



**SAVING  
FINLAND  
IN AMERICA**

**PELASTA  
AMERIKAN  
SUOMI**

**RÄDDA  
FINLAND  
I AMERIKA**

# IT'S UP TO US

**BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, WE MUST RAISE \$3 MILLION  
TO SAVE FINLAND IN AMERICA**

In his column in the April issue of *The Finnish American Reporter*, Editor Dave Maki talked about the importance of rescuing the historical archives and collection of the Finnish American Heritage Center. These invaluable treasures were put in jeopardy earlier this year when Finlandia University in Hancock, Michigan, announced its closure. He referenced his hardworking and generous great-grandfather Jalmer, who had a connection to the school that was founded as Suomi College in 1896.

Dave commented that Jalmer “would’ve done anything and everything he could to help” to protect the irreplaceable materials and the most extensive collection of Finnish-American history. He encouraged readers to do the same.

“It’s up to us to do all we can to ensure that our stories will continue to be told and chronicled, our history will still be preserved, our past will not fade into the past,” Dave wrote.

“It’s up to us,” the trustees of Finlandia Foundation National concluded at an emergency meeting to consider the dire situation. Guided by our organization’s 70-year-old mission, our unanimous sentiment was, “It’s up to us.”

Since March, we have successfully secured the extensive inventory of the FAHC and maintained operations and staffing. It is our duty and privilege to protect the legacy of Finnish America, but **we cannot do this without you.**

**It is imperative that we raise \$3 million by the end of 2023 in this initial phase of the campaign.**

**It’s up to us. All of us.** Together, we can do this.

Thank you for your sincere interest and generous support of the “Smithsonian of Finnish America.”

Anne-Mari Paster  
President, Finlandia Foundation National



THE FINNISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

The archives were established in 1932, and now preserve more than 40,000 pieces of the past including print materials, oral histories, artifacts and artwork. Thousands of donors have entrusted their treasures and their histories to FAHC, making this the largest collection and most complete story of Finnish America.

The building opened in 1990 with a gallery, offices and hall for classes and events. FAHC hosts a variety of art exhibits, lectures, plays, programs and annual celebrations. It had operated under the auspices of Finlandia University, which was founded as Suomi College in 1896, and closed in 2023.

Through the efforts of Finlandia Foundation National, and with your support, FAHC will remain an invaluable resource and important part of the community. Meet the dedicated team responsible for its operation.

David Maki | Director, Finnish American Heritage Center and Editor, The Finnish American Reporter

More than 23 years ago, I left my role as a reporter for the local daily newspaper and took a job at *The Finnish American Reporter*, thinking it'd be a way for me to use my journalism skills to earn a living, meet some new folks and face deadline pressure only once per month.



I've embraced my Finnish roots since I first understood where my ancestors came from, and I was eager to share my talents with a group that I imagined understood me.

What I didn't understand early on – but learned quickly – is that this is a cultural role with a journalism component. It's entirely about stories, but it's not just about writing stories. It's about archiving, teaching, exhibiting and much, much more – all with the common mission of preserving and promoting the stories of the Finnish immigrant experience.

For the first decades of my career here, I served in a subordinate role, but I was blessed with ample opportunity to make a difference, make decisions and make an impact on Finnish America. I'm doing my best to continue on that path now that I've assumed a leadership role here at the FAHC.

Each day we are further removed from the immigrant generation, and it's essential that we preserve all that we can to ensure the immigrants' stories will still be told, their lessons will still be learned, and their roots will still be nurtured.



None of us can do it alone, though; every one of us can and should share their time, their talents or their treasures to help us guarantee that those who come after us will understand why we're proud of our Finnish ancestry – and why they should be, as well.

The 2023 Folk School at Midsummer exhibit at Finlandia Art Gallery



2 "QUEEN CHRISTINA" BIBLES  
— the first printed in the Finnish language in 1642



400 HOURS OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS



40,000+ HISTORIC ITEMS  
in the climate-controlled archives



684 FINNISH-AMERICAN PERIODICAL TITLES  
some dating to the 1800s



175 TITLES OF FINNISH PRINT NEWSPAPERS



72 FINNISH-AMERICAN MICROFILMED NEWSPAPERS

PLUS PHOTOGRAPHS, SHEET MUSIC, AND CORRESPONDENCE



Joanna Chopp | Archivist

As the archivist at the FAHC, I care for the documents and artifacts that tell the stories of Finnish America, and make them accessible to researchers from around the world.

It is my honor to preserve our history and heritage for generations to come.

