

Iltatähti

The Evening Star



The Finnish Heritage House and Finn-Am Society of Mid-Coast Maine

Newsletter No. 83 – Fall / Syksy 2025

Charlotte Loukola's Concert

By Mariann Ahola



Charlotte Loukola, the 2025 FFN Performer of the Year, put on a wonderful concert at the Federated Church in Thomaston on September 20th. She received a Master of Music degree in Violin Performance at The Julliard School in New York City and a second master's degree from Sibelius Academy. Currently she enjoys living in West Palm Beach, Florida and has been touring this year across the U.S. as a solo violinist. She loved the Midcoast area and took in a hike up Beech Hill during her visit. She will return to New York City this holiday season to perform in the Radio City Orchestra Christmas Spectacular. You can follow Charlotte on Instagram.

L to R: Charlotte w/
Anne & Greg Koski at
the post-concert
reception.



Shop the FHH Tori For Christmas

By Steve Gifford

The big draw for many visitors to Finnish Heritage House is often the pulla, but don't neglect stopping by the Tori during the holiday season. The Tori includes many items appropriate for the holiday including gift bags, aprons, tree ornaments (straw, birds, stars, mittens, korkontus), tontus (Christmas elves), cd's, rag rugs and many publications dealing

with local Finnish history. While visiting Finnish Heritage House be sure to buy raffle tickets for the rag rug and the lovely quilt. Winners will be drawn at the annual Christmas party and you do not need to be present to win. Wishing you and your family "Rauhallista Joulua ja Onnellista Uutta Vuotta".

Digital Project Completed

By Steve Gifford

Steve Gifford, project coordinator, presented the Finnish Heritage House board of directors with flash drive copies of the project "Memories of the Finnish Community in Midcoast Maine" at the October meeting. The project was made possible by a generous grant from Finlandia Foundation National awarded in June of 2024. Steve Gifford, working with Craig Mathieson of Mathieson Digital Services, began work on the project in the summer of 2024 and completed the project in June of 2025. The project digitized the summer exhibits at Finnish Heritage House over the past 14 years. Exhibits included were "Pillars of the Earth" (Finns and the granite industry), "Finnish American Music", "Finns and Feathers" (Finns in poultry farming), "Remembering Grandmother and Grandfather", "Finnish American Veterans in World War II", "Kosti Ruohomaa", "Finns and Blueberries", Finnish American Polio Dances" and "Finns On the River Road", etc. This project now ensures that all these materials are preserved for future generations to be able to easily access local Finnish history. Flash drive copies of the project are available for loan from Finnish Heritage House.

Eeppi Ursin in Concert

By Jackie Harjula



The Christmas season is rapidly approaching, and we Finns are in for a treat. Eeppi Ursin, the beloved singer and pianist, is returning for her fourth concert here

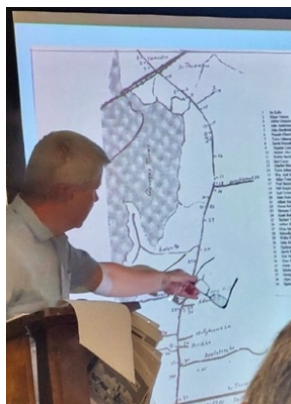
in Maine. She will be performing on November 30th at 3 pm at the Thomaston Federated Church, 9 Hyler Street. Be prepared to enjoy her new Christmas songs, both in English and Finnish, from her Christmas Album *Eeppinen Joulu – Epic Christmas*. It is a benefit concert, with a suggested donation at the door of \$15. The proceeds will go toward the Thomaston Interfaith Food Pantry and the Finnish Heritage House. Please join us and invite your friends. Coffee and pulla served after the concert.

Follow Eeppi at www.eeppiursin.com on her Facebook page, and on YouTube.

Scott Hodgkins Presentation

By Jackie Harjula

In August, Scott Hodgkins, our Finn-Am Treasurer, spoke to a packed house at the Thomaston Federated Church for the Thomaston Historical Society. With photos on the screen and various posters and photos and news articles around the perimeter, he covered the long history of the Finns in this area. He will be doing a repeat performance at a future Finn-Am meeting, so watch your calendar. This is not to be missed!



