Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season,

President’s Letter

That mission has evolved since 1953, when the founders created this organization. We have adapted to social and cultural shifts within the Finnish-American communities. Some 70 years ago, Finn Halls were central to immigrant life. Today, a relatively small number of those gathering places exist, and social circles are much wider.

We have embraced the opportunities available through online communication, expanding both our programming and our reach to our traditional Finnish-American community and a wider audience that is now more aware of and interested in Finland.

As we saw during October’s Joint Chapter Meeting in New York City, there is a high level of interest, enthusiasm and dedication on the part of the countless volunteers who are determined to keep and strengthen Finnish America, on the local level and through the connectivity and the resources of the national organization.

We look forward to celebrating our 70th anniversary in the coming year, and the possibilities beyond. Your generous gift to Finlandia Foundation National, the most important independent source of support for Finland in America, is vital to that future.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season,

Anne-Mari Paster

President’s Letter

The magazine is produced twice yearly by the FPN Communications Committee: Jacqueline Harju, chair, and Katarina Lehtonen, Betsey Norgard and Tarja Silverman.

Additionally, FPN produces a monthly, free e-newsletter. To receive it at the FPN website. Submit chapter news and other items of interest and photos to FPN Communications Manager Kath Ustad. Please contact her at kath@finlandiafoundation.org

FFN Communications Committee: Jacqueline Harju, chair, and Katarina Lehtonen, Betsey Norgard and Tarja Silverman.

The subject matter of his paintings focuses on nature and forest scenes, and he has a series of paintings of ice cuts done in lakes used for swimming after a sauna. The Finnish influence of his paintings comes through in most of his work.

A native of New England, Eric has painted across the globe. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Massachusetts College of Art, and received a Fulbright Scholarship for graduate study at the Institute of Art and Design in Lahti, Finland.

In interviews and discussions, Eric never misses an opportunity to note his Finnish heritage as an influence on his work and inspiration.

Eric Aho

FFN Trustee

The Artist of the Year is an American painter with Finnish heritage who lives and works in Vermont. The subject matter of his paintings focuses on nature and forest scenes, and he has a series of paintings of ice cuts done in lakes used for swimming after a sauna. The Finnish influence of his paintings comes through in most of his work.

A native of New England, Eric has painted across the globe. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Massachusetts College of Art, and received a Fulbright Scholarship for graduate study at the Institute of Art and Design in Lahti, Finland.

In interviews and discussions, Eric never misses an opportunity to note his Finnish heritage as an influence on his work and inspiration.

His work can be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the Museum of Fine Art in Boston and the Denver Art Museum.

Eric’s work is represented in New York City by DC Moore Gallery, and he is associated with well-known galleries in Santa Fe, Jackson Hole and others.
Lecturer of the Year is Suzanne Matson

Suzanne Matson, a poet, author and English professor at Boston College, is the Finlandia Foundation Lecturer of the Year for 2023. Her fourth novel, Ultraviolet, was published by Catapult in 2018. Much acclaimed, it is the story of three generations of women and "the complexities of marriage, motherhood, aging, and the end of life."

From Publishers Weekly’s starred review: "Readers will latch onto the unforgettable characters of this accomplished saga of the shifting personal and historical complications of American womanhood."

She writes short fiction and nonfiction articles and essays, and her poems have been widely published in periodicals and two of her own books. In her LOY program, Suzanne will talk about Finnish identity as a writer, and read from her works.

Her POY presentation, "Writing the Finnish-American Story" is based on her finding that audiences are interested in talking about the process of turning personal and public history into literature.

She offers as an optional companion to the LOY, a two-hour, interactive workshop, "Writing Our Family Stories." Participants would bring source material, such as a family photograph, letter, ship manifest, recipe or oral history, that would inspire a short writing exercise.

Suzanne, who now lives in Newton, Massachusetts, is originally from Oregon. She received a BA in English from Portland State University, an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Washington and a PhD in English, also from Washington.

She will be available for LOY appearances from January through December of 2023. FFN pays for travel, while chapters make local hosting arrangements and pay the honorarium. Find the details at FinlandiaFoundation.org. Learn more about Suzanne at her website, suzzannematson.com.

Ida Metsberg is Performer of the Year

Katarina Lehtonen, Trustee
LOY Coordinator

The 2023 Performer of the Year for Finlandia Foundation National is singer-songwriter Ida Metsberg. Music has always been an important part of Ida’s life, as she comes from a Finnish family of musicians. She began classical piano lessons at age seven, and in 2012, moved to New York to study musical theatre at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy.

