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Vol 22 and No 3

May/June 2025

Kahden Uutiset

Friends of Suomi Hall

Formerly known as United Finnish Kaleva Brothers & Sisters Astoria Lodge #2

Founded December 6, 1886, as a non-profit, non-political organization

Finlandia Foundation Astoria Chapter

President's Message:

Just a note that you may need to click "See all content" at the bottom of this email to view the entire newsletter... we've got a lot going on!

Hello all,

It's a beautiful April day and as I reflect on all that has happened in the last couple of months, all I can say is WOW! March and April have gone by so fast! March saw us with some busy days and spring break in Oregon for schools. April saw Easter and other family events.

March had our Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Court Introduction at the Astoria High School Commons! So proud of our representatives. Both Hannah (our junior) and Olivia (our senior) did an excellent job. Their chaperones, Melissa and Megan, rounded out the Finnish group! So cool to have so many of our members there in support of these amazing people.

In March we also had St. Urho's Day! What a wonderful turnout and very delicious food. Thank you so much to our auxiliary, and our amazing St Urho.

Our hall was also busy with a few memorial events. Many thanks to the numerous volunteers and committees that assist with these events.

We are in need of some help with some events coming up!

1. Do you want to learn to make some Prune Tarts?
2. Do you want to help at the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival with the booth?
3. Do you know how to write grants?
4. Or, are you interested in working on other committees such as; membership, scholarship, princess, financial, restoration? Don't hesitate to let us know!
5. AND, lastly, do you have some weekend time that you would like to spend at the Lindgren House at Cullaby Lake!

All of these wonderful opportunities are available to you all! Take advantage of them, and get involved.

Your Trustees Board voted for the following officers in March:

President: Leila Collier

Vice President: Greg Jacob

Secretary: Barb Wells

Financial Secretary: Katie Ryding

Treasurer: Faith Swanson

Respectfully Submitted

Leila Collier

President of the Trustees

503.791.1139

mlcollier62@gmail.com OR friendsofsuomihall@gmail.com

New website launched!

www.suomihall.org

We want everyone to explore our new website. We've tried to make it very informative. Subjects are Membership, Trustees & Committees, Auxiliary, Events, Suomi Hall Building Rental, Scholarships, Suomi Hall Renovation, Summer Suomi School, Lodge History, Building History, and Cultural History.

Access to past Kahden Uutiset Newsletters dating back to 2017, Digital Archive is still a work in progress. Links to other Finnish related subjects. Please give us constructive input on what you might like to see or improve upon. Please share with others.

Suomi Hall Restoration Committee Report and Background History

Reporting we are slowing raising funds to start our renovation of Suomi Hall. Our first phase is to stabilize our foundation and level Suomi Hall, the northwest corner has settled nearly 12 inches over the decades our stage has hump in the middle, uneven floors. Major crack in the foundation on the north side of foundation. The estimate to complete this first phase would be nearly \$300,000. Joel Bergeman Construction is the contractor assigned to this first phase of the project. We've raised nearly \$75,000 out of our \$300,000 goal. Our elevator needs replacing and would dovetail in at the end of this project, this would require additional funding. We will be hiring an Architect who specializes in Historic Renovations in the near future to draw up plans and renderings of what our Renovated Suomi Hall might look like, bringing back its historic details. We are always accepting donations to reach our goal and beyond. We are in search of Grants and other funding sources, individuals can include us in their estate planning.



Foundation crack

Objective and Goals

The long-term goal is to restore Suomi Hall to its former historic appearance. Suomi Hall is one of the most historically significant buildings in Astoria. Unfortunately, over the decades, Suomi Hall hasn't been treated well regarding its historic character. Most of its historic features have either been covered up or stripped away in the era of modernization, losing its eligibility to be recognized as a historic landmark on the state and national levels. It's possible to regain eligibility for landmark status if we decide and take a proper course of action in restoring our beloved Suomi Hall. We have a chance to leave a legacy to our community and remain a landmark that everyone recognizes. We don't want to become just another historic landmark lost to time! Our desire is to see a plaque on the front of Suomi Hall that reads, "National Landmark Status!"



