerts in historic venues. Eighty-seven members of the CYSO will take part in this tour, and the FFN grant will help support their stay and performance in Finland.

22. Music for All-Lifer Life continues a collaboration between two music educators, an American and a Finn, who will create, fund, and direct an adult beginner band in Campbell, New York, in partnership with the public music school program. It was noted that Finnish music educators are more interested in the process than in the product, and emphasize the role of music for well-being. This band will become a permanent addition to the culture of the community. The grant will assist with travel to Finland, accommodations, and music.

23. Finland’s Bioeconomy-Exploring Renewable Energy is a four-part energy series that will be offered in the fall of 2019 in Houghton, Michigan, to explore methods used in Finland. The goal is to increase the use of renewable, water, and energy efficient technologies. The series will be videotaped and posted on the website newpowertour.com. The grant will be used for travel and accommodations for the Finnish presenters.

24. Leading Finnish jazz musicians, a six-piece jazz band performing as Tuomo and Markus, will travel to the U.S. to appear at Central Park’s SummerStage Festival in New York City, and at the Nordic Heritage Museum in Seattle. The grant will help with travel expenses and hotels. Their unique sound and open-minded approach to music are possibly credited to their Nordic heritage.

25. Camera-Pen Pedagogy Workshops will be offered at Saloalampi Finnish Language Village by Panu Tuomikko, with activities in filmmaking as language education to program participants and professional development for staff members. Students solve problems, make observations and develop visual thinking using the camera as a tool. Funding will be used for travel and salaries.

26. The craft of Himmeli will be studied in Finland, including learning about its folk history, viewing old himmeli in museums, and visiting Eija Koski’s organic rye farm to learn about the traditional use of rye as the material for their construction. The artist’s hope is that there will be a renewed interest in this craft and that himmeli-making will continue. This grant will provide funds for travel from Minneapolis to Helsinki.

SPORTS
27. Finnish Cultural Exchange through Hockey will be supported by a grant enabling the FFN-Suomi Chapter in Bellingham, Washington, to sponsor former NHL player Jyrki Lumme at a one-day hockey clinic. Finland will be featured, and participants will receive gift bags with Finnish goodies and a T-shirt.

ARCHIVAL WORK
28. The Finnish American Heritage Society in Canterbury, Connecticut, in collaboration with Finlandia University’s Heritage Center, will use the services of a professional archivist to organize and catalog its extensive collection of publications, documents, photos, and artifacts. The Finnish Hall, constructed in 1925, has over 3,000 publications dating to the early 1900s. Access to these titles through internet technology will provide value to researchers, educational institutions, and families.

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION
29. The Lindgren Cabin, in Cullaby Lake, Oregon, is a traditional Finnish axehewn log cabin built using 19th century Finnish log construction techniques. Repairing the cabin will make it possible to hold cultural and historical events open to the public. The FF Columbia-Pacific Chapter is overseeing this work.

30. The Finnish Center at Saima Park in Fitchburg, Massachusetts has a busy kitchen and dining room that regularly serve many wonderful Finnish meals to the Finnish-American community and to the general public. This facility is also rented to other ethnic groups throughout the year. This grant will assist with a much-needed update of the kitchen in order to comply with current regulations.

31. Planning for the Astoria Nordic Heritage Park (formerly Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Park) in Oregon began in 2015, and the committee has done endless work and completed many steps toward its goal of beginning construction by July of 2019. Finns are the largest of the immigrant groups in Astoria, and this park will honor the contributions of their early immigrants and their customs, language, food, and the arts.

WRITING AND TRANSLATION
32. Kotima: Homeland is the third novel in the Finnish historical fiction trilogy by Minnesotan Mark Munger. It chronicles the details of a Finn’s emigration from Finland in the early 1900s, and is also a contemporary story of the political unrest in Finland relating to immigration. The grant will support the editing and a first run of 500 copies of the novel.

33. The Journal of Finnish Studies disseminates in English information about Finnish research and the Finnish diaspora. The publication center for a theme issue entitled Entrepreneurial Education and Tendencies in Finland will be paid for by a grant from FFN. Research for this issue was submitted by many young Finnish cutting-edge academics who study entrepreneurship and how to teach the best practices for future business people in Finland.

