

Iltatahti

The Evening Star



The Finnish Heritage House and
FinnAm Society of Mid-Coast Maine

Newsletter No.74 – Fall / Syske 2022

Kent Washburn to perform on September 24

Are you old enough to remember the silent movies? Even if you aren't, now's your chance to experience one. FHH and the Finnish American Society of Mid-



Coast Maine are co-sponsoring a performance by Kent Washburn, the Finlandia Foundation National Performer of the Year. Kent is from Virginia and

will be appearing at the Thomaston Federated Church at 8 Hyler Street at 7 pm.

Light refreshments will be served after the program, including coffee and pulla/nisu. Please join us to see a movie starring Finland's answer to the American Rudolph Valentino.



Gypsy Charmer (Mustalaishurmaaja) - Kent Washburn

Mustalaishurmaaja / Gypsy Charmer is a 1929 Finnish silent film for which Kent Washburn scored an organ soundtrack with colorful folk and popular Finnish music.

The film was written and directed by Valentin Vaala and Teuvo Tulio, two Russian immigrants to Finland, who stepped into the cinema limelight in 1929 with a colorful script featuring a Rudolph Valentino-like gypsy played by Tulio. Washburn scored the film entirely with Finnish music, and to the colorful gypsy life on screen, he matched a wealth of equally colorful folk and popular music. Kent accompanies the film on piano tonight. Following the film, he leads a Q & A.

Plan to stop by the Heritage House to view the recent donations:

a rannu, a steamer trunk, a Finnish-American naval uniform, and many Finnish books and glassware items.

Rannu

By Jacqueline Harjula



This is the story of the beautiful rannu, donated by Liisa Fontaine in honor of her mother, Siiri Kovalainen. Siiri created this weaving in the 1970's, while living in Moosup, CT. She was born in Kestila, Finland in July of 1925. Her family emigrated to the US in 1956.

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In 1942, during the war in Finland, when Siiri Kovalainen (Ristikaarto) was only 16 years old, she served as a member of the Lotta for three years. Those serving with the Lotta (Women's Auxiliary Services) were sometimes referred to as medical war sisters. They worked in field hospitals, hospital trains, and in military and emergency hospitals in the war

zone. Those in the Lotta received thorough training for their duties. They were educated for six months in theory and the basics of nursing, with many being trained in military hospitals. Their duties were difficult, as they took care of wounded and dying soldiers, which often included defrosting and cleaning the bodies of the deceased.

After the war, there was little recognition for those serving in the Lotta. However, in recent years, they are finally receiving recognition with Medals of Honor for their services. On April 26, 2015, Siiri received her medal of honor.

Steamer Trunk

By Jacqueline Harjula



This Steamer Trunk Belonged to Matti Saastamoinen



Matti Wiljam Saastamoinen was born in Pielavesi, Finland on November 15, 1890. When he was 16, Matti, his parents and brother emigrated to Quincy, MA where they had friends. It was here that he met his Finnish wife, Hannah (Johanna). They married in 1918 and had two sons, Reino and Walfred.

Matti was a stone cutter at Peerless Granite in Quincy. It was believed that he did the fancy work on the stones. He stayed there about 18 years, but due to health issues caused by the stone dust (silicosis) he moved his family to Cushing, Maine. In 1929 he bought a farm from A. Anderson where he kept a poultry farm and had other animals for their own use. In 1942 he sold the farm to his son, Reino.

Matti Saastamoinen died in Quincy in 1951.

Donated by Donald Saastamoinen, Matti's grandson.

Naval Uniform Does Double Duty

By Steve Gifford



This uniform was displayed as part of our previous exhibit on Finnish American World War II veterans, and was recently donated to Finnish Heritage House by Leo Laukka. This naval uniform was worn by brothers Leo and Henry Laukka. When Henry



joined the United States Navy at the age of 17, he served on a minesweeper for 3 years. During this time, he had the uniform custom made as the military permitted this during the war. So, when Leo Laukka joined the United States Navy at the age of 18 Henry passed the uniform on to his brother. Leo went on to serve on the U.S.S. Capricorn. Thank you, Leo, for your generous donation.

