



Finlandia Foundation - Boston Newsletter Special June Edition

Website: <https://finlandiafoundationboston.com>

June 2020

Message from Our President Sirkku Konttinen

I was President of Finlandia Foundation Boston Chapter when the terrorists hit the Twin towers in New York. It was a moment when you wanted to rewind the time to undo what had just happened. The life as we knew it had permanently changed. Now we are quarantining at home and running essential errands with masks and gloves on. Kids do not have school or day care or playgrounds. Millions of people have lost their jobs and over one hundred thousand Americans have lost their lives. The horrible COVID-19 virus has crippled the world. One of the few pieces of good news is that Finland has had fewer deaths from the pandemic than many other countries.

Some of you might think that we should not put effort into Finlandia Foundation Boston at this point. But many of you might find comfort in music, art, movies, lectures, books, or pastries - all the things that we are about. Because big gatherings will not be possible in the near future, we are planning new ways of bringing our programs to you.

The board members of the chapter had a video conference on May 1 to toast the arrival of spring and to discuss our future programs. Later in May, we also had a board meeting via Zoom. As a follow-up, I have contacted Kerry Lavin, the director for the Scandinavian Cultural Center in Newton, to discuss the prospects of our events at the center. Since the hall where we typically meet is well separated from the residential living area, we should be able to return to the center once it is deemed safe by the governor to hold in-person meetings. In the meantime, we are looking at alternative ways to hold our program events.

In regards to national initiatives, I am pleased to report that the Board of Finlandia Foundation National (FFN) has established the FFN COVID-19 Student Emergency Relief Fund to support Finnish-American students facing urgent financial challenges as a result of the pandemic. Information about how to apply for a grant is given below. Finlandia Foundation Boston is also accepting applications for three scholarships right now. Please help us spread the word about these funding opportunities. I am also happy to report that our treasurer Anne-Mari Paster has been elected President of Finlandia Foundation National. You can read about her many accomplishments in an article included below. We are all delighted!

Be safe and try to enjoy the summer. There is a lot of beauty around.

- Sirkku Konttinen

Financial Assistance and Scholarship Opportunities for Finnish-American College Students

Finlandia Foundation National FFN COVID-19 Student Emergency Relief Fund

Many Finnish-American college students have faced unprecedented financial challenges due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. While the spring semester has ended for most students, many still face significant difficulties due to lost summer jobs, postponed projects, changing family finances, and other shifts in everyday life.

Members of the FFN board have acted swiftly to establish the **FFN COVID-19 Student Emergency Relief Fund**, which supports students facing urgent financial challenges as a result of the pandemic. FFN will review and reward grants based on the individual circumstances. Eligible college students should be members of an FFN chapter, or will be asked to apply as an individual member of FFN.

The deadline for application for COVID-19 funds is June 15. More information is available on the FFN website <https://finlandiafoundation.org/>

At this time, our own chapter FFB is also accepting applications for the following three scholarships:

1. **Savele Syrjala Journalism Scholarship**

For a student of Finnish-American heritage studying in the field of Journalism or Communications.

2. **Aina Swan Cutler Music Scholarship**

For a student of Finnish-American heritage studying music (excluding hard rock and electronic music).

3. **Lauri Armas Lindell Architectural Scholarship**

For a student of Finnish-American heritage studying architecture in the United States or Finland.

For an application or for further information about the first two scholarships, please contact: Edith Syrjala Eash, 80 Potter Pond, Lexington, MA 02421; syrjalaeash@gmail.com
For further information about the architecture scholarship, please contact: Linda Lindell, 471 Waltham St., Lexington, MA 02421; lindalindell@verizon.net. **The application deadline is June 30, 2020 for all three scholarships!**

Please help us spread the word about these funding opportunities. Also, unless you already did so, **please remember to renew your membership in Finlandia Foundation Boston.** Your membership and support are essential to keep our programs going.

Anne-Mari Paster Elected President of Finlandia Foundation National

We are pleased to report that our treasurer Anne-Mari Paster has been elected president of Finlandia Foundation National (FFN), which is a network of Finnish American organizations in the United States. Founded in Pasadena, California in 1953, FFN administers grants, scholarships, and programs supporting and celebrating Finnish heritage and Finnish American culture and traditions, while maintaining ties to contemporary Finland.



“I am honored to have been elected as president of FFN and excited to strengthen and grow this wonderful organization. I see an opportunity to expand FFN's visibility and connection to the Finnish and Finnish American communities,” says Anne-Mari, who has been a trustee on the FFN board for several years and held the positions of chair of the finance and investments committee and treasurer.

Anne-Mari has extensive experience in the finance and investment fields, most recently as a managing director and chief financial officer of Omega Funds, where she was responsible for the financial and administrative operations of the international health care investment firm. Prior to that, she was a partner and CFO of venture firms involved in life sciences and biotech industries.

A native of Turku, Finland, Anne-Mari received her Bachelor of Science degree in engineering at the Turku Institute of Technology. Before moving to the U.S. in 1992, she was an international project manager for Wärtsilä Marine and then founded APS Material Services, a marketing and sales company representing high-end Finnish suppliers to the international luxury hotel and cruise liner markets.

We are fortunate that Anne-Mari will continue to serve as treasurer of Finlandia Foundation Boston Chapter. Earlier, she served on the boards of the International Institute of Boston and YWCA Boston.

She and her husband, Fred, have lived in Lexington for more than 20 years and have two adult children. Finnish heritage and language are important to the family, and they make frequent visits to Finland. In her free time, she enjoys Scandinavian and British TV series and yarn craft.

Best wishes to all for a happy spring and an enjoyable summer. Please stay safe and healthy!

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