During her time in school, Ida was drawn to making her own music and telling her own stories. She now accompanies her blend of pop and folk on guitar, and is eager to share her music with Finnish-American audiences all across the U.S.

Ida has appeared at many well-established venues in New York, including Webster Hall, Cafe Vivaldi, Rockwood Music Hall, Bar9, Kastelli Cafe, Shrine and Silvana. She released her first EP, “Somebody New,” in October of 2022. Also in October, at the opening night of the FFN Joint Chapter Meeting, she performed with other Finnish talent in the annual "Diamonds of the North" concert. Ida hosts a monthly singalong with children at Scandinavia House in Manhattan.

Her unique and original way of telling stories leaves audiences mesmerized. Reviews of Ida’s performances include:

"Ida Metsberg captivates audiences old and young with her presence and talent when performing."

"Ida is a master in storytelling with her original songs and unique lyrics."

"Phenomenal singer-songwriter and artist."

Ida will be available for POY appearances from January through December of 2023. FFN pays for travel, while chapters make local hosting arrangements and pay the honorarium. Find the details at FinlandiaFoundation.org. Learn more about Ida at her website, idaofficial.com.
The change of seasons ushered in renewed inspiration for the Young Leaders Board (YLB). Two major events highlighted our fall activities — our September collaboration with the Finnish Embassy in Washington, D.C. and our participation at the October Joint Chapter Meeting (JCM).

Spearheaded by YLB representative Tommy Flanagan, we hosted the third event in our partnership with the Embassy on September 15, titled “Young Leaders Forum: NATO, Finland and the United States.” Panelists included Giulia Neaher, who serves as an assistant director with the Atlantic Council’s GeoTech Center, Ashley Lund, a congressional legislative aid, and Pauliina Patana, a faculty member at Georgetown University. Daniel Olin, a correspondent for the Finnish public broadcasting company Yle, served as moderator.

With a diverse array of industries represented, the panel sparked a wide-ranging conversation and thoughtful, engaging questions from the full house audience in attendance.

“Recent world events have put Finland in the center of media attention,” Tommy said regarding the decision-making behind the event topic (above, with microphone).

“Together with the Finnish Embassy and our co-sponsor, Georgetown’s BMW Center for German and European Studies, YLB was able to harness that attention into an evening of open discussion of current events focused on Finland.”

Tommy continued, “With Nokia CEO Pekka Lundmark and an open forum with Ambassador Mikko Hautala, it was inspiring to see how much interest and attention there was from the YLB community for Finland. A huge thanks goes out to all our partners.”

Moving forward, the YLB plans to host two annual events in collaboration with the Embassy, one virtual and one in-person. Future topic ideas include technology, Finnish authors, cybersecurity, sports and more.

Tommy Flanagan

The other highlight of the

Finlandia Foundation National is a proud sponsor of Finnding America, a new documentary series by Santi “Fox” Hynönen that explores Finnish entrepreneurship, startups and culture on his epic, 13,000-mile road trip through 31 states.

Santi is a Finnish-born independent art director/designer, producer and photographer based in Helsinki and Los Angeles.

The first four of his interviews are available for viewing online. The additional programs will be released in the coming months. Find links to Finnding America programs at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

Learn more about Santi’s work at SantiFox.gallery.

Wille Yli-Luoma, a former professional snowboarder who pursued his coffee obsession and in 2009 founded Heart Roasters in Portland, Oregon

Kristiina Hiukka of Seattle, a professional leadership consultant, trainer, coach and author, and Honorary Consul of Finland for Washington State

Matti Suokko, Principal PM-Azure Mobility at Microsoft in Seattle, and Honorary Consul of Finland for Washington State

Sami Inkinen of Aspen, Colorado, the founder and CEO of Virta Health, co-founder of Trulia and a triathlon world champion
When preparing a grant proposal, know the following:

- Projects should benefit the general public, not only the sponsor or sponsoring organization.
- Grants should show evidence or testimony of high cultural, educational, artistic or scientific merit.
- Grants are limited to a maximum of $5,000 per award.
- Special consideration is given to projects endorsed or sponsored by an FFN chapter.
- Salaries to project staff or employees are not allowable.

Richard Ahola
FFN Trustee
Grants Committee Chair

SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 1956, Finlandia Foundation has supported students in the U.S. and Finland through its annual scholarship awards. Full-time undergraduate and graduate students in any area of academic study enrolled in an accredited post-secondary institution are eligible.

- A minimum 3.0 GPA is required.
- Students of Finnish-American heritage get primary consideration.
- Financial need and course of study are considered.
- U.S. or Finnish citizenship required.