Finlandia Foundation National Board Meeting

By Jackie Harjula

The semiannual meeting of FFN was held over Zoom on October 18 for 5 hours! Many areas of business were discussed, but here are some of the highlights:

- The 2026 Performer of the Year was approved. Ruut DeMeo, a singer and songwriter from Phoenix, MD, will be visiting many chapters to share her music. Note: she co-wrote FFN's theme song for Sauna Week.
- We are finalizing our plans for celebrating USA's 250th Anniversary, with special performances of a play about John Morton, a Finnish signer of the Declaration of Independence
- A relatively new group, the Young Leaders Board, that participates in our board meetings (but doesn't vote) is very active. They meet online regularly and have completed several projects that involve our youth. We are excited to have their insight and suggestions.
- The Saving Finland in America fundraiser was very successful. We now own the Finnish American Reporter, the North Wind Bookstore, the Finnish Heritage Center with the Art Gallery and the Archives, and the Finnish American Folk School program. With these extra employees, we have extra costs, so we are encouraging those who donated to SFIA to continue with their support.
- FinnFest in Duluth was a big success, in large part because of our support and programming.
- The most exciting news is that we are in the process of digitizing the vast quantities of historic material in our archives. This is a monumental task, but thanks to our donors for SFIA, these items were saved to preserve our history for posterity.
- Our next meeting is in Philadelphia in April.



Finn-Am August Meeting

By Anne Little

At the August Finn Am meeting, a presentation was made regarding rules and respect for the Finnish flag. This presentation was postponed from an earlier date. Members then made Finnish flag pins



from kits prepared by Aimee Sanfilippo. Many smiles and frowns showed on the members as the pins were a bit tricky to put together. But good old SISU helped complete the project.



Barbara Hooper concentrating on getting the beads in the correct order



The final product.

Happy Birthday Gary

By Jackie Harjula



On August 23rd, many family members, friends and several people from our Finnish groups gathered in St. George to celebrate Gary Aho's 90th birthday. It was a beautiful day right on the water, and the refreshments were plentiful. A big hit was the never-ending supply of delicious lobster rolls! Gary has been a longstanding member of the Midcoast Finn-Ams, and regularly attends all our meetings. Congratulations, Gary!

Finn-Am September Meeting

A Pot Luck was enjoyed by those attending.



L to R: Marianne Ahola, Charlotte Loukola, Gary Swanson

Bob Hamalainen shares a joke.



Finn-Am October Meeting

By Lynn Snow



Lynn Snow was the presenter at the October meeting. She told us about a new mission that she has created for herself - to personally visit every post office in the state of Maine! She has a routine on this journey. Upon arrival at each office, she writes herself a postcard. If the PO is open, she goes in and requests that the postcard be hand-canceled. She takes a picture of the post office and of herself mailing the postcard. When the postcard arrives back at her home, she puts it, along with the photographs in an album. To date, Lynn has visited 101 Maine post offices. There are more than 400 in the state.

This idea was inspired during Lynn's 2024 visit to Finland. Her Finnish 'sister' (exchange sister), Outi, was telling how she has visited every town/city in her country! Lynn wanted to take on a similar challenge and 'Postofficing' was invented.

> October Meeting Continued on Page #4

> October Meeting Continued from Page #3

Lynn has also designed an educational unit around the US Postal Service that she teaches to her 5th-grade students.

Lynn brought blank watercolor postcards and instructed the small group of participants on how to use painter's tape, watercolor paint, and black Sharpie markers to create beautiful original postcards. These came out fantastic! She appreciates those who tried this activity with creativity and an open mind!



L to R: Linda Grant, Anne Little and David Little in their Halloween costumes making postcards.



Astrid Weaver in costume.



Kathleen Anderson concentrating on her work.



Lawrence Brooks holding the birch tree postcards



Justin Anderson



2025 FinnFunn Weekend

By Aimee Sanfilippo & Anne Little



The annual FinnFunn Weekend was held October 24th – 26th in Troy, New Hampshire. Set on a working farm at the base of Mount Monadnock, The East

Hill Farm was the perfect location to showcase this year's theme, *Finns and Nature*.

The weekend was packed with activities that showcased and celebrated our Finnish culture and heritage. There was a weekend long display showcasing Finnish Ingenuity, a portable sauna, and multiple educational sessions, including



a foraging hike around the grounds, a wild

mushroom cooking demonstration, and several films. Multiple crafts sessions were held, including needle felting and



printmaking.