Finnish Glassware and Books

By Jacqueline Harjula



One never knows what connections will be made when our groups promote our heritage and culture. A recent example is a wonderful man,

Bob Greene, who attended our Eeppi Ursin concert in June. He drove a long distance to hear her performance and was so excited to connect with our local Finnish-American people.



Not long afterwards, he returned to FHH to donate some beautiful Finnish cups and saucers and other glassware collected by his

late wife. A few weeks later, he visited again with some more of her Finnish items, including tall Iittala candlesticks, Ultima Thule plates and a bowl, and many Finnish books. As space allows, we are displaying some of them in our display case. We hope to have a 2023 summer exhibit featuring these and other examples of Finnish craftsmanship, especially the glassware.

Stop by any Saturday morning between 9 and 12 to view many of our donated items and to enjoy some coffee and conversation. Pulla/Nisu will also be on sale, along with many varieties of homemade cookies and other delicacies.

FinnFunn Weekend 2022 Celebrates 30 Years

By Jacqueline Harjula

Do you enjoy Finnish music and dancing?

Do you enjoy dining on locally grown food served family style?



Do you enjoy making Finnish crafts?

Would you like the

opportunity to attend a giant Tori, with a large selection of Finnish food and products for sale?



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> **FinnFunn Weekend continued from page # 3**



How about a giant raffle with many Finnish items available to win? If any of these suggestions appeal to you, now is your chance to experience all of them. All Finnish Americans and

friends are invited.

Mark your calendar for October 28, 29, and 30 for FinnFunn New England Weekend, held in Troy, NH at East Hill Farm.



Oh, and did I mention it's a working farm, so you will have the opportunity to milk a cow, pick some fresh eggs in the henhouse, and check out the newborn piglets?

The resident donkey will greet you in the morning with a "Hee-Haw", and the cows will moo a welcome to you.



In addition, the Abundance mobile sauna is booking reservations. A writing workshop is scheduled. Bring your Halloween outfit for the costume parade with prizes. Where else could you enjoy such Funn and such a variety of Finnish culture and heritage in one location!!!

To register, call East Hill Farm at 603-252-6495. For more information, go to www.finnfunn.org You won't want to miss it.



EPPI URSIN, FFN
PERFORMER OF THE YEAR, 2022

By Jacqueline Harjula

A delightful musical evening took place on June 17, when Eeppi Ursin, jazz vocalist and songwriter performed for us at the Thomaston Federated Church.



This event was co-sponsored by the Finn-Am Society of Mid-Coast Maine and FHH. About 50 attendees enjoyed hearing her talented voice as she accompanied herself on the piano. As one member of the audience said later: "She didn't need the piano; her voice was beautiful enough by itself."

She regaled the audience with both Finnish and American songs.

Since she now lives in New York, she sang the familiar Frank Sinatra tune *New York New York*. A rousing Finnish polka was also part of her repertoire. After a standing ovation, she agreed to do one more number.



We then headed downstairs to the church Fellowship Hall for light refreshments, featuring coffee and Finnish coffee bread: pulla/nisu. A big thank you to all the members

who donated the punch and sweets. Eeppi also had her CD's available for sale, including her latest release, a solo album entitled *Speechless*.



Our groups especially thank Marianne Ahola for hosting Eeppi for the weekend, and also for hosting many of our other Finnish guests. She opens her cottage for them and serves them delicious meals. They always want to return to Maine after she makes their visit so enjoyable.

What wonderful hospitality and happy memories.

Do Not Forget our Annual Raffle

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*



This year there will also be a second raffle with a beautiful Memory Globe as it’s prize. *These raffle tickets are 50¢ each or 5 for \$2.00*



The winning tickets will be drawn and announced this September 17th during the Finn-Pot Luck meeting.

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



June & July FinnAm Meeting Activities

By Aimee Little Sanfilippo

Summer has been in full swing at the FinnAm meetings!

