

# THE FINNISH LINE

FINLANDIA FOUNDATION® NATIONAL



HANDS ACROSS THE SEA SINCE 1953



Finnish American  
Heritage Center





## Greetings from the President

### Dear friends, Hyvät Ystävät:

I am honored to have been elected the new president of Finlandia Foundation National at the FFN Board of Trustees meeting in April in Hancock, Michigan.

Finlandia Foundation National has thrived since its inception in 1953, continuing to grow, change, and meet challenges as they have arisen over the years. As many of you know, FFN came together, along with the Finnish-American community and friends of Finland, to literally “Save Finland in America” when Finlandia University closed its doors last year. Together, we raised over \$4 million to purchase the Finnish American Heritage Center and North Wind Books

buildings and preserve the Historical Archive and more.

My predecessor, Anne-Mari Paster, led the effort along with dedicated FFN team members and Heritage Center staff. Thanks to them and the full backing of the FFN board, we succeeded in making this momentous transition happen. The Board of Trustees and staff were warmly welcomed by the Finnish-American people of Hancock and together we celebrated this accomplishment and new beginning. We have demonstrated that together, *yhdessä*, we can make big things happen! We hope that all friends of Finnish America will continue to join us in giving to support this transformative effort.

FFN remains committed to our “Fiercely Finnish” mission to promote and champion our culture and heritage across the U.S. We continue to support our Young Leaders Board and their efforts to engage younger people in our shared mission; collaborate with and grow our connections to a wider audience of Finns and other Nordics online in the U.S. and in Finland; award grants and scholarships to promote Finnish-American projects and studies and help our local chapters to access our Performer of the Year, Lecturer of the Year and Artist of the Year programs.

As we begin this next year, we are excited to continue to partner with Finns and Finnish Americans everywhere to celebrate our common Finnish heritage. We have much to do!

Päivi Tetri

President

president@finlandiafoundation.org



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To reach a trustee by e-mail, contact:  
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## THE FINNISH LINE

The magazine is produced twice yearly by the **FFN Communications Committee**: Tommy Flanagan, chair, and Annika Anohala, Lexi Brewer, Jacqueline Harjula, David Maki, April Stevens and Lauren Tuiskula.

Additionally, FFN produces a monthly, free e-news; sign up to receive it at the FFN website. Submit chapter news and other items of interest and photos to: FFN Communications Manager Kath Usitalo, newsletter editor: kath@finlandiafoundation.org

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In June of 2022 in Minneapolis, Finlandia Foundation and the region’s Finnish-American community came together to salute Finnish-born Maestro Osmo Vänskä at pre- and post-concert receptions as he wrapped up his tenure as Minnesota Orchestra Music Director.

Anne-Mari hands the FFN gavel to President Päivi Tetri at the April 13 celebration in Hancock.

#### COVER:

Anne-Mari Paster prepares to cut the ribbon at the Friday, April 12 rededication of the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock.

Photo by Christine Manninen

## Looking Back, and Ahead

By Anne-Mari Paster  
Immediate Past President



Reflecting on my four years as president of Finlandia Foundation National, I feel a profound sense of accomplishment and gratitude. It has been an incredible journey filled with both challenges and triumphs, but overall, I am proud of what we have achieved together.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my presidency has been witnessing the tangible impact our foundation has had on the community. Whether it’s through funding scholarships and grants, creating the Young Leaders Board, hiring the first Executive Director for the foundation, supporting our chapters with new programming, or the Saving Finland in America fundraising campaign, we have made a meaningful difference. Seeing the smiles on people’s faces during the re-opening of Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock, Michigan—my last task as president of FFN—and hearing their stories of how our efforts have positively impacted them, reaffirms the importance of our mission and makes me believe we are on a right track.

Of course, leading a foundation comes with its fair share of challenges. From navigating through the COVID pandemic to the Saving Finland in America campaign, there were times when the road ahead seemed daunting. However, it is during these moments of adversity that I witnessed the strength and resilience of our team. Together, we tackled each obstacle head on, finding creative solutions and staying true to our mission.

As I look back on my term, I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside such dedicated co-trustees and staff members who share a passion for making a difference. Their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts have been the driving force behind our success.

While my term as president has come to an end, I am confident that the foundation is well-positioned to continue thriving under new leadership. As I passed the gavel to Päivi Tetri, I did so with a sense of optimism and excitement for the future.

In closing, I am immensely proud of what we have accomplished during my time as president of Finlandia Foundation National. Together, we have made a lasting impact on our community. I am honored to have been a part of this journey with all of you.



# FFN Welcomes New Trustees

At its annual meeting in April, the Finlandia Foundation National board thanked Anne-Mari Paster for serving four years as FFN president, as she passed the gavel to Päivi Tetri. The immediate past president has assumed the duty of FFN treasurer. Jacqueline Harjula has stepped into the job of secretary, which was most recently handled by Päivi.

The board recognized departing trustees Richard Ahola, Betsey Norgard and Hanna Wagner for their years of dedication to the work of FFN and support of Finnish America.

FFN also welcomed four new trustees to three-year terms on the board:

**Annika Ahonala** is the founder and CEO of Sand Hill Marketing, a company focusing on building bridges between the Nordics and Silicon Valley. Together with her team, Annika accelerates growth of Nordic companies by providing insights, opening doors and finding new growth opportunities.

Annika has 20-plus years of international experience driving sustainable growth and



Annika Ahonala

innovation through marketing and digital transformation initiatives across the circular economy, green tech and real estate sectors. Additionally, she's led the marketing integration in numerous international M&As.

Annika and her family have lived in Menlo Park, the heartland of Silicon Valley, since 2019.

**Elaine Kumpula** devoted her professional career to the complex practice of employment-based immigration law. In retirement, she is fully enjoying family time and greatly expanded hours to be outdoors and travel.

Elaine earned a BS in Elementary Education from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. She obtained her JD from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Elaine grew up in Esko, a small town with a strong Finnish legacy in northern Minnesota. She currently serves as Honorary Consul of Finland in Minneapolis and is on the board of the Finnish-American Chamber of Commerce – Minnesota.



Elaine Kumpula

**David M. Rowe** is an accomplished business leader and multi-disciplinary professional with an extensive background in business management, product development, finance and market research. As Chief Executive Officer of the Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation in Houghton, Michigan, David is responsible for facilitating the startup of new emerging technology companies and the commercialization of their intellectual property portfolios.

David holds an MBA from Michigan State University's Eli Broad Graduate School of Management, and undergraduate degrees in biology and business administration from Michigan Technological University. He has a long and successful record of utilizing his passion for networking in the development of community relationships and strategic partnerships. David has volunteered countless hours in support of Michigan Tech, and was recently appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to serve on the MI-STEM Council.

David resides in Dollar Bay, Michigan, with his wife, Mary, and children Sarah and Matthew.



David M. Rowe

**Kirsi St. Marie** is an engineering professional with experience in consulting, research, and as an engineer in Finland and the U.S. She is a business analyst for the environmental technology industry.

She received her M.Sc. in Technology and Licentiate of Science in Technology degrees from Helsinki University of Technology (now Aalto University). Kirsi worked for Outokumpu Research and at the University of Utah before moving into computational fluid dynamics research and development and engineering consulting.

She is the president of Finlandia Foundation Colorado and previously was a volunteer language teacher and treasurer for the Finnish School of Denver. She has also extensively volunteered for local schools, organizations and university student guilds.

Kirsi lives in Littleton, Colorado with her husband Robert and two daughters, both college students. She is passionate about sharing Finnish culture and customs and in her free time enjoys hiking, skiing, reading and travel.



Kirsi St. Marie

# Connecting to Contemporary Finland

By Tommy Flanagan  
FFN Executive Director



FFN is proud to be “the most important independent source of support for Finland in America.”

We have the network and the history to back it up—with over 70 years behind us, connected through a network of nearly 60 local Finnish-American affiliates across the country.

Over the past year, FFN has intensified our commitment to Finnish and Finnish-American heritage in the United States by acquiring the Finnish American Heritage Center. Now, FFN is undergoing a much-needed strategic planning process that will help guide us into the future and define goals and objectives, as well as offer us a chance to reflect on where we have been in relation to where we wish to go as an organization.

What does it mean to be the most important independent source of support for Finland in America in today’s complex, interconnected world? Where does FFN fit into that picture?

For us, it means balancing many needs. We honor the generations of Finnish-Americans in the U.S. and their contributions to American culture and society. We provide grants and scholarships to groups and individuals across the country. We highlight artists, performers and authors through our annual programs. And we will continue to do this.

To live up to our commitment of being the most important independent source of support, we must also develop and deepen our connections to and friendships with modern-day, contemporary Finland.

Take a look at the FFN logo. It is right there. Two hands, clasped together. You’ve probably seen the FFN tagline before: “Hands across the sea since 1953.” Connecting to modern Finland has been a part of our organization’s identity since its inception.

The world of 2024 is undeniably different than the world of 1953. It grows ever more complex, and we face enormous challenges for the future. Despite, or

even because of, the changing world we live in, the role FFN plays in connecting Finland and the U.S. is more important now than ever.

We have clear values—values of education, celebrating heritage, promoting Finnish and Finnish-American culture in all its forms in the U.S. When we seek out partners, both here and in Finland, with unique goals, yet a shared set of values, we can achieve much more.

