



# Iltatähti

Evening Star



## Finnish Heritage House

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Alex Anttila

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## Juhannus Day Celebration Joint meeting / pot luck

The Finnish Heritage House and Finn-Am Society of Midcoast Maine will hold a joint meeting and pot luck lunch at Jura Hall on June 16, 2018 at 12:00 Noon. The schedule is as follows:  
12:00 - Potluck Lunch (salad, main dish, dessert)  
1:00 - 50/50 Raffle, Door Prizes, Jokes, Comments  
1:30 - Rusty Hinges Band  
2:15 - Closing



*A huge bonfire in a village in Finland. Notice the number of people out celebrating Juhannus. Sometimes the whole village is present.*

Bonfires are a traditional Finnish way of celebrating mid-summer. Juhannus celebrations are held between June 20th and 26<sup>th</sup> at the lightest point of the year. Bonfires were usually built on a hill near a lake, of which there are thousands. When our President, Jackie Harjula, was in Finland for Juhannus, she took a ride in a *tractor sauna* (a working sauna being pulled on the back of a tractor down a bumpy country road). She also enjoyed the traditional Juhannus food consisting of Salmon Chowder and vanilla ice cream topped with fresh strawberries. Many people also drank large quantities of liquor, but she wasn't one of them! The wonderful day celebrating midsummer ended with a gigantic bonfire at sunset. It is one of her special memories of Finland.

**CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL!**  
**HAS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRED?**  
**Your name will be removed if you are more than two years overdue.**



## *The Finnish Centennial Celebration –*

### *One Perspective*

By Greg Smiley

On December 6, 2017, Finland celebrated 100 years of being an independent country. As a resident of Masku, a town in southwest Finland just north of Turku, I had the honor and privilege of experiencing the days before and during the celebrations. It was an amazing and emotional time and a very humbling experience. I would like to share some of the mood, moments and memories.

Finland is not a country known for boasting, flaunting its positive aspects or showing too much outright emotion. For decades it struggled to bring beautiful crafts like its glassware and furniture to international markets – some say because of an aversion to aggressive marketing. Some Finns joke that at the height of Nokia’s reign as the world’s largest mobile phone manufacturer, the company was hesitant to change the assumption that “Nokia” was Japanese and present the truth of it being “just Finnish”. When Finland was recognized as having the world’s best educational system, many Finns shrugged with modesty (and a subdued, most-times unrecognizable chuckle) and mumbled that there must have been some mistake in the calculation.

The weeks leading up to Independence Day seemed to have a similar sort of “Finnish understatement” to them. There were many celebrations and festivities throughout the year, but in the weeks building up to the centennial celebration, my feeling was that there was merely a sense of calm expectation. People would say that it was the annual day of recognizing the country’s independence and, yes, one hundred years was an achievement. There did not seem to be much “excitement” within the statement. But having lived amongst these people for many years, I will never assume that when there is no outward sign of emotion from a Finn, there is no emotion. The Finns are very emotional, and very strong in their pride of their country and its one-hundred-year process of maintaining its independence. The fact that it does not emerge within what other cultures might see as “normal excitement” does not mean that it is not emerging.

About a week before *itsenäisyyspäivä* I began to feel the undercurrent of emotion changing ever so slightly. Store displays of “Suomi 100” items seemed to become more prominently displayed in stores. (“Where had they been all year?” some people asked. Come to think of it, that’s true; where had they been?) People spoke of happenings in town and began mentioning what they were planning to do on the sixth of December. Simple statements, nothing that you would call “great excitement”; but again, there it was, a change in the atmosphere of simple discussions and calm statements of fact.

There were many events that took place on the eve of the 6<sup>th</sup>. For instance, I felt privileged to have been invited to Turku’s first “Independence Day Castle Celebration” -a formal gala of 600 people converging on the Turku castle on Independence Day Eve to celebrate the centennial in regal fashion. I felt the excitement of getting a formal suit, polishing my shoes, figuring out the logistics; and then the evening began. There was an introductory program at the City Opera House (which, with what I can only think of as understated Finnish humor, had been built just above an underground bowling alley). There were speakers telling of the country’s history; there was “Mannerheim” -Finland’s famous General, Field Marshal and President – telling of the times of war; and there was a man from Iraq who spoke of his gratitude to Finland for providing his family with such simple things as clean water and safe schools. Sibelius’ “Finlandia” was played by a pianist with such fervor I literally felt sorry for the piano. This, I thought, is the other side of Finnish emotion-emotion as it is when family comes forth – raw and true, with nothing there in between.