34. Preserving Finnish History is the goal of translating seven journals from Finnish to English. These are from the period between 1918-1941, related to the original St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Beechwood, Michigan, and to the establishment of a rural Finnish church. A skilled Finnish translator will be paid using the FFN grant received.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE
35. The Minneapolis community will gather for a conversation about art, design and architecture with artist Jaana Partanen and architect Heikki Lamusuo from Kuopio, Finland. They will speak informally about their unusual approaches in these areas for places like hospitals, day-care centers and schools, and lively conversation will be encouraged. Kuopio and Minneapolis have been sister city partners since 1973.

DESIGN AND RESEARCH
36. FF of Montana is collaborating with the University of Montana’s Broader Impact Group to engage Missoula’s thriving food and beverage sector with Aalto Design Factory’s innovative “Design Bites” project. This focuses on designing vibrant, inclusive, innovative ecosystems. The event will bring together a diverse, international cohort of 200 designers, innovators and changemakers for conversations and boot camps.

SOCIAL MEDIA
37. FinnFastUSA is bringing Finnish-American public relations into the 21st century via paid placement on social media including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and Google. The goal is to increase representation for FinnFast USA 2019, expand public awareness of the event and increase interaction and communication that bring the general public’s attention to Finland and Finnish-America.

What a wide range of projects, and what an honor for Finlandia Foundation National to be able to support them! Keep in mind that your generous donations, matched by the Paloheme Foundation, have enabled our Finnish-American heritage and culture to survive and thrive. The next FFN grant application deadline is January 17, 2020. Go to FinlandiaFoundation.org.
2019 FFN Scholarships

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he first program established by Finlandia Foundation, within a few years after it was founded in 1953, was its scholarship fund dedicated to music students in the United States and Finland. The inaugural Siberius Scholarship was awarded to Einojuhani Rautavaara, a student at the Siberius Academy who applied his funds toward study at The Juilliard Academy in New York City. Rautavaara (1928-2016) would go on to become one of Finland’s most important composers.

Today, undergraduate and graduate students in all fields at schools in the U.S. and Finland are eligible. This year the committee received 57 applications, and was able to grant 15 scholarships totaling $36,000. Of the recipients, seven are dual nationals, five are U.S. citizens, and three are Finnish citizens.

The 10 Scholarships Committee, chaired by FFN trustee Hanna Wagner, consisted of Sonja Grulich, Kristi Norg, Pipo Schlichting, and Turto Turtainen.

The next application deadline for scholarships is February 2020. Find details at FinlandiaFoundation.org.
P.J.C. Lindfors Legal Scholarship

Pertti Lindfors, a Finnish-American attorney in San Francisco, established the Pertti Lindfors Legal Studies Fund to encourage cross-cultural study and understanding by law students in Finland and the United States.

The recipient of the $3,000 Lindfors Legal Scholarship is JUNANI LAUTJÄRVI. He holds an LL.M. degree from the University of Helsinki and a Master of Science in Economics from the Aalto University School of Business. He is pursuing a post-graduate LL.M. degree at Columbia University in New York City.

NEW LINDFORS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE

Finlandia Foundation National announces a change in the application deadline for the Lindfors Legal Scholarship, beginning immediately. The next round of applications, for the 2020 award, are due by October 1, 2019. Announcement of law scholarship recipients will be in late 2019, and the funds will be released in January 2020. Find details at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

Kalevala Reading Marathon at Finlandia University

By Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen | FFN Trustee | Assistant Professor, Finlandia University

On February 28, Finlandia University’s Finnish & Nordic Studies Program hosted its first annual “Kalevalathon,” a marathon reading of Finland’s national epic, Kalevala. The object of the first event was to read as much of the epic as possible during a 14-hour period. In that time, participants read 19 of its 50 poems. Primarily led by students in my Kalevala class, guest readers were other students in the Finnish & Nordic Studies program and faculty and staff including Finlandia University President Philip Johnson. Participants read their poem in either Finnish or English, and copies of the book were available for the audience to follow along.

