

Iltatähti

The Evening Star



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

Newsletter No. 82 – Summer / Kesä 2025

A Summer Ritual

It's Time For Smoked White Perch

By Steve Gifford



Seven Tree Pond in Warren.

Arne waits patiently for the batch of white perch to finish.

The smoker was built by Charlie Lunden.

The summer of 1979 and Arne Laukka is smoking a mess of white perch at his cottage on



The summer of 2024 and Arne Laukka's grandson

Terry Laukka at his home on Seven Tree Pond in Warren checks on the white perch in his smoker.



Terry Laukka displays a rack of

smoked fish.

photos provided by Terry Laukka and Steve Gifford



Finnish Heritage House

Has a New Look

By Steve Gifford

The Board of the Finnish Heritage House staged an informal dedication of a new plaque at their June meeting.



Anne Little, Mariann Ahola, Jackie Harjula, Joanne Nelson, Fred Weibel and Steve Gifford (behind the camera)

The Finnish Congregational Church and parsonage (Finnish Heritage House) were placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior in June 1994. This spring the FHH Board authorized a plaque to



commemorate this designation and Brooks Memorials in Warren arranged for its creation. In May the bronze plaque was placed

on the front of Finnish Heritage House.

The Finnish Church was built in 1922 with lumber recovered from a torn down Waldoboro boarding house. The lumber arrived via train and was transferred to the site from the railroad crossing just up the road. The church was constructed on land purchased from John Anderson. The funds for its construction were borrowed from the

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Congregational Home Mission Society in Boston. The parsonage was built in the early 1930s. These buildings serve as a reminder of the role the Finnish people played in the history of the Midcoast during the 20th century. The Finnish Congregational Church, the Finnish American Society of Midcoast Maine and the Finnish Heritage House continue to carry into the 21st century the tradition of remembering and honoring the contributions made by this Finnish community.

Coastal Senior College**Brown Bag Event**

By Steve Gifford

On Monday, May 12, seventeen members of the Coastal Senior College, led by Steve and Mary Gifford hiked the Riverview Hayfields Preserve



(maintained by the Georges River Land Trust), once part of the Anderson (Finnish) farm on the River Road in South Thomaston. Although the path through the hayfield was wet in spots, the members were able to negotiate it without incident. Members enjoyed the three informative kiosks along the path that described the birdlife, the ecology of the mudflats along the river, and the history of the area (including the Finns). Following the hike, the group made the short drive to Finnish Heritage House. While members ate their brown bag lunches,



Steve Gifford presented an overview of the history of the Finnish community in the Midcoast area. After viewing the exhibits, the group moved to the Finnish Congregational church next door for a tour



and brief history of the church. Most of the group had not realized that there were Finns in the Midcoast. Several stated that they planned on returning to the hayfield for a hike and picnic this summer. On all accounts it was an enjoyable day.

Photos provided by Jayne Gordon, Coastal Senior College

The Coastal Senior College (coastalseniorcollege.org) is a welcoming community of learners primarily 50 and older involved in intellectual, creative, social and physical activities that offer opportunities to learn and connect with others through classes, events, and activities in Knox and Lincoln counties.

The Riverview Hayfields

By Mariann Ahola



The Riverview Hayfields preserve is 110 acres of permanently protected grasslands. It's located off route 131 in S. Thomaston across from the old Anderson Farm and within viewing distance of the Finnish Church. The mowed path loops

through the fields and down by the river. Along the way you will pass a rustic pavilion with picnic tables. It is an ideal place to sit and take in the scenic views, the abundant wildflowers and birds that nest there.

These fields are protected for bobolink, and for the Savannah sparrows that nest in the grasses May to July. Haying begins after July 15th to allow birds to raise and fledge their young. The preserve is closed to dogs in the nesting season and will reopen in August. Once you cross the railroad tracks, watch for the parking lot on your right. The trail is one mile long.

Remembering
Arthur R. Fish, Sr.
January 6, 1942, to June 2, 2025

By Jackie Harjula



When thinking about our friend Arthur, this phrase comes to mind: “to know him is to love him”. This sentiment is surely shared by the members of the many groups he led, including the Elks, Masons, American Legion, Grange, and three Finnish groups. He also knew all his *Pick Qwik* customers and their orders in advance. This sentiment is reinforced by the standing-room-only crowd of over 200 attendees at his celebration of life.