And then we were on our way to the castle. It happened that a touring light show was at the castle that evening-the castle was lit in a subtle, eerie, magical hue of blues with silhouettes of animals wafting across the castle’s surface. It was wonderful and calming. There were drums playing a soft, dreamy cadence. When we were seated inside, the evening’s program of food and entertainment progressed until, at the stroke of midnight, everything stopped. There was a moment of silence-a pause as everyone took in the moment of their free and independent country turning one hundred years old. And then suddenly all 600 people there within the castle began singing Finland’s national anthem. Again, I felt that rawness, of pride, of standing firm and of being exactly who they were as Finns. Independence Day had begun.



**Recipe Box**

**Pickled Beets (6 pints)**



- 3 quarts cooked beets, peeled
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon whole allspice
- 1 tablespoon whole cloves
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 3 ½ cups vinegar (check the label you need 4 to 6 % acidity which is standard pickling vinegar)
- 1 ½ cups distilled or filtered water

**Instructions:**

1. Wash and drain your beets. Leave 2 inches of stems and the large tap roots on the beet.
2. Cover with boiling water and cook until tender.
3. Let them drain until just cool enough to handle, then chop them into pickled beet sized pieces, or slices if you prefer.
4. Combine the remaining ingredients and add to the beets in a large pot over low heat.
5. Simmer 15 minutes.
6. In the meantime, prepare your jars and lids by boiling them to sterilize.
7. Pack peeled and trimmed beets into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch head space.
8. Pour hot pickling liquid over the tops of the beets in each jar.
9. Adjust your lids.
10. Process 30 minutes in boiling water canner.

**Shelf Life of This Pickled Beet Recipe**

Store jars in a cool, dark place and let set for 6-8 weeks before opening. Consume within 8 months.

**Esther Heino Benham Visits FHH**

On May 19 Finnish Heritage House was honored to receive a visit from Esther Heino Benham accompanied by her daughter, Leila Garas, and grandson, Michael Garas. Esther's father, the Reverend John Heino, was the pastor of the Finnish Congregational Church from 1933 to 1937. Reverend Heino, his wife Fanny Luoma Heino and daughters Esther and Ruth were the first family to live in the newly constructed parsonage.



*Esther , Michael and Leila At the Finnish church*



*Helvi Silverman and Esther singing a childhood song "Pikku Musta Sarah". Esther said that she was often sick as a child and her mother would often sing to comfort her.*



*Dorothy Johnson Jackson and Esther Behnam shared childhood memories of their time as friends and neighbors on the St. George River Road during the 1930's. Dorothy's family lived in the house next to the Finnish Congregational Church parsonage.*

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# Newsletter of the Finnish Heritage House No. 58 ~ Summer 2018

## Esther Heino Benham Visits FHH (continued)



Esther and Gloria Dennison examine the marriage certificate of Lempi and William Hill, Gloria's parents. Esther's father, the Reverend John Heino, married them one evening in the parsonage (now Finnish Heritage House).

Below is the marriage certificate being examined by Gloria Dennison and Esther Heino Benham.



## FHH Calendar of Events

- Saturday June 16, 2018 12 noon  
Juhannus Celebration Joint meeting with Finn-Am
- Tuesday July 17, 2018 2:00 pm  
Trustee meeting
- Tuesday August 21, 2018 2:00 pm  
Trustee meeting
- Saturday September 15, 2018 12 noon  
FinnFling Joint meeting with Finn-Am, Pot luck lunch and program

## Finnish Heritage House Is Open

Finnish Heritage House opened for the season the first Saturday in May. The hours FHH is open will expand as of Wednesday, June 20th when it will also be open on Wednesdays from 9:00 to 12:00. The summer schedule of Saturdays and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 12:00 will continue through Wednesday, September 26th. The Tori is fully stocked with all your favorite items including: CDs, birch bark stars (3 sizes), Finnish coffee, lingonberry sauce, Finnish licorice, flag buoys, decals, Marimekko aprons, and Edna's towels. Two new items this year are the tontut (elves) created using Marimekko fabrics and a new t-shirt celebrating Finland's Centennial (1917 to 2017). This summer's exhibit will feature panels from the past 12 years of exhibits. The coffee pot is always on. We look forward to seeing you this summer.



The newest items, our new T-shirt and Tonttus.