By placing our common connections and our friendships in the middle, we find that we have an important role to play in this fast-paced world—bringing people and ideas together across history and modern culture.

In February, I had a chance to travel to Finland. A priority while there was to connect. Here, you will see some highlights from only a few of these connections.



SAM Executive Director Lena Grenat

When we look across the Atlantic, SAM (Suomi-Amerikka Yhdistysten Liitto/League of Finnish-American Associations) emerges as a natural

partner—one that fundamentally shares our goals of bridging the U.S. and Finland. SAM Executive Director Lena Grenat explains it clearly:

“Organizations dedicated to bridging nations through cultural understanding play an instrumental role in promoting mutual respect, and appreciation. Two such entities, SAM and FFN, are exemplary in their commitment to nurturing the relationship between the United States and Finland. Through increased collaboration, these organizations amplify their impact, enriching the lives of individuals on both sides of the Atlantic.

“The benefits of collaboration between SAM and FFN are manifold. Firstly, our combined resources enable us to reach a wider audience, thereby increasing awareness about Finnish culture and heritage across the U.S. and reciprocally American culture in Finland.

“By sharing resources, knowledge, and networks, SAM and FFN can leverage each other’s strengths to create impactful initiatives that resonate with diverse audiences.

“As we continue to collaborate and innovate, our collective impact will undoubtedly leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.”

FFN is excited about our shared online events over the next several months.



Celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, Fulbright Finland Foundation works in a different sector to achieve similar outcomes as FFN and SAM.

With decades of experiences and extensive networks of academic exchange between the U.S. and Finland, Fulbright Finland Foundation connects. Terhi Mölsä, CEO, puts it eloquently:

“The Fulbright Finland Foundation is the primary interface for the Finnish and U.S. governments’



Fulbright Finland Foundation CEO Terhi Mölsä

bilateral work in education, science and culture, and it operates as the platform for a wide range of Finnish-U.S. collaborations between scientists, educators, research institutions, NGOs and companies.

“There are many areas that we have in common with FFN, especially in view of the programming in the U.S. for our Finnish grantees and U.S. alumni, so that our collaboration is a genuine win-win. FFN is an excellent partner, and we are thrilled to be working together.”

Our Fulbright collaboration has already begun, as FFN gladly committed to co-sponsoring an alumni event celebrating 75 years of exchange in Mystic, Connecticut, in May.

## A Musical Connection

The arts provide a forum for genuine cultural exchange and conversation, and have historically held a special place at FFN. We have greatly valued our collaboration with the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. We especially value those moments that lead to true cultural exchange.

Together with the Finland’s Swedish Cultural Foundation/*Svenska kulturfonden*, FFN is a proud co-sponsor of a Nordic collaboration between two highly reputable and impactful institutions, Sibelius Academy and The Juilliard School; details follow.

*Continued next page*



*Tommy Flanagan continued*

One thing is clear—the possibilities are endless. We look forward to continuing our work, connecting, highlighting, advocating, and promoting Finnish and Finnish-American culture where we can.

With an eye toward contemporary connections to Finland, while honoring our heritage and appealing to newer generations and audiences of Finns, Finnish-Americans and Friends of Finland, we look forward to serving as the “most important independent source of support for Finland in America” and deepening our connections and collaborations in the United States and Finland.



*The following information is courtesy of Nelli Kuokka, Head of Communications, Sibelius Academy, Uniarts Helsinki. Find the full article online at [uniarts.fi](http://uniarts.fi).*

The artistic and educational exchange between New York’s Juilliard School and Helsinki’s Sibelius Academy is the culmination of a long-held vision cultivated by Brian Zeger, Juilliard’s Artistic Director of Vocal Arts, and Markus Lehtinen, Professor of Opera at Uniarts Sibelius Academy.



Brian Zeger, The Juilliard School



Markus Lehtinen, Sibelius Academy

“Our discussions have centered around the idea of uniting vocalists in smaller, intimate settings, diverging from the typical large-scale collaborations involving hundreds of performers and a single performance,” Markus Lehtinen says. The program involves two vocalists and a pianist from each school.

“It’s a select group of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, each technically skilled and motivated to work with the material with openness and curiosity. The pianists are working with the singers from the other institution,” says Brian Zeger.

“The central idea is to open up their worlds, awakening awareness in each other’s cultures and educational processes. We’re talking about young people getting new landscapes, new ways of working with the material. It’s an adventurous approach.”

The group had its initial meeting online in early April, and students learned the music, languages and styles of repertoire with coaches from both sides before meeting in Finland in May. The workshops and rehearsals were held at Kallio-Kuninkala, an iconic cultural milieu in Järvenpää, also renowned as the site of composer Jean Sibelius’ home.

“We’re facilitating genuine exchanges of ideas on vocal topics and experimenting with diverse interpretations, which are all valid,” says Markus. “None of us knows how the repertoire develops in our small group. Every person is equally important, and there is no standard interpretation. It’s really healthy for everyone.”

Following the May 24 concert in Helsinki, the group will perform in New York City on September 13. FFN is planning an event in conjunction with that program.



## YLB GROWS, CONTRIBUTES TO FFN

By Lauren Tuiskula

With fresh ideas and energy from new members and the institutional knowledge and experience of the founding members, the Young Leaders Board has been hard at work on various initiatives and events as we jumpstart our fourth year as a group.

New YLBers dove in headfirst, assisting in the National Sauna Week programming in February. Anne Junttila served as co-moderator for a panel with Artist of the Year Eric Aho, while Lexi Brewer introduced the moderator for a well-attended panel on sauna culture.

Meanwhile, Nate Kilponen-Fix and Oliver Gardner utilized their experience as business students taking North Wind Books as a case study. They have been brainstorming with FFN and the manager of North Wind Books to optimize operations.

Three YLB members — Oliver Gardner, Anne Junttila and Abi Carlson — represented the group at the April board meeting hosted in Hancock. This was a wonderful opportunity to gain more knowledge about Finlandia Foundation and also see the Finnish American Heritage Center firsthand.

“I loved exploring the Finnish American Heritage Center, Finnish American Folk School, North Wind Books and the rest of the City of Hancock with FFN,” says Anne. “The community connected with Finnish American heritage and found comfort that the culture will be preserved through Finlandia Foundation. It was a beautiful moment in history to be a part of.”

At the local level, returning YLB members Anya Peck and Lauren Tuiskula have taken leadership positions in their respective local chapters (New York and Boston) and are assisting with outreach to younger generations.

Looking ahead, the YLB is hard at work planning for our third annual in-person event, which will be hosted in the fall in collaboration with the Embassy of Finland in Washington, D.C. We look forward to continuing to utilize our various interests and strengths to execute on our mission: building on our past while bridging to the future.



YLB members (from left) Oliver Gardner, Anne Junttila and Abi Carlson with Tommy Flanagan during a coffee break at the FFN board meeting.

*Lauren Tuiskula is associate managing editor for the GIST, a female-founded sports media company, and a founding member of the FFN Young Leaders Board.*

Are you interested in getting involved?  
Check out the Young Leaders Board page at  
[FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org).



# Finnposium

A Brief History of Finnposium: It all began with the Greeks. Well, the name was inspired by their symposium, a time of music, conversation, drinking and dancing open to males only.

Finlandia Foundation's modern interpretation is a virtual symposium born out of COVID-19 that prevented the FFN Lecturer of the Year and Performer of the Year from touring. But the pandemic didn't stop then-president Anne-Mari Paster; it inspired her.

With the availability of Zoom and ability to create content from wherever anyone was locked down, she proposed taking the programs virtual. Like a symposium, the content could range from conversations and concerts to food and beverage. Finnposium, however, would be accessible to all, not just men.

Since its launch, Finnposium has offered a wide variety of programming and has initiated and helped to strengthen connections between the U.S. and Finland. The content is a mix of live and pre-recorded programs, has always been free to view and, with minor exception, the recorded programs are available at the FFN YouTube channel. FFN National Sauna Week sessions are online, as well.

Topics in 2024 include the films of Aki Kaurismäki with Andrew Nestingen, professor of Finnish Studies and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle; "Baltic Bowed Lyres" with Alice Margerum and Clare Zuraw, Director of the Finnish American Folk School; and Finnish log construction expert Frank Eld on his 2023 exploration of savu saunas, savu tupas and other structures in Finland and Sweden.

Details and registration information are announced at the FFN Facebook page and in our e-news; sign up at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](https://FinlandiaFoundation.org). Most programs are available on YouTube within 10 days after the original event date.

Pop the corn, grab a beverage and enjoy past programs at: [youtube.com/c/FinlandiaFoundationNational](https://youtube.com/c/FinlandiaFoundationNational)

Recent Finnposium programs include (clockwise from left) "The Forest Finns" with experts and minority activists IngMarie Bohmelin, Jan Myhrvold and Birger Nesholen, moderated by Sarah Kammlah of the Forest Finns in America Facebook group; Finnish artist Marjo Levlín on her *Heading West, Coming Home* exhibition at Finlandia Art Gallery in conversation with Curator/Director Carrie Vander Veen; Phyllis Fredendall of the Finnish American Folk School on "Weaving in Finland Today and Yesterday: Folk Schools, Taitos and Beyond."



