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Finlandia Foundation National

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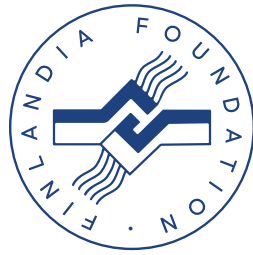


GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS SOAR!

Grant Recipient Niklas Malacinski

INTRODUCING THE YOUNG LEADERS BOARD





Finlandia Foundation National

INSPIRING, CELEBRATING AND CONNECTING THE FINNISH-AMERICAN COMMUNITY SINCE 1953



Word from the President Hyvät Ystävät:

The challenging year 2020 is behind us.

Despite all difficulties and obstacles, we are actively steering Finlandia Foundation toward the future. With new optimism, we are ready for all opportunities and proceeding with plans for a busy and exciting year ahead.

We are continuously strengthening relationships and improving connectivity that will serve FFN well, as we enter our 68th year as a leading, independent organization fostering Finnish culture and Finland across the U.S.

I am especially proud of the formation and launch of the FFN Young Leaders Board (YLB) to work alongside the trustees. This is imperative, in order to attract younger people who will get to know, love and nurture this organization for the future. YLB has enthusiastically embraced the challenge and initiated projects. You'll meet our impressive panel of charter members on pages 4-5.

Financially, we ended 2020 on a strong note, exceeding our fundraising goal of \$100,000, which was matched by the Paloheimo Foundation. Going forward, we must substantially increase that goal to ensure FFN stability and growth. We see the interest and need for more dollars to support our scholarship and grant programs. Our virtual *Finnposium*, largely available on the FFN YouTube channel, has been well received. Even as we look forward to the return of in-person touring performer and lecturer presentations, we know that online programming will continue, and we are exploring several exciting possibilities.

We also know that we require the tools to produce quality products, from our webinars and videocasts to e-marketing and the website. We have had to invest in equipment and expertise to ensure professional results, and those demands will continue.

While acknowledging that technology is great, I do hope that in the coming year I will have a chance to travel and meet our members. Nothing compares to sitting down with a cup of coffee for a face-to-face (or mask-to-mask) chat.

Throughout this issue you will read about our efforts and accomplishments. I hope you're as excited about where we are today and the potential we see.

Best wishes for a wonderful summer.

Anne-Mari Paster

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"IT'S OK TO HAVE BIG DREAMS!"

By Tim Nurvala, FFN Trustee

THIS IS THE ADVICE ELSA BRULE GIVES YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING THEIR WAY IN THE WORLD TODAY. IT'S ADVICE SHE HAS TAKEN TO HEART THROUGHOUT HER BUSY AND IMPACTFUL LIFE.

In December of last year, Elsa demonstrated this by making a big gift of \$25,000 to Finlandia Foundation National, and another of \$200,000, to help forge a new partnership with the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. This will enable Finlandia Foundation to offer increased opportunities to students and encourage cultural ties between the Academy and the United States.

Her interest in this effort grew from a recent project through the Sibelius Academy Global Music program that linked Sámi musicians of Finland with the



Photo by Rick Guidotti

The newsletter is produced twice yearly by the **FFN Communications Committee**: Jacqueline Harjula, chair, and Katariina Lehtonen, Betsey Norgard and Tarja Silverman. Additionally, FFN produces a monthly, free e-news; sign up to receive it at the FFN website. Submit chapter news and other items of interest and photos to: FFN Communications Manager Kath Usitalo, newsletter editor katusitalo@mac.com

CONTACT Finlandia Foundation National FinlandiaFoundation.org Maria Voltaine, Operations Manager office@finlandiafoundation.org

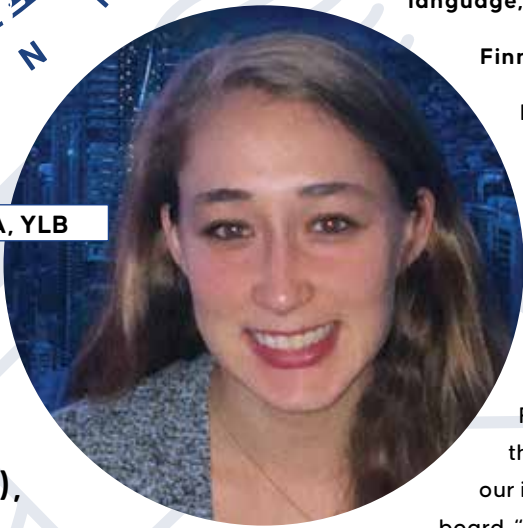
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BY LAUREN TUISKULA, YLB

THE NEW FINLANDIA FOUNDATION YOUNG LEADERS BOARD (YLB), CONSISTING OF EIGHT FINNISH-AMERICAN MILLENNIALS, FIRST CONVENED VIRTUALLY IN FEBRUARY FOR AN INTRODUCTORY MEETING LED BY FFN PRESIDENT ANNE-MARI PASTER.



The YLB has continued to meet virtually, bonding through ice breakers, discussion of our Finnish backgrounds and a shared passion for increasing awareness of Finnish culture and history. Throughout and in between our meetings, we've started to outline and act on the priorities for our new group. In the near term, we plan to focus on creating opportunities to practice and learn the language, raising the profile of

Finnish popular culture and broadening our reach in order to welcome more millennial Finns into the Finlandia Foundation community.

For the eight YLB members, these priorities align with our initial interest in joining the board. "I was excited to hear about the creation of the FFN YLB because it is something that I wish had existed when I was in high school and college and trying to figure out how I could keep Finland and the Finnish language as a central part of my life," says YLB member Mirva Johnson.

The YLB also had the opportunity to meet with the FFN Board at its spring meeting held over Zoom on March 26. Although our group was just over a month in the making, we were

excited to share our early accomplishments ---the creation of a LinkedIn networking group for young Finnish-Americans and a curated Spotify playlist with contemporary Finnish music---in addition to our longer-term vision and goals for the future.

Other projects we're excited to begin working on include hosting virtual coffee chats, where young Finnish-Americans can connect and practice the language, and an interview series to share the stories of Finns in sports, entertainment, business and more. The YLB looks forward to eventually meeting in person, and further collaborating with the FFN Board to bring these projects to fruition.

My fellow YLB member Mirva perfectly summarized our goal of building on the legacy of FFN while reaching new

audiences. "I hope the YLB can give other young adults ideas and options for pursuing their interest in Finland, building on and amplifying the work the FFN has been doing for decades, especially by offering additional resources to connect them to Finland, Finns and other Finnish-Americans."

HERE'S A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO EACH YLB MEMBER:



MIRVA JOHNSON is a Ph.D. candidate in Scandinavian Folklore at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



TATU KUNTO is originally from the northern parts of Finland and currently resides in San Diego, working as a marketing executive for FootBalance.

TOMMY FLANAGAN lives in Washington, D.C. and works as a Language Program Officer at the Goethe-Institut, a German cultural institution.



JULIA PASTER works as an analyst in Private Wealth Management with Goldman Sachs in Chicago.



ANYA PECK is a global public health social entrepreneur, currently based in New York City.



KAIJA PERKIÖMÄKI is a communications and marketing professional in Portland, Oregon.

AND, AS FOR MYSELF, LAUREN TUISKULA, I'm a second-generation Finn from Worcester, Massachusetts working as a writer for The GIST, a female-founded sports media company.

With our diversity of professional expertise and broad range of experiences as Finnish-Americans, the YLB is eager to help amplify the work of FFN and bridge to the next generation.



MIKKO MCFEELY works as the resilience and sustainability director for a group of the nation's largest public water utilities.

In its first month, the Finlandia Foundation Young Leaders Board launched two initiatives:

Young Finnish Americans on LinkedIn: A space for young Finnish Americans to connect and network.



[linkedin.com/groups/13959445/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13959445/)

FFN YLB Finnish Favs on Spotify: A curated playlist of favorite Finnish bops.