Pirjo Kujansuu Schulbach
Scholarship Committee Chair
FFN member

GRANTS

Awards of up to $5,000 have been made available to projects in areas of the arts, history, research, music, events, archival work and preservation of historic properties.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Scholarships: February 1, 2023
Grants: January 17, 2023

APPLICATIONS

Applications are open for 2023 grants as well as scholarships for undergraduate, graduate and law students. Deadlines are January 17 for grants and February 1 for scholarships. Applications must be submitted online at the FFN website by 11:59 p.m. (Pacific) on the deadline date. Awards will be announced in spring 2023.

Find complete information and applications at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

LINDFORS SCHOLARSHIP

Kristina Mentula is a poet, writer, and teacher with roots in Minnesota and Finland. She received a 2016 grant from FFN that assisted her creation of her recently published book, Surface Displacements: Poems.

In it, she pays homage to the Kalevala, Finnish writers and visual artists and Finnish and American northern landscapes.

Sheila writes, “I am so grateful for the grant support, and I feel honored to have received it. I love my Finnish heritage as well as Finland’s contemporary culture and language. It continues to be a rich source of inspiration for me.”

Surface Displacements: Poems is available on Amazon. Learn more about Sheila and her work at sheila packa.com

Sheila Packa

Violinist Charlotte Loukola is a two-time FFN scholarship recipient from Jyväskyla, who completed her bachelor’s degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music, and is now working on her master’s at The Juilliard School. In appreciation for the awards, Charlotte contacted FFN to say she would be happy to perform at any event Finlandia Foundation might be hosting in New York City.

As a result, on October 22, Charlotte opened the FFN Joint Chapter Meeting at Scandinavia House with three beautiful solo pieces. Learn more about Charlotte and her work at charlotte loukola.com

For more information, visit FinlandiaFoundation.org.

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For more information, visit FinlandiaFoundation.org.
Thank you for the kind gift. I had so much fun at Salolampi... I loved going to the sauna and making new friends. My friends were Jani and Laila. Kilostu Love, Henrik.

Henrik, age eight, was one of 16 students who received funds from Finlandia Foundation to assist in their attendance at the Salolampi Language Village of Concordia Language Villages in 2022. At the summertime camp, young people are immersed in the Finnish language, culture, foods and activities in a setting of traditional architecture surrounded by woods and water near Bemidji, Minnesota.

"Henrik and his sister Sigrid not only loved the beautiful outdoor setting and the adventure of sleeping in cabins, they truly began to appreciate that Finland is a part of their heritage," says their mother, Caitlin. "They learned to ask for "maitoa" at meals or "suklajäätelöä" at the kioski for a snack. As a mom, it was wonderful seeing how they could independently and safely explore the camp and the activities with their new friends."

FFN Salolampi Chair Eeva Syvanen says that many students were attending their second or third camp. FFN is again offering financial support of $300 per student ages seven to 18 for Salolampi's two- and four-week residential camps offered in June and July 2023. FFN travel grants are also available.

The FFN application deadline is April 30, and scholarships are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Find information and the application at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

See concordialanguagevillages.com for additional scholarship opportunities.

Inspired by Finland's strong reputation for and appreciation of music, in 2008 Finlandia Foundation created Soiva International Music Camp to bring Finnish and American instructors and elementary through high school instrumental students together for a learning opportunity and cultural exchange.

Unfortunately, Soiva was derailed by Covid-19 in 2020, although a virtual camp was held in 2021. It was on hiatus in 2022.

At this time, Finlandia Foundation is exploring avenues for the direction of Soiva Music Camp. More information will follow.

Soiva International Music Camp is a great event for music lovers.
various media to advance
the message about
individual chapters and
Finnish America.

The Young Leaders Board
panel, “Tapping the Next
Generation,” sparked a lot
of discussion and questions
about what chapters can do
to engage younger people;
the could probably have filled
twice the allotted time.

Over a delicious lunch
prepared by Scandinavia
House’s Björk Cafe & Bistro,
members had a chance to
network but also discuss
chapter development issues,
goals, ideas and suggestions.
They shared their findings
in the afternoon session. The JCM allowed for an
interchange of information
about FFN and chapter
activities, plus some
fun activities sprinkled
throughout.

Congratulations to the
newest FFN affiliate, Astoria
Chapter of Finlandia
Foundation National,
selected in a random drawing
as the winner of the $700
mini-grant awarded at the
conclusion of the JCM!

