

Iltatähti

The Evening Star



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

Newsletter No. 84 – Spring / Kevät 2026

Tori To Open On May 16th

By Steve Gifford

When visiting Finnish Heritage House, the Tori is certainly worth exploring during your visit. The Tori offers a wide assortment of items for sale including handmade aprons, gift bags, rag rugs, books, decals, desk flags, CDs, license plate frames, Christmas ornaments, flag buoys, Finnish American label pins to mention just a few. The popular t-shirt featuring birch trees will be offered in a long sleeve style this season. Don't forget the Pulla!

Finnish Heritage House will be open Saturdays from 9:00 to 12:00 until the third Saturday in December 2026. If you find you are in the area at other times call Jackie Harjula at 975-1476 or Steve Gifford at 273-2877 and we will do our best to accommodate your schedule. Tervetuloa!

Finlandia Foundation National

By Jackie Harjula

As a Board Member and Secretary of this group for several terms, I am happy to report that our annual live Board meeting will be held at the end of April in Pennsylvania as we celebrate the 250th Anniversary of our country. We also have several Zoom meetings through the course of the year. Did you know that one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence was a Finn? His name was John Morton, and our FFN Lecturer of the Year, Jay Smith, will be speaking about this relatively unknown Finn throughout the year.

In addition to our all-day Board meeting to approve the funding for the many grant applications and to review other committee reports, we will be visiting the gravesite of John Morton; the Finnish Settler

Monument in Chester, PA; and the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation Museum in Wilmington, DE, followed by a reception there with local FFN Chapter members. It will be a busy weekend, but an important one. Thanks to your generous donations to our "Saving Finland in America" program, we are moving along steadily to digitize our collections in the Finnish Heritage Center in Hancock to preserve them for future generations. We are also celebrating the designation of Hancock, MI, as the world's Finno-Ugric Capital of Culture for 2026. There will be twelve months of enhanced cultural celebrations to commemorate this honor. FMI, visit the frequently updated site: www.hancockfinnugric.com. For more information on Finlandia Foundation National, visit their website: www.finlandiafoundation.org. We also have many past lectures, concerts, and other presentations on YouTube. Check them out, especially the ones about Sauna Week 2026, which just ended. ENJOY!!!

Eepi Ursin Concert

Eepi Ursin, the beloved singer and pianist returned for her fourth concert here in Maine. She performed on November 30th at the Thomaston Federated Church. All enjoyed her new Christmas songs from her Christmas Album *Eepinen Joulu* – Epic Christmas. It was a benefit concert, with proceeds going toward the Thomaston Interfaith Food Pantry and the Finnish Heritage House.



Finn-Am November Meeting

By Jackie Harjula

FHH/FINN-AM THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION

November 15 marked our annual sumptuous feast for Thanksgiving. For many years, Arthur and Kirsti Fish roasted a big turkey and brought it with the stuffing for the celebration. Since we lost Arthur last year and Kirsti could not cook it on her own, we went to plan B: a potluck Thanksgiving.

Fortunately, Aini Aho Yskaitis called a couple of weeks before the meeting and volunteered to provide the main course.

She brought delicious, sliced turkey with gravy. I called the other members and requested they sign up for the traditional “fixins”. What a happy ending after all! We always enjoy each other’s company,



Gary Aho and his sister Aini Aho Yskaitis

chatting and socializing, and our early Thanksgiving meal.

Finn-Am Christmas Party

By Scott Hodgkins

Members and guests attended the annual Finn-Am Christmas party and potluck lunch at Jura Hall on December 20th. After a festive meal and a short business meeting, gifts were retrieved from under the tree and handed out by Chhaya Hinkley and her brother, Rufus. Chhaya and Rufus are great-grandchildren of Kirsti Fish.

Chhaya received the 2025 Finn-Am Scholarship at the meeting. Chhaya graduated from Mt. Ararat High School in June 2024 with high honors. She received the Art Award and was a member of the yearbook club, math team, and outdoor club. She now attends the College of Charleston, SC where she majors in international business. Her future goal is to become a policy analyst.

In her application Chhaya recognized her great-grandmother, Kirsti Fish, as being a big influence

on her. Through Kirsti’s accounts of her experiences in Finland as a young girl and the harrowing years of WW II, Chhaya grew to appreciate her Finnish heritage. Kirsti’s resilience, perseverance, and strength help motivate her to pursue her goals. Sisu will move her forward! Congratulations Chhaya! The local Finnish community wishes you well.

2025 FHH Raffle

By Jackie Harjula

RAG RUG WINNER



Steve Gifford

Steve “Galvanized Finn” Gifford was the lucky winner of the hand-woven rag rug donated to FHH by our good friend and member Tooty Wilson. We also have some of her beautiful

rag rugs for sale in our Tori. Steve has been an FHH board member for many years and has spearheaded many projects. He oversaw the digitization of our archival material, preserving our records for posterity. Steve and his wife, Mary, order and organize items for our Tori, and prepare and mount the changing yearly exhibits on display in FHH. They also volunteer one Saturday a month from May to December to welcome visitors to FHH, sell the pulla/nisu, and manage the sales of the Tori gifts.