1893 Suomi Temperance Society building on Taylor Ave above present location



1920s after Temperance society moved its lodge and expanded.

Background History of Suomi Hall

It was an important meeting place for early Finnish immigrants. The history of Suomi Hall is very complex. Most people today think that Suomi

Hall has always been the Finnish Brotherhood. Its birth began up the hill on Taylor Avenue. The Finnish Temperance Society built Suomi Hall in 1883. It was moved down the hill around 1910, turned around and raised to become the second floor of the main hall with the stage. The first floor was added for shops and the dining room and kitchen to the east. This tripled its size. In its new location, it was built on pilings on the banks of the Columbia River. Soon after, the riverbank was filled in and a new concrete foundation was poured under Suomi Hall. The Finnish Temperance Society struggled in later years. The Finnish Brethren purchased Suomi Hall in 1935. This would become their first Temperance home after nearly 50 years of meeting in various other locations throughout Astoria.

After nearly 100 years, the foundation has served its purpose well, but it's had its challenges, being built on unconsolidated sand fill, it's had to endure a lot of shaking, from the periodic earthquakes, to the major construction of the Megler Bridge in the 1960's, to all the heavy truck traffic on Marine Drive, every time a heavy truck passes you can feel the vibration in the hall.



Princess Introduction in March

In March, the official introduction of the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival Court happened at Astoria High School! Our young ladies did an excellent job! They gave their speeches for the first time, and we can't wait to see them in May at the lodge. Come one and all to their presentation on May 12. 6 pm for Strawberry Shortcake and their presentation will follow directly after we are all done eating. So exciting!



Senior Miss Finland: Olivia Atkinson. Junior Miss Finland: Hannah Martin



Senior Court Chaperone: Melissa Schacher, Junior Court Chaperone: Megan Schacher



Two mother/daughter pairs. Leila Collier, Trustees President. Emmi Collier, FOSH Member and Festival Princess Committee member. Melissa and Megan Schacher

2025 Miss Finland Tea

Sunday, May 10 - 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Suomi Hall

Past and present princesses are invited to attend the Miss Finland Tea at Suomi Hall. RSVP by May 1st by call or text to 503-791-1139. Or email friendsofsuomihall@gmail.com. We'd love for you to wear your costume, name, tag, sash or ribbon.

Help us get the Lindgren Cabin ready for our summer visitors!

Saturday May 17th - 11am to 2pm



Sign up today:

<https://ffcpc.info/volunteer/>

Please join us, bring your gardening tools, gloves, and knee pads and help us clean up the grounds of the Lindgren Cabin for the summer.

Lunch (*and of course coffee*) will be provided so please sign up on our volunteer page so we get an accurate count.

Items that will be needed would be:

- Trimmers & shears
- Tarps (to easily move the debris)
- Shovels & trowels

- Rakes
- Brooms
- Garden Gloves
- Knee pads
- Wheelbarrows

If you have any questions please email Greg Jacob: jacobgk@comcast.net, Warren Bechtolt: wbechtolt@gmail.com or Reneé Byrd: renee.byrd@comcast.net

We hope to see you there. Thank you for your help!

Volunteer Opportunity

It's so easy and fun to volunteer at the Historic Lindgren Cabin....The directions are below. Grab a friend/family member and make a day or weekend of it! To sign up, contact Leila Collier or Greg Jacob!

The historic Lindgren Cabin, built by Erik Lindgren in the 1920s out of ax-hewn Western Red Cedar logs, is in need of volunteers to host from 11am to 3:00pm during the weekends beginning Memorial Weekend. The cabin, originally located on Soapstone Creek, was moved to its present site at Lullaby Lake in 1972. Hosts will get the keys out of the lock box and unlock the gate, the cabin, and the sauna building.