Following the business
meeting, chapter reps and
their guests attended a
“Fiercely Finnish” reception
featuring delicious hors
d’oeuvres with a Finnish
flair, accompanied by the
music of Johanna Telander
and Eepi Ursin.

Recently appointed
New York Consul General,
Ambassador Jarmo Sareva
(see page 27), visited with
the guests and spoke about
the unique opportunities
presented by the fact that
Finland today is in the
worldwide spotlight
more than at any time in
modern history.

Capping the weekend,
many members and guests
enjoyed a guided tour on
Sunday of Sunset Park,
Brooklyn, which was known
as Finntown. Robert Saasto,
an attorney who is passionate
about preserving that
history, shared fascinating
insights into the important
contributions of the Finns
in this neighborhood who,
more than a century ago,
introduced non-profit,
cooperative housing to
the U.S.

Robert has worked, with
other dedicated volunteers,
to identify Finnish-American
landmarks throughout
the area, which is now
largely populated by other
ethnic groups.

FFN has received many
positive comments about
JCM 2022, from the working
sessions and opportunities
to socialize and network,
to the setting and food at
Scandinavia House, and
Sunday’s Finntown tour.

Members have requested
that—at minimum—the
in-person meetings are
held every five years,
supplemented by the
quarterly Virtual JCM.

Young Leaders
Board members
share insights at
Saturday’s JCM
session. (seated, from left) Mirva
Johnson, Lauren
Tuiskula, Mikko
Peck and Kaja
Perkiomaki.

JCM attendees
socialize and
network at events
on Friday and
Saturday evenings.
Ellen Liddle of Red River Finns reports on the October 15 appearance by organist Kent Washburn at the 49th Annual Silent Movie Night in Fargo, North Dakota.

Kent, FFN immediate past Performer of the Year, delighted the audience when he performed his score to the 1929 Finnish film, Mustalaishurmaaja (The Gypsy Charmer) on the Fargo Theatre’s Mighty Wurlitzer, which was installed in 1927 specifically to accompany silent movies.

“It’s important to remember that other countries had their own film industries and own music culture,” says Dillon. “This makes the screening of Gypsy Charmer a once-in-a-lifetime showing. Having the entire soundtrack made entirely of Finnish music made the event culturally significant.”

The event was co-sponsored by The Red River Theatre Organ Society, FFN Red River Finns Chapter and the Nordic Culture Clubs of Fargo-Moorhead. Members, dressed in Finnish blue and white, served as ushers.

An audience of 125 attended, more than double last year’s crowd. Many declared it the best event yet.

“The Fargo Theater experience was sensational!” says Kent. He appreciated the opportunity to accompany his film on the four-manual Wurlitzer, which was installed in 1927 specifically to accompany silent movies.

CALIFORNIA
The Los Angeles Finlandia Foundation had an information booth at the 45th Annual Scandinavian Festival at California Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks, June 4-5 (below).

Later that month, LAFF hosted a free open house at the Finnish Folk Art Museum in Pasadena.

ALASKA
The Anchorage Suomi-Finland Club has been busy! Summertime events include a Juhannus/Summer Solstice Party featuring Performer of the Year Eeppi Ursin.

There were tonttu, himmel and basket-making sessions and the annual Nordic Market. October served up a fish-themed dinner of lake trout, smoked herring, minkki, pike, salmon patties, salmon soup and king salmon, plus a presentation about lakes and fish in Finland. Karelian stew and caribou were on the buffet at November’s dinner.

CONNECUT
Congratulations to the Finnish American Heritage Society of Canterbury, which recognized its 35th anniversary with a well-attended celebration on June 5. FAHS hosted the annual Chicken BBQ, Yard Sale and Tori.

The Finnish Hall’s Museum Makeover project (above) was completed with a beautiful new display and expanded hours, assisted by CT Cultural Fund grants.

Additionally, FAHS members welcomed visitors to the museum and prepared a variety of delicious Finnish foods for participants in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor Walktober event.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
The National Capital Chapter enjoyed Finnish flavors at a Happy Hour to Celebrate Spring in May at Chef Mikko Kosonen’s restaurant with members and friends. Also in May, volunteers from the chapter were excited to help at the EU Open House at the Finnish Embassy.

ILLINOIS
In September, the Finnish American Society of the Midwest participated in the Scandinavian Day Festival at Vasa Park with Finnish food and other goodies. The annual meeting and picnic were the following week.