<https://open.spotify.com/>

Find more information at the YLB webpage at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

GRANTS

By Katariina Lehtonen,
FFN Trustee and
Grants Committee Member

In 2021, the Finlandia Foundation grant applicants focused on creating new and exciting projects in the wide-ranging areas of construction of a park, documentary films, streamed music and comedy shows, festivals, screenplays, conservation of art, research, art exhibits, preservation of oral stories and production of a Finnish-American radio show. We were also excited to receive requests from two winter sport athletes.

FFN received 38 grant applications requesting a total of \$164,320, from all over the U.S.—California, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Michigan, Minnesota,

Pennsylvania, Florida, Illinois, Texas and Wisconsin—as well as from Finland and Denmark.

Congratulations to 33 applicants who received awards totaling \$125,000. The 2021 Grants Committee, chaired by Richard Ahola, consists of Jacqueline Harjula, Katariina Lehtonen, Anita Smiley and Päivi Tetri.

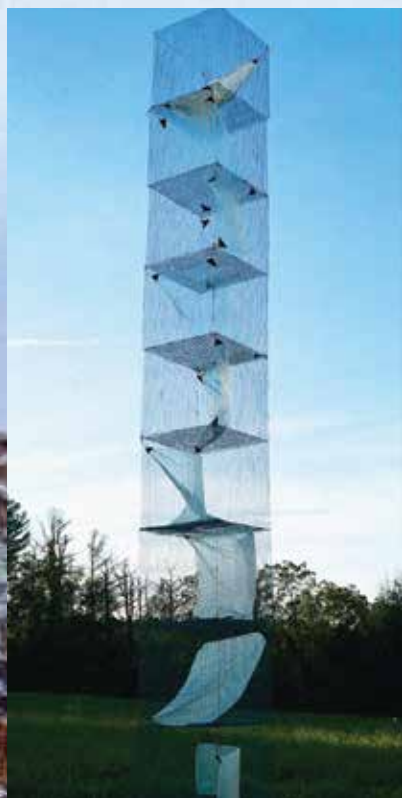
The next grant application deadline is January 17, 2022. Find information at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

Specific funds that support several of the awards are noted.

Arts

Torni-Tower by Sari Nordman

Torni-Tower is an interdisciplinary installation work utilizing sculpture, video projection, archiving and community participation in Brooklyn, New York. The projects reflect on climate change and the biblical story of the Tower of Babel – the story of greed and value of cultural differences.



Glimmers on the Archipelago

Post Doom Romance will trace historic, symbolic and environmental contexts of the Finnish archipelago using edited field recordings based on specific geolocations. The project offers multiple ways to access the final sound/video compositions via an Augmented Reality app that viewers can use while at physical sites within the archipelago, or through pointing the lens at postcard-like images of the locations. The purpose is to evoke the watery depths of a timeless human consciousness that is at once specific to the Finnish archipelago and bound to earth in general.

Among Forests and Lakes: Landscape Masterpieces from the Finnish National Gallery

From May 6–October 17, 2021, The National Nordic Museum in Seattle will host 50 works that examine how Finnish artists have depicted the landscape of their native country in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The exhibition is organized by the Ateneum Art Museum, the Finnish National Gallery.

Photo property of the
Finnish National Gallery



History & Archives

Recognizing Finnish Co-op Buildings in Brooklyn

In the early 1900s, Finnish immigrants introduced the concept of non-profit cooperative ownership to the U.S. by building co-op apartments in Brooklyn, New York's "Finntown." Two of the best known are Alku (Beginning) and Alku Toinen (Beginning II). New York attorney Robert Saasto, who has roots in Finntown, is leading the effort to fund plaques to identify 27 former Finn co-op buildings surrounding Sunset Park.



Astoria Nordic Heritage Park

This public space along the Columbia River in Astoria, Oregon, is being constructed "to honor the contributions of the Nordic immigrants who were plentiful in the Pacific Northwest and contributed immensely to the local community. It will serve as a permanent reminder to their descendants who maintain their heritage and traditions today, and be culturally informative to new residents and visitors."



History & Archives continued

Oral Histories

Appelo Archives Center in Naselle, Washington, will acquire equipment to extend accessibility of the currently archived oral histories of many Finnish immigrants that document the development of Pacific Northwest communities. The firsthand account interviews will be available in-person at the archives and online to a diverse audience.

Finnish Log Sauna Construction

Calumet, Michigan high school industrial arts teacher Robert E. Bohlsen is leading projects utilizing the art of traditional



building methods from the 18th century.

Finnish construction. Their first was a wood rowboat. Next, they will construct a log sauna using

Music

Speechless

The fourth solo album from Finnish-American vocalist Eepi Ursin (below) combines American song tradition with jazz, soul and Finnish sounds. FFN funding will cover part of the album's production costs.

Joulusauna

The traditional Finnish brass septet Ameriikan Poijat

celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2020. The group plans to make a recording of Finnish Christmas music, and hopes to perform concerts to observe the Christmas performances they missed last year.

International Piano Competition and Festival

A high-profile Rachmaninoff event in spring of 2022 in California will feature 24 contestants from around the world and an international panel of jurors (funds will support a member from Finland). The festival program will include a Master Class/Lecture about piano music by Finnish composers. *Smiley Hakkila Fund*

The Cosmopolite Music Project

The U.S.-based Bowery Trio has commissioned works from four young composers in Finland, which the musicians will perform during U.S. and Finnish tours from fall



2021 to spring 2022. They challenged the composers to create music that considers Finland's growing diversity, and to imagine a new Finnishness that is inclusive of the country's collective histories, from immigration, refugees and Sámi peoples. *Smiley Hakkila Fund*

Bridging Cultures Through Music

The contemporary, Helsinki-based AEKI ensemble will present concerts and workshops at the International Clarinet Festival in Fort Worth, Texas in July. They will premiere works by Finnish composer Olli Moilanen and others from diverse backgrounds. The program aims to bridge cultures through music between Finland and the U.S. *Smiley Hakkila Fund*



New Finnish Percussion

Percussionist Kalle Hakosalo will present three concerts of newly commissioned, Finnish multidisciplinary solo percussion music in the San Diego area. His goal is to reach new audiences to reduce prejudices about modern art.



Research

Repatriation As Reparation

How the Sámi and Nordic States are Setting the Precedent for Global Indigenous Relationships

"This research will examine Finland's relationship with the Sámi as well as recent successful domestic and international



repatriations of ancestral human remains and cultural items from Finnish museums,"

explains Amanda

Sky. She will research how the reparative efforts from Finnish museums and government agencies can be looked to as a successful standard for relationships between Indigenous and Western nations. *Helin/Korpela Social Sciences Fund-*



One Thing Leads to Another

A photography and narrative by University of Denver Associate Professor Roddy MacInnes (above) highlights connections that exist between communities in three geographical regions: North Ostrobothnia, Finland; Michigan's Upper Peninsula; and Savo Township, South



Dakota. The primary dynamic connecting the regions is the migration of a family from Finland to Michigan in 1880, and then to South Dakota in 1882. The project illuminates additional personal and universal themes of community and interconnection. *Helin/Korpela Social Sciences Fund*



Photo by Erika Haavisto

Preservation

A Place for Us: A Museum for Finnish-American

Joanna Chopp of the Finnish-American Heritage Center at Finlandia University in Hancock, Michigan, explains, "As the FAHC becomes the guardian of an ever-increasing number of historical artifacts and museum worthy collections, the need is dire for a Finnish-American Museum. Finlandia University will hire museum professionals, identify an appropriate site and design it to showcase items that highlight the diversity and history of Finnish America."

Conservation of a Unique Work of Art



Grant funds will help in conserving a double-sided painting by Finnish-American artist Reima V. Ratti (1914-1945). Ratti was born in Waukegan, Illinois to

Finnish immigrants, and came of age during the Great Depression when he labored as a rock-crusher with the Civilian Conservation Corps. The conservation of *Portrait of a Young Woman* (above) and *City at Night in the Moonlight* will expand public access to the work of the important Finnish-American artist at the Bess Bower Dunn Museum in Libertyville, Illinois, which holds the largest public collection of Ratti's works.