QUILT WINNER

Martha Calinda donated a beautiful quilt to Finn-Am for our Scholarship Fund. Anne Little, whose name was drawn, is a FHH Board member and former Vice-President of Finn-Am. Anne leads some of our Finn-Am programs and helps her daughter Aimee with others. She is another much-



Anne Little

appreciated volunteer, helping once a month for the FHH sales, and does a lot “behind the scenes”.

KIRSTI ANNIKKI FISH 09-11-1936 to 02-18-2026

By Jackie Harjula



We are sad to announce the passing of our beloved Kirsti Fish, while surrounded by her loving family. Born in Finland, she emigrated to the US with her family at the age of 9. The journey lasted 13 days on a freightliner. Both

in Finland and later in the US, she was an outstanding swimmer. Her treasured childhood memory was a Christmas trip to church by horse and sleigh.

As a resident of Washington, she graduated from Union High School in a class of ten students and worked for Sylvania Corporation for 30 years. Kirsti was dedicated to our three local Finnish groups, serving as President of Finn-Am for 12 years, serving on the board of FHH for several years, and as a faithful attendee of the Finnish Congregational Church. This was in addition to leading several committees for the various groups. She also traveled frequently, organizing multigenerational trips to Finland to inspire her family to learn more about their culture and heritage. Her volunteer involvement was not limited to her Finnish groups. She was a member of Evening Star Grange, the Fire Department Auxiliary, the Ladies Guild in Washington, the Rockland Elks and Emblem Clubs, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Gully Riders Snowmobile Club.

Kirsti was predeceased by three husbands, the last being Arthur Fish, who, although not a Finn, willingly volunteered to serve as an officer in all three Finnish groups. She was also predeceased by a brother, a daughter, and a stepson. Left behind to mourn her are her brother Kauko Wilson; three children, Deborah, Ronald, and Laurie; her stepchildren Lisa, Arthur, Jr., Tina, and Judy; seven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren. She will be remembered as a devoted mother, wife, volunteer, and friend.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, July 26, 2026, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Rockland Elks Club, 210 Rankin Street, in Rockland. The committal service will take place the next day at 2 pm at the Levensaler Cemetery on Jefferson Road, Route 126, Washington. Kiitos paljon, Kirsti, for all the energy and love you devoted to promoting our Finnish Heritage during your lifetime.

EVA DAGMAR BURNS 11-03-1931 to 12-07-2025

By Jackie Harjula



Eva Burns, a long-time member of the Finn -Am Society, was born with her twin sister Annie on Finn Hill in North Warren to Finnish immigrants John and Ida Koskela Niemi. Her membership in the group enabled her to find Finnish family members in Upper Michigan and Finland. Starting at the Anderson School speaking only Finnish, she quickly mastered English with the help of our own Arthur Jura and Norman Alholm. During her childhood, she worked with her sisters on the family's poultry and blueberry farm and graduated from Union High School in 1950. After raising her nine children, she went on to graduate from UMA with an associate degree in Mental Health Technology. She served the town of Union on the Historical Society and on the Road Naming Committee. She also was one of the longest serving volunteers at the Thompson Community Center. Eva was predeceased by three sisters, three beloved children, and three sons-in-laws. She is survived by several children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. A graveside service will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, June 12, 2026, at Post/Sunny View Cemetery in North Warren. A celebration of life will follow at the Union Masonic Hall at 3:30 p.m. Please consider donating to FHH, PO Box 293, S. Thomaston, ME 04858 or Pope Humane Society, PO Box 1294, Rockland, ME 04864 in lieu of flowers.

Recipe For St. Urho's Day



St. Urho's Day Fish Stew: A Taste of Finland's Shores

My grandmother, bless her Finnish soul, would always make this stew around St. Urho's Day. I remember huddling in her cozy kitchen, the aroma of dill and simmering fish filling the air, as she regaled me with tales of St. Urho chasing away the grasshoppers. The warmth of the stew, both in temperature and in spirit, was a shield against the lingering chill of early spring, a comforting reminder of family and tradition. It wasn't just a meal; it was a taste of her homeland, a spoonful of heritage.

Recipe Overview

- Prep Time: **20 minutes**
- Cook Time: **35 minutes**
- Total Time: **55 minutes**
- Servings: **6**
- Yield: **About 8 cups**
- Dietary Type: **Gluten-Free**

Ingredients

- 6 medium **potatoes**, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 large **onion**, diced
- 2 teaspoons **salt**
- 5 **whole allspice berries**
- 6 cups **water**
- 3 lbs **fish** (whitefish, walleye, cod, or haddock), cut into bite-size chunks
- 1 cup **cream** (heavy cream or half-and-half)
- 1 cup **milk**
- 1 tablespoon **unsalted butter**
- 2 teaspoons **minced fresh dill**