The menu for the October FAHS lunch featured Karelian stew, potatoes, vegetable, salad, soup, Finnish coffee and dessert. The kick-off to the holiday season started in November at the 8th Annual International Christmas at Estonia House.
**Massachusetts**

The Finnish Center at Saima Park is known for its Pannukakku Breakfasts, and Music and Moonlight guided trail walk with an outdoor performance by the Fitchburg State University Community Orchestra. The Summer Festival in June featured the orchestra, as well as Performer of the Year Eeppi Ursin.

It was a beautiful day for the Saima Tori and Classic Car Cruise on September 18. The Nordic Marketplace was overflowing with handcrafted items, baked goods, imports and more. The museum was open to visitors; car buffs inspected an array of vintage vehicles on the spacious grounds; and there was plenty of good music.

**Cape Ann Finns** hosted "The People Danced: An Evening of Finnish-American Dancing" at Gloucester City Hall on October 22 (left). Finnish folkdance group Revontulet lead the dancing, accompanied by the music of the band Oivan Ilo. There was a special session to introduce children to the traditional dances.

This event was the recipient of an FFN grant. It was the first of a series of dance-related events in celebration of Gloucester’s 400th anniversary in 2023.

**New York**

After a summer break, the New York Metropolitan Chapter got back together at its traditional potluck picnic on September 11.

The October 21 "Diamonds of the North" concert at Scandinavia House was attended by many FFN members from across the country who were in New York for the Joint Chapter Meeting. In November, the chapter and New Yorkin Suomi-koulu gathered to celebrate their alliance.

**Oregon**

The Columbia-Pacific and Astoria chapters hosted Performer of the Year Eeppi Ursin for appearances in November, including a family event celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Portland Suomi-koulu.

At June’s Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival, Miss Finland Olivia Esnard was crowned Miss Scandinavia. Olivia, a high school senior, is the daughter of Sari and Matt Esnard. Junior Miss Finland is Ila. Both were sponsored by the United Finnish Kaleva Brotherhood & Sisterhood Astoria Lodge No. 2, the Astoria Chapter of Finlandia Foundation National.

**Washington**

At the 20th Finnish-American Folk Festival of Naselle in July, FFN Performer of the Year Eeppi Ursin was part of the musical schedule. The three-day event also featured food, exhibits, tori, games and cultural programming.
The Finnish-American community of Minneapolis-Saint Paul was busy June 1-3, as it hosted a Finnish embassy/consulate delegation and a two-part celebration in appreciation of departing Minnesota Orchestra Music Director Osmo Vänskä.

Finlandia Foundation National co-hosted the festivities on June 3 at Orchestra Hall, before and after Friday evening’s concert.

Honorary Consul of Finland for Minneapolis Elaine M. Kumpula hosted a pre-concert reception showcasing 18 organizations and representatives of the regional Finnish community. They included the Suomi Finland 100 Chorus, which performed a flash mob Finlandia in the hall’s lobby.

Following the concert, FFN welcomed guests for sweets and specialty drinks, the Osmo Cosmo and Koskenkahvi, hosted by Koskenkorva vodka.

Cellist Esther Seitz, a member of The Bowery Trio (which has received an FFN grant), played during the FFN reception. She is a Rosemary and David Good Fellow with the Minnesota Orchestra.

The concert that evening featured Finnish pianist Juho Pohjonen and Concertmaster Erin Keefe performing Mendelssohn’s Concerto for Piano, Violin and Strings.

It was also the premiere of the unfinished symphony by the late Jaakko Kuusisto. The work was completed by Jaakko’s younger brother, Pekka Kuusisto, with the assistance of score technician Jari Eskola.

The symphony was dedicated to Osmo Vänskä and Jaakko’s wife, Maija. She and Pekka and his wife, Anna-Liina, as well as the other musicians, attended the FFN reception.

FFN Trustee and Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities President Betsey Norgard welcomed the Maestro to Minneapolis 19 years ago. She also wished him farewell at this event.

From left to right:
Consul General, Ambassador Mika Koskinen of the Consulate of New York, Anne-Mari Paster, and Honorary Consul of Finland for Minneapolis Elaine M. Kumpula

Minnesota First Lady Gwen Walz, on behalf of Governor Tim Walz, presents a proclamation to Maestro Vänskä

Maija Kuusisto, Osmo Vänskä and Anna-Liina and Pekka Kuusisto

Cellist Esther Seitz

Maestro Vänskä and Betsey Norgard

Representatives from one of the 18 participating Finnish-American organizations

Specialty drinks by Koskenkorva: Vodka from a Village
The 30th annual FinnFunn Weekend was held October 28-30 at The Inn at East Hill Farm in Troy, New Hampshire. Workshop and presentation topics included Finland and NATO, Sibelius’s 1906 tone poem, *Pohjola’s Daughter*, Moomin creator Tove Jansson and the work of the Finnish-American Heritage Center.