Marathon Kalevala readings have been conducted elsewhere, including among different academic programs in Finland and at Columbia University. The Kalevala will be an annual event at Finlandia University, though in the future, the entire epic will be read.

I look forward to this 14-hour venture, as long as enough participants ensure that I won’t have to read most of the poems myself.

Kalevala is a recognized holiday in Finland commemorating the anniversary of the date that Kalevipoika compiler Elias Lönnrot signed the front page of his first version of the epic, published in 1835.

Kalevalathon allowed my students in the Kalevala class to approach the stories in a way approximating the original oral context in which Karelians in the 1830s would have heard the poems themselves. In listening to the poems, even I notice things about the stories more sharply than when I read them.

The event was an opportunity for the university community and the public to come together to celebrate the Finnish and Nordic-Canadian community. It was a cherished evening of fun and delight for Finlandia Foundation Florida’s Finnish community.

Ambassador Shares Gender Equality Insights with Florida Chapter

By Kaarina Langeland | President, FFFC

The centenary celebration of Finland’s Independence in 2017 was the most significant commemorative year for the Finlandia Foundation Florida Chapter, the annual meeting last February was the most remarkable meeting thus far in the chapter’s history. We were delighted to have Finland’s Ambassador to the U.S. Kirsti Kauppi as the keynote speaker, with Finlandia Foundation National President Ossi Rahkonen the honorary guest.

Ambassador Kauppi discussed Gender Equality in Finland from political, economic and educational points of view, noting:

- The women’s labor force is almost at the same level as that of men.
- The difference in salary between men and women is one of the smallest in the world.
- More women than men have academic degrees.
- The Finnish educational system has always encouraged gender equality.
- Gender equality exists among Finnish ambassadors worldwide.

A lively discussion followed, with many questions from the audience.

FFFC presented our guest speaker with a painting by artist and FFFC Vice President Tiula Antikainen, which the ambassador kindly promised to hang at the Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Contributed by Elsie Jaehn | FFFC member

The evening of November 17 was a happy occasion for more than 130 guests at Finlandia Foundation Florida’s annual gala at the Atlantis Country Club. The theme of “Happy Finns!” kicked off with appetizers and champagne, and carried through a delicious dinner, short program, dancing to the Driftwood Band and fun raffle.

Following a warm welcome by FFFC President Dr. Kaarina Langeland, Mistress of Ceremonies Anna-Lisa Jakobsson led a “Happy Finns” melody and dance. Peter Makila shared thoughts on nature’s gifts to the Finnish people. Reijo Salo spoke about Finland’s national pastime of sauna, accompanied by sauna sausage and tasty mustards. Harri Manner sang the popular “Hepokatti” and encouraged guests to accompany him through its many verses.

It was a cherished evening of fun and delight for Finlandia Foundation Florida’s Finnish community.
Finnish Foundation New York Metropolitan Chapter President Eero Kilpi reports that 2018 was a busy year, with nine successful events ranging from a private shopping evening at the Flattron Marrimskio flagship store to a Midsummer sauna gathering, and a private visit in October to the studio and gallery of Finnish-American 3D pop artist Charles Fazzino.

The last three events of the year were sell-outs, says Eero, noting that November’s release party for a book by Teemu Luukkan about New York entrepreneur Tyyni Kalervo was a joint program with the Finnish Lutheran Congregation and the Finnish School in New York. The Independence Day Celebration traditionally attracts many members, and the Christmas Party was organized in collaboration with the Finnish American Chamber of Commerce.

According to Eero, “As a non-profit charitable organization, we rely heavily on donations and always appreciate them. However, six of the nine events were held for free. The trend continues where we work as much as possible with all relevant players within the Finnish community in the tri-state area to support students and the Finnish community itself here in our home, New York.” He explains that the cooperative approach broadens the audience and potential success for an event, and this is a way to strengthen the organization and its future.

‘Not so long ago, we celebrated Finland’s 100th anniversary, and April 12 of this year marks the 65th anniversary of the Finlandia Foundation New York Metropolitan Chapter!’