## Sharing Finnish-American Talent

The popular cultural touring programs, Performer of the Year and Lecturer of the Year, have been mainstays of Finlandia Foundation for decades, with the recent addition of Artist of the Year to spotlight Finnish-American talent in any art medium.

Lecturer of the Year Hanna Pylväinen (right) is the author of *The End of Drum-Time*, a 2023 finalist for the National Book Award for fiction. Chapters have options for adding a seminar to Hanna's approximately one-hour book talk.

Performer of the Year Miska Kajanus is zig-zagging the country, sharing *My Immigrant Story*, a comedic monologue in which he talks about his journey from Finland to America. He opened his tour in Washington, D.C. for the Finlandia Foundation National Capital Chapter's annual Kalevala Day dinner at the Embassy (right).

As part of the "Saving Finland in America" celebration during the FFN annual board meeting in April, Miska and Hanna delivered samples of their full programs. Separately, Hanna also presented a lecture hosted by North Wind Books that was open to the public. Both Hanna and Miska will appear at FinnFest 2024 in Duluth.

The work of Artist of the Year Eric Aho, a painter of mostly large scale works, is not quite as portable. The Massachusetts native now lives in Vermont, and traveled to Boston in November to speak to that FFN chapter. He talked about the influence his Finnishness and family have played in his life and art, accompanied by slides and smaller works.

Eric has also been active with FFN via virtual Finnposium and National Sauna Week programs.

## SEEKING LOY, POY 2025

FFN is searching for Lecturer of the Year and Performer of the Year for 2025. The terms of the touring programs begin January 1 and run through December 31.

Applications are due by September 1, 2024.

Find information and applications at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](https://FinlandiaFoundation.org).



Above from left: FFN Young Leaders Board members Lauren Tuiskula and Oliver Gardner with Artist of the Year Eric Aho at the FFN Boston Chapter's event.



# SAUNA WEEK PICKS UP STEAM



Sauna art by school children in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula was on display at the Finnish American Heritage Center.

Finger Lakes Finns in New York had a public event featuring sauna owners who are maintaining family sauna traditions or building their own. The carving (far right) is from one of the local saunas.

In one of the six FFN Zoom programs, Finnish folklorist Dalva Lamminmäki (right) and Frank Eld, Finnish sauna and log construction expert, talk about sauna culture; he and Dalva toured saunas on his 2023 research trip to Finland.

A showcase from the *Sauna is Life* exhibition at Nordia House in Portland, Oregon.



The third annual National Sauna Week, February 18-24, was busy with virtual and in-person events supporting Finlandia Foundation's reason for creating the celebration: to spread awareness and appreciation of something that has been an essential part of Finnish life for centuries.

This effort to inform and inspire love of true sauna is not new. The North American Sauna Society for years has been sharing information in a number of ways to educate the public about the origins, importance, benefits and enjoyment of a proper sauna, but FFN

is the first organization to create an annual event to rally sauna enthusiasts and the growing number of sauna businesses across the country.

Each day, from Sunday through Friday, FFN hosted a live virtual program on a different topic related to sauna. On Saturday, there was an exclusive screening of the Finland episode of the documentary series *Perfect Sweat* by Mikkel Aaland.

In addition, Performer of the Year Miska Kajanus, with Mikko Nuopponen and Jaakko Manninen, created the bouncy "Sauna Song" and music video (right).



Erica Korpi of Banks, Oregon was the winner of the FFN "Just Add Sauna" Instagram contest. In cooperation with FinnStyle, the online store for Finnish goods, Erica won two Marimekko robes and a bundle of sauna accessories.

"My love for sauna started as an exchange student in Valkeakoski, Finland in 2008," she says.



**JUST ADD SAUNA**



**ENTER TO WIN!**

The inaugural poster art contest, judged by FFN Artist of the Year Eric Aho and Finlandia Art Gallery Curator/Director Carrie Vander Veen, drew entries from across the U.S.

FFN offered mini grants to chapters to assist in producing sauna events in their communities. Mobile saunas were popular, accompanied by refreshments and in some locations, day-long celebrations.

Nordia House in Portland, Oregon built an exhibit, *Sauna is Life: Sauna Culture in Finland*, which was open to the public January 10 - April 24, and has become a traveling exhibition.

The Finnish Theme Committee in Hancock, Michigan produced a series of events that included a self-guided tour of area saunas and "Sauna Stories" oral history project.



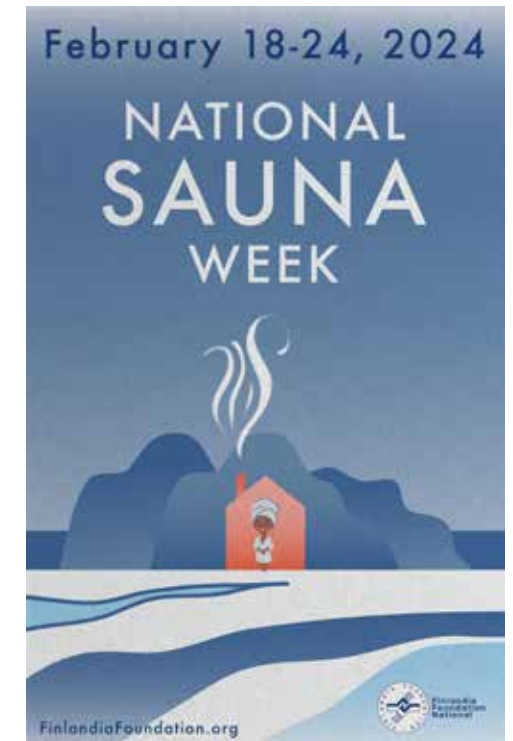
Finland's Honorary Consul of San Diego Kathy Mautino was instrumental in securing a declaration from the City of San Diego recognizing National Sauna Week.

From left, FFN Executive Director Tommy Flanagan, Kathy Mautino, FFN Trustee Teuvo Pulkkinen, Okko-Pekka Salmimies, Finland's General Consul in Los Angeles and Timo Loustarinen, President of House of Finland San Diego.

In 2024, National Sauna Week received its first governmental recognitions, from the City of San Diego and Michigan's House of Representatives.

Toasty Mobile Sauna in Idaho again hosted a series of Sauna Week events, joined by many other independent sauna companies and retailers that offered promotions and sales. Media coverage, from articles to interviews, also showed growth.

National Sauna Week programs are available at the FFN YouTube channel. Find more sauna info at FinlandiaFoundation.org.



Debbie Paver of Calumet, Michigan was the winner of the inaugural National Sauna Week poster art contest.

"I want to celebrate the sauna's role as a central opportunity to rejuvenate, meditate and connect with your own mind, body and spirit," she says.

The poster is available to purchase from North Wind Books at bookstore. finlandiafoundation.org.



**FEBRUARY 16-22, 2025**



# FFN BOARD MEETS IN HANCOCK AND CONNECTS WITH COMMUNITY



A flurry of activities surrounded the Finlandia Foundation National visit to Hancock, Michigan April 11-13, as trustees and members of the Young Leaders Board conducted the full-day annual business meeting, while getting to know the staff of the Finnish American Heritage Center and touring the former Finlandia University properties now under FFN's domain.

It was also an opportunity to mingle with members of the local community and absorb some

of the history of the Hancock-Houghton area, where it's not unusual to see street signs and businesses bearing Finnish names.

The meeting agenda included reports from each committee, approving grant and scholarship award recommendations and election of new trustees and officers. Most reports appear in this issue of the newsletter, but the scholarship recipient profiles will appear in the fall *Finnish Line*.

Community events, open and free to the public, kicked off with Thursday's well-attended "Kahvi

ja Nisu" hour. Friday brought the rededication of the Heritage Center and the opening reception for Finnish-American artist Heather Allen Hietala's *Evolution* exhibition at Finlandia Art Gallery. On Saturday, North Wind Books hosted a lecture and book signing by FFN Lecturer of the Year Hanna Pylväinen, author of *The End of Drum-Time*.

In between, board members and guests toured the iconic Quincy copper mine, where many early Finnish immigrants found work. They also visited the Historical Archive, Finlandia Art Gallery, Finnish American Folk School, Price of Freedom Museum,

North Wind Books and the office of *The Finnish American Reporter*.

Saturday's celebration of the momentous "Saving Finland in America" fundraising campaign closed out the festivities at the Heritage Center. Special guest speakers included Finland's Consul General of New York, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva, and Michigan State Representative Gregory Markkanen. Kivajat Dancers, Hanna Pylväinen and Performer of the Year Miska Kajanus provided entertainment.