Crafty people made birch bark rings, himmeli ornaments and masks for the Halloween costume parade. There was plenty of music, dancing, games, tori, sauna and good food.

Finlandia Foundation National President Anne-Mari Paster attended and extended congratulations to all involved, including Past FFN President Anita Smiley, who conceived the festive celebration. Anita presented a slide show about the 29 years of FinnFunn camaraderie and cultural heritage. She and her late husband Jack were recognized for working to make the event a reality.

Next year, the Cape Ann Finns will host FinnFunn Weekend in Massachusetts as part of the 400th anniversary of the City of Gloucester.

Find more information at finnfunn.org.

Due to COVID-19, FinnFest turned to virtual programming and offered a robust schedule of webinars, lectures, music and other online events. Now, under the direction of Executive Producer Helé Sirvio, the exhibits, discussions, performances, workshops, tours, tori and more will bring Finnish-Americans and friends of Finland together again.

Find more information: finnfest.us

Three Decades of FinnFunn

Chapters Eligible for Sauna Week Mini-Grants

Mark your calendars for National Sauna Week, February 19–25, 2023. The second annual celebration of sauna will build on the success of the inaugural, week-long tribute to this important tradition, which is so much a part of Finnish culture and Finnish-American life.

Chapters are encouraged to plan now to take advantage of the $300 FFN mini-grant to support their National Sauna Week events, as several organizations did in February of 2022.

Finlandia Foundation launched Sauna Week for the purpose of recognizing the historical, social and physical benefits of sauna and furthering understanding of the unique, Finnish version of steam bathing, which is found in many cultures.

Once again, FFN will offer a daily, online presentation with guests addressing different aspects of sauna and the role it plays in the home, among family and friends, as well as in business; one program topic is “Sauna Diplomacy.”

The new documentary series *Perfect Sweat* and an original sauna music video from comedians ISMO and Miska Kajanus are on the schedule.

In addition, FFN is expanding the variety of materials available at its website to support Sauna Week programs and awareness.

“We are collaborating with sauna societies and organizations in the U.S. and Finland to make National Sauna Week better each year,” says FFN President Anne-Mari Paster. She urges chapters to participate with at least one event at that time, and to publicize it not only to members, but to the broader, local community.

“It’s important to have the synergy of multiple sauna-related activities happening at chapters across the country during that last week in February,” she says. “It makes a more dynamic event, a bigger impression and more appreciation for sauna and Finland in America, which is our goal.”

Find more about the National Sauna Week mini-grant, ideas and resources at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

A New Era for FinnFest

After a coronavirus pandemic-caused hiatus, FinnFest USA will return to its traditional, in-person format in Duluth, July 26–30, 2023. Since its founding in 1983, FinnFest had been held annually (with one exception, in 2003).

Its most recent happening was in Detroit in September of 2019.

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For more information: finnfest.us

Finnish comedians ISMO (left) and Miska Kajanus will premiere an original song they created just for National Sauna Week 2023.
FFN trustees held a focused, efficient, day-long meeting on October 21 at Scandinavia House in Manhattan, leading up to the Friday evening reception that opened the Joint Chapter Meeting. In attendance were three members of the FFN Young Leaders Board — Mirva Johnson, Mikko McFeely and Lauren Tuiskula — who shared their insights and added perspective to the discussions.

Committees had done their work via Zoom prior to the board session, which included review of applicants and recommendations for the 2023 Performer of the Year and Lecturer of the Year. Also approved was the inaugural Artist of the Year and the recipient of a Lindfors Law Scholarship (see separate articles).

The board decided to suspend collection of the per-member fee required of chapters to maintain membership in the national organization. Trustees weighed the merits of the $1-per person income, which helps minimally with FFN expenses but provides a means of knowing who constitutes FFN membership, against the current challenges that chapters are facing. Chapter leaders will receive further information from FFN.

Additionally, a revised Finlandia Foundation National Mission Statement was approved to better capture the changing role of the organization as it approaches its 70th anniversary in 2023.

On Thursday evening prior to the board meeting, trustees and guests enjoyed a private reception at the residence of the newly-appointed New York Consul General, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva. It was an opportunity to build on the relationship between FFN and the Consulate General’s office.
At the age of nine, Anna Kulinski became fascinated with the Appalachian Trail and the idea of thru-hiking from Georgia to her home state of Maine. On October 6, 2022, the 24-year-old achieved her goal and joined the roster of 2,600-milers who have completed the entire A.T.