Only a year after the inception of Finlandia Foundation National in January of 1953, the FFNYMC was founded by charter members Reino Aarino, Essa Ara, Pihl Heiskanen, Jussi Himanka, Raymond K. J. Luomanen and Theodore M. Purdy, who was also the first president of the chapter.

From the beginning, FFNYMC took a strong role in supporting the Finnish community, when the Sports Committee granted aid for Finnish athletes’ travel expenses to participate in the Olympics in Melbourne, Australia in 1956. The annual Press Awards were started in 1958 in recognition of significant cultural coverage of Finland in the American media; this award was later changed to Arts and Letters and extended to other areas as well (e.g. music and architecture).

In 1965 FFNYMC began to grant annual scholarships, still a prominent part of the foundation’s mission. This year the organization gave $30,000 worth of grants and scholarships to Finnish-American students in such fields as science, medicine, music, art, history and education.

For the Los Angeles Finlandia Foundation meeting on March 17, members were invited to bring an item from their family’s past that is Finland-related, and tell stories about the item and their family history in Finland or the United States. “It was a great way to learn more about our members,” says LAFF President Ellen Harju.

Hei Sirvio chats with author Teemu Luukkan at a release party for his book about legendary New York City entrepreneur Tyyni Kalervo, an early supporter of FFNYMC.

1. LAFF members who shared their treasures and stories (from left): Sirvo Wieremo, Larry Soronen, Karl Morris, Jeff Neff, Jason Hiltunen, Lisa Linnala, Dennis Matson, Elissa Della Rosa and Carm Goode
2. Sirvo Wieremo’s Finnish knife
3. Lisa Linnala’s handcarved serving spoon from Finland
On March 14, 60 members of Finlandia Foundation’s National Capital Chapter enjoyed an unusual Kalevala Day event at the beautiful Embassy of Finland. We savored a light buffet of Finnish-style food and heard FFNCC member Seija Cleverley recite poetry from the epic Kalevala and its “sister” book Kontieler: FFN Performer of the Year, saxophone player Juli Wood with guitarist accompanist Steve Herberman, played Finnish folk tunes linked with a jazzy twist to American songs. We also offered a silent auction fundraiser of pulla bags. These were Finnish baked goods including pulla, limppu, and cookies loaded into special canvas bags designed by FFNCC member Sinna Massala.

In addition, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of FFNCC with a discussion of chapter history by FFN President Ossi Rahkonen, who was the National Capital Chapter president from 2001 to 2004.

Every five years, the Svenska Finlandsfrivilligas Minnesförening (Swedish Association of Finnish Volunteers’ Memorial Society, or SFK) and Finlandia Foundation National sponsor the SFK Memorial Ski March to commemorate a significant event of the Winter War. The next ski march takes place from March 26-29, 2020, when volunteers on skis will as did the ski troopers of 1940, cross 80 km (50 miles) from Kemijärvi to Salla in Finnish Lapland.

**Background**

On November 30, 1939, without declaration of war, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, starting the Winter War. This act of aggression shocked the world and the USSR was expelled from the League of Nations.


**Juha Mäkipää Why I Give**

Juha Mäkipää is well-known among Finnish-Americans. His expertise as a global business leader for IBM took him to Paris, Tokyo and New York, and enabled him to sell and install the first IBM computers in Finland, Ireland and the People’s Republic of China. With all of his international success, Juha still managed to find time to be a leader with Finlandia Foundation. He first joined the New York Metropolitan Chapter in 1975 shortly after moving to the United States from Tokyo. Since then, he has served as treasurer and president of that chapter, the Florida chapter and FFN.

Juha was born and raised in Helsinki and benefited from an excellent Finnish private school, learning five languages from age six. By 16, he had graduated high school and went on to receive a Master of Science in Engineering from the Helsinki Institute of Technology. He joined IBM Finland in 1959 as a sales representative and helped install many of the first computers in Finland. With his skills and expertise, he was promoted up the corporate ladder and had the opportunity to work on some significant and transformative projects, including the first maritime collision avoidance system and the first Apollo Lunar Module. After 30 years of service, Juha retired and now lives in Florida. Throughout his career in the United States, he has actively celebrated his Finnish heritage.