Movement—Forest and Finns

Salolampi Finnish Language Village aims to preserve a pristine Finnish log cabin from Osage, Minnesota, by

relocating it to its site on Turtle River Lake near Bemidji. The moving and repositioning is the first step in pioneering a new educational focus on the Finnish-American experience and how it informs many villagers, ages 5-95, as they acquire Finnish language skills and cultural understanding. The authentic Finnish log structure will be a catalyst for new endeavors including responsible forestry, environmental studies, sustainability and broader cultural understanding.

Entertainment & Events



Streamed Comedy Shows

Actors Petteri Lassila (left) and Miska Kajanus will live-stream improvised and interactive comedy shows in Finnish, in which the performers create original material based on audience suggestions and stories of Finnish communities in the U.S. The shows will also be subtitled in English.

Virtual Kantele Classes

The Evergreen Livakat Kantele ensemble, the only such group in the Pacific Northwest, will host a series of kantele classes over Zoom by Anu Alviola, Master of Music, Sibelius Academy Folk Music Department, and a leading kantele teacher from Lahti, Finland.



The Scandinavian Music Festival

Now in its 15th season, this series of three, free outdoor



concerts on Sundays in June features works by Scandinavian composers performed by members of the New York Scandia Symphony, Dorrit Matson, conductor. A diverse audience hears the music of Finnish composers and experiences Scandinavian culture and heritage at Fort Tryon Park in Manhattan.

Midnight Sun Festival 2022

The three-day event attracts some 10,000 visitors from near and far at Bryant Park in Lake Worth, Florida. The festival celebrates strong Finnish culture and heritage with entertainment, food, events and activities for children.

Virtual Performances, Finnish Choral Society

The Finnish Choral Society of Seattle, a very active mixed choir with more than 20 members, is one of the few ensembles in the U.S. that sings in Finnish. Due to COVID-19, the choir has been rehearsing virtually using Zoom, and producing choir videos for the church services, Kalevala Festival and many other events on the West Coast. Leader Maria Männistö has been joined by choir director Heather McLaughlin-Garbes. The grant will help with programming.



Kalevala Puppet Pageant

This New York Mills, Minnesota event is a large-scale street theater play based on stories from the Finnish national epic poem, the *Kalevala* (left). Each year, an original play features community members of all ages. Artists lead participants in two weeks of workshops preceding the performance, developing the play and building new props and puppets to add to their collection of larger-than-life *Kalevala* characters.

ScanFair Festival

ScanFair Festival is an annual tradition hosted by Nordic Northwest in Portland, Oregon, that celebrates the sights, sounds, tastes and traditions of the holiday season including *Joulupukki*, the Finnish Santa.

Radio /TV/Film

Finnish-American Radio Show

Marja Kaisla will produce a weekly, one-hour program for broadcast on any number of the 2,450 LPFM stations in the U.S. It will bring awareness of Finland and recognition to Finnish-American organizations, businesses and individuals.

The Flowershop

Beata Harju of Los Angeles will produce a film of a play about a small corner store in Helsinki, and the community it brings together—and separates. It will be shared online.

Sibelius at the Piano



Ruusamari Teppo has given *Sibelius at the Piano* concerts as a featured performer of FFN, and recently finished her dissertation about Sibelius' piano works. She now plans to make a professional audio and video recording in Finland at the Tempelliaukio Church and Ainola, the home of Sibelius.

Reunion

Miska Kajanus and Katri Manninen are writing a screenplay about Pekka, a Finnish man who returns to California two decades after his exchange student year, and meets his long-ago American host brother Mark. This Finnish-American story is about two cultures, friendship, how our memories don't always add up when we revisit them as adults, and how it's difficult to get back that innocent time.



Funniest Person in the World

World

Grant funds will help to complete *The Funniest Person in the World Contest*

documentary that was shot in Heelsini and Laapland, and features comedian Ismo Leikola. The film will be an excellent showcase for Finland to wide and diverse audiences.

Midsummer in Hollywood

This Finnish film event targets industry professionals in Los Angeles including Golden Globe and Academy Award voters, and will mix traditional Nordic customs with LA Cool. The mission is to make Finnish filmmakers better known in LA, and bring Finnish movies to people who truly appreciate the world of cinema. It will show the Finnish Golden Globes and Oscar film selections, followed by a networking meeting.

Sports

Support for Nordic Combined Skier

The grant will assist Finnish-American Niklas Malacinski (cover photo) of Steamboat Springs, Colorado with expenses related to his USA national team annual fee, his equipment and travel to Europe for camps, Continental Cups, World Cups and junior and adult World Champions of 2021-2022. **Jaakko Tuominen Memorial Sports Fund**

Support for Nordic Combined Skier

Grant funds will assist Finnish-American Annika Malacinski (left) of Steamboat Springs, Colorado with her USA Nordic national team annual fee, equipment expenses and travel to Europe for training, Continental Cups, World Cups and women's World Champions of 2021-2022. **Jaakko Tuominen Memorial Sports Fund**

2021 FFN SCHOLARSHIPS

By Pirjo Kujansuu Schulbach,
Scholarship Committee Chair and FFN Member

In 1956, Finlandia Foundation National established its first program, a scholarship fund dedicated to music students in the United States and Finland. It was named for the organization's first Patron, Jean Sibelius.

The inaugural Sibelius Scholarship went to Einojuhani Rautavaara, a student at the Sibelius Academy who applied his funds toward study at The Juilliard Academy in New York City. Rautavaara (1928- 2016) would go on to become one of Finland's most important composers.

Until 1991, only music students were eligible for FFN scholarships. Since then, students in any field of undergraduate or graduate study at an accredited American or Finnish college or university may apply. Law students in the U.S. and Finland are eligible for scholarships from the P.J.C. Lindfors Legal Studies Fund.

In 2021, FFN received the highest ever number of scholarship applications. The committee reviewed the applications of 68 post-secondary students and two law applicants for the Lindfors scholarship.

1. JORI CARTER will be a senior this fall at the University of Washington. He is pursuing majors in Civil Engineering and Scandinavian Studies, as well as a minor in Finnish language. Jori was born to a Finnish mother and American father in Seattle. Currently working for a hydrology research lab, Jori is the team's web developer and has the privilege of working with snow scientists and hydrologists overseas, including participation from scientists in Finland. In the future he hopes to pursue a master's degree in civil engineering and would like to work on sustainable water infrastructure.

2. KATJA ERRINGER was born in Santa Barbara, California. The maternal side of her family lives in Finland, and she values the



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Committee members remarked on the high caliber of applicants for both programs. All bode well for the future of the U.S. and Finland.

The committee and the FFN Board of Trustees voted to award the largest ever scholarship budget: \$57,000 to 25 students in a variety of fields, including aerospace engineering, biology, fire science, music composition, print making, medicine, intellectual property and human rights. Individual awards range from \$1,000 to \$3,000. There are five Americans, four Finns and 16 dual U.S./Finnish citizens.

The Scholarship Committee is chaired by FFN member Pirjo Kujansuu Schulbach with members Ellen Harju, Satu Lehto, Marjo Northup, Turto Turtiainen and FFN Trustee Hanna Wagner. Finlandia Foundation National and the committee congratulate the 2021 recipients.

The next application deadline for scholarships is February 1, 2022.

If you are interested in supporting FFN's Scholarship Fund, please find details at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

Specific funds for several scholarships are noted.

connection to her heritage that she has always had. She studies Fisheries and Wildlife Science at the Oregon State University Honors College, and wants to go to veterinary school after graduating. She's involved with the Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter and hopes to inspire young people to learn about and celebrate their Scandinavian heritage.