Quincy mine tour photo by Christine Manninen



# HANCOCK HAPPENINGS

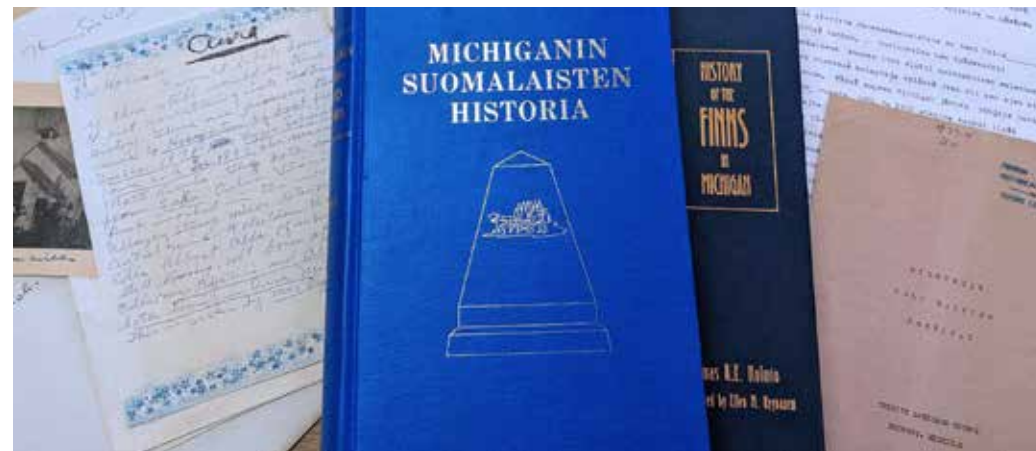
## A Wealth of Archival Material

Like so many other seasonal trends, summer brings with it an influx of genealogists making appointments to visit the FAHC Archive. For novice researchers who might only know an immigrant ancestor's name and where they lived when they arrived, one of the first resources they can consult here are Boxes T-38a and T-38b, which comprise the Holmio Biographical & Geographical Files.

In doing research for his book, *Michiganin Suomalaisten Historia (History of the Finns in Michigan)* in the 1960s, Dr. Armas K.E. Holmio compiled information about important Finnish-Americans in the state, as well as data on communities where immigrant Finns tended to live.

Holmio's files typically include references to other sources relevant to each person or place and can provide researchers with information on what Finnish churches and organizations were in the area, what industries existed for employment, what people did for fun, as well as general history. Some of the files also contain photos, clippings and other ephemera that help shed light on many locales and the people who lived there.

To ask the archivist a question or to set up a research appointment, please contact Joanna Chopp by email at [joanna.chopp@finlandiafoundation.org](mailto:joanna.chopp@finlandiafoundation.org) or phone 906-487-7347.



## New Website for FAHC

Check out the new Finnish American Heritage Center website! The new site is linked to our main Finlandia Foundation National website. It's all in one place.

The FAHC site is where you'll find the Archive, Folk School, Art Gallery and North Wind Books information.

Go to: [fahc.finlandiafoundation.org](http://fahc.finlandiafoundation.org)



## Finnish American Folk School

In January, Clare Zuraw stepped into the role of full-time director of the Finnish American Folk School. Previous director Phyllis Fredendall remains active teaching at the FAFS, including a five-day Beginning Weaving Workshop, July 30 through August 3.

This winter, the FAFS celebrated Heikinpäivä in Hancock with workshops including Inkle Band Weaving, Karjalanpiirakka Making, Finn Horse Quilt Block Sewing, Beginning Knitting and Beginning Kantele. The Folk School has also been participating in several outreach events this spring, reaching hundreds of young people in the region.

In April, with support from the American Scandinavian Foundation, the FAFS hosted artist Heather Hietala for two popular workshops on embroidery and textile techniques in wire. Many exciting programs are in the works for the rest of 2024 and beyond. If you're interested in Folk School events, visit the website [fahc.finlandiafoundation.org](http://fahc.finlandiafoundation.org), follow on social media and subscribe to the free email newsletter.

## Finlandia Art Gallery

Gallery Director/Curator Carrie Vander Veen and Calumet art teacher Susan Rosemurgy worked together to bring 35 Calumet High School students to the Finnish American Heritage Center for a field trip on April 15. The students met visiting Finnish-American artist Heather Hietala, who was in Hancock for the opening of her art exhibit *Evolution*, on display at the Finlandia Art Gallery through June 5. The artist shared the stories behind each of her textile art pieces and explained the techniques she used to create her work.

Student Mallory McMahon calls Heather an inspiration. "My favorite part of the field trip was learning about how Heather connects her life with her work," said student Preston Hodges.

The students then met Finnish American Folk School Director Clare Zuraw for a lesson in hand spinning yarn with a drop spindle. They incorporated their handspun yarn into a weaving project when they returned to school. "It was so cool to learn how to spin my own wool yarn!" says Maija White.

After a busy morning at the FAHC, the students enjoyed Finnish treats at the Nisu Café in Hancock. This field trip was supported with grant funds from the Michigan Arts & Culture Council and Finn Spark, Inc.



Calumet High School students (from left) Mallory McMahon, Jailyn Kesanen and Laci Jarvi spin yarn for a weaving project. The students learned to weave on a small loom; this example is by Maija White. Artist Heather Hietala (blue shirt) joins a group in the weaving activity.



## FFN Takes Ownership of Properties

In early January 2024, Finlandia Foundation Executive Director Tommy Flanagan announced confirmation of the purchase of two buildings that were formerly a part of Finlandia University in Hancock, Michigan.

FFN is now the owner of the Quincy Street structures that house the Finnish American Heritage Center and North Wind Books store. These are the homes of the Historical Archive, Finlandia Art Gallery, Price of Freedom Museum, Finnish American Folk School and *The Finnish American Reporter*.

“With the acquisition of these cultural institutions, we have moved into the next phase of our overall plan to make them more accessible to the general public, including the digitization of many of the archival records and creating touring exhibitions featuring treasures in the collection. Additionally, we will create an endowment to ensure the future health of the Heritage Center and entities,” says Tommy.

The purchases were possible thanks to the \$3 million “Saving Finland in America” campaign supported by some 900 donors, who contributed gifts ranging from three dollars to millions of dollars.



A new sign identifies North Wind Books as part of Finlandia Foundation National. Can't make it to the Hancock location? Shop for books and gifts online at [bookstore.finlandiafoundation.org](http://bookstore.finlandiafoundation.org).

A worker removes “Finlandia University” from the Heritage Center in preparation for installation of new FFN signage.

## OSSI RAHKONEN: STRENGTH FROM ADVERSITY

By Lauren Tuiskula

As Finlandia Foundation National embarks on a new chapter with the opening of the Finnish American Heritage Center and looks ahead to its upcoming 75th anniversary, it's important to consider the breadth of history that the organization and its members have experienced.

Former FFN president (2013 to 2020) and longtime trustee Ossi Rahkonen recently shared his story as a “Finnish war child” and the impact it had on his future career and successes.

Ossi was born in Finland, but at the age of three years and eight months, was sent to Nyköping, a small town south of Stockholm, Sweden. He was one of 70,000 to 80,000 Finnish war children who were evacuated between 1940 and 1945 amid the fears and uncertainty about Finland's future during World War II.

“It's hard to describe for people who live today what the situation was then,” Ossi says of the circumstances that led families to choose that future for their children. “But it was very, very grim.”

After the war, he returned to Turku, where he first attended a Swedish school before eventually switching to a Finnish school. “Going from Sweden back to Finland, it was fairly dramatic in the sense that Finland was so impacted by the war.” He notes that he was fortunate to have a smooth transition back into Finnish life, but many other war children did not have that same experience.

Little did he know at the time, Ossi's formative years spent in Sweden would lay the groundwork for his future work. He went on to earn an economics master's degree from a Swedish-speaking university, leading to a successful and impactful career as an economist at the World Bank.

Being fluent in Swedish, he became involved with Nordic cooperation in the mid-1960s, which led to his recruitment by international consulting firms in 1967 and work on infrastructure development projects in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia for funding by the World Bank. Ossi eventually joined the World Bank in Washington, D.C. in 1972. That's when he also joined the Finlandia Foundation, kicking off the start of a long tenure with, and enduring impact on, the organization.

He considers that help from Sweden during the war years as of critical importance for his future and his career.

*Lauren Tuiskula is associate managing editor for the GIST, a female-founded sports media company, and a founding member of the FFN Young Leaders Board.*



Ossi Rahkonen in 2017 with then-Ambassador of Finland to the U.S. Kirsti Kauppi at the Finland 100 Anniversary Gala celebrating Finland's century of independence.



# 2024 GRANTS

In 2024, Finlandia Foundation National was thrilled to receive 63 grant applications, a 50% increase over prior years. This is a result of our national group becoming more well-known throughout the country and Finland.

The requests totaled \$293,380. With a budget of \$125,000, the grants committee deliberated during two long Zoom meetings to fairly allocate the funds. Committee members Richard Ahola, chair, Jacqueline Harjula, Katariina Lehtonen, Päivi Tetri and emerita trustee Anita Smiley were assisted with valuable input from FFN Executive Director Thomas Flanagan and Operations Manager Jessica Ann.

Grants of \$500 to \$5,000 were awarded from Maine to Hawaii, in the categories of saunas, comedy, music, film, TV, art, events, education, dance, history, sports and networking. It is a joy to learn about and support so many wonderful Finnish and Finnish-American happenings.

The next grant application deadline is January 17, 2025. Find details at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org).

## MUSIC PROJECTS & PERFORMANCES

### Boston Symphony Debut of Dalia Stasevska

This grant supports the Boston Symphony Orchestra debut of Finnish conductor Dalia Stasevska on Saturday, August 10 at Tanglewood, the country's pre-eminent summer music festival and summer home of the BSO, located in Stockbridge and Lenox, Massachusetts. Ms. Stasevska will conduct two works by Sibelius and a violin concerto by Stravinsky.