I felt that if all the multitude of Finnish-American organizations, Finlandia Foundation alone had the programs and leadership required for long term growth and success,” Juha says. “It turns out that I was right. So many other Finnish-American organizations have suffered decline and extinction over the past decades, and it looks like not very many others still remain as active.” We asked Juha a few questions about his career, his success, and why he is an active supporter of Finlandia Foundation.

**Q** Tell us about your educational and career path and the factors that were critical to your success. 

**Juha Mäkipää**

Timely and pure luck completed heavily. The school went to IBM in Helsinki had a heavy emphasis on languages from age six through 12. High school summer vacation jobs in Germany, England and Sweden also helped.

Later, a one-year scholarship to the University of Wisconsin added to my English skills. Finnish students were invited to apply for the very generous scholarship just one day before a 1956 general strike happened to close all post offices in Finland. Apparently, I was the only applicant who thought of taking my application to the American Embassy in Helsinki, and persuading them to add it to the diplomatic mail. IBM Finland hired me mainly based on being fluent in three or more languages.

**Q** Do you think your Finnish heritage and upbringing helped you in any way?

My parents were both college graduates and placed a great emphasis on education. My school in Helsinki were also offered a wide range of educational opportunities that families in rural areas. For example, the private school I attended offered an accelerated path to graduation, enabling me to apply to universities at age 16.

**Q** What are your fondest “Finnish” memories?

I loved my college years in Helsinki. For example I worked to develop the first Finnish TV network (TTS TV) in studios at the Finland Institute of Technology. I met with many famous Finnish entertainers and politicians in our studios. 

**Q** What advice would you give our current group of FFN scholarship recipients as they complete their education and start their careers?

Larger companies, especially those operating internationally, offer better opportunities for skills development and career advancement than smaller, local companies. Looks better on your resumes, too.

**Q** What important role can Finlandia Foundation play in the future?

In my opinion, Finlandia Foundation is probably the only Finnish-American organization that has excellent odds for survival and success. Finlandia Foundation has for many decades been quite successful in supporting Finnish culture in the United States. Longer term, however, I see some serious challenges. I am hoping that Finlandia Foundation will find some major breakthroughs in the area of fundraising. Only a solid financial foundation can guarantee future growth and success.

**Q** Why do you support the Finlandia Foundation?

I support Finlandia Foundation exactly because it is the one and only Finnish organization with a proven track record and the best financial footing to survive and succeed. Finlandia Foundation is the organization with the best odds to have zero. Let’s all join to support the organization with the best odds for continuous success, the Finlandia Foundation.

**Q** Why is it important for others to support the Finlandia Foundation?

Hundreds of Finn Halls and other Finnish Foundations have pulled the plug on this country, often competing with each other. In my New York Metro area alone, we have used five Finn Halls. We now have zero. Let’s all join to support the organization with the best odds for continuous success, the Finlandia Foundation.

**Finnlandia Foundation**

The meeting location allowed the trustees to meet local members of the FFN San Diego chapter, House of Finland. The House of Finland belongs to the House of Pacific Relations (HPR), a non-profit community organization in San Diego, which was founded in 1955 and is dedicated to furthering cooperation and understanding between national groups in the United States. HPR consists of 54 national groups, many of which have their own cottage in Balboa Park. House of Finland, founded in 1959, has filled its cottage with examples of Finnish glass, textiles and materials related to cultural icons including Jean Sibelius and Angry Birds. The international cottages are open to the public on weekends, when each group takes a turn presenting an entertaining cultural program.

Following the close of their meeting on Saturday, FFN board members enjoyed a reception at the House of Finland followed by dinner and a music program at the Hall of Nations, a short stroll away.

Finnish cellist Juusi Mäkipää and pianist Nazig Azezian played selections by Finnish composers, including a piece composed for The Blue Bird, the duet’s new children’s book and CD set and theme of one of their touring programs (see story on page 4).

Juha Mäkipää had the opportunity to meet with Vice President Mike Pence at the White House in March of 2019.
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