Aune E. Koski Scholarship

3. ISABELLE HAYSLIP is enrolled at Florida International University, where she is majoring in International Relations. Isabelle grew up in the United States but has also spent time with her mother's family in Finland. She has dual citizenship, and is fluent in Finnish. Growing up with a combination of Finnish and

American cultures has led Isabelle to develop an interest in the importance of cultural perspectives in national worldviews and their impact on international cooperation. She is planning to continue her education in Finland with a master's degree specializing in human rights and peace studies. **Finlandia Foundation Florida Scholarship Fund**

4. KAYLEIGH KARINEN is pursuing a master's degree in Linguistic Diversity at the University of Helsinki. She is interested in promotion of marginalized languages, multilingualism and heritage languages. This year Kayleigh will conduct sociolinguistic field research on the role of sports in the promotion of Basque language. Her long-term goal is to pursue a Ph.D. and work to provide solutions to encourage people's linguistic well-being in our increasingly diverse global world. **UFB&S Lodge #1 of SF Fund for Scholars**

5. HEINI KATRIINA KORHONEN is an undergraduate student at Rhode Island School of Design with a major in illustration and a concentration in scientific inquiry. "I am so incredibly grateful for the opportunities that receiving this scholarship has opened up for me, including the exciting possibility of spending my next semester abroad with RISD's European Honors Program. Peering into the future, I am hoping to attend graduate school in Helsinki and ultimately work as an illustrator, designer and educational researcher. And, of course, continue to wave the Finnish flag up high wherever the road may lead!"

6. AADA KUNTO has been an active member of the Finnish community of San Diego since she moved there with her family. Aada is a junior at the Anna Maria College Fire Science program. She exudes determination and strength by maintaining her position on the Dean's List while playing soccer at the collegiate level. Aada is passionate about helping others and has great pride in Finland. At the moment she is studying from Finland as her classes are virtual and it is possible to complete them from anywhere. Her motto: "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." (Wayne Gretzky)

7. DEBBY LEHTOLA is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota pursuing a degree in kinesiology with a minor in Finnish. Upon achieving her undergraduate degree she plans to enter the Occupational Therapy graduate program to continue her studies. Before starting college Debby studied abroad in Finland, further sparking her interest in the language and culture. Outside of school she enjoys volunteering, creating music, traveling and hiking in the mountains. **Jean E. Sainio-Nolan Scholarship Fund**

8. CHARLOTTE LOUKOLA is a dual citizen of the U.S. and Finland. She studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music with Professor Ilya Kaler. Her major is Violin Performance, and she's pursuing a minor in Business Management at Case Western Reserve University. Charlotte has placed in multiple international competitions, including solo and chamber music. She completed high school in Finland and studied at the Sibelius Academy Youth Department for six years with Merit Palas.

9. HANNAH LOUKUSA is studying mechanical engineering at St. Cloud State University. She plans to combine her engineering skills with her passion for human biology to invent life-changing medical



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technology. She sees herself someday designing devices like surgical robots or innovative prosthetics. Hannah also enjoys learning the Finnish language. She has completed three years of Finnish at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and spent a year studying in Reisjärvi, Finland.

10. CAROLINE MAGEE is a graduate student in the Master of Public Health program at Yale School of Public Health. She is studying social and behavioral sciences and is particularly interested in child behavioral health, stigma and the intersection of health and education. After graduating, she plans to pursue a career in public health policy with a focus on health equity.

11. INKERI CHISHOLM MARTIN is an instructional coach for the Oregon City School District in Oregon, and experienced English Language Development teacher. She has an MA from Portland State University in TESOL/ Applied Linguistics, and is currently completing her Reading Endorsement. In the fall she hopes to join the Ed.D. online program for Language, Culture and Literacy Education at Indiana University. Inkeri looks forward to deepening her knowledge of language, culture and literacy education, continuing to advocate for emergent bilingual students and promoting language education in schools.

12. ALEKS MATTHEWS, from Astoria, Oregon, is currently working on a Bachelor of Arts from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon. He is majoring in International Studies with minors in Sociology and Spanish. Aleks plans to study abroad in Finland next year, and hopes to pursue a master's degree program in Finland after graduating from Willamette. "Ultimately, I would love to be able to live and work in Finland at some point in my life."

13. ANNIKA MCFEELY is an undergraduate student at the University of Washington, Seattle. She is working toward a BS in Environmental Science and Terrestrial Resource Management under the Wildlife Conservation specialty, and aims to minor in Finnish language and Quantitative Science. She is also a biology undergraduate researcher, researching evolutionary body elongation ratio in the family Sciuridae. Annika volunteers at local park restorations, works as a physical therapist's shadow, and is a virtual volunteer

reaching out to isolated seniors during the coronavirus pandemic. In her spare time she enjoys hiking, gardening and taking ballet classes. In the future, Annika hopes to attend medical school to continue her studies.

14. ISABELLA PIRITTA MORRILL is a Finnish-American student and award-winning composer born and raised on the coast of Oregon. She currently attends Western Oregon University as a Music Composition major, and her goal is to write for a wide variety of performing groups as well as film and other media. She has visited Finland to see her family many times, and the beautiful country has inspired her to write music as both a composer and performer.

15. RIIA PULAKKA was born and raised in Nokia, Finland. Riia's ambitions are to explore, feel, create, learn and grow. Her dream is to leave her mark on the world by being an important part of children's growth, and creating works of art that inspire people. She will soon get her BA in Dance and Early Childhood Education at Hunter College in New York City.

16. JACK H. RAISANEN is an environmental and sustainability expert, advocate, activist and entrepreneur. In the master's program in Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Helsinki, Jack is deepening his understanding of climate change, air pollution and biogeochemical cycles. He has pursued extensive education and training throughout the Nordic Region and in his home state of Minnesota. Jack is active in service to the community. His goal is thriving life for all, within planetary boundaries. (Photo by Mats Engblom) **UFB&S Lodge #1 of SF Fund for Scholars**

17. ELISA RÄSÄNEN is pursuing a doctorate degree at the University of Jyväskylä Centre for Applied Language Studies. Her dissertation research focuses on foreign language learners' independent language use. The results can be used to develop foreign language pedagogy to better correspond with learners' actual needs in the target language. Elisa is also working at the Indiana University Department of Central Eurasian Studies, where she has taught Finnish language and culture for five years as a lecturer.

18. ALEXANDRA SCHMIDT is a medical student at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School interested in global maternal health and health disparities. She is a first-generation Finnish American and dual citizen of the U.S. and Finland. Alexandra's research as a medical student examines the structure of Finnish



perinatal healthcare and how the U.S. may learn from its successes. Her goal is to train as an OBGYN and work toward improving maternal health outcomes in the U.S. **Jean Ellen Sainio-Nolan Scholarship Fund**

19. EMMA THEISEN is pursuing her Ph.D. in neurosciences at Stanford University. Her interest in neuroscience began in high school, inspired by her psychology and biology teachers at Turku International School. Emma's career goal is to become a professor of neuroscience. Her dream is to one day run a laboratory at a Finnish university. In pursuing this goal, Emma plans to promote neuroscience in Finland. **Jean Ellen Sainio-Nolan Scholarship Fund**

20. OONA TOUSSAINT was born and raised in Finland, and moved to New York in her early 20's. She completed her undergraduate studies in Communication, Arts and Disorders at the City University of New York, and was recently accepted to the highly competitive Speech Language Pathology Bilingual master's program at Long Island University. Her passion is to serve the multilingual population, and as an aspiring researcher to specialize and better serve the population in need.

21. AMANDA VAINIO is a rising junior at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth majoring in criminal justice studies with a focus on a law career. She feels grateful to have the support of the Finlandia Foundation and other Finnish-American groups. In her spare time, she enjoys meeting friends and staying active.

22. OSKARI VAKKI is a second-year aerospace engineering undergraduate studying for his bachelor's degree at the University of California, Los Angeles. Oskari has aspirations of being part of the greater movement to build space-faring rockets that will explore distant planets such as Mars. Additionally, he plans to move up in the industry and hopes to reestablish Finland's place on the global stage as an exporter of highly qualified engineers and scientists.

23. CRISTINA YOUNGREN is a Minnesotan of Finnish ancestry. After completion of her bachelor's degree in chemistry with a minor in Finnish at the University of Minnesota in spring 2021, she intends to continue her studies in analytical chemistry at a master's program at the University of Helsinki. She is a board member of Finnish American Cultural Activities (FACA), FinnSource and Suomi 100 Choir, as well as a volunteer at the 612 Sauna Society.