### Nixie Out of the Water

This original operetta borrows from the *Kalevala* and Finnish folklore and has fun with the connection between Michigan and Finland. It will be performed at schools, libraries and cultural centers in Southwest Michigan, and in cities with strong Finnish populations. Following the performance, the dramaturg will lead the audience in a discussion of mythology, folklore, the *Kalevala* and Finnish culture and history.

### Sauna - The Song

A consortium of five musicians will record a song meant to become the sauna anthem not only for Finnish America, but also for the entire, traditional, sauna-enjoying North America.

### Theme Song Workshop

This workshop for Finnish schools in the U.S., led by Jenni Helena-Niemi and songwriter Eeppi Ursin, will result in an original song written by the students. Each school will get their own, unique song, and the process will work to nurture their cultural identity in an inspiring and creative way.

### Ida Metsberg's West Coast Tour

Past FFN Performer of the Year, singer-songwriter Ida Metsberg, will tour Finnish-American West Coast communities including San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Seattle, as well as Hancock, Michigan. She'll perform original music concerts at night, and children's sing-along concerts (in Finnish and English) during the day.



### The AfroSpace of Sun Ra

Finnish Heritage Society presents Dr. Markku Salo's *The AfroSpace of Sun Ra* at Berkeley Finnish Hall September 8-9. Dr. Salo, who lives in Kerava, Finland, will perform and lead this epic poetic musical experience with a six-piece jazz ensemble, including the Finnish Hall's artists in residence, Heikki Koskinen and Rent Romus, and others from the San Francisco Bay Area music community. The program explores the connection between the revolutionary ideas of African American intellectual music and writings of Afro-futurist Sun Ra, and Dr. Salo's decades of therapeutic research on how music and poetics can be used for mental wellness in the Finnish prison system.

### Finnish-American Christmas Album

Vocalist, pianist and songwriter Eeppi Ursin is releasing *Epic Christmas - Eeppinen Jouluk*, a Finnish-American holiday album for Christmas 2024. The double album features some of the most beloved songs from both countries, including swinging sounds and deeply touching nostalgia, plus new original holiday music from the artist.

### Ameriikan Poijat On the Road

The grant will support the Finnish-American Brass Band Ameriikan Poijat (Boys of America) concert tour to Finnish communities on the U.S. West Coast in August 2024. Leaving from Minnesota, they will visit Astoria, Oregon, Naselle, Washington and nearby communities.

### Juli Wood Quartet at Salolampi

FFN Past Performer of the Year Juli Wood's jazz quartet has been invited to play at the fall 2024 session at Salolampi Language Village in Minnesota. One will be a concert of Finnish folk songs in jazz styles; the second will feature traditional folk songs for dancing.

### A Sibelius Journey

The Miami Beach-based New World Symphony will present *A Sibelius Journey* on April 12 and 13, 2025. The concert will be led by Dalia Stasevska, chief conductor of Lahti Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of the International Sibelius Festival.



### A Finnish-American Remigration Story

Juilliard School trained mezzo-soprano Betany Coffland and Alan Johnson, professor and pianist at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, present a concert tour to Miami, New York and Minnesota. The musicians, both of American-Finnish ancestry, will perform classical music representing composers from Finland, the U.S. and others with Nordic connections.



**New  
World  
Symphony**





**Finnish and Scandinavian Utopists in Americas**  
Teuvo Peltoniemi continues work on his book, website and exhibits about Finnish and Scandinavian utopian communities. In the second year of the three-year project, he will collect data from West Coast and Midwest archives and Nordic organizations, and at locations of those settlements.

**Sisu Public Charter School**  
Sisu Environmental School will use an instructional approach based on and inspired by the highly successful Finnish education system. We call this the “Finnesota Approach,” as it is based on the Finnish model but is tailored to the local needs and requirements of the State of Minnesota so that our school’s children can reap the benefits of this exemplary model here in their home state. Sisu Environmental School will provide a “Finnish-style education for Minnesota kids.”

**Finnish Language Education in the U.S.**  
Salolampi, the Concordia Finnish Language Village (below), will develop three series of lessons to teach Finnish language and culture using the Content-Based Instruction method, in which students learn language while developing a skill. The curriculum units include theater/filmmaking, handicrafts and soccer/field hockey, all taught in Finnish. These open-access resources will be offered free to all interested educators.



## COMEDY

### Ismo Leikola Tour

This grant will support the stand-up comedy performance by Ismo for the Finnish-American community of Hawaii, with opening act Miska Kajanus.

## RESEARCH & EDUCATION

### The Intersection of Finnish Culture, Education and Women Leaders

This study will examine the Finnish cultural and educational contexts enabling women leaders to develop, thrive and contribute in impressive ways throughout all spheres of society. In depth interviews with women from government, business, education and the social sector will provide the lens for understanding the determining factors. These insights will be used as a springboard for further dialogue between emerging leaders and women in leadership in Finland and the United States.



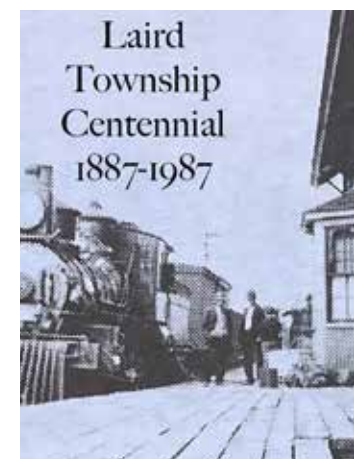
### Suomi-koulu Family Camp 2024

The Finnish schools of San Diego and Los Angeles are organizing a weekend-long educational Suomi koulu family camp for Southern Californian Finnish-school families, Finnish-American families and community members in the area. The Camp will be held August 9-11 at Hauli Huvila and consist of planned educational programs for children over three years old. A modest fee will cover the educational program, meals and stay for the whole family.

## BOOKS

### Laird Township Centennial Book

The grant will assist redesign and publication of the out-of-print book, *Laird Township Centennial 1887-1987*, to save the family histories of 188 early settlers from a small Finnish community in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. With more than 250 photos, the extensive area history is the quintessential story of immigration and homesteading at the end of the 19th century, by first and second-hand accounts of the families. It is a cultural and historical gem to be shared with 21st century audiences.



### Salolampi Adventures

This book features stories from daily activities and customs at Salolampi Language Village through the viewpoint of forest animals, birds and critters big and small. The book has Finnish names of the animals along with adjectives in Finnish describing them. A glossary is provided.

### The Spyglass: A Childhood in Finland and Sweden

Carol Makela shares her father’s story, which takes place before, during and after the Winter War and Continuation War, during which he was sent to live as a foster child in Sweden. It culminates in his journey to the U.S. with his single mother. Carol plans a book tour of FFN chapters to present the tale through public and educational events.

### Saunas of the Keweenaw

Through highlighting varying aspects of modern sauna culture, our goal is to bring to life the book *Saunas of the Keweenaw*. Picture a book full of beautifully photographed saunas from a region in the “sauna belt” in unison with a collection of high-quality sauna stories.



## HERITAGE & CULTURE

### Finnish Room at the University of Pittsburgh

These funds support construction of a Finnish heritage room at the renowned Nationality Rooms at the University of Pittsburgh. The fundraising and planning for construction of a Finnish Room has been a project in the works since 2003.

### Kivajat Finnish Dance Costumes

The Kivajat Finnish Dancers, sponsored by the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock, Michigan, are celebrating 20 years. The ensemble started as a small group of upper elementary children preparing to perform at FinnFest 2005 in Marquette. It has grown to include kindergarteners through teens who delight and educate audiences at performances at nursing homes, multi-ethnic festivals and community events in the area. This grant will help to refresh and expand the costume collection and create a contemporary costume for the teens.





## SPORTS

### Nordic Combined Journey

Niklas Malacinski (right) is working to become one of the top athletes in Nordic combined. This grant will help to support his rigorous training, international competition participation and ongoing quest for personal and professional growth as he advances his skills, competes at the highest level and contributes to the broader narrative of Nordic combined on the international stage.

### Nordic Combined Athlete

Skier Annika Malacinski is a proud dual citizen of Finland and the U.S. and a member of the Women's Nordic Combined Team on Team USA. As an athlete, she relies on individual sponsorships to pursue her passion and elevate her athletic career while contributing to the success of women in Nordic combined, promoting gender equality in sports.

## FILM & VIDEO

### Sauna Stories

2nd Sandbar Productions, located in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, will create a pilot for a documentary film series centered around the sauna. The series focuses on the culture, history, and personal stories of the Finnish-American sauna experience in the Keweenaw.

### Finn Hall Culture

*Researching and Celebrating the Finn Hall Culture: Cape Ann's Heritage in Music, Theater, and Dance* is a documentary film about Cape Ann, Massachusetts and its heritage of performances at Finn Halls in the 1920s and 1930s. Stories will tell of how cultural activities reflected the many challenges of Finnish immigrant working class life, but also created strong social ties and leadership in community activities and unions.



### Hauliwood Vampires Promo Video

California based Finnish campsite Hauli Huvila's house band is on the move, hoping to perform across Nordic festivals in the U.S. This grant will assist in creating a video and music for promotional purposes. The band includes two FFN Performers of the Year.

### Sauna TV Show Trailer

This grant will fund a trailer for a TV show about Finnish sauna culture for the American audience.