The weekend was full of Finnish and Finnish-inspired games. Participants tested their strategic skills learning to play the Finnish card game, Ristiseiska, and Finnish lawn game, Molkky. Competitive cell phone tossing, a nature scavenger hunt, and Finnish Jeopardy were also offered.

The weekend was also infused with Finnish music. Revontulet, a Finnish Folk Dancing troupe, delighted us with their authentic Finnish costumes and folk dances and other



seasoned dancers gave Finnish dance demonstration and lessons. Finlandia Foundation's National performer of the Year, Charlotte Loukola, gave an amazing violin performance.

> FinnFunn Weekend Continued on Page #5

> FinnFunn Weekend Continued from Page #4



On Saturday, a Tori (Finnish market) was set up at a neighboring school, selling beautiful Finnish goods and delicious treats.

Throughout the weekend a raffle and silent auction were also held to support next year's FinnFunn Weekend.



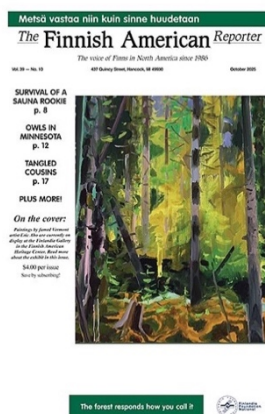
Back row -Aimee Sanfilippo, Anne Little, Linda Grant,
Front row – Robert Brown, Jackie Harjula

5 Finnish flavors that confuse but also charm foreigners



We Recommend Subscribing to:

The Finnish American Reporter



The Finnish American Reporter is a monthly, English-language journal featuring articles and news reports of interest to Finns across North America.

Subscription Rates (12 issues annually)

United States & Canada
\$40

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must be in U.S. dollars.

Subscriptions will begin with the next available issue.

To subscribe to The Finnish American Reporter, call (906) 487-7549 or this URL

<https://www.pasty.com/far/> to access a secure order form.

Rauhallista
Joulunaikaa toivottaen



Recipe For Joulutorttu (Finnish Christmas Star Cookies)



Soft and flaky pastry surrounds a flavorful jam in Joulutorttu, festive Finnish Christmas Star Cookies.

Prep Time 1 Hour

Cook Time 12 Minutes

Total Time 1 Hour 12 Minutes

Yield: 2 Dozen (3 Inch) Star Cookies

For best results, refrigerate this dough for 2-3 hours before shaping and baking the cookies.

INGREDIENTS

For the Pastry

- 2 sticks (16 Tbsp) salted butter, softened
- 8 oz ricotta cheese
- 2 c unbleached all-purpose flour

To Make the Cookies

- ½ c prune jam, (recipe below*) or other thick jam
(If you really can't bear the thought of prune jam, raspberry or blueberry would be a super tasty option as well.)
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- Powdered sugar, (for dusting the finished cookies)

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Dough

1. In a large bowl beat together butter and ricotta cheese with an electric hand mixer. Add the flour and mix until a soft dough comes together.
2. Divide the dough in half. Shape each half into a ball and wrap each ball in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours (up to overnight), until firm.

To Shape And Bake

1. Preheat your oven to 425F.
2. Lightly flour your countertop and roll out one section of dough to a rectangle (roughly 12 x 9 inches) that is about an 1/8 inch thick.

3. Cut the dough into 3-inch squares.
4. In each square, make four cuts, one from each corner, each going 1/2 - 2/3 of the way to the center of the square.
5. Spoon 1 teaspoon of jam in the center of each square.
6. Fold every other corner of each square over the jam. Use the beaten egg wash to moisten the corners slightly and lightly press to seal the corners together over top of the jam.
7. Transfer your pinwheel cookie to a parchment lined baking sheet, placing the cookies 1 inch apart.
8. Repeat with the second half of the dough.
9. Lightly brush the tops of the cookies with the beaten egg.
10. Bake the cookies 10-12 minutes, until golden.
11. Remove the cookies from the oven and let them cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, before transferring them to a wire rack to cool completely.
12. Once the cookies are cool, dust them lightly with powdered sugar.
13. Store the cookies in an air-tight container on the counter for 3-4 days.