P. J. C. LINDFORS LAW SCHOLARS

CHRISTINE NIKANDER is an upcoming Fulbright Finland scholar and LL.M. candidate at Columbia Law School. She is an *Oikeustieteen maisteri* (Master of Laws) working toward becoming an attorney-at-law at the Finnish Bar. Christine previously studied international and environmental law in Leiden, Netherlands and Edinburgh, Scotland. At Columbia, she will focus on intellectual property law. Her goal is to strengthen social responsibility in the technology sector and to teach corporate social responsibility to future lawyers in Finland and the U.S.



SIIRI SINNEMÄKI, a graduate from the University of Helsinki, currently works as a legal counsel in an NGO specializing in asylum law and refugee rights. She will be joining the LL.M. program at the University of Michigan with a focus in international law and human rights. "I am particularly interested in the immigration and asylum context of this area of study and the strong tradition of human rights and social justice advocacy in the U.S."



Teuvo Pulkkinen Honored by Finland

In December 6, 2019, Teuvo Pulkkinen was recognized with an order of merit, the Knight of the Order of the Lion of Finland (*Suomen Leijonan ritarimerkki*). On April 22, 2021, Consul General of Finland Stefan Lindström of the Consulate in Los Angeles traveled to San Diego to present the honor to Teuvo on behalf of Finland's President Sauli Niinistö.

The commendation acknowledges those who make significant contributions in advancing the interests of Finland. Teuvo and his wife, Marjut, both natives of Finland, moved to California in 1992. He established the Finnish American Chamber of Commerce in San Diego and was its first president (2013-2015). He has been actively promoting and developing business relations between Finland and San Diego, and currently serves as FACC vice president.

Teuvo served on the board of FinnFest USA in San Diego, and in 2015 founded the Finlandia Foundation San Diego Chapter. Among his volunteer responsibilities as a trustee on the board of Finlandia Foundation National, he coordinates the FFN musical programs by cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian. While the duet's U.S. tour has been suspended due to COVID-19, Teuvo has created a series of "Coffee Concerts" from Nurmes, Finland, by Jussi and Nazig especially for the FFN YouTube channel.



KURTTI RETIRES

Jim Kurtti, a familiar presence at FFN chapters, FinnFests and other cultural events, is hanging up two of the (at least) four Finnish-American hats he's worn for decades in and around Hancock, Michigan and at Finlandia University.

The director of the Finnish American Heritage Center and editor of the monthly *Finnish American Reporter*

is stepping away from those duties, but will remain active with the Finnish Theme Committee/Finlandia Foundation Copper Country Chapter and as the region's Honorary Consul of Finland.

Finlandia University President Philip Johnson said in a tribute in the April issue of the paper, "Jim Kurtti's legacy, after 21 years as the director of Finlandia's Finnish American Heritage Center, will be one of passionate leadership marked by a single-minded

determination to make Finlandia the leader in the preservation, interpretation and dissemination of the Finnish-American story."

Finlandia University is accepting applications for Director of the Finnish American Heritage Center.

Find details at finlandia.edu.



FFN Performer of the Year

Starring as Manajardo, the love-struck protagonist, was Teuvo Tulio, who went on to become one of Finland's greatest directors in the 1940s. Tulio's good friend Valentin Vaala won his first critical acclaim as a director with this production. Permission was granted this duo to film some scenes in Gypsy villages, which included several Gypsies who were cast in the movie.

Kent initially thought he would not find enough Finnish music to fill the movie; but, in fact, he ended up having to make choices. As the movie contains colorful characters, complicated predicaments in love and friendship and an array of great scenes, he drew on Finnish music from various genres, including *Mustalainen* (written by Oskar Merikanto), *Vanha häämarssi* (Old Wedding Waltz), *Savuke* (The Cigarette), *Tappelupolka* (The Fight Polka), *Viinapolkkaa* (The Wine Polka), and a Sibelius Romance.

The program will be a Zoom presentation, with a welcome and introduction to the movie and its music from Kent, explaining how he chose music to match the action and tone of the silent movie scenes. He provides clips of the various characters' theme songs to help listeners find them tucked into the soundtrack. Following the hour-long film, Kent will conclude the Zoom session by answering questions.

Chapters may request this video program for their members; it will not be archived on YouTube. If in-person programs become possible before the end of this year, Kent looks forward to visiting chapters to present the program live. Watch for information on viewing this very special virtual event.

SEEKING POY 2022

The term for the next FFN Performer of the Year will be January 1 to December 31, 2022.

The deadline for applications is September 1, 2021. For further information regarding the POY go to FinlandiaFoundation.org

By FFN Trustee Betsey Norgard

If the "blurdays" of the pandemic have taken away the enjoyment of old films, chapters are invited to a high-energy movie night that takes you back to 1929 Finland where the silent movie *Mustalaishurmaaja* (The Gypsy Charmer) will entertain with romance, dancing, wine drinking, fighting, a police chase and even a run-in with a locomotive. And it is all accompanied by a specially-created music soundtrack for organ, composed and performed by FFN Performer of the Year Kent Washburn.

In Ancient Greek times, the symposium was a gathering where men would eat, drink, sing and talk philosophy, politics and current events. Finlandia Foundation has adopted that spirit with its Finnposium, a virtual symposium at the FFN YouTube channel. Programming to date has included webinars, concerts, cooking demonstrations, a comedy show and two monthly interview shows.



The free, online programs reach members of Finlandia Foundation and a broader audience interested in Finnish-America and Finland. *Finnposium* features webinars on Tuesdays, interview programs on Thursdays and concerts and entertainment programs on Saturdays. Check the FFN Facebook page and the events calendar at FinlandiaFoundation.org for the latest information.



Go to Finlandia Foundation National YouTube and take a look. Subscriptions are free!

My American Dream

Host Michel Wendell chats with Finnish and Finnish-American entrepreneurs about their start-ups and paths to success in the U.S.



Michel is passionate about helping Finnish companies to grow and internationalize. He was among the first "Finnish techies" in Silicon Valley, and served as Honorary Consul of Finland for Northern California for 10 years, before he and his wife Kicka relocated to Austin, Texas. Michel is a trustee of Finlandia Foundation National.

In Conversation

She was the 2012 FFN Performer of the Year and has connections in the entertainment industry in her native Finland and Los Angeles, her current home. Maria Voltaine, operations manager at the FFN office in Pasadena, interviews Finnish-American and Finnish performers, influencers and others about their fascinating lives. The series kicked off with Finnish-American Philip Bailey, a robotic systems engineer who is on the NASA team for the Mars 2020 rover. Next,



Finlandia Foundation in conversation



Maria chatted with filmmaker Eric Saarinen, who is working on a documentary about his grandfather, architect Eliel Saarinen.

Webinars

FFN was pleased to work with the Embassy of Finland in the United States and the Consulate General of New York to present three webinars earlier this year. The Consulate informed participants about its work and addressed "Dual Citizenship and Finland."

Ilkka Turunen, senior specialist in higher education and science policy at the Embassy in Washington, D.C., conducted "Education in Finland" and "Studying in Finland" programs. There are plans for further cooperation on new topics later this year.

Additionally, FFN hosted the webinar "Tax Reporting in the U.S. and Finland for Dual Residents" presented by Ann-Christine Westerlund, CEO and founder of WESTMUSA, a New York City-based tax and accounting firm that has served companies and individuals from the Nordic countries and beyond.



Kahvikonsertti

Coffee Concerts by cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian bring a variety

of music from Nurmi, Finland to FFN audiences. The musicians have performed works by Finnish, Russian, Hungarian, Armenian and other composers. The lovely setting is Jussi's residence, and the artists add commentary and personal anecdotes that create intimate and beautiful musical experiences.

Meet the Finn Cooks

Although Soile Anderson (in red apron) and Eleanor Ostman have been unable to travel to present their Lecturer of the Year cooking events, they are sharing favorite Finnish recipes with audiences via YouTube. Learn how to make the holiday rosolli salad, blueberry coffee cake and vappu treats. Their recipes are at the FFN website.