Equipment Needed

- Large kettle or Dutch oven
- Cutting board
- Knife
- Measuring cups and spoons

Instructions

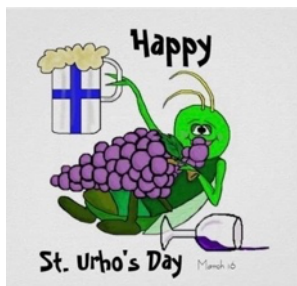
1. In a large kettle or Dutch oven, combine the **potatoes**, **diced onion**, **salt**, **allspice berries**, and **water**.
2. Cover the kettle and bring the mixture to a **boil** over high heat.
3. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low and **simmer**, covered, for **15 minutes**, or until the **potatoes** are tender when pierced with a fork.
4. While the **potatoes** are simmering, prepare the **fish**. Cut the **fish** into bite-size chunks, approximately 1-inch pieces. This ensures even cooking and prevents the fish from falling apart.
5. After the **potatoes** are tender, gently add the **fish** chunks to the potato mixture. Be careful not to splash the hot liquid.
6. Return the kettle to a **simmer**, cover, and cook for another **15 to 20 minutes**, or until the **fish** flakes easily with a fork. It's crucial not to **boil** the soup at this stage, as boiling can toughen the **fish**. A gentle simmer is all you need.
7. Once the **fish** is cooked through, stir in the **cream**, **milk**, **butter**, and **fresh dill**.
8. Heat the stew through gently. Avoid boiling, as this could cause the dairy to curdle. You are simply warming the **cream** and **milk** until the stew is heated through.
9. Remove from heat and serve immediately.



St. Urho's Day

St. Urho, the patron saint of Finland, is the legendary saint who was created by a Finn in Virginia, MN. He is revered as the saint who drove the grasshoppers from Finland to save the grape crops. This honorary Finnish saint was created as the Finns' way of competing with St. Patrick of Ireland. St. Urho's Day is March 16 preceding St. Patrick's Day by one day.

FHH has traditionally held a potluck lunch celebration at Jura Hall in conjunction with Finn-Am Society of Mid-Coast Maine. Please plan on joining us for the fun activities this year on March 21st. ...and be sure to wear purple and green.



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

All subscription rates are for 12 issues; payments

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.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

By Jackie Harjula

Please consider joining the Board of one of our Finnish groups. FHH needs another Board Member (we meet once a month for an hour), and a Vice-President is needed for Finn-Am. Also, our FHH Newsletter Editor would be willing to train someone to take over his position if you are so inclined. Speak to Jackie Harjula, FHH President, 207-975-1476 or to Linda Grant, Finn-Am President, 207-542-4850. You also might consider attending our Finnish Congregational Church services on alternate Sundays at 2:00, with a coffee hour to follow. Please give these requests your serious consideration. Kiitos.

Combined Finnish Heritage House & Finn-Am Society Calendar

March 2026

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

April 2026

18	FINN-AM Potluck	12:00 noon
21	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm

May 2026

16	FHH opening day	9:00 – 12:00
16	FINN-AM Potluck	12:00 noon
19	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm

June 2026

16	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
20	FINN-AM Potluck	12:00 noon



The Finnish Heritage House Tori

Featured are handmade aprons, gift bags, rag rugs, books, decals, desk flags, CDs, license plate frames, Christmas ornaments, flag buoys, Finnish American label pins to mention just a few.



In the food department you will find mustard, lingonberry sauce, licorice, multi-grain FinnCrisp and tea.



The popular t-shirt featuring birch trees will be offered in a long sleeve style this season.



Pulla/Nisua at our weekly bake sale

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

Fred Webel

Greg Koski

Astrid Weaver

open

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: open

Secretary: **Mariann Ahola**

Treasurer: **Scott Hodgkins**

Directors

Barbara Hooper

Joan Harjula

Jacqueline Harjula

open

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.

If you are not yet a member, please join us as a supporting member of the Finnish Heritage House
by completing this form and returning it, along with a check payable to **Finnish Heritage House**
to: **FHH, P.O. Box 293, South Thomaston, ME 04858.**

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

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

*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.*

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) _____

Name(s) _____

Street Address / PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

I'd prefer to receive FHH newsletters by ☐ E-mail ☐ U.S. Postal Mail

To Finnish Heritage House Members

**Newsletter deliveries stop automatically 12 months after a membership renewal date has passed.
Check the month & year on your mailing label to see your recorded membership renewal date.**

Please renew your membership in support of our efforts to preserve the memory of our Finnish immigrant ancestors.

To **RENEW** your Heritage House membership please provide your name & address information and your preferences, and return with a check payable to **Finnish Heritage House**
P.O. Box 293, South Thomaston, ME 04858.

☐ **Annual Supporting Membership Dues (\$10.00)** ☐ **Five Year Supporting Membership Dues (\$45.00)**

I'd prefer to receive my FHH newsletter by ☐ E-mail ☐ U.S. Mail

Name(s) _____

Street Address / PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

To 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 provide your name & address information and return with a check payable to: **Finn-Am Society**
P.O. Box 293, So. Thomaston, ME 04858.

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

Name(s) _____

Street Address / PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____



Finnish Heritage House & Finn-Am Society

P.O. Box 293

South Thomaston, ME 04858