Nutrition Information:

Yield: 12

Serving Size: 2 cookies

Amount Per Serving: *Calories: 110*

NOTES

***Prune Jam**

Yield: 1 1/2 c of jam

1 c roughly chopped prunes

½ c sugar

Water, (to cover)

Place the prunes and sugar in a small saucepan. Add water to cover the prunes and bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat.

Simmer, uncovered, until the prunes are very soft, and mixture is jammy, 20-30 min. (Add water as necessary during the simmering so the mixture doesn't become too dry.)

Remove the pan from the heat and let the jam cool completely before using.

The Finnish Heritage House

172 St. George Road / State Route 131, P. O. Box
293, South Thomaston, Maine 04858

Website: www.finnheritage.org Facebook:
www.facebook.com/Finnish-Heritage-House-111062928972026/

Officers

President: **Jacqueline Harjula** 207.975.1476
Vice President: **Joanne Nelson**
Treasurer: **Linda Grant**
Clerk/Secretary: **Mariann Ahola**

Trustees

Steve Gifford
Anne Little
Kirsti Fish
Fred Webel
Greg Koski

Newsletter Editor

Fred Webel

Building Committee

vacant

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Finnish Heritage House to preserve the memory of our Finnish immigrant ancestors who chose a new homeland, came to Midcoastal Maine, and transplanted the seed of the Finnish people to be assimilated within the American dream.

In their honor, we pledge to help their descendants in tracing their family roots, as well as promoting closer ties between our two nations.

The Finnish Heritage House is a non-profit organization under section 501 (c) (3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Dues / Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Our federal Tax ID number is 04-3773388.



The Finn-Am Society of Mid-Coast Maine

P. O. Box 293, South Thomaston, Maine 04858

Officers

President: **Linda Grant**
Vice President: **Anne Little**
Secretary: **Mariann Ahola**
Treasurer: **Scott Hodgkins**

Directors

Barbara Hooper
Kirsti Fish
Joan Harjula

Membership Chair

Gloria Dennison

Building Committee

Gary Swanson

All Finn Am Society meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month from March through December at noon at Jura Hall. Meetings include a potluck luncheon, a short meeting and entertainment. **All are welcome.**

Combined Finnish Heritage House & Finn-Am Society Calendar

November 2025

15 FINN-AM & FHH Potluck & Thanksgiving
Celebration 12:00 noon

Aini Aho has graciously volunteered to bring a turkey and gravy. All others attending should bring a dish to share which would be part of a Thanksgiving dinner. Please don't everyone bring cranberry sauce!

18 FHH Board Meeting 3:00 pm
30 Eepi Ursin Concert 3:00 pm

December 2025

17 FINN-AM & FHH Potluck & Christmas
Celebration 12:00 noon

Please bring a \$10 gift labeled "female" or "male" for the gift exchange !

January 2026

20 FHH Board Meeting 3:00 pm

February 2026

17 FHH Board Meeting 3:00 pm

March 2026

17 FHH Board Meeting 3:00 pm
21 FINN-AM Potluck &
St. Urho's Day celebration 12:00 noon

To Current Finnish Heritage House Members

As an email recipient of this newsletter you will receive a postal mail notification when your current FHH membership expires.

When renewing **your membership** (or to **JOIN** as new member) please complete this form and return with a check payable to **Finnish Heritage House** and mail to: **FHH, P.O. Box 293, South Thomaston, ME 04858.**

Please also consider a DONATION, or GIFT to support our work.

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Dues / Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Our federal Tax ID number is 04-3773388.

Name(s) _____ ☐ Renewal ☐ New

Street Address / PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

☐ Annual Membership (\$10.00) ☐ Five Year Membership (\$45.00) ☐ Donation/Gift \$ _____

I'd prefer 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) _____

To All Current Finn-Am Society Members

Please remember that your annual Finn-Am Society dues are payable every March.

To **RENEW** your Finn-Am Society membership please complete this form and return with a check payable to **The Finn-Am Society of Mid-Coast Maine.**

Please send to **Finn-Am Society, P.O. Box 293, So. Thomaston, ME 04858.**

Name(s) _____

Street Address / PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Finn-Am Society Annual Membership Dues (\$5.00)



Finnish Heritage House & Finn-Am Society

P.O. Box 293

South Thomaston, ME 04858