Musical Performances

From Soiva, With Love: Students in the U.S. and Finland who have attended Finlandia Foundation's Soiva International Music Camp contributed a piece of music prefaced by their thoughts about the effect Soiva has had on their learning and lives. Soiva is based at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, with trips to Finland every three years.

To A Distant Star: Pianist Ruusamari Teppo and soprano Maria Männistö present a romantic program of music and love letters by composers to their beloved, accompanied by beautiful visuals.

Holiday Cheer: Christmas programs include music from Finland by cellist Jussi Makkonen and pianist Nazig Azezian, and by Finnish performer and songwriter Eepi Ursin, (right) now of New York City.



Chapter NEWS

Connecticut

Several FFN chapters conducted virtual *Kalevala* programs celebrating the epic poem, including the Finnish American Heritage Society in Canterbury. FAHS hosted a musical tribute presented by Kasha Breau, John Kalinowski and Mickey Koth, who perform together as The Wild Notes. One of the seven short videos that comprise the program tells the story of "The Making of the Kantele."

The *Kalevala* 2021 series is available at the chapter's YouTube channel; access it at fahs-ct.org. It is also found at the Finlandia Foundation

FAHS members happily making pulla in Connecticut are (left to right) Kerttu Lavallee, Marita Sasser and Arlene Roberts



National YouTube channel at the Chapter Programming Playlist.

FAHS members got together in April for their first pulla bake in the year. There were plenty of smiles as the bakers kneaded and braided 47 loaves of goodness that were sold to help with operational expenses at the Finnish Hall.

"You can't imagine how our members have been waiting for this pulla," says Anita Smiley. "Everything was sold on order before it was even made. There was one couple missing it so much that I baked some pulla a few weeks ago and brought it to them."

"Pulla with these Finns is like gold, and we're fortunate to have many volunteers to help with the baking."



Musicologist Amber Broderick spoke to the Cape Cod Chapter about Finlandia and Sibelius (upper left)

Illinois

Traditionally an active chapter, the Finnish-American Society of the Midwest has carried on a lively program of activities despite not being able to meet in person.

On the first Sunday of the month, the Chicago area group turns to Zoom for Virtual Social Hours with themed presentations. The New Year's Resolutions kick-off on January 3 was hosted by Julie Badel with accordion music by Oscar Forsman. Other topics include Shrove Tuesday/Laskiainen, a crafts session making paper stars and himmelis and genealogy in May.

Massachusetts

In lieu of their monthly in-person meetings, the Finnish-American Society of Cape Cod has launched Zoom meetings on the third

Saturday with a guest who addresses topics related to Finnish culture.

On March 20, an engaged audience that stretched from the East Coast to Alaska tuned in for a presentation by Dr. Hilary Virtanen about the *Kalevala*. An expert on the Finnish epic, Hilary is assistant professor of Finnish and Nordic Studies at Finlandia University in Hancock, and a trustee of Finlandia Foundation.

Amber Broderick, professional flutist and musicologist of the Cape Cod Symphony Orchestra, conducted the April 17 presentation on Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia*. She talked about the history and context of its composition, its first performance, and what makes it work as a great piece of music.

The May 15 program features North American Wife Carrying champions Jerome and Olivia Roehm of Delaware. They are heading to Finland to vie for the top prize in July of 2021.

Chapter president Stephen Trimble invites all FFN members to join the programs. To obtain the Zoom link contact: satcapecod@hotmail.com

Oregon

Reino Tarkiainen was 15 years old when he and his sister traveled from Finland to the United States, where he intended to stay for six months. That was in 1952. Today, he is president of Finlandia Sauna, the largest privately owned sauna manufacturing facility in the U.S.

In *Finns in the News*, a new program produced for YouTube by the Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter, host Kaija Perkiömäki talks with Reino and his wife Marilyn about the company they founded in Portland, Oregon, in 1964, and the challenge of introducing a true, Finnish sauna to the mass market in this country. The second program features Väinö Koskela, a 97-year old veteran of the Winter War.

Find *Finns in the News* at ffcpc.info/finns-in-the-news/, or at the FFN YouTube channel Chapter Programming Playlist.

FFCPC President Greg Jacob reports that in April at Nordic Northwest, they began the first of many games of KUBB and Mõlkky. While the traditional Vappu celebration was cancelled, at the June Midsummer Festival they will be serving their "Karelian" dogs and potato salad.

They are also working with Appelo Archives in Naselle, Washington to sell monographs about the stories of Finnish settlement

in the area, and the activities committee is planning cooking classes and himmeli and other workshops.

FFCPC volunteers will be busy acting as hosts during the summer weekends at the historic Lindgren Cabin at Cullaby Lake near Astoria.



New York

From Finnish yoga to Ystävänäpäivä, Finlandia Foundation New York Metropolitan Chapter has hosted a variety of virtual events to engage and connect its members and the broader community on a monthly basis.

Following the online celebration of the 103rd anniversary of Finland's Independence on December 6, it was BYO champagne to the virtual New Year's Eve Party featuring music by Johanna and Christopher Telander. A "Love Boat" concert by Eepi Ursin brightened Valentine's Day, or Ystävänäpäivä (Friends Day in Finland).

On International Women's Day in March, New York-based yoga teacher Mikaela Soldan offered a complimentary session as an introduction to the yoga classes she conducts in Finnish, and in April, art lovers took a guided virtual tour of the Finnish National Gallery, the Ateneum in Helsinki.

Continued from page 21

California

Finlandia Foundation San Francisco Bay Area Chapter and the Berkeley Finnish Heritage Society hosted a Vappu Virtual Spring Celebration on YouTube.

The pre-recorded program features more than a dozen local artists and their music, stories and poems, visually accompanied by paintings. Check it out at the Bay Area Chapter YouTube channel.

House of Finland, San Diego held a Vappu sale of homemade sima and *munkki* donuts. The cultural cottage at the Balboa Park International Village plans to reopen to visitors and functions July 4.

Ohio

The Finnish-American Heritage Association of Ashtabula County has spent its COVID-19 down time in building a new website, which carries extensive historical information, photos and documents about the Finnish community of the Lake Erie area (faha-ashtabula.org).

FAHA plans to reopen its museum for summer visitors

on May 29, and is looking forward to a 15th anniversary celebration of its Finnish American Cultural Center (below).

The log structure was built on the site of Sovinto Hall, which was a Finnish temperance society and cultural center constructed in 1897 and demolished in 1961.

Also on the FAHA calendar: Juhannus at a local park on June 21.

Joint Chapter Meetings

Finlandia Foundation chapter leaders have been meeting quarterly at Virtual Joint Chapter Meetings (vJCM), with good participation.

The Zoom sessions allow FFN board members to share updates about their committee activities and programs, and chapters to ask questions, talk to each other about topics of interest and network.

The vJCM grew out of the Joint Chapter Meeting in Washington, D.C. in 2016.

The next vJCM will be held in July, and planning has begun for an in-person JCM in September 2022 in New York City.

Oral History Toolkit

By Hilary Virtanen,
FFN Trustee and History Committee Chair

The human stories and memories that individuals have of the past are important to understanding people and communities through their events and experiences, both momentous and of everyday life. To assist chapters in preserving and interpreting their Finnish-American past, the FFN History Committee is creating an Oral History Toolkit that will be freely available for chapter use. The toolkit will consist of a set of documents and electronic resources that will provide:

- Tips on oral history best practices
- Samples of oral history interview videos
- Template question lists and consent forms
- Other resources as identified

We will also create workshops for chapters that will take place over Zoom. Portions of, if not the entirety of the workshop(s) can also be made available to watch over YouTube.

As a past member of the Michigan Oral History Association board of directors, I am happy to chair this effort with committee members who share an interest and experience in this field, trustees Paul Halme and Anita Smiley and Young Leaders Board member Mirva Johnson.