### One of Them

Set in the real historical events of the 1880s, *One of Them* is a story about loyalty and identity that depicts the coexistence of two northern peoples, Ojibwa Indians and Finns, in the poorest lands of the Great Lakes. A young Finnish immigrant, struggling to earn his place in the New World, ends up in the middle of hostilities between the settlers and Ojibwa. He finally must choose his side, which results in severe consequences.

### Finnish Winter War Story

This grant will assist in the development of a TV series about the Finnish Army's resistance to the Russian invasion during the Winter War of 1939 (left).

### Fluit

Beata Harju is producing the documentary feature *Fluit* in the U.S., looking at early globalization and the Finnish involvement of early settlement efforts under Swedish rule through the lens of a Fluit shipwreck (right).

### Film Shoot

Filmmaker Miska Kajanus will apply this grant to filming of his original feature comedy *Reunion*, a story about Finnish-American connection and becoming an adult and letting go of your childhood.

## EVENTS

### Finnish American Folk Festival

The Finnish American Folk Festival of Naselle, Washington, is planning a series of events to take place from June through September. It will feature the FFN Performer of the Year, group performances, a Midsummer celebration and a mini Finn Fest with a family dance, lectures, performances and a vendors' market.

### 70th Anniversary Celebration

The Finlandia Foundation Florida Chapter will celebrate its 70th anniversary at a gala on Saturday, November 16 in Lake Worth. Proceeds will support the higher education of the Finnish-American youth in Florida, as well as Salolampi Finnish language and culture courses. The night is themed around the famous song *Fly Me to the Moon*, created in 1954, the year FFFC was founded. The gala will feature a festive dinner with music provided by Eeppi Ursin and a local jazz band.



### Independence Day Celebration

The Detroit area Finnish Center Association seeks to enhance the cultural offerings and significance of its Finnish Independence Day gala, which will be hosted at the center on December 7. This formal evening includes a multi-course dinner of Finnish appetizers and specialties, live chamber music and keynote speaker. The event attracts close to 100 guests, including FCA members and visitors of all ethnicities who are interested in Finland's proud history and cultural influences.

### Nordic Networking Event

This will bring together university, college and vocational school students and young professionals from Finnish, Nordic and Minnesota businesses for a presentation on how these companies are moving forward in clean energy, sustainability, and/or digitalization. They will also talk about opportunities for interns or young professionals in their organizations.

### Midnight Sun Festival 2025

Midnight Sun Festival is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping Finnish heritage alive in South Florida. The annual event in March features Finnish performers; grant funds will be used to provide proper audio equipment for them.

### Finnish-American Program

Actor and musician Mikko Nuopponen and The Finnish-American Actors Collective will produce an evening of music and short scenes from Nordic plays and American films, in both Finnish and English, at Suomi-Kerho club in Los Angeles. The actor will also attend a professional workshop at The New American Theater.



### **Nordic Utopia? African Americans in the 20th Century**

This exhibition at the National Nordic Museum in Seattle March 23 - July 21, 2024, illuminates the untold story of African American visual and performing artists who sought new possibilities, inspiration and environments in the Nordic countries as an alternative to Paris. Multi-media artist Howard Smith (1928-2021) lived in Finland and created for Arabia (example in display case above). *Nordic Utopia?* will travel to the Chazen Museum of Art in Madison, Wisconsin and Scandinavia House in New York City. Photo courtesy of National Nordic Museum



### **St. Andrew's Lutheran Church Festival**

This four-day celebration of music and art, Finnish culture and fellowship in Lake Worth, Florida spans a broad representation of musical genres. There will be a church concert, an intimate chamber music house concert, popular music night and others, plus an art show and youth-oriented activities.

### **ARCHIVAL PROJECTS**

#### **Memories of the Midcoast Maine Finnish Community**

This project entails converting 14 years of summer projects currently on 125 foam display boards and in scrapbooks to a digital format (i.e. flash drives/thumb drives).

#### **Tom of Finland**

Tom of Finland Foundation Archival Project will continue cataloging and digitizing Tom of Finland's 3,500 works so ToFF can bring its collection online to be accessed by the public globally. This will bring worldwide recognition to not only ToFF and Tom of Finland's art, but to Finnish culture.

### **ART**

#### **Woven Culture**

Finnish textile artist Satu Nisu (right), in collaboration with the New York Finnish School, will create a community art piece celebrating Finnish strength, emphasizing craftsmanship and creativity through participatory art-making. Participants will gain hands-on experience in the textile manufacturing process, contributing their cultural imprint to reflect the richness and diversity of the Finnish community.



### **Nordic Artists of New York**

This group seeks to strengthen community and create change by building bridges between Scandinavian and Estonian artists, art foundations and cultural programs in New York, and showcasing Nordic values through partnership with local

environmental initiatives. Funds support practical expenses as well as showcases and networking events.

#### **Anxiety Lean-to**

Sari Nordman's *Anxiety* is a communal fiber-arts project with an environmental theme, advocating for the reduction of single-use plastics and promoting repurposing and recycling practices while advancing traditional Finnish fiber arts within contemporary art.

# CHAPTER NEWS

## **CALIFORNIA**

**House of Finland San Diego** hosted December Nights, its Christmas tradition at Balboa Park. In January, the cottage was a polling place for Finland's presidential election, and voters enjoyed traditional baked goods and coffee.



## **CONNECTICUT**

"My house smells like heaven," says one pulla baker who took home the lessons from the Culinary Delights demonstration on how to make the cardamom bread. The **Finnish American Heritage Society of Canterbury**'s calendar also included a pancake (plus pannukakku) breakfast in March, when the museum was open to visitors. Anita Smiley and Patti Folsom made a presentation about Finnish heritage, FAHS and the Finnish Hall and museum at the Learning in Retirement program at Quinebaug Valley Community College in Danielson.



## **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

**Finlandia Foundation National Capital Chapter** has enjoyed some laughs lately, as a group got together for food and beverages before selfie-taking comedian Ismo's February show. FFN Performer of the Year Miska Kajanus entertained with his comedic monologue at the FFNCC Annual Dinner and Kalevala Celebration at the Embassy building.



## **FLORIDA**

FFN Executive Director Tommy Flanagan attended the Midnight Sun Festival in Lake Worth, where he connected with members of the **Finlandia Foundation Florida Chapter**. In the photo (from left) are Anja Laurila, Tommy, Armi Sturges and Reija Kilpinen. FFN was a Silver Sponsor of the annual March celebration, which features Finnish foods, bands, vendors, a car show and fun events like the wife carrying contest.





## ILLINOIS

Santa made a special visit to Chicago for the **Finnish American Society of the Midwest** Christmas party, and Eepi Ursin had everyone in the holiday spirit with her lively tunes. In March, members wore purple and green for a fun St. Urho's Pea Soup Lunch. FASM also hosted the webinar "Sami People: An Indigenous People in the Here and Now" by Thomas DuBois, a past FFN Lecturer of the Year.



## MASSACHUSETTS

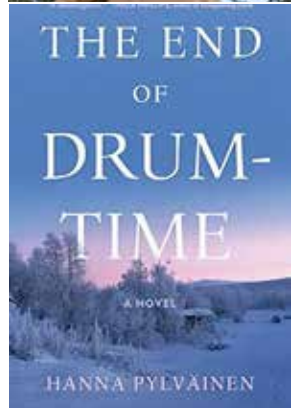
**Cape Ann Finns** organized a January outing to a local theater for the group's shared experience of watching the lauded Finnish film *Fallen Leaves* by Aki Kaurismäki.



Members of **Finlandia Foundation Boston** spent a wonderful February evening at the Boston Symphony Orchestra enjoying a "Music of the Midnight Sun" concert; they were able to meet with conductor John Storgårds, composer Outi Tarkianen and violin virtuoso Pekka Kuusisto. Recent thought-provoking programs include sessions on international climate negotiations and how the Vaisala company works to improve the climate with its measurement systems and products.



The **Finnish American Society of Cape Cod** continued its series of live, online presentations in a chat with Finnish-American actor David Chokachi (think *Baywatch*) and the March 16—St. Urho's Day—program about the history of the legend who chased the grasshoppers out of Finland to save the country's grape crops.



**The Finnish Center at Saima Park** is offering 10-week Finnish language classes at beginner and advanced levels. Recent programs include member Marci Haneisen leading a discussion of *The End of Drum-Time* by FFN Lecturer of the Year Hanna Pylväinen, and birch bark weaving classes with Elaine Moe. Elaine is an FFN grant recipient who traveled to Finland to learn and perfect the art to keep the craft alive.

## MICHIGAN

The **Finnish Center Association** in metro Detroit rounded up volunteers to celebrate Earth Day by helping with the local Adopt-a-Road litter pick-up—24 bags of trash collected in a 2.5 mile stretch, reports FCA Co-President Christine Manninen. Bonus: road sign publicity for the organization noting its involvement.



In late January, Executive Director Tommy Flanagan represented Finlandia Foundation at Heikinpäivä, the annual wintertime festival hosted by **Finnish Theme Committee of Hancock/Finlandia Foundation Copper Country**. The month-long series of indoor and outdoor events included learning traditional crafts, cooking, dancing and kantele, plus a polar plunge, film screenings, tori and Spiral Bear Dance. FFN was honored for its work throughout the last year, and Tommy proudly donned the robe and crown of "Hankookin Heikki" in the all-in-good-fun grand parade.