Her first attempt came after the completion of her English degree from the University of Maine. It was March of 2020, and COVID-19 was wreaking havoc. After a little more than a week of hiking, and thinking about the effect that the pandemic would have on her journey, she made a difficult choice.

As she writes at therek.com, a website dedicated to long-distance backpacking:

“Leaving the trail was not an easy decision. I had been dreaming about this hike since I met my first thru-hiker as a kid in one of New Hampshire’s AMC High Huts, 15 years ago. Planning since I was a senior in high school, when I opened my first savings account to deposit all of my graduation money to save for the trail. Prepping since I started adding to my course load in order to graduate college a semester early.

“Even though my timing was perfect, the world’s was not.”

On March 28, 2022, Anna restarted her trek, and in 96.4 miles, 14 states and some amount of sisu later, she reached Mount Katahdin, the end of the trail. Throughout the six-month-long adventure, she appreciated the South’s terrain, flora and fauna, so different than that of New England. She was touched by the kindness and generosity in communities along the way. Her dad, Richard, visited her briefly in Virginia. She detoured for a quick trip to Washington, D.C. She even met a fellow American-Finn who was also thru-hiking.

Anna’s mother, Sari, moved to the U.S. from Finland as a young adult. Finnish was spoken at home, so Anna was able to tap that language skill on the A.T. When she reached New York, exhausted, Anna drew on her sisu for the strength and determination to persevere. “If I didn’t see it through, I would never know what it felt like to get through it.” And so she did.

Anna Kulinski achieved her dream of thru-hiking the Appalachian Trail, reaching its northern terminus at Mount Katahdin on October 6, 2022.

Generational is an occasional feature about young Americans with Finnish roots.

“Ushering in autumn, cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian present a new concert for Finlandia Foundation, “At Koli – In the Footsteps of Jean Sibelius.” The performance was filmed in Koli National Park in North Karelia, Finland, on the roof of Break Sokos Hotel Koli. Koli is one of Finland’s best-known landscapes. Its forested hills, majestic fells and scenic Lake Pielinen have inspired many Finnish artists over the centuries, including the composers featured in this concert: Jean Sibelius, Oskar Merikanto and Armas Järnefelt. It’s a beautiful and unique setting for the music and related anecdotes from Jussi and Nazig.”

NATO WEBINAR
The September 14 webinar, “How Will NATO Membership Affect Finland’s Work for Peace?” looks at Finland’s future as a member of NATO and how that will relate to the country’s efforts in peacemaking.

Hosted by Finlandia Foundation, CMI Communications, the event featured CMI CEO Dr. Janne Taalas and Antti Ämmälä, head of CMI Communications. It was followed by a Q & A section, which is included in the video.

IN CONVERSATION
Journalist Lauren Tuisiska, a member of the FFN Young Leaders Board, chats with Tommy Barrineau about his career as an athlete and coach.

UP ON THE ROOF
Ushering in autumn, cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian present a new concert for Finlandia Foundation, “At Koli – In the Footsteps of Jean Sibelius.”

The performance was filmed in Koli National Park in North Karelia, Finland, on the roof of Break Sokos Hotel Koli. Koli is one of Finland’s best-known landscapes. Its forested hills, majestic fells and scenic Lake Pielinen have inspired many Finnish artists over the centuries, including the composers featured in this concert: Jean Sibelius, Oskar Merikanto and Armas Järnefelt. It’s a beautiful and unique setting for the music and related anecdotes from Jussi and Nazig.

The performance only a grand piano was lifted onto the roof of the Break Sokos Hotel Koli.

For this performance, only a grand piano was lifted onto the roof of the Break Sokos Hotel Koli.

IN CONVERSATION
Journalist Lauren Tuisiska, a member of the FFN Young Leaders Board, chats with Tommy Barrineau about his career as an athlete and coach.

Tommy was born in Georgia to an American military dad and Finnish mom. As an athlete, he drew on the strength and determination of his sisu. Now, his Finnishness means being one with nature, and being able to relax completely and enjoy that balance and peace.

He shares stories about how sisu helped with his athletic success, and his experience competing for Finland, including winning the national decathlon title in 2014 and heptathlon in 2015. Tommy is now a coach at William & Mary athletic s.
WHAT’S NEW IN FFN COMMUNICATIONS

HAVE YOU VISITED FINLANDIAFOUNDATION.ORG LATELY?

The Finlandia Foundation website has been overhauled and boasts a clean, new look and easier navigation. FFN contracted with J&Co Digital, a full-service design and digital agency in Finland, to develop the project. Sugar Maple Media, a company based in Marquette, Michigan, was contracted to assist with executing the final product.

