



Finlandia Foundation - Boston

February 2023 Newsletter

Website: <https://finlandiafoundationboston.com>

February 2023

Message from Our President

Dear Members,

January has been a month of new beginnings and plans for the future are brewing. We had the Annual Meeting at Scandinavian Cultural Center on Sunday January 22nd. Turnout was great - a big thank you for all who attended. It was lovely to meet in person instead of online! There were many good discussions around the coffee table before and after.

We had reports from myself, FFB Treasurer Tarja Vuolteenaho, Scholarships report by Director Greta Ljung, and the new Suomi-Koulu Treasurer Monna Lohkovuori who not only presented the numbers but turned out to be a very inspirational speaker too.



Anne-Mari and Tuija

One of the many goals for 2022 was to strengthen the cooperation with Suomi-Koulu. For this purpose, we invited one of the teachers, Erika Verkkonen, to our Board meetings. I'm delighted to tell you that at the Annual Meeting we voted Erika in as a new Board member. Welcome aboard, Erika! Part of the meeting was giving a surprise gift to some long-time FFB members. The FFB Board wanted to recognize the exceptional service of Linda Lindell, Liisa Chanoff, Sirkku Kontinen, Tapani Ronni and Edith Eash. We are truly grateful for all you have done (and keep doing).

Finlandia Foundation National was founded in January 1953 which means it is time to celebrate its 70th Anniversary. Our guest speaker FFN President Anne-Mari Paster gave us a presentation about the exciting events planned for 2023. It's going to be a great year- please follow the FFN newsletter and website for details. There is also going to be an addition to the FFN staff as Thomas 'Tommi' Flanagan- who you might remember from the FFN Young Leaders Board- starts as the Executive Director in February.

The young are the future. The challenge for Finlandia Foundation is how to get them involved in our organization. Are we hitting the mark with our programming? If you have any great ideas for programs, especially for the teens and young adults, please let us know. You can write to finlandiaboston.president@gmail.com

In the past year I have heard from many people who would like to join Finlandia Foundation but do not speak Finnish or do not have Finnish heritage. This is not a requirement! Our mission is to promote Finnish-American culture and we welcome all. So, to our next event, please bring a friend. As Anne-Mari so well said "you only need to love Finns- or even like us a little".

Have a Fabulous February, everyone!
-Tuija Vainio, FFB President

Sauna Week to be Celebrated Locally February 24-26

The mobile sauna event will be back on **February 24-26** at the Scandinavian Cultural Center (SCC) in Newton. Saturday is already sold out but there are sessions still available on Friday and Sunday, starting as early as 10 a.m.

To celebrate this old Finnish tradition and enjoy an authentic wood fired sauna please register at:



<https://event.racereach.com/ffnsaunaweek2023>

Finnish Day at the Kaffestugan and Screening: Karaoke Paradise, Feb 25th

Come and join us for a **Finnish Day** at the Kaffestugan at the Scandinavian Cultural Center (SCC) on **Saturday February 25 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.** SCC is also screening a movie about Finnish Karaoke Culture at 1 p.m. Tickets for the movie are sold at the door and here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/screening-karaoke-paradise-tickets-510824037447>

Dreamers' Circus on Friday, Feb 24th at 8 p.m.

Contemporary and innovative in their approach, the young Scandinavian trio, *Dreamers' Circus*, draws inspiration from the deep traditions of folk music in the region and reshapes them into something bright, shiny, and new. Their art embraces music from Denmark and Sweden as well as Iceland, Finland, and the far reaches of the windswept Faroe Islands. Finlandia Foundation - Boston members can receive 25% off tickets using the discount code DREAM25 at checkout. Link to the event:

<https://www.celebrityseries.org/productions/dreamers-circus/>

"Writing the Finnish American Story" by Suzanne Matson, Sunday March 19, 2023

Finlandia Foundation National's Lecturer of the Year (LOY), Suzanne Matson, will be our guest speaker on Sunday March 19, 2023, at 3:00 p.m. at SCC. Suzanne Matson is a poet, author and English Professor at Boston College. She holds an MA in Creative Writing and a PhD in English from the University of Washington. Suzanne will talk about Finnish identity as a writer and read from her works. Her presentation titled "Writing the Finnish American Story" will be followed by a Q&A. As an optional companion to her LOY presentation, Suzanne offers a two-hour interactive workshop on "Writing Our Family Stories". More details and registration information will be posted on our website.



Suzanne Matson

Finlandia Foundation - Boston Election Results

At the Annual Meeting on January 22, 2023, Finlandia Foundation – Boston elected **Erika Verkkonen and Greta Ljung** to its Board for two-year terms beginning immediately.

Erika Verkkonen received her undergraduate degree in Pedagogy at Universidad Tecnológica Equinoccial in Quito, Ecuador. She later earned a Master's degree in Special Education from Universidad de Cadiz, Spain. Besides working as a Special Education Teacher in Finland, Erika has worked in several Development projects in Ecuador. Later, she spent 12 years in Brazil where she and her husband started their family that includes four children. While in Brazil, she mentored and created "Espaço CECOIA", a social initiative that focuses on sustainability and recycling of school supplies to support educational opportunities in low income neighborhoods. Four years ago, her husband's career took them to Sharon, Massachusetts and she is currently teaching 3-4 years old children in the Suomi-koulu of New England.

Greta Ljung grew up in Jeppo, Finland and completed her B.S./M.S. degree in Psychology at Åbo Academy in Finland. Interested in quantitative methods, she went on to graduate studies at University of Wisconsin – Madison, where she earned a Ph.D. degree in Statistics. Her professional career includes teaching positions at Boston University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Later she was Principal Scientist and Manager at a Boston area consulting firm, where she developed statistical models for natural hazards risk assessment. Greta has served on the FFB Board since 2021 and we are delighted to have her continue as a Director. She is also an active member of the Lexington Field & Garden Club and serves on the Steering Committee of Lexington Living Landscapes.

Thank you!

We like to thank all of you who attended our Annual Meeting on January 22. Very special thanks go to all the members who contributed to our Coffee Table. These include Sirkku Konttinen, Bert Beander, Linda Lindell, and a number of our Board members, too many to list by name. Thank you all!

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FFB Scholarship Opportunities

FFB is pleased to make the following three scholarships available for the 2023-24 academic year:

1. **Savele Syrjala Journalism Scholarship**
For a student of Finnish-American heritage studying 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 in Architecture.

For questions or further information, please contact: Edith Syrjala Eash, 80 Potter Pond, Lexington, MA 02421; syrjalaeash@gmail.com. The application forms are available online at the Finlandia Foundation – Boston website. **The application deadlines are May 31, 2023.**

Membership Renewals Are Due!

It is now time to renew your membership or to become a new member of Finlandia Foundation – Boston for 2023. The annual membership fee, which runs from January through December, is \$20 for individuals, \$10 for senior members, and \$30 for families. To renew your membership please send a check to:

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

If more convenient, you can also pay your membership fee or make a donation using **PayPal or Venmo** by going to <https://finlandiafoundationboston.com/membership/>.

Happy February 2023!