# Newsletter of the Finnish Heritage House No. 58 ~ Summer 2018

## SHARING OUR RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

**By Jacqueline Harjula**

A group of four young people and four adults visited the Finnish Congregational Church and the Finnish Heritage house on Saturday, May 12. They were from the Broad Bay Congregational UCC Church in Waldoboro and the young confirmands had been encouraged to learn about our Finnish Church and other denominations and religions. I gave them some of the history of the church, including the names of some of the ministers, and how the Finns had met in people's homes prior to building the church in 1923. They found it interesting that years ago, the men sat on one side of the church and the women on the other side. I also explained why we hold our services at 2:30 (because Finns were milking their cows and tending their crops every morning), and we continue that tradition to this day. The most interesting information (I think) was that the lumber for the church came into town on the rail located down the road, and was from a boarding house in Waldoboro that had been torn down. We are all very proud that our small group was able to put a foundation under the church to build a fellowship hall (Jura Hall) for coffee hours and meetings in 2008. As one of the young people said, "What a cozy church." An adult commented that it was nice to have windows on both sides of the meeting room, something their church doesn't have. They asked if the whole service was in Finnish, and I explained that we sing one Finnish hymn, and share the benediction in Finnish. They then checked out our Finnish hymnal, and I pronounced a few Finnish words for them.



*Back Row L to R: Brian Scheuzger, Alethe Donaldson, Blake Donaldson and Linda Brandt.*

*Front row, L to R: Henry Scheuzger, Sam Scheuzger, Anya Osborne and Max Osborne*

We then headed next door to FHH for another tour. It was humming with activity, due to the visit by Esther Heino Benham, daughter of former Pastor John Heino, who served from 1934-1937. I also introduced them to Edna Montgomery, whose grandfather, Pastor Alexi Raita, also served the church from 1925-1933. I explained that FHH was the former parsonage, and was built when the first full time pastor was hired. At that time, there was no running water, and no central heating system. They learned about all the work that has been done to this building to preserve and improve it, thanks to much volunteer labor, and due to many matching grants from the former MBNA. Language lessons, kantele lessons, a quarterly newsletter, presenting Finnish musicians and lecturers, offering genealogy research, and regular meetings that are held demonstrated to them that our efforts to preserve our heritage are succeeding. We are always proud to educate people about the Finns.

## FHH SPRING CLEANUP

Have you noticed how FHH sparkles and shines when you walk through the door? Several ambitious members gathered on April 26<sup>th</sup> to spruce up the inside of the building. The floors and windows were washed, the rugs and curtains and spider webs were vacuumed, the bathroom was scrubbed, the office and kitchen were cleaned, the shelves were dusted, and the Tori was reorganized. We appreciate this crew of hard workers who came forward for this annual event.



*Mary Gifford, Steve Gifford, Jackie Harjula, Kirsti Fish and Edna Montgomery were the cleaning crew.*



### *Alex Anttila gets ordained In Oulu, Finland*

Our Finnish foreign correspondent Alex Anttila has finished his college and has been ordained as Deaconess in a wonderful ceremony at the Oulu Cathedral on Sun. May 20. The ordination mass took place on the Christian feast day of Pentecost. He will graduate from Diaconia-ammattikorkeakoulu (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Oulu) on May 31, 2018 as a Registered Nurse.



*Alex with his alb and stole at his ordination.*



*Alex and fiancé Mimosa Halonen at Oulu Cathedral*

Mimosa also graduated from Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Oulu as a Registered Nurse. She graduated in Dec. 2017. Alex added a semester to get his Deaconess position.

### **FINNFUNN WEEKEND 2018**

To all you Finns out there who like to have fun, (including our non-Finnish friends), please make every effort to join us for an entertaining weekend of Finnish delights. This event will be held the weekend of October 19-21 at the East Hill Farm Resort in Troy, NH, next to scenic Mount Monadnock. It is an actual working farm, and the food, served family style, is the most delicious you will have ever tasted! Coffee and homemade snacks are always available in the dining room, with a cozy fireplace to enjoy in the lounge area. The committee has worked diligently to make this a weekend worth attending, with speakers, movies, music, dancing, a Finnish Tori, socializing with friends, and a wonderful raffle. One of our favorite performers, Sara Pajunen, who has entertained FHH twice with her beautiful singing and violin music will be performing during the weekend. Kasha Breau, a talented kantele player will perform, Oivan Ilo will play, and the Revontulet Dancers will also entertain us. Our good friend, Jim Kurti, of the Finlandia University Heritage Foundation and Editor of the Finnish American Reporter will be attending. Please plan to join the five FHH members who have already made plans to attend. Once you go to a FinnFunn Weekend, you don't want to miss another year. Reservations may be made by contacting East Hill Farm at 1-800-242-6495. Visit [www.saima-park.org](http://www.saima-park.org) or [www.fahs-ct.org](http://www.fahs-ct.org) for more information.