We would like to know which chapters are already engaged in oral history programs, and those that are planning or are interested in beginning one. To be better assist in developing the toolkit, chapters are invited to share any questions they have and needs they foresee in implementing an oral history program. Contact:

office@finlandiafoundation.org

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER! WITH ALL FIVE NORDIC COUNTRIES RANKED WITHIN THE TOP 10 OF THE WORLD'S BETTER LIFE INDEX AS WELL AS THE WORLD'S HAPPIEST COUNTRIES (WITH FINLAND TOPPING THAT LIST!), IT MAKES SENSE FOR OUR ORGANIZATIONS TO WORK TOGETHER.

By Betsey Norgard, FFN Trustee and Committee Chair



Members of the new FFN Finnish and Nordic Organizations Cooperation Committee have been putting their minds together to explore ways to partner with others toward our own and shared goals.

Even before this new group met, collaboration had begun, as FFN joined with the Embassy of Finland to sponsor two webinars.

In both cases it was a mutually beneficial effort, as the Embassy wanted to provide information and FFN had a ready-made audience eager for it.

In January, New York Consul General Mika Koskinen and a panel provided information on dual citizenship for Finns living in the U.S. and non-residents interested in U.S.-Finnish dual citizenship.

Virtual sessions in February focused on education, with Embassy staff first explaining the structure and goals of Finland's acclaimed system, and then exploring how to study in Finland.



Rendering of the Nordic Heritage Park underway in Astoria, Oregon

As the committee discusses opportunities for partnerships with Nordic organizations, many different types and reasons for seeking this cooperation will be explored—to reach audiences that FFN currently does not address, or to gain additional technical capacity, or to gain efficiencies where programs or memberships could be complementary. Nordic cooperation is strong, and all can benefit from each other.

Keep watching the FFN Facebook page and Finnposium webpage at FinlandiaFoundation.org as other programs are posted.



Soiva Music Camp 2021



By FFN Trustee Dennis Anderson and Melodee Bahr, Soiva Co-Directors

Greetings to all of our Soiva Music Camp lovers! Although 2020 was not a year without challenges we were blessed to produce a virtual video with nine of our talented Soiva students.

From their homes across the U.S. and in Finland, the students introduced themselves and commented on their Soiva experiences, and played a piece of their choosing.

The video includes a wide range of student ages and instruments, and was edited by Maria Männistö of Seattle. Find "From Soiva, With Love" at the FFN YouTube channel, and please enjoy and share this wonderful showcase of Soiva student talent.

Soiva 2020 was cancelled and will not be business as usual in 2021 due to COVID-19. However, we will bring students and faculty together through the virtual power of Zoom. Although this method of teaching and learning does not compare to attending camp, we want to keep students aware of Soiva and provide the hope of returning to a face-to-face setting in Finland in 2022.

This year, six faculty from Concordia College will conduct lessons and group performances online for three days between June 21-23. Faculty members have been using Zoom to conduct classes, and this may or may not be a new experience for the students. Each faculty member will interact with four to five students of piano, flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and bass. New students must submit an audition

piece to Debora Harris at Concordia College at harris@cord.edu. The fee is \$100 for the camp, including lessons and a virtual version of the traditional Soiva pizza party.

Registrations are due by May 31.

Find details at FinlandiaFoundation.org

Thank you for your understanding during these difficult times, and keep the faith that we will enjoy the joy and camaraderie of being together in the not too distant future. Stay well and stay safe!

Pent Up Demand for Salolampi



By FFN Trustee Eeva Syvanen, Salolampi Chair

Last year, when Salolampi Finnish Language Village in Bemidji, Minnesota, was forced to shift to an entirely virtual program, Finlandia Foundation had only one applicant for its financial support. We are happy to see that this summer's Salolampi, with both online and residential sessions, has wind beneath its wings!

More than a dozen students have applied for FFN funds, and Salolampi reports that the on-site, two-week residential camps have sold out. Find details on FFN financial assistance for the remaining programs at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

An international career that took Ossi and Karin Rahkonen around the world is in part responsible for the couple's contributions to Finnish America and Finland that have been recognized with honors from the Office of the President of Finland.

The Rahkonens, both Finnish natives, came to the United States in 1972 when Ossi joined the World Bank. His last position there was Chief of Board Operations, before he joined

the Embassy of Finland as Counselor in 1990. Prior to the couple's arrival in Washington, D.C., Ossi's work had taken them to visit or live in numerous countries, including Denmark, Nigeria, Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia, Albania, Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Because his work had little connection with Finland and Finns, both Ossi and Karin were keen to join the Finlandia Foundation National Capital Chapter (FFNCC) soon after arriving in Washington, D.C. He served on the board and as president of FFNCC, and for 17 years as

a trustee of Finlandia Foundation National, including the position of president from 2013-2020. Among Ossi's many contributions during that period, he guided FFN in its celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Jean Sibelius' birth in 2015 and, two years later, Finland 100, marking the centennial of Finland's independence.

On Finnish Independence Day, December 6, 2020, Ossi was recognized with *Suomen Leijonan 1. Luokan Ritarimerkki*, or Knight, First Class, of the Order of the Lion of Finland.

It is one in a hierarchy of honors presented by the President of Finland to deserving military and civilian individuals for their contributions

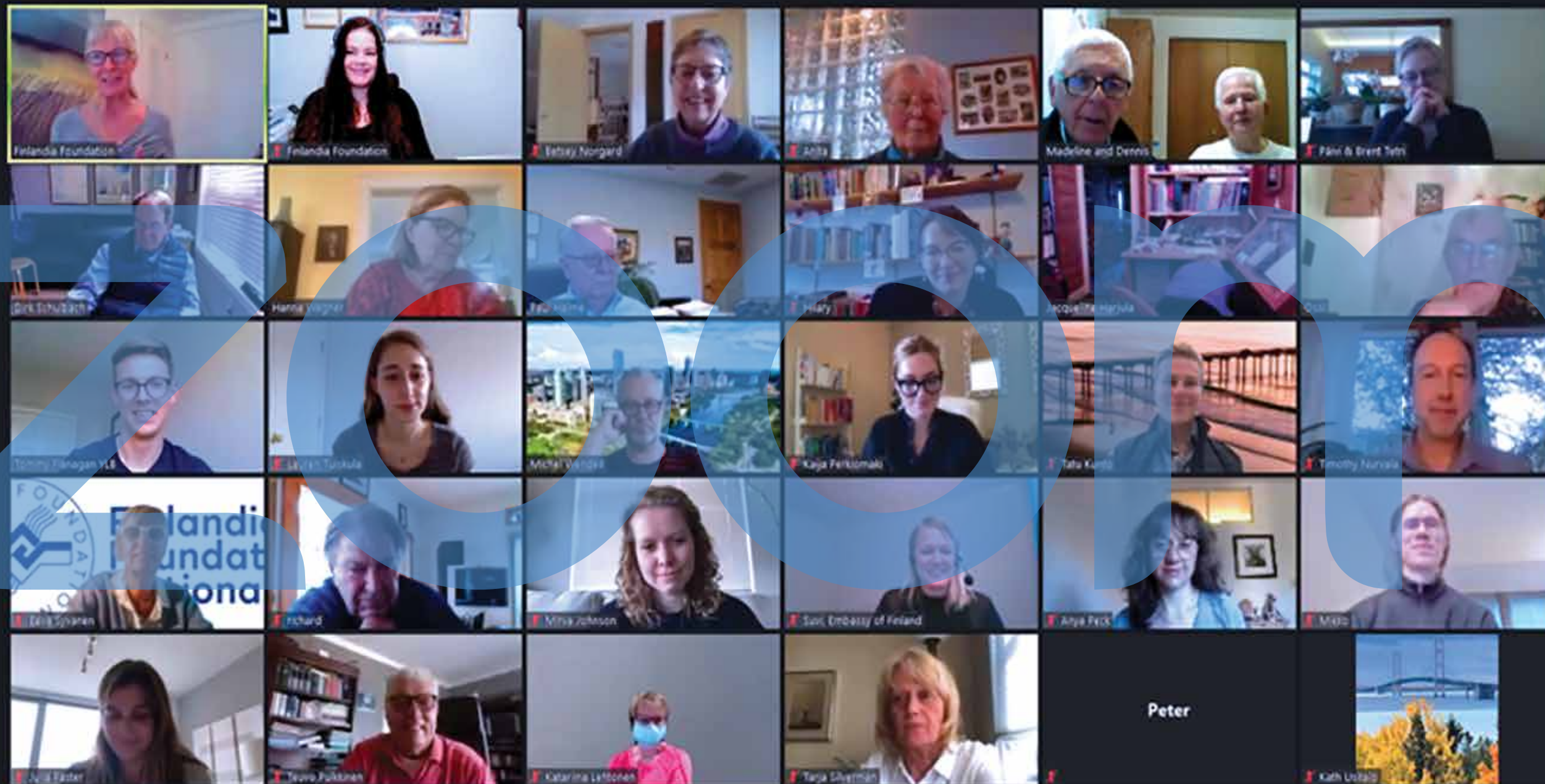
and achievements. This class of award ranks above the Knight of the Order of the Lion of Finland, which Ossi received in 2009.

