

Iltatähti

The Evening Star



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

Newsletter No. 81 – Spring / Kevät 2025

FHH Welcomes A New Trustee

By Greg Koski



We are delighted to welcome **Greg Koski** to the board of the Finnish Heritage House in Thomaston, Maine. A new supporter of the organization and its mission to preserve and promote Finnish culture and heritage in the Midcoast

Maine area. Greg is excited to take on a more active role and collaborate with fellow board members to ensure the Finnish Heritage House continues to thrive as a valuable community resource.

Greg brings a wealth of organizational experience to the board. His professional career spanned many years at Harvard University, where he held various positions in medicine, clinical research, administration and ethics. He has deep appreciation for the importance of preserving history and cultural heritage, as well as a commitment to community engagement.

A retired physician-scientist with a strong interest in history and genealogy, Greg is also a member of the Finnish-American Society of Midcoast Maine and a member of the planning committee for the upcoming Finn Fun Weekend 2025. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family, hiking, his guitar and learning Finnish — and of course, his home-built sauna!

Greg is looking forward to contributing to the Finnish Heritage House's efforts to expand its outreach and educational programming, and to develop new ways to connect with the local and national Finnish community.

FHH Weathertight At Last

By Steve Gifford

The Finnish Heritage House roof has had a long history of leaking during heavy rainstorms. Many attempts have been made in an attempt to solve the problem including replacing the shingles twice, new flashing at the base of the chimney and many applications of sealant.

The second shingling job was completed in the Fall of 2022 and the leaks continued. Horsch Roofing returned and applied sealant to further cement the flashing to the chimney. They recommended that we contact a company dealing with chimney repairs.



This past fall Bruce Hendrickson of Waldoboro Chimney Service installed a new titanium/stainless steel liner, a weathertight cap, a new aluminum clean-out door at the base of the chimney and applied waterproofing to the outside of the chimney. Finally, this appears to have provided the fix that had so long eluded us.

Make An Entrance!

By Scott Hodgkins

Many of you who have attended an event at Jura Hall lately may have noticed the two new entrance doors installed by Gary's Handyman Service. The new fiberglass doors replace the old rusty, drafty ones. Both doors were installed with extra insulation around the frames and new weather stripping. Both improvements should help with the

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> *Entrance Continued from Page # 1*

heating bills! The doors have new functional doorknobs and deadbolts, and after some minor adjustments, the doors add a fresh, clean look to Jura Hall's facade. The work was a joint financial effort between the Finnish Heritage House and the Finnish-American Society. If you haven't visited lately, be sure to take a look when you next attend an event!

FinnFunn Weekend 2024

By Greg Koski

Our first FinnFunn weekend at Mount Monadnock in Troy, New Hampshire, was set against the stunning backdrop of the mountain, offering the perfect opportunity to enjoy the outdoors amidst the lovely autumn foliage. Along with ample delicious food, entertaining activities, and the chance to make new friends while reconnecting with old ones, we also had plenty of choices for group and personal activities.



Anne, Kirsti, Greg, Kathleen, Linda, Jackie, Aimee, Anne

We particularly enjoyed discussing Hanna Pylväinen's novel, *The End of Drum Time*. We learned about the "smoke sauna", even though we still prefer our own traditional sauna. And the evening entertainment, "My Immigrant Story" by Miksa Kajanus, was hilarious! The presentation about the Finnish experience in World War II gave us an appreciation of life in Finland during that difficult time.

During the weekend, we immersed ourselves in Finnish history, culture, and language, making it a fun and enriching experience. The schedule allowed ample time for personal activities, knitting, hiking and socializing as well. Kiitos!

We look forward to participating again next year! Tervetuloa!

Greg and Anne Koski

Update on Finlandia Foundation National (FFN)

By Jackie Harjula

FFN has been busy working behind the scenes since our October semi-annual Board meeting on Zoom. We met again on Zoom in January to finalize our 2025 budget. The Grants Committee received 51 applications with funding requests totaling over \$236,000. We rate each application in 11 categories, enter our ratings in an online grant matrix and meet on Zoom in mid-March to finalize our decisions. As Chairperson of this committee, I will lead the discussion, which will take at least four hours!

Other committees have selected the Performer of the Year, violinist Charlotte Loukola; Lecturer of the Year, Eero Kilpi; and Artist of the Year, Vaino Kola from Deer Isle, ME. Our FHH board member Steve Gifford and his wife Mary visited his studio last year, and Vaino was featured in an article in our own *Iltatähti* newsletter.

FFN awarded 37 scholarships totaling \$75,000. Many of our Chapters celebrated National Sauna Week from February 16 to 22. Even non-Finns all over the US are enjoying the health benefits of a sauna.