Although not a Finn by birth, he certainly embraced our Finnish heritage after marrying Kirsti, his wife of 21 years. Over time, he presided over the Finnish Congregational Church (leading the *Happy Birthday* singing and never missing a Sunday service), our Finn-Am Society (selling the 50-50 tickets at every meeting and roasting a huge turkey for our Thanksgiving meeting) and participated in all the FHH activities. He was instrumental in the nisu (pulla) making process, starting every other Friday at 11 am to mix the ingredients and then knead the 30 pounds of dough. This was after starting at 4 am to work a full shift at *Pick Qwik*! He even wanted to leave his sick bed shortly before his passing to come to church and help to get the bread started. That’s the kind of man he was—always thinking of others, not of himself.

Not only did Arthur help with the bread, sold every Saturday at FHH, he also helped in many other ways. Arthur, can you put up the new flag? Arthur,

can you trim the shrubs by the church entrance? Arthur, can you fill that hole by the church driveway. The answer to those requests and many others was always, “Yes”, with a big smile.

Arthur gave of himself in many other ways, especially to his family, attending school events, dance recitals, and sporting events. His steadfast love and commitment were the cornerstones of his family, and he was instrumental in developing and instilling the work ethic, love of family and faith in God that many of them have today.

Arthur was predeceased his wife of 40 years, Sharon, two sisters, four brothers, a grandson, and a stepdaughter. In addition to his wife, Kirsti, he is survived by four children, three stepchildren, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. They were the sunshine in his life.

It was a privilege for us to know and love Arthur. So many superlatives could be used to describe him: honest, dedicated, considerate, hard-worker, conscientious, loyal, devoted, diligent, kind, generous, and the list goes on. We will miss you, Arthur; you were a good and faithful servant.



FinnFunn Weekend 2025

October 25-26, 2025

Mark Your Calendars and Plan On Attending

FinnFunn Weekend has been sold out for the past two years; some people, including frequent attendees, were placed on a waiting list. We anticipate a similar response this year. Rob Ranta reports that over 50% of the tickets have already sold. Call now.

(Google FinnFunn Weekend 2025 or use this link: www.finnfunn.org to find current information.)

2025 FHH Raffle

By Jackie Harjula

The prize is a beautiful hand-woven rag rug once again donated by our good friend “Tooty” Wilson of Lovell, Maine. *These raffle tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00*



The winning tickets will be drawn and announced this September.

Tickets for the raffle are on sale at Finnish Heritage House. The winner does not need be present to win. ***Good Luck!***

Special Thanks to Mary & Steve Gifford

By Jackie Harjula



Mary and Steve Gifford have again beautified the entrance to FHH by donating the window boxes full of flowers. Our Finnish ancestors would be proud of our work to keep the former parsonage in good condition and looking so inviting to visitors. Doesn't it make you want to sit on the porch with a cup of coffee and watch the sun rise over the water? Try it someday.

Charlotte Loukola Concert



Charlotte Loukola, The Finlandia Foundation National Performer of the Year will perform in Thomaston on Saturday, September 20, 2025.

Violinist Charlotte Loukola will present a captivating solo performance. Her program showcases the violin's versatility and blends her artistry with personal storytelling. Having studied at both Finland's prestigious Sibelius Academy and the Juilliard School of Music in New York, Charlotte brings technical brilliance and heartfelt passion to the stage.

The performance culminates with a tribute to her Finnish roots. Experience the warmth and spirit of Finland through Charlotte's remarkable violin performance.

Her performance will be at 7:00 pm at the Federated Church of Thomaston at 8 Hyler St, Thomaston, ME.

Coffee and Finnish Pulla will be served.

There will be a suggested \$10.00 per person donation at the door.

Save the date and mark your calendar.

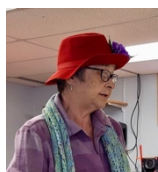
She is being sponsored by the Finnish Heritage House of South Thomaston.

Finn-Am March Meeting & St. Urho's Day Celebration

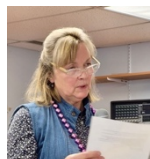
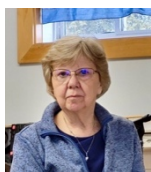
By Aimee Sanfilippo

St. Urho's Day was celebrated during the March Finn-Am meeting. Traditionally, St. Urho's Day is a Finnish folk-holiday celebrated on March 16th to honor the legend of St. Urho. According to the legend, St. Urho was a giant of a man, standing over seven feet tall. His strength was attributed to a diet rich in *viili* (a type of Finnish sour milk) and *kala mojakka* (fish soup). But it was his thunderous voice that truly made him a legend. When hordes of grasshoppers swarmed Finland's vineyards, devouring the precious grapes, St. Urho confronted them head-on. With a mighty roar, he bellowed, **"Heinäsiirikka, heinäsiirikka, mene täältä hiiteen!"** ("Grasshopper, grasshopper, go away!"). Terrified by his booming command, the grasshoppers fled, and Finland's wine was saved!