## MINNESOTA

**Red River Finns** hosted a booth at Pangea, a multicultural festival in November at the Hjemkomst Center in Moorhead.

## MONTANA

In Roberts at **Finnish Family of Kaleva /Red Lodge**, members turned out in force to tackle the spring clean-up chores. There was a job for everyone, from heavy-duty tree debris removal and raking the Finnish Kaleva Park grounds to tidying the Lodge and making sure the hardworking crew of volunteers was fed.



## NORTH CAROLINA

FFN welcomed the **Triangle Finnish Association** as its newest affiliate, the first from North Carolina. Located in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area, TFA is an active social/cultural club of about 100 Finns, Finnish-Americans and friends of Finland. Activities include a Finnish Independence Day party; Late Laskiainen Pea Soup Party (yes, in April!); and Finnish Night at the Carolina Hurricanes hockey game, including a pre-game tailgate.



## OHIO

Linda (Sippola) Riddell, co-founder—with her husband, John—of the **Finnish-American Heritage Association** and museum in Ashtabula, reports on an exciting special event: an open house for the April 8 solar eclipse. Guests included sky-watchers from Pennsylvania, West Virginia and New York City who wanted to experience the rare event in the path of totality. The visitors toured the museum, purchased some gift items and enjoyed the nisu and coffee provided.





**OREGON**

It was a busy spring for **Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific** at Nordic Northwest, including co-hosting Nordic Coffee Hours and Finnish conversation groups, a sold out Easter celebration and a family-friendly concert by Mimmit, a Finnish musical duo of two talented sisters. This year's FFCP Most Valuable Finn award winners are Dave Alford and Ray Wikman, who were recognized for their involvement and contributions to FFCP and other area Nordic groups.



**VIRGINIA**

**Finlandia Foundation Tidewater** had an exciting experience in April, as the City of Norfolk hosted the NATO Parade of Nations and International Village. With Finland's joining NATO, this was the first year of the country's participation. According to chapter President Randy Wattaja (right), "Families from each of the 31 NATO member national delegations construct a parade float which they feel best represents their nation to the rest of the world. Our Finnish NATO families had been busily constructing a beautiful float of their own design, for several months. Only members of our NATO families could ride on their country's float. Auxiliary organizations were invited to walk alongside each nation's float, so of course members of Tidewater Finlandia Foundation chapter were invited to carry the FINLAND banner, wave Finland flags, pass out flags to parade spectators, and to walk alongside the float."



**WASHINGTON**

**Finnish American Folk Festival of Naselle** hosted a fun Easter tradition with a twist—in addition to the typical daytime event, there was a Flashlight Egg Hunt for the older kids. Other recent and current projects include a St. Urho's Day Poetry Contest, launch of a choir and creation of a Finnish-American cookbook.

**Finlandia Foundation Suomi Chapter** in Bellingham was a supporter of the springtime Pacific Northwest tour by heavy metal bands Veriteras of Seattle and Event Relentless from Finland. Veritas also received a grant from FFN to support the tour, which the band initiated to introduce U.S. fans to metal music from Finland.



**A TASTE OF VAPPU AND VALBORG 2024**

The *munkki* and *tippaleipä* tempted, and *sima* was sipped at May Day celebrations across the U.S., from Oregon to Georgia, Florida to Alaska and beyond. A sampling of the fun:



Finlandia Foundation Boston



Finnish American Society of the Midwest, Illinois



Finlandia Foundation Colorado, Boulder



House of Finland, San Diego



Finnish-American Club of Tucson



Triangle Finnish Association, North Carolina



FinnFest 2024 will be held in Duluth, Minnesota July 25-28, and Finlandia Foundation is delighted to again support and participate at this annual celebration of Finnish and Nordic culture, history, traditions and innovation—past, present and future.

Register now for the informative lectures, panels and speakers, the variety of entertainment, guided tours to local historical sites and meeting others with common interests. Not to mention the delicious Finnish food and variety of quality vendors at the tori.

Find details at [finnfest.us](http://finnfest.us). See you there!

**CHEERS TO CHAPTERS!**

Finlandia Foundation recognizes several chapters on milestone anniversaries of their affiliation with FFN.

Thank you for your involvement and support of Finnish America!

- 20th:** Finnish Center Association, Detroit area
- 30th:** Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities
- 45th:** Finlandia Foundation Tidewater Virginia
- 50th:** Finlandia Foundation Baltimore
- 50th:** Los Angeles Finlandia Foundation
- 65th:** Finlandia Foundation National Capital
- 70th:** Finlandia Foundation Florida
- 70th:** Finlandia Foundation New York Metropolitan

*Find and follow Finlandia Foundation National on social media at Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X, and at YouTube.*

*Sign up for our free, monthly e-news at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org)*



## Suomi-Seura Honors Finnish Expat Choir

Suomi-Seura, the Helsinki-based organization that serves Finnish people living abroad, presented its 2023 “Finnish Expatriate of the Year” award to the Finnish Expatriate Choir led by professional musicians Maria Männistö of the Seattle area and Eva-Christina Pietarinen of Germany. The choir is an international, virtual choral group founded by Maria and Eva-Christina during the COVID pandemic.

Rehearsals are done via Zoom by some 100 singers from countries across Europe and North America. They performed live in Duluth for FinnFest 2023, and are touring Europe this summer. Their album, *Yli rajojen (Beyond Borders)* is available at Spotify (search Yli rajojen) and Bandcamp ([finnishexpatriatechoir.bandcamp.com/album/yli-rajojen-beyond-borders](http://finnishexpatriatechoir.bandcamp.com/album/yli-rajojen-beyond-borders)).

Maria, a soprano, is a past FFN Performer of the Year and in recent years has produced several short concerts for FFN. Those programs are available free at [youtube.com/@FinlandiaFoundationNational](https://youtube.com/@FinlandiaFoundationNational).

FFN congratulates Maria, Eva-Christina and all members of the Finnish Expatriate Choir.



Members of the virtual expat choir say “juusto” for a rare group photo while in Duluth to perform at FinnFest 2023.

## Finland Recognizes James Kurtti

For his many contributions to Finnish America, Jim Kurtti was awarded the title of Knight, First Class, of the Order of the Lion of Finland.

The honor was presented on behalf of the President of Finland by New York Consul General, Ambassador Jarmo Sareva, during the FFN event on April 13 at the Finnish American Heritage Center.

Jim is Chair of the Finnish Theme Committee of Hancock/Finlandia Foundation Copper Country Chapter and Finland’s Honorary Consul for the Upper Peninsula. Over the decades he has worked on projects related to Finnish America and Finland, and in 2021 was recognized by FFN with its Award of Excellence.



Jim Kurtti accepts the high Finnish honor from Ambassador Sareva.



## NOTEWORTHY

### CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA With Music Director Klaus Mäkelä

Newly announced Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Director Klaus Mäkelä (at left in photo) chats with FFN Trustee Jon Jurva at a CSO concert in April in Chicago. Anne-Mari Paster also attended and extended greetings on behalf of Finlandia Foundation.

The Helsinki-born conductor and cellist studied at Sibelius Academy, and was called “perhaps the fastest-rising conductor of his generation,” by The New York Times. The 28-year-old has been Chief Conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic since 2020, and will be the youngest conductor to take the CSO baton when his five-year contract begins in 2027.

### SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY And Jean Sibelius

Audiences at the San Francisco Symphony performances of *Salonen: All Sibelius*, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen, browsed banners on loan from Finlandia Foundation National that portray the life of Jean Sibelius. FFN created the series in 2015 for the 150th celebration of the composer’s birth.

### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS Honors Viola Turpeinen

Accordion virtuoso Viola Turpeinen’s *Kauhavan Polka* was accepted by the Library of Congress for the 2024 National Recording Registry. It is one of 25 recordings honored as audio treasures worthy of preservation for all time based on their cultural, historical or aesthetic importance in the nation’s recorded sound heritage.

Margaret Fibel, a member of the Finlandia Foundation National Capital Chapter, and James P. Leary, emeritus professor of Folklore and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, were leading advocates for the nomination.

Viola (1909-1958) was one of the most well-known Finnish-American musicians of her era, and is possibly the first woman in the world to record accordion solos.



## FFN Receives Historic, Transformational Gift

By Tommy Flanagan  
FFN Executive Director

Finlandia Foundation National received the largest single gift in its 71-year history when the Finnish Center Association's Senior Citizens' Housing Corporation, located in Farmington Hills, Michigan, presented more than \$4 million to the organization early in 2024. The funds came from the recent sale of Tapiola Village apartments, a 92-unit housing community it had developed as affordable housing primarily for its members.

The story of this historic gift is truly one of inspiration and is the definition of paying it forward. In early 2022, FCA Senior Citizens' Housing Corporation decided to conclude its activities due to changing community needs and increasing operational challenges. Steadfast in its commitment to its Finnish-American roots, it sought a solution and a partner with a strong Finnish cultural and heritage background, solid financial position, broad exposure in North America, a reputable history and sustainable plans. FFN was chosen as an organization with a truly national reach, representing the same values.

The monumental gift arrived as the "Saving Finland in America" fundraising effort approached its conclusion.

FFN and FCA Senior Citizens' Housing Corporation share an important common core value. Both of our organizations are dedicated to supporting Finnish and Finnish-American culture. It is precisely in this spirit that this significant contribution was born. The donation of the proceeds of the Tapiola Village honors the work of the past, recognizes current realities and presents an optimistic future. With this transformation, we take the hopes, dreams and intentions of past generations and carry them forward.