To attend the in-person FFN Board meeting on April 25, I will be in Chicago. It will be wonderful to see all my Finnish friends in person again. Zoom is my least favorite way of conducting meetings! With the success of the Saving Finland in America campaign, we now own the building housing the Finnish American Heritage Center including the

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archives, the Finnish American Reporter, and North Wind Books including the Finnish War Museum. We have five employees in charge of those areas, which also includes the Finnish American Folk School and the Art Gallery.

As is evident from my report, FFN has taken on a great responsibility with great results-promoting our heritage and culture. As a member of FHH, you are automatically a member of FFN. We appreciate your support.

Robert P. Cremonni

Our beloved **Bob Cremonni**, an integral part of our Finnish community, died peacefully on January 25, 2025. Born in Wellesley, MA, he spent his school years there playing a variety of sports and leading the wrestling and football teams to state championships. Bob attended Northeastern University and then served in the US Army. After earning a degree in Business Management from Babson Institute, he had a long career with the DuPont company.



Retirement brought him to Tenants Harbor, where he and his wife Cindy settled. Being active in community affairs, they also enjoyed traveling, sailing, their grandchildren, and hosting gatherings with family and friends.

Bob and Cindy faithfully attended all the Finn-Am meetings, and he always volunteered to play "Happy Birthday" (preceded by a long arpeggio). As a regular attendee at the Finnish Congregational Church, he enjoyed reading the scripture lessons.

A friend to all, always ready with a smile, a pat on the back and words of encouragement, Bob will forever be thought of lovingly and will be deeply missed.

He is survived by his wife, Cynthia, their two children Matthew (Stacey) Cremonni and Helen (William) Schweizer, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. A celebration of life will be held in Tenants Harbor in the spring.

The Finnish Heritage House Tori

We will reopen on Saturday, May 17, 2025.



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



We are featuring a new t-shirt honoring Finland and featuring birch trees.



Pulla/Nisua at our weekly bake sale

2024 FHH Raffle

By Jackie Harjula

The 2024 Raffle drawing was held in December and the beautiful hand-woven rag rug donated by our good friend “Tooty” Wilson was won by FHH member **Fred Weibel** of South Bristol. What more



appropriate person to win this year's raffle? He edits our wonderful newsletter, patiently waiting for articles and photos to be submitted. He then organizes them into the format you are now reading. He is also a Board Member and our Social Media expert.

Thank you, Fred, for all your good work. He claims that this was the first raffle that he can remember winning. Given the smile on his face he is happy winner.

Finn-Am Halloween Meeting

By Jackie Harjula

What a great meeting, with members in costume, a craft consisting of decorating a drinking cup, filling the cup with a Finnish Long Drink (*lonkero*),



Kathleen Anderson

and enjoying a *vihta* demonstration by **Bob Hamalainen**. Bob brought the materials for the *vihtas* and showed us how to make one for our saunas (if we're lucky enough to have a sauna!)



We thank **Amy Sanfilippo** for providing the craft materials and the ingredients for the drink (gin and grapefruit juice). She gave us the recipe and served the drinks in her flapper costume. What a cutie!

Of course, we also enjoyed our traditional pot-luck meal.



Standing Back row: L to R: Bob Cremonni, Anne Koski, David Little, Anne Little, Astrid Weaver, Aimee San Fillippo, Greg Koski, Anna Sodergren, Kirsti Fish, Scott Hodgkins, Linda Grant
Seated Front row: L to R: Helvi Silverman, Kathleen Anderson, Cindy Cremonni, Charles Sodergren.

Finn-Am/FHH Thanksgiving Meeting

By Jackie Harjula

As has been a long-time tradition, Arthur and Kirsti Fish roasted the turkey. Other members signed up in advance at the October meeting to provide the “fixins”. With an abundance of vegetables, salads, breads and desserts, nobody went home hungry.

Our program taught us about the tradition of the Finnish goat, known as **Joulupukki**, the Finnish version of Santa Claus.



Barbara Linscott and Gloria Dennison



During the Christmas season, Finnish families would make various sizes of goats out of straw, decorate

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them with ribbons and place them around the house. On Christmas Eve, a goat-like figure would bring presents to the children, asking, “Are there any good children in this house?” Of course, the answer was always “Yes”, and the presents were distributed. In modern days, this has evolved into a



more benevolent Santa Claus-like figure.

We appreciate **Aimee Sanfillippo** for educating us about this Finnish tradition, for showing us how to make our own *joulupukki*, and for donating the materials.

Dorothy Jackson's 100th Birthday Party

By Jackie Harjula

In November, Jura Hall was brimming with family and friends of **Dot Jackson**. Attendees came from as far away as Virginia and California. She enjoyed greeting everyone and was overwhelmed by having close to 100 people celebrating her many years. Dot has happy memories of the years she was a regular attendee of the Finnish



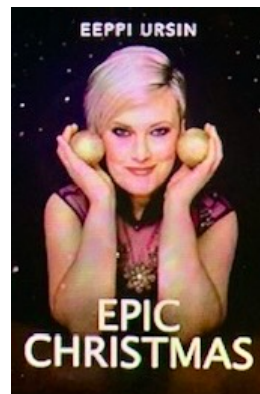
Church, of Finn-Am, and of FHH, being a charter member of all the groups. She regularly corresponds with the daughter of one of our Finnish Church pastors, who lived in the parsonage that is now FHH. In later years, when it was becoming increasingly difficult to attend services and meetings, she still sent egg salad sandwiches with a friend for our coffee hours.