The website will continue to evolve with new material and updates to the existing content, so check it often for the wealth of resources, calendar of events, information on FFN awards programs and more at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

FIERCELY FINNISH

This new publication combines into one booklet the information previously found in seven brochures, each one dedicated to a FFN program. “Fiercely Finnish” eliminates duplication of information and presents a clearer picture about FFN and its many activities. It also simplifies inventory and mailing, and is more cost effective than printing several brochures.

THE FINNISH LINE

Finlandia Foundation’s twice-yearly print newsletter has a new name: The Finnish Line. As FFN programs and activities have grown, so has the need to expand coverage through the website, e-marketing, social media and publications. Formerly known simply as the FFN News, this mini-magazine now regularly runs 28- to 32 pages, and the mailing list has nearly 7,000 names. It is also available at the website. To supplement The Finnish Line, FFN produces a free, monthly e-news. Sign up for it at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

Facebook: facebook.com/Finlandia.Foundation.National/
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Instagram: instagram.com/finlandiafoundationnational/
Twitter: twitter.com/FinlandiaFFN
YouTube: youtube.com/FinlandiaFFN
Young Leaders Board LinkedIn: linkedin.com/groups/13959445/

Welcome, Consul General of Finland in New York

Jarmo Sareva is the new head of the Consulate General of Finland in New York, the Finnish mission with the widest jurisdiction in the U.S.

The Embassy in Washington, D.C. covers Maryland and Virginia, and the Consulate General of Los Angeles is responsible for 13 western states.

All other states and U.S. territories are in the sphere of the New York office.

Until his September 2022 appointment, Consul General, Ambassador Sareva was in Helsinki as Finland’s Ambassador for Cyber Affairs. He was the country’s first Ambassador for Innovation, from 2018 to 2021.

His long diplomatic career includes positions in Vienna, Moscow, Geneva and Washington, D.C. He was also Representative of Finland to the United Nations in New York.

Ambassador Sareva holds an MA from the School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University. He is married with two children and two grandchildren.

For more information: https://finlandabroad.fi/web/usa/consul-general-of-finland-in-new-york

Congratulations, Amerikan Uutiset!

The Finnish-American newspaper Amerikan Uutiset is celebrating its 90th year of delivering news of Finland and Finnish America—longer than any other Finnish language publication.

The Finnish immigrant press has a rich history in the U.S.; the first Finnish-language newspaper, Amerikan Suomalainen Lehti, was founded in Hancock, Michigan in 1876.

Of the 350 Finnish publications that thrived throughout the decades, Amerikan Uutiset, founded in 1932 in New York Mills, Minnesota, survives. Mikko Koskinen is editor and owner of the biweekly news, now based in Florida. It is written mainly in Finnish, but also carries stories in English.

Happy Anniversary! Onnea!

For more information: amuutiset.com

Amerikan Uutiset
The National Newspaper for Finnish-Americans
Since 1932
Do you have a Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA? Donate it to Finlandia Foundation National and save on your taxes.

Once you turn 72, the IRS requires that you start making withdrawals from your IRA or other employer-sponsored retirement accounts. Retirees can face costly penalties and fees if they do not make these withdrawals. But many retirees don’t need the income to live and, by taking the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), they trigger higher taxes.

But, by donating the RMD directly to a 501(c)(3) organization like Finlandia Foundation National, retirees can avoid these taxes and support their favorite non-profits.

When the gift goes directly to the charity without passing through your hands, the dollar amount of the gift may be excluded from your taxable income, up to a maximum of $100,000 annually.

One year ago, FFN President Anne-Mari Paster launched a program to assist with planning for income and budgeting for Finlandia Foundation programming, grant and scholarship awards.

Several donors have accepted the “Chairman’s Challenge” and committed to a multi-year pledge to FFN of a minimum of $2,500 each year for four years ($10,000 total).

“This level of support is appreciated and important to the future of Finlandia Foundation,” says Anne-Mari. “As we approach our 70th anniversary in 2023, we can take pride in our past as well as in the confidence that the Chairman’s Challenge donors have shown in their promises to Finlandia Foundation.”

All gifts are matched by the Paloheimo Foundation (up to $100,000 per year), so your contribution can have double the impact. Join the Chairman’s Challenge with the enclosed envelope or at FinlandiaFoundation.org.
**Finlandia Foundation National, Inc. Chapters:**

Year affiliated with FFN and president/chairman

Find more information about the chapters, including websites and Facebook pages, at FinlandiaFoundation.org

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