



Finlandia Foundation - Boston

December 2022 Newsletter

Website: <https://finlandiafoundationboston.com>

December 2022

Message from Our President Tuija Vainio

Dear Members,

It is the most wonderful time of the year. There are many holiday events to attend and many memories to be made. Sometimes it's hard to choose between the events.

On December 3, Suomi-koulu had their annual Christmas Bazaar. If you missed it, please make sure to attend their Christmas Party held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, December 17. Their raffle includes some amazing prizes. A very special guest dressed in red might ask if you have been naughty or nice during the year!

On December 4, there was a Finnish Christmas luncheon at Val's Restaurant in Holden organized by Sovittaja. The event included accordion music, raffles, and a Yankee Swap. We heard a speech about Finnish Independence Day and the traditions involved with the celebrations. Many who attended are second or third generation Americans with Finnish heritage that they are proud of. It was truly a pleasure to meet them.

December 6 marked the 105th anniversary of Finland's independence from Russia. Like nearly three million other Finns, I spent part of the day watching a live broadcast by YLE from the President's Independence Gala, attended by 1,300 guests. There were inserts from an event five days earlier honoring war veterans and members of the Lotta Swärd. Their stories were the most moving part of the day. When I lit up the customary two candles at 6 p.m. I thought of their service with great gratitude.

For the holidays, the President of Finland Sauli Niinistö has sent a video message to all Finnish expatriates. You can find his message posted on the FFB Facebook page or directly on YouTube at Tasavallan presidentin tervehdys ulkосуomalaisille 6.12.2022

As I write this, we are having our first snowfall of this winter. I have already started skating at the Frog Pond and I am very much looking forward to cross country skiing. Winter sports make the season even more enjoyable. And the Christmas trees around Boston are even prettier when covered with fresh snow. The trees at Boston Common and Faneuil Hall are an annual must-see.

Finlandia Foundation-Boston will hold its Annual Meeting at 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 22, 2023, at the Scandinavian Cultural Center in Newton. You are all encouraged to attend. After the business part of the meeting, there will be a presentation by the President of Finlandia Foundation National, Anne-Mari Paster. The coffee table will follow. Please note that your membership needs to be up to date in order to vote at the meeting. We are also looking for people to fill future leadership positions.

The Sauna Week 2023 will take place the last week of February. The registration will open in January.

Happy Holidays to all!
Yours sincerely,
Tuija Vainio, FFB President



Reminder: Suomi-koulu's Christmas Party Takes Place on Saturday December 17, 10 a.m. to noon

Please join us to celebrate the Christmas holidays at the Suomi-koulu. Their annual Christmas Party is held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday December 17 at Weston Methodist Church located at 377 North Avenue in Weston.

There will be a raffle with amazing prizes such as four tickets to Boston Ballet's "Our Journey" and "A Cottage Weekend" at Sunday River, ME. Finnish glassware and other collectables are also included. Raffle tickets can be purchased on-site using cash or a check.

The program will also feature a coffee table, traditional Finnish Christmas songs and - of course - the Special Guest; the one that is "coming to town".

We look forward to seeing you all there!

FFB Annual Meeting to be Held at 3 p.m. on Sunday January 22, 2023

Please mark your calendars for our Annual Meeting to be held at the Scandinavian Cultural Center in Newton at 3 p.m. on Sunday January 22, 2023. At the meeting, we will elect two new members to the Board of Finlandia Foundation - Boston. The Nominating Committee, consisting of Tuija Vainio, Tuija Voutilainen-Lynch, and Anne-Mari Paster, will put forward the following candidates:

Director: Greta Ljung (Lexington); Current Board member
Director: Erika Verkkonen (Sharon); Suomi-koulu teacher

Both positions are for two-year terms beginning in January 2023. All other members serving on the current Board of Directors were elected in January 2022 and have two-year terms ending January 2024.

Further details about the program will be posted in our January 2023 newsletter.

Finnish Christmas Traditions

In Finland, the month of December has many Christmas traditions that are observed by families all across the country. These including lighting advent candles, opening the Christmas calendar, visiting Christmas Markets, celebrating Saint Lucy's Day, searching for the perfect Christmas tree, and decorating the home with greenery and

candles. Since this is the darkest time of the year, these holiday traditions bring light and joy to families at a time when this is much needed.

At noon on Christmas Eve, December 24, "Christmas Peace" is declared in Turku. This tradition, which dates back to the 14th century, marks the official start of the Christmas season. The event is broadcast via radio and television, and when the bells of Turku Cathedral ring, their sounds can be heard all across the country.

Having sauna on Christmas Eve is an old tradition. This is a moment to enjoy peace, quiet, and to cleanse one's body and mind. Some people also attend church where beloved Christmas hymns and carols are sung on Christmas Eve. Many also visit cemeteries and light candles on graves of loved ones who are no longer here.

Enjoying traditional food with family and loved ones is an important part of Christmas. Rice porridge is traditionally served on Christmas Eve either for breakfast or lunch. Usually, an almond is hidden in the pot of porridge. Whoever finds the almond in her or his serving will have good fortune.

The main Christmas meal is eaten in early evening. Traditionally the Christmas dinner starts with various fish dishes such as herring and smoked salmon. Lutefish used to be a starter, but is less popular nowadays. The main meal includes an oven-baked Christmas ham (kinkku), root vegetable casseroles, and mixed beetroot salad. Dinner is finished off with a variety of desserts, including star shaped pastries with plum jam, and gingerbread cookies.

The highlight of the evening comes when "Joulupukki" (Santa Claus) knocks on the door and asks, "Are there well-behaved children here?" and all the children, well-behaved or not, will eventually receive presents making this another magical and memorable Finnish tradition.

The Christmas Day on December 25 is usually spent quietly at home day, resting, relaxing, and reading, after perhaps attending a church service in early morning. The following day, called Tapaninpäiva, or Annan Day Jul in Swedish, people often visit relatives or enjoy outdoor activities such as walking, cross-country skiing, or skating if the lake or river has frozen.

The Christmas season lasts until Knut's Day on January 13. It is now time to take down all Christmas decorations and toss out the Christmas tree. For many die-hard Christmas fans, this is a sad day in deed!

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Membership in FFB; Please Renew or Join Us Now!

It is now time to renew your membership in Finlandia Foundation – Boston or to join us as a new member. Our annual membership fee, which runs from January through December, is \$20 for individuals, \$30 for families, and \$10 for senior members. To renew or join us, please send a check to:

FINLANDIA FOUNDATION – BOSTON
P.O. BOX 308
Arlington, MA 02474-0007

You can also pay your membership fee or make a donation to our organization using **PayPal** by going to <https://finlandiafoundationboston.com/membership/>

Thank you! We truly appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you at an event soon.

Hyvää Joulua!
God Jul! And
Merry Christmas