Reflecting on the role that previous generations play in securing a future for the next ones, Olli Lamminen, Chair of FCA Senior Citizens' Housing Corporation, eloquently comments, "We honor their legacy and use it to create a sustainable future for other organizations whose spirit and mission they supported. This decision preserves the shared history of our organizations and ensures that their experience and achievements will always be celebrated and remembered."

Honoring the original intent of the founders of Tapiola Village, the gift will be used to celebrate and sustain Finnish-American institutions, specifically the Finnish American Heritage Center and the important and historic contents of the archive, as well as the cultural and folklife aspects of Finland and Finnish America represented in Hancock, Michigan.

This gift will help FFN tell the story told in Hancock and across the country. It is hard to overstate the importance of the cultural heritage and the living culture housed at the FAHC. This gift ensures that our work to increase visibility of and access to these treasures has been transformed from a dream into a reality.

FFN is ever grateful for the visionary leadership of the board of the FCA Senior Citizens' Housing Corporation for their proactive decision to continue their Finnish-American legacy.

### Thank You! Kiitos!

Finlandia Foundation National thanks the board of the FCA Senior Citizens' Housing Corporation for your leadership and vision. Your efforts have made it all possible.

Marylin Metsa Clark  
Nancy Hanson  
Kathryn Hill  
Mia Lamminen  
Olli Lamminen  
Christine Manninen  
Erik Salonen  
Liisa Salonen  
Sarah Wiideman

FFN produced a short video about the successful Saving Finland in America campaign; watch it at [youtube.com/@FinlandiaFoundationNational](https://youtube.com/@FinlandiaFoundationNational).

## Thank You for Saving Finland in America

These gifts have been specifically directed toward the initial \$3 million fundraising goal dedicated to the Finnish American Heritage Center in Hancock, Michigan. More than 900 individual donors contributed amounts ranging from three dollars to millions of dollars. The outpouring of support is overwhelming. **Kiitos!**

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James Mercier  
Minnesota Finnish American  
Historical Society  
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Al Mytty  
In Memory of Martii Mytty  
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Judy Ogden  
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In Honor of Betsey Norgard  
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In Memory of Helen Sardarov  
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& Chris Weeres  
Phyllis L. Smith  
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Robert Veikk Thompson  
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Arja & Turto Turtiainen  
Gerald & Kathleen Vargo  
K. Marianne Wargelin-Brown  
Minna & Aaron Waters  
Joan Wennstrom Bennett  
In Memory of Kerttu  
Johnson Wennstrom

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Nancy Salminen  
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## Honor Loved Ones with a Special Finlandia Foundation Tribute

The names of Finlandia Foundation members and friends below are followed by those they have remembered with a Centennial Honor Gift to FFN.

Add the story and photos of your loved ones to the Finlandia Family Tree. For more information or to make an honor gift, please visit [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org).

### GIFT OF \$500+

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Carolyn (Posio) Wills  
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Oili Elisabet Kujansuu  
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Isaac & Anna Usitalo  
Marlissa Westerfield  
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Father

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Ruth Ann Swanson  
Matti (Hautala) Hill &  
Aino Elizabeth (Rako) Hill  
Eva Wahlroos  
Sven Wahlroos



# Finlandia Foundation National, Inc. Chapters and Year of affiliation with FFN and chapter leaders

Find more information about the chapters, including websites and Facebook pages, at [FinlandiaFoundation.org](http://FinlandiaFoundation.org)

## ALASKA

**Anchorage Suomi Finland Club  
2015**  
Pinja Larme

## ARIZONA

**The Finnish-American Club  
of Tucson  
2007**  
Tommi Koskinen

**Finns and Friends of Phoenix  
2010**  
Kati Huhtala

## CALIFORNIA

**Finlandia Foundation Berkeley  
2016**

**Finlandia Foundation San  
Francisco Bay Area Chapter  
1956**  
Hanna Tikkanen-Merk

**Finnish-American Home  
Association Sonoma 2005**  
Salla Vaerma-Jadlos

**The House of Finland-  
San Diego 2015**  
Timo Luostarinen

**Los Angeles Finlandia  
Foundation 1974**  
Jeff Neff

## COLORADO

**Finlandia Foundation of  
Colorado Denver 1993**  
Kirsi St. Marie

## CONNECTICUT

**Finnish-American Heritage  
Society Canterbury 2011**  
Steven Bousquet

## DELAWARE

**Delaware Valley Finnish-  
Americans Newark 2017**  
Roy Palo

**New Sweden Alliance  
Yorklyn 2017**  
Affiliated Member  
Sheila Romine

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**Finlandia Foundation National  
Capital 1959**  
George Elliott

## FLORIDA

**Finlandia Foundation Florida  
Lantana 1954**  
Reija Kilpinen

**FinnsConnect South Florida  
Miami-Dade-Broward Counties  
2017**  
Paivi Kaufman

## GEORGIA

**Atlanta Finland Society, Inc.  
1975**  
Verna Bush

## ILLINOIS

**Finnish-American Society of the  
Midwest Chicago area 1997**  
Dan Maki

## MAINE

**Finnish-American Heritage  
Society of Maine West Paris  
2012**  
Karen Bennett

**Finnish Farmers Club Monson  
2012**  
Inez Goodine

**Finnish Heritage House  
South Thomaston 2007**  
Jacqueline Harjula

## MARYLAND

**Finlandia Foundation Baltimore  
Area 1974**  
Ruut DeMeo

## MASSACHUSETTS

**Cape Ann Finns 2017**  
Rob Ranta

**Finlandia Foundation Boston, Inc.  
1955**  
Henne Capone

**Finnish-American Society  
of Cape Cod 2012**  
Stephen Trimble

**The Finnish Center at  
Saima Park, Inc. Fitchburg 2005**  
Linda Byrne

**The Finnish Heritage Society -  
Sovittaja Rutland 2006**  
Barry Heiniluoma

## MICHIGAN

**Finlandia Foundation of  
Michigan Royal Oak/Detroit area  
2012**  
Frank Gottberg

**Finlandia Foundation National,  
Lake Superior Marquette  
2006**  
Ron J. Hill

**Finnish-American Society of  
West Central Michigan  
Coopersville 2007**

**Finnish Center Association  
Farmington Hills/Detroit area  
2004**  
Christine Manninen  
Roger Wanttaja

**Finnish Theme Committee of  
Hancock - Finlandia Foundation  
Copper Country 2006**  
James Kurtti

## MINNESOTA

**Finlandia Foundation Northland  
Duluth 2010**  
Mary Lukkarila

**Finlandia Foundation Twin Cities  
/FinnSource 1994**  
Betsey Norgard

**Finnish-Americans and Friends-  
Hibbing  
1998**  
Marcella Schwecke

**Kaleva Building Corporation  
Virginia 2017**  
Art Maki

**Red River Finns Moorhead  
2011**  
Ellen Liddle

## MONTANA

**Finlandia Foundation Montana  
Missoula 2017**  
Jenni Rohrbach

**Finn Club of Helena 2007**  
Marjorie Peura Reilly

**Finnish Family of Kaleva Roberts  
2011**  
Carrie Holst  
Claudia Morley

## NEW YORK

**Finger Lakes Finns Spencer  
2006**  
Michael Ludgate

**Finlandia Foundation New York  
Metropolitan 1954**  
Eero Kilpi

## NORTH CAROLINA

**Triangle Finnish Association  
Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill  
2023**  
Tom Dunder

## OHIO

**Finnish-American Heritage  
Association of Ashtabula County  
2003**  
Linda Sippola Riddell

**Finnish Heritage Museum  
Fairport Harbor 2015**  
David Leifer

## OREGON

**Finlandia Foundation Columbia-  
Pacific Portland 2001**  
Heli Hatanpaa-Wetzel

**Finlandia Foundation National  
Astoria 2022**  
Karen Van Cleave

## PENNSYLVANIA

**Finlandia Foundation Pittsburgh  
1990**  
Karen Fix

**Finnish-American Society of the  
Delaware Valley Philadelphia  
2006**  
Marja Kaisla

## SOUTH DAKOTA

**Sons and Daughters of Suomi  
Deadwood 2015**  
Larry Rantapaa

## TEXAS

**Dallas/Fort Worth  
Finnish-American Society 1991**  
Jeremy Martin

**Finnish Language School  
of North Texas Dallas 2018**  
Leila Jaamuru

## UTAH

**Finlandia Foundation Utah  
Provo 2016**  
Tiina Watts

## VIRGINIA

**Finlandia Foundation Tidewater  
Virginia 1979**  
Randy Wanttaja

## WASHINGTON

**Finlandia Foundation Inland  
Northwest Spokane 1970**  
Tuula Ezzell

**Finlandia Foundation Seattle  
1968**  
Mikko Männistö

**Finlandia Foundation Suomi  
Bellingham 2010**  
Hanna Winter

**Finnish-American Folk Festival  
Naselle 2011**  
Jennifer Ullakko Boggs

**Swedish-Finn Historical  
Society Seattle 1991**  
Bill Carlson

## OUR MAILING ADDRESS

Finlandia Foundation National 254 N. Lake Ave. #852 Pasadena, CA 91101