Phyllis Fredendall | Director, Finnish American Folk School

My commitment to the Finnish American Folk School is grounded in my personal mission to ensure that weaving and other handwork traditions of Finland live and thrive in the United States. The processes we teach inherently contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

As I write this, I am in Rovaniemi on a fellowship studying and weaving a traditional technique called *täkänä*. The kind teacher here is delighted, as it has been decades since she wove *täkänä*. She is relearning it to teach me. Others here will weave it when I am finished, and I plan to teach it at the Folk School next summer.



Clare Zuraw | Assistant Director, Finnish American Folk School

I'm dedicated to continuing and reviving cultural traditions of all kinds, from handwork to music, cooking to language.

For me, working at the Finnish American Folk School is an opportunity to share these traditions in new and dynamic ways to reach diverse audiences.

Barks & Willow Symposium at FAHC, September 2023

Carrie Flaspohler | Director/Curator, Finlandia Art Gallery

The Finlandia Gallery hosts rotating exhibits featuring Finnish-American and Finnish contemporary art. The synergistic collaborations between the Finnish American Folk School and the gallery provide programming that infuses tradition with contemporary thought and technique.

With the goal of both broadening our perspective and strengthening our international connections, the gallery provides educational resources for our community, and is a gathering place for people to discuss and reflect upon art. Our aim is to be the leading exhibitor of Finnish and Finnish-American art in the United States.



April Stevens | Manager, North Wind Books



The loss of Finlandia University / Suomi College has saddened all alumni. The university's presence may have changed, but its history will be preserved by saving the Finnish American Heritage Center. The photographs, stories and university artifacts will continue to keep these memories alive. I urge alumni to offer their support.





### Kay (Marttinen) Seppälä | Founder and Director, Kivajat Dancers

From her foreword to the book *Finns of Michigan's Upper Peninsula*

It wasn't until I moved away from the Upper Peninsula that I realized how Finnish-American I was. When I returned some two dozen years ago, I was pleased to discover the Finnish American Heritage Center with its dedicated staff, who work to preserve this slice of Finnish-American life. It has supported me in creating and directing the children's Kivajat Finnish folk dance group.

Why preserve this cultural heritage? Singer John McCutcheon, in his song *Water from Another Time*, says it well: "It don't take much, but you gotta have some/The old ways help the new ways come/Just leave a little extra for the next in line/they're gonna need a little water from another time."

(Kivajat Dancers, pictured in performance on cover, practice weekly at FAHC.)

## YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED

### Donate now to help us in our multi-phased mission, which includes:

- Protecting the largest collection of archives and artifacts that tell the story of Finnish America
- Sharing traditional and modern crafts and programs through the Finnish American Folk School
- Directing the Finlandia Art Gallery and Price of Freedom Museum
- Publishing the monthly *Finnish American Reporter*
- Purchasing the Finnish American Heritage Center and North Wind Books buildings
- Employing staff to operate our programs
- Digitizing the archives to make the resources available to a global audience
- Establishing an endowment to secure the future of FAHC for generations to come

**Your tax-deductible contribution to Finlandia Foundation National, a 501(c)(3) organization, will help us to achieve our initial goal of \$3 million by the end of 2023.**

You may make a single gift or give monthly online at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org), or mail a donation to:  
Finlandia Foundation National 254 N. Lake Ave. #852 Pasadena, CA 91101

If you wish to support Saving Finland in America through planned giving in a will, estate or other bequest, please contact FFN Executive Director Thomas Flanagan: [thomas.flanagan@finlandiafoundation.org](mailto:thomas.flanagan@finlandiafoundation.org).

### John & Pauline Kiltinen | SFIA Donors, Marquette, Michigan

To have the Finnish American Heritage Center, *The Finnish American Reporter* and the archives survive is a good sign of stability in the midst of sad change.

There would be a possibility of moving the resources elsewhere, but the very town of Hancock has a special place in Finnish-American history, having been called the *pesäpaikka* (nesting place) by the Finnish immigrants, as they first came there and then moved elsewhere for work.

Together, we can make it happen. Let's all pitch in and do our part.



## FFN MISSION STATEMENT

*Fiercely Finnish since 1953, we champion our culture and heritage across the United States by supporting educational opportunities and promoting diverse, relevant, and enriching programs.*

Be sure to follow FFN on Facebook, Instagram and the website, and sign up for our e-news to stay on top of our progress. Find links at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org). Contact us with any questions, by phone at 626.795.2081 or email: [office@finlandiafoundation.org](mailto:office@finlandiafoundation.org).  
Finlandia Foundation National, Inc. 2023