June Finn-Am Juhannus Celebration

During the June FinnAm meeting we learned about Juhannus (Midsummer) in Finland. Finland is known for its “white nights” and Midsummer’s is the whitest/longest day of the year. It is celebrated each year on the Saturday falling between June 20th and June 26th. This year it was celebrated on June 25th. The original purpose of Juhannus celebrations were to pay tribute to the pagan god, Ukko, the Finnish god of weather, fertility, and growth. Midsummer was celebrated as a feast of fertility. One of the oldest traditions of Finnish Midsummer is juhannustaika, magic rituals. By performing magical rituals at Midsummer, people believed they could secure a better future for themselves, ensure good fortune for their household, guarantee an abundant crop, protect their livestock from illness, and find true love.

One Juhannus ritual told that if you make a flower crown and lay the crown near your pillow on Midsummer Night, you will see the face of your true love in your dreams. During the meeting the group made wildflowers crowns. I suspect there were many romantic dreams the night of Juhannus!



Aimee presented the program about Juhannus

Busy on our project



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Barbara Hooper & Arthur Fish.



Astrid Weaver & Gloria Dennison



Jackie Harjula



Barbara Hooper.



Linda Grant



Helvi Silverman



Gary Aho's granddaughter



Scott Hodgkins



Gloria Dennison



Ron and Kathleen Anderson



Anne Little, daughter Aimee, and David Little



At the July meeting, we played Finnish Fact Bingo. Bingo cards were given out with words or phrases that related to Finland on the squares. For each word or phrase, a fact about Finland was shared. Winners of each game chose old fashioned candy prizes.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Celebrations

Although it may seem to be too early to be bringing up those holidays, this is just a reminder to mark your calendars. There will not be another newsletter to remind you before they take place. At the October Finn-Am meeting, a sign-up sheet will be passed around for you to indicate what food you will bring to the meal (veggies, salads, pies, etc.) The Thanksgiving dinner will be at noon on November 19.

For the Christmas party on December 17 at noon, it will be the usual potluck meal. After the feast, the popular gift exchange will be enjoyed by all. All females should bring a \$5 gift marked "female or woman." and the same for the males. If you are bringing a young person with you, bring a separate gift for them with their name on the package. It's always fun to see the gifts as they are unwrapped.



THE RECIPE BOX

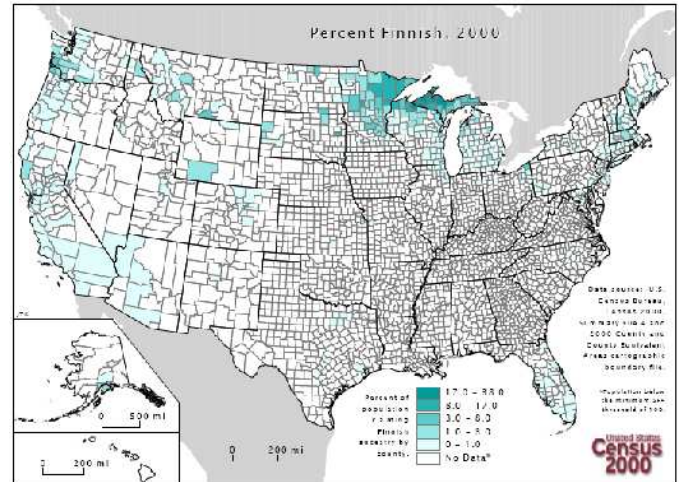
Merimiespata aka Finnish Beef and Beer Stew
Serves 6



- 1 1/3 lbs lean beef (sirloin is good)
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large onions
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2+ lbs potatoes, peeled and sliced
- a 16 oz bottle of beer
- 1 1/4 cups beef stock
- a bay leaf or two
- fresh thyme, to garnish

- Lay half of the potatoes into the iron-cast cooking pot, season lightly with salt.
 - Cut the beef crosswise into 1/2 inch slices. Heat oil and butter on a heavy frying pan on a high heat, brown the meat slices on both sides (about 3-5 minutes). Season with salt and pepper and place on top of the potatoes.
 - Peel and halve the onions, slice thinly. Fry gently on the frying pan for about 5 minutes, then add sugar and fry for another 4-5 minutes, until onions are translucent and softened. Take care not to burn them! Scatter on top of the beef slices, together with any pan juices.
 - Cover with the rest of the potato slices.
 - Now pour over the beer, then add enough beef stock to just cover the potatoes.
 - Tuck a bay leaf into the pot, cover tightly and place either into a 350° preheated oven for about 2 hours, (or into an oven full of hot coals).
 - When finished, test for doneness with a sharp knife. Remove from the oven, garnish with some thyme and serve.
- Can be re-heated on the next day or even on the following day.