### **The Future of Finnish Language Classes**

There were two sessions of Finnish Language Classes scheduled for this spring and both had to be canceled due to lack of interest. Rather than take the chance that a third session might suffer the same fate it has been decided that a meeting will be held one Saturday in October for all those interested in studying Finnish to discuss the future of classes here in the midcoast. Further information regarding this meeting will be forthcoming over the summer.



# Newsletter of the Finnish Heritage House No. 58 ~ Summer 2018

## A DAY ON THE ISLAND

By Jacqueline Harjula

What a glorious day as we boarded the 7 am Vinalhaven ferry on May 5<sup>th</sup> to help the island's Historical Society kick off their Scandanavian Summer program. Many Finns came to the island to work in the granite quarries in the late 1880's. Their other occupations included lobstering, boat building, and fishing. Peggy Oliver, our genealogist extraordinaire, presented an interesting and informative program entitled "Scandanavian Genealogy", with Robert Brown and I there to support her. The presentation lasted about an hour, and the enthusiastic group had many questions about how to search for their ancestors. One woman present found some family information she had been searching for and previously had been unable to find. You can imagine how excited she was! We then enjoyed eating our bag lunches together and chatting some more.



*Elizabeth Bunker, Director of Vinalhaven Historical Society, Peggy Oliver, Genealogist and Jeanette Lasansky, Program coordinator.*

In addition to Peggy's program, Jeannette Lasansky, the coordinator for the summer program, took us for a tour of the island. We visited the American Legion Hall, where I will be demonstrating the making of pulla/nisu and pannukakku on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Vinalhaven Museum (the former Post Office), and a drive-by of the former Grange Hall, now closed. At her home, I was able to look down from her back yard into the beautiful quarry where the granite for the Brooklyn Bridge was quarried, called the Sands Quarry. There is another quarry on the island whose granite was used to build the columns for the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.



As mentioned in our last newsletter, there will be other Finnish programs taking place on the island this summer. Steve Gifford will be speaking about Finnish settlements in Coastal Maine, Charlie Heino will be making a presentation about Saunas, and our own *Soumalaiset Jouset-Finnish Strings* kantele group will be performing there in September. We are proud to have this opportunity to share our heritage with the islanders.

## FHH ANNUAL MEETING

*By Jacqueline Laffely, Secretary*

The Annual Meeting of the Finnish Heritage House was moved from January to April in the hopes that more members would attend due to better weather conditions. Unfortunately, that didn't increase attendance, as there were only 14 members who braved the dampness and cold to attend-spring weather hadn't arrived in Maine yet! However, our pot luck lunch at noon had a nice variety of food, as usual. The first order of business was to elect the officers for the year. Reggie Montgomery proposed that the Officers and Directors remain the same, and that proposal was unanimously approved. (The list of officers elected is on the front page of this newsletter.) Other business discussed was the ongoing research on the Memorial Wall and the Historical Kiosk. Our survey responses showed enthusiastic support for these projects and the Board will continue to look at various configurations and prices before the final decisions are made. We will keep our membership informed as the work continues. We also sincerely thanked Reggie Montgomery for continuing to produce our wonderful newsletter.

Our special program was a delightful performance by the duo "Two for a Song", consisting of Sue Pedretti on keyboard and Phil Anderson on drums and vocals. They entertained us with songs from the past that most of us remembered, with commentary in between. We were disappointed that there weren't more people at the meeting to enjoy their music.

We look forward to another active year, with many visitors to our Tori, bake sales and summer exhibit; musicians and lecturers sponsored by Finlandia Foundation National; Finnish language lessons and kantele lessons; and performances by our kantele group. We are confident that, with the support of our members, we will continue to meet our goal of preserving our Finnish heritage in midcoast Maine.



Finnish Heritage House  
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Please Join Us!

FINNSH HERITAGE HOUSE P.O. BOX 293 – South Thomaston, ME 04858

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_

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I'd like to receive the FHH newsletter by E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to get involved in the following activity/activities or committee(s)

Exhibits \_\_\_\_\_ Fund Raisers/ Luncheons etc. \_\_\_\_\_. Building Maintenance \_\_\_\_\_ Docent \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_ Grants \_\_\_\_\_ Music/Dance \_\_\_\_\_ Children's Activities \_\_\_\_\_ Library \_\_\_\_\_

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Member (\$10) \_\_\_\_\_ 5 Year Member (\$45) \_\_\_\_\_ Gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Finnish Heritage House and send to P.O. Box 293 South Thomaston, ME 04858

***Is it time to renew your membership? Check your address label.***