Karin also was active in Finnish cultural activities, including Finn Spark, Inc., when the couple lived in the D.C. area. She was informed in February of 2020 that her contributions were recognized with the *Suomen Valkoisen Ruusun 1. Luokan*

mitali kultaristein, or Medal, First Class with Golden Cross, of the Order of the White Rose of Finland.

Ossi and Karin, who are dual Finnish-U.S. citizens, returned to live in Helsinki in the fall of 2020. The presentation of their awards will be formally made in Finland in 2021.





When COVID-19 forced the Finlandia Foundation board to conduct its April 2020 meeting virtually instead of in Florida, as planned, no one knew that a year later the trustees would continue to meet via Zoom rather than in person.

Results of board actions approved at the Friday, March 26 meeting are found throughout this newsletter, from grants and scholarships awarded to initiatives designed to improve connectivity and visibility for FFN and the Finnish community in the U.S.

Members of the FFN Young Leaders Board (YLB) joined the meeting

to introduce themselves and inform the board of their activities, plans and vision for the new council, which launched in February.

YLB members are working with FFN committees that align with their expertise and interests, and this was an opportunity for the YLB and trustees who chair those committees to "meet."

FFN President Anne-Mari Paster had hoped that the board and YLB could convene in person this spring at a special meeting dedicated to discussing the short and long range future of Finlandia Foundation, but that strategy session will also be conducted online.

In addition to the spring and fall board meetings, individual FFN

committees conduct their business virtually throughout the year.

Each member of the board serves on one or more of the organization's 19 committees.

These responsibilities include finance and investment, technology, fundraising, marketing, and all of the annual programs.

A new committee is responsible for seeking ways to build cooperation between FFN and similar organizations related to other Nordic countries (see story on page 23).

You may find the list of FFN committees and their members at FinlandiaFoundation.org.

SIBELIUS ACADEMY

UNIARTS HELSINKI



Continued from page 3

Native American students at St. Joseph's Mission School in New Mexico. The struggle to maintain their language and music is similar in both cultures. The exchange was a celebration of shared joy in creating music. The vast difference in climate from Lapland to the Southwest added to the appreciation of what is mutually valued in both societies.

A quote by Hans Christian Andersen, "When words fail, music speaks," underscores the importance of such exchanges. From that experience, Elsa was enthusiastic about helping similar projects, such as facilitating the Finlandia Foundation's partnership with the Sibelius Academy to expand the opportunities.

She credits her positive outlook and her boundless energy to her Finnish heritage. Elsa grew up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where Finnish culture is part of everyday life. Her mother and grandmother were both born in the United States but their Finnish heritage carried its way forward through their outlook as well as in the marvelous art of baking pulla. Elsa has mastered baking the cardamom bread later in life, and likes nothing better than sharing it with others.

Her grandfather was a strong influence in her childhood. He emigrated from eastern Finland to the United States when he was 18 years old to avoid being drafted into the Czar's army, and made his way to the copper mines of the Upper Peninsula. He eventually owned a "biergarten" in Hancock, Michigan.

"He had a lot of common sense. He would give us, his three granddaughters, a dollar bill every time he visited and advise, 'Now, put that in the bank.' To describe a Finn in one word, I'd use practical!" says Elsa.

But, it was as a teenager that she remembers seeing a quote from famed humanitarian, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, that helped influence her love of philanthropy and making a difference in the lives of others. The quote is: "I do not know what your destiny will be, but this I do know. You will always find happiness if you seek and find how to serve." That idea has helped fuel much of the impact that Elsa has made for so many others.

"There is nothing better than making a gift and watching it grow," she says. Much of her philanthropic focus has been on literacy, in building and restoring school libraries, here in the U.S. and abroad. A recent project was the creation of one of the first community libraries in Cambodia, housed in a former Buddhist pagoda.

"Everyone could learn from what the Finns have done in these areas," says Elsa. "The Finnish education system is among the best in the world. The new Oodi Library in Helsinki is an

extraordinary model for how significant a library can be for a community."

Making a big difference is something Elsa has done throughout her life. On a trip to Rwanda, she and Erika Sauer (the spouse of the former Finnish Ambassador to the United Nations) learned of a hospital that desperately needed a playroom for its hospitalized children. Seeing the need and the big impact it could have on their lives, the two women went to work creating an amazing playroom in just one day (above). It's the positive "can-do" spirit that has characterized Elsa's outlook throughout her life.

To the Finlandia Foundation she says, "I'm glad you're here!" Elsa is quick to point out that she is a proud American, but that "we need to take the opportunity to be ambassadors for the wonderful country of Finland, our mother country, which is doing so

many great things. The Finnish appreciation of education, culture, reading and literature, as well as music, has played such an important part in their success." She celebrates Finland for being so innovative in such a competitive world.

The true realization of her own Finnish connection wasn't complete until she made a moving and transformative trip to Finland over 20 years ago, to meet her mother's family for the first time. Elsa was amazed by how familiar it was: the warm welcoming spirit, the humor, the stalwart and positive attitude, the food---even though she'd never been there before. Now, she goes to Finland as often as she can. On a lighter note, Elsa also loves to draw and has developed a series of delightful renderings of *tonttu*, Finnish elves!

She identifies having Finnish character as her strength to get her through any challenges she faces. It is a reminder that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, with a heritage honed on resilience, hard work and dedication to doing what is right. Her grandson wisely reminded her one day, "What good is sisu, if you don't use it?"

Whether it is hospitals in Rwanda, libraries in Cambodia, schools in New York City or musical partnerships with the Sibelius Academy, Elsa is making a big impact.

What does the future hold for Elsa Brule? She is not ready to make any public announcements yet, but she is working on a new endeavor that will have a meaningful and lasting effect on many people's lives. Rest assured, she is taking her own advice and "DREAMING BIG!"

Honor Loved Ones with a Special Finlandia Foundation Tribute

The names of Finlandia Foundation members and friends below are followed by those they have remembered with a Centennial Honor Gift to FFN.

Add the story and photos of your loved ones to the Finlandia Family Tree. For more information or make an honor gift, visit FinlandiaFoundation.org.

GIFT OF \$500+

Paul & Susan Halme
Omar & Saima Halme
Loretta (Posio) Lindell & Carolyn (Posio) Wills
Posio/Ranta Families
Pertti Lindfors
Consul Jarl Lindfors
Karl Ernest Pierson
Helmi Wirtanen Pierson
David & Jeannette Sharpe
Ruth Viola Hyry Sharpe
Anita Smiley
Jack & Ida (Lillquist) Häkkinen

GIFT OF \$250

Michael & Elaine Anuta
Helmi Costenso-Taipale
Michael & Elaine Anuta
Taimi Elsa Mikkonen
Anna Leena Christensen
Alma (Luoma) & Matti Laukkonen
Kirsti Frenzen Noring
Donald Frenzen
Hillevi Null
Nikolai & Amalia Domars
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
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




















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