Did You Know



Apparent Finnish Language oddities

It appears as if Finns have no property. In fact, you could say they have nothing, because there is no such verb as “to have” in Finnish!

The Finnish language is missing one of the most fundamental verbs! Instead, and with apparent twisted Finnish logic, the idea of “having” is constructed by combining the verb “to be” in the 3rd person of the singular with the *adessive*, one of the 15 cases of the Finnish language.

So, if Finns want to express that “a living thing has”, they say “on the living thing, there is”. So, for example:

Kissalla on viikset – The cat has whiskers (*literally: on the cat is [sic] whiskers*)

Sinulla on koira – You have a dog (*literally: on you is a dog*)

Pekalla on auto – Pekka has a car (*literally: on Pekka is a car - poor Pekka!*)

In other words, Finns don't have property, it comes onto them.

How not to translate Finnish into English

Printed notices seen in a Finnish hotel room.

- Help us to save water. If you need fresh towel, throw yourself on the floor. If you don't need fresh towel, hang yourself. -
- In the event of a fire, if you cannot leave your room please call reception and seal the gaps around the door. Expose yourself in the window. -

Combined Newsletter publication

schedule

By Fred Webel

Due to the closure of the Finnish Heritage House during the winter months and a corresponding reduction in activities, future publications of the combined Finnish Heritage House / Finn-Am newsletter will be limited to three editions per year: **Spring/March; Summer/June; Fall/September.**

We will look forward to producing an interesting newsletter in the early spring of 2023. Your suggestions and contributions are welcome and appreciated.

CALENDAR

September		
17 th	Finn-Am Potluck	12:00 pm
20 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
24 th	Kent Washburn Concert	7:00 pm
October		
15 th	Finn-Am Potluck	12:00 pm
18 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
28-30 th	Finn Fun Weekend in Troy, NH	
November		
15 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm
19 th	Joint Finn-Am/FHH Thanksgiving Dinner	12:00 noon
December		
17 th	Joint Finn-Am/FHH Christmas Party	12:00 noon
20 th	FHH Board Meeting	3:00 pm

(No further activities until March, 2023 celebrating St. Urho's Day)



The Finnish Heritage House

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

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

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Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Finnish Heritage House to preserve the memory of our Finnish immigrant ancestors who freely chose a new homeland 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 FinnAm Society of Mid-Coast Maine South Thomaston, Maine

Officers

President: **Linda Grant**

Vice President: **Anne Little**

Secretary: **Mariann Ahola**

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FOR FHH MEMBERS

If you have received your newsletter via Postal Mail, please be aware that printing and postage is costly. In order to keep our expenses down we are asking if you would be willing to receive your newsletter exclusively in electronic format as an email attachment? If you are agreeable, please send us a confirming email at:

ffh.sthomasston.me@gmail.com

IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRING? CHECK THE MAILING LABEL. If the date is in RED It indicates that your membership has expired. Newsletters will automatically stop 12 months after a membership has expired.

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

Name _____ Renewal _____ New _____

Address _____

State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

I'd like to receive the FHH newsletter by E-mail _____ U.S. Mail _____

I'd like to get involved in the following activity/activities or committee(s)

Exhibits _____ Fund Raisers/ Luncheons etc. _____ Building Maintenance _____ Docent _____

Newsletter _____ Grants _____ Music/Dance _____ Children's Activities _____ Library _____

Other (Please specify) _____

Annual Membership (\$10) _____ **5 Year Membership (\$45)** _____ **Gift \$** _____



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