Dot keeps in phone contact with her wide circle of friends and keeps the post office in business with all the cards and letters she sends. On TV, her favorite shows are Lawrence Welk and Jeopardy. She loves hosting family get-togethers and welcomes visits at her house from friends and

relatives. The coffee is always on and if you're lucky you'll also be treated to one of her homemade desserts. At 100, Dot is still going strong. Must be that Finnish Sisu!

Special thanks to Mary Gifford, who gave a festive look to our window boxes. during our snowy winter season.



Eeppi Ursin Concert

Eeppi Ursin performed a Christmas concert at the Federated Church in Thomaston. There were eighty people in attendance on this December 1st Sunday afternoon to listen to an array of songs from Finland and traditional Christmas carols, as well as popular holiday songs, sung

in both Finnish and English. She connected with the audience with her wonderful voice, accompanied by piano, and her delightful storytelling. Her CD “Epic Christmas” was sold out.

Because of Eeppi's generosity \$1,500 was received in donations that will go to the World Central Kitchen, Meals on Wheels of Knox Co. and the Thomaston Inter-Church Fellowship food pantry.

We look forward to Eeppi returning to our area in 2025!

2024 Finn-Am Scholarship

Recipients

By Scott Hodgkins

Two deserving college students received scholarships at our December 21st meeting.



Kerrigan Peterson, a music education major at the University of Maine Orono, was one of the recipients. She informed the crowd about her enthusiasm for her course of study at UMO.

Griffin Spear, majoring in architecture at Syracuse University, was the second student awarded a scholarship. Griffin also gave us some background about his major and his plans for the future. Interestingly,



Congratulations to both!

Finn-Am Christmas Party

By Jackie Harjula

Kathleen Anderson shares some daily inspirational thoughts as our President **Linda Grant** listens intently. As usual, the table was overflowing with a



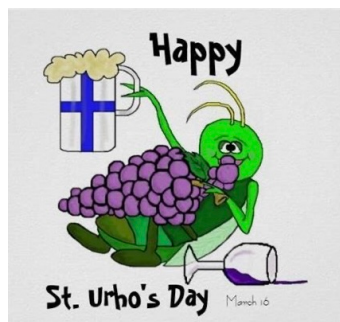
great variety of food. A special Finnish dessert was Helvi Silverman's prune tarts.

The Christmas Tree was loaded with gifts, distributed by Griffin and Kerrigan, our scholarship recipients. As usual, everyone left with a full stomach and a nice gift.



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 15th. ...and be sure to wear purple and green.



RECIPE FOR SPRING ...

Savory Åland Maksalaatikko

A traditional Finnish dish that delights the taste buds with its rich and comforting flavors. Maksalaatikko, also known as **liver casserole**, is a dish that has deep roots in Finnish cuisine, particularly in the Åland Islands. This hearty recipe combines the earthy goodness of liver with the creamy texture of rice, creating a dish that is both wholesome and delicious.



Ingredients:

- 500g (just over 1 lb) beef or pork liver, finely chopped
- 1 cup rice, uncooked
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 egg
- 4 cups milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 2 tablespoons butter, for greasing the baking dish
- Lingonberry sauce, for serving (optional)

Instructions:

Preheat the Oven: Preheat your oven to 350°F.

Prepare Rice: Cook the rice according to the package instructions. Set aside.

Sauté Onions and Liver: In a pan, sauté the chopped onion until translucent. Add the finely chopped liver and cook until the liver is browned.

Season with salt, white pepper, allspice, and ginger. Allow it to cool.

Mix Eggs and Milk: In a bowl, whisk together the eggs and milk.

Combine Ingredients: In a large mixing bowl, combine the cooked rice and the liver-onion mixture. Pour in the egg and milk mixture and mix well until everything is evenly combined.

Grease Baking Dish: Grease a baking dish with butter.

Bake: Pour the mixture into the greased baking dish and smooth the top with a spatula. Bake in the preheated oven for about 1 to 1.5 hours, or until the top is golden brown and the center is set.

Serve: Allow to cool slightly before slicing into squares or rectangles. Serve warm with lingonberry sauce on the side if desired.



The Finnish Heritage House

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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
Anna Silverman
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

March		
15 th	FINN-AM Potluck & St Urho's Day Celebration	12:00 noon
18 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
April		
15 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
19 th	FINN-AM Potluck & Program	12:00 noon
May		
17 th	FINN-AM Potluck & Program	12:00 noon
20 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
June		
17 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
21 st	FINN-AM Potluck & Program	12:00 noon