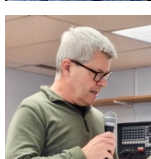
After reading about the details of St. Urho's Day, Finn-Am members participated in a "Who Is Most



Like Urho" survey, giving themselves points for each trait they shared with St. Urho.



Kirsti Fish was declared the winner and crowned the Queen of St. Urho's Day!



Members wearing their traditional purple and green for the day.

Finn-Am April Meeting

By Aimee Sanfilippo

"The Finnish Line"

During the April meeting, we watched the Hallmark movie, *The Finnish Line*. The movie was



filmed in Lapland and Rovaniemi, Finland, specifically at Santa Claus Village, and features the historic Joulurauha race, a

300-mile dog sledding competition. This is the first

Hallmark movie to be filmed in Finland. The movie also highlighted many of the Finnish Christmas customs. It was a treat to see the beautiful sights and traditions of Finland.



Of course, no movie would be complete without snacks! Anne Little provided popcorn and drinks for the movie.

Anne Little also donated a DVD of the movie "The Finnish Line" that can be borrowed from our library.

Finn-Am June Meeting

Juhannus (midsummer) marks the longest day of the year and is celebrated in Finland with bonfires, donning of floral head wreaths, feasting, music, dancing, and enjoying the "midnight sun".

At the June meeting, a picnic style lunch was enjoyed, Finnish customs were discussed and the lawn game of Mölkky was played.



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Mölkky is a wooden toss game. Cheryl Hatch and Scott Hodgkins became experts at tossing the stick at the pins. Matthew Cremonni did a great job of retrieving the pins and setting them up. Scott was the winner, but not by much!

Thanks to the three of you for being such good sports!

A set is available for loan from the FHH Library.

Finn-Am May Meeting **A Fitting Tribute**

By Scott Hodgkins

Edna Montgomery



At its May 17th Finn-Am meeting, members honored the memory of Edna Montgomery, a dedicated member and volunteer of all three Finnish organizations, who passed away on April 28, 2025 at Breakwater Commons in Rockland, Maine.

Anyone who knew Edna can tell you what a hard-working, selfless, and caring individual she was. Edna devoted much of her free time to the Finnish Congregational Church, Finn-Am Society, and the

Finnish Heritage House. She could be found doing everything from making coffee and desserts, to cleaning, setting up for meetings, mowing the lawn, planting flowers, and staffing the Heritage House every Saturday. In fact, Edna did all the yard work at the church and Heritage House for the whole season leading up to her illness.

On May 17th each Finn-Am attendee was given a number. When the number was called during the meeting, the person assigned to that number had to say something about Edna. After heartfelt words, such as "hard worker", "selfless", "generous and caring" and "great friend" were shared, the member then chose an item from a basket full of potholders, dish towels and scarves, all hand made by Edna. A wonderful idea and such a fitting tribute! Edna's heart, spirit and generosity made an impact on all who knew her.



Members wearing items handcrafted by Edna



Anne Little with a basket of Edna's items

A side note: Edna's maternal grandfather, Aleksi Raita, served as Pastor at the Finnish Congregational Church in South Thomaston from 1925 to 1933.

RECIPE FOR SUMMER FINNISH SUMMER VEGETABLE SOUP (KESÄKEITTO)



Serve this with freshly-baked Finnish Rye Bread and some cheese for a nice lunch.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups water
- 2 small carrots, sliced
- 1 medium potato, cubed
- ¾ cup fresh green peas or ¾ cup frozen green peas
- 1 cup cut fresh green beans or 1 cup frozen green beans
- ¼ small cauliflower, separated into florets
- 2 ounces fresh spinach, cut up (2 cups)
- 2 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup whipping cream
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons snipped dill weed or 2 tablespoons parsley

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat water, carrots, potato, peas, beans and cauliflower to boiling in 3-quart saucepan; reduce heat. Cover and simmer until vegetables are almost tender, 10 to 15 minutes.

2. Add spinach; cook uncovered about 1 minute. Mix ¼ cup of the milk and the flour; stir gradually into vegetable mixture. Boil and stir 1 minute.
3. Stir in remaining milk, the whipping cream, salt and pepper. Heat just until hot. Garnish each serving with dill weed.



American dream house



Finnish dream house



boredpanda.com

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

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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**

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Kirsti Fish
Joan Harjula

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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

July	15	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
	19	FINN-AM Potluck & Program	12:00 noon
August	16	FINN-AM Potluck & Program	12:00 noon
	19	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
September	16	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
	20	FINN-AM Potluck & Program	12:00 noon
October	18	FINN-AM Potluck & Program and Rag Rug Raffle	12:00 noon
	22	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
	25-26	FinnFunn Weekend	