Hosting Instructions:

- Open shutters
- Remove plastic coverings
- Sweep any critter droppings
- Hang open sign on chain link fence
- Place bronze information sign to left of the cabin door
- Place the American and Finnish flags on each side of the gate in the chain link fence
- Place handmade rugs (optional) around the cabin floor. They are in the Loom Room in a plastic bin
- Display the donation bowl, information brochures, visitor's log on the large table

When leaving put signs and flags back inside the cabin, put away the rugs, cover artifacts with the plastic coverings, lock sauna building and gate, and put keys back in the lock box. Thank you. We hope to have cabin hosts on every Saturday and Sunday from Memorial Weekend to Labor Day Weekend. Many volunteers come from Friends of Suomi Hall and Finlandia Foundation Columbia-Pacific Chapter.

St. Urho's Event

Thank you to everyone who attended, cooked, volunteered, served, shopped, and anything else that I may have missed! Wow, delicious food and wonderful fellowship was had by all! We had a wonderful St. Urho, Wes Ginther.





Member Spotlight - Marta Thysell



My father's parents were born in Finland in the area around Tornio and Karunki. They met after coming to America, and my dad, Veikko, was born in Connecticut.

As an adult, Veikko chose a career as an Army engineer, so my two brothers and I grew up moving frequently. We enjoyed the road trips, and getting to know different parts of the country, living most often on the east or west coast.

I attended college in California where I met my husband while completing my degree. I was happy and proud when he joined the Coast Guard. This meant I was soon traveling again while earning my teaching credential and raising our two wonderful kids. When the time came for my husband to retire, we were very thankful to the Lord to be able to settle in the Pacific Northwest as it was one of our favorite residences. We also love volunteering at church and school.

After retiring from teaching, I was certainly glad when my friend, Peggy, suggested I join the Finnish Brotherhood Auxiliary. I had often admired this organization's involvement in preserving Finnish culture through the Scandinavian Festival, providing scholarship opportunities, and other activities. I have greatly enjoyed meeting so many friendly members, and I look forward to making many, many more prune tarts!

Trustees Spotlight - Helen Pitkanen



Olen Suomalainen!!

My first language is Finnish.

My parents, Anna and Heikki Pitkanen, and I spoke only Finnish growing up in Uniontown, Astoria, Oregon. I had to learn English in the first grade! Going through schools in Astoria, including Clatsop College was a roller coaster ride.

Then onto Oregon State University for a degree in Home Economics Education.

I still think Astoria is the best place for me!!

Book Review - “Cold Victory”

By Arnie Hummasti

I think many of you have read Karl Marlantes’ novel *Deep River*, which focuses on three Finnish siblings (the Koskis) who emigrated from Finland to our area at the mouth of the Columbia.

Some of you may have read his subsequent novel, *Cold Victory*, which continues the saga of the Koski family. However, I don’t consider it a sequel. *Cold Victory* takes place entirely in Finland, and the protagonist, Arnie Koski, is a very minor character in *Deep River*. He is the

son of Matti Koski (Aino's brother) and his wife Kyllikki, and is a child (rarely mentioned) throughout the story. It is only in the epilogue of *Deep River* that we learn he has grown to adulthood and had become a military attaché to Finland.

Cold Victory is Arnie's story (and his wife's, Louise) as he arrives in Finland as a US attaché. It is 1946, the end of World War II. Finland is in an awkward position, having fought with Germany against the Soviet Union and later having turned on the Germans. Stalin's troops are still occupying parts of Finland and the Finnish population is divided, some for and some against the USSR.

At a social event Arnie runs into Mikhail Bobrov, now a military attaché to the Soviet legation in Finland, but, during the war, a Soviet officer who Arnie met and befriended, as they were both fighting the Germans. After several drinks, Arnie and Mikhail hatch a friendly wager to race by skis across Northern Finland in winter. Their wives, Louise and Natalya, form a cautious friendship.

Once the race begins, Louise, in order to raise funds for an orphanage run by a Finnish relative of Arnie, issues a press release encouraging people to wager on the outcome of the race. As the news of the race and wager spread nationally and then internationally, Louise realizes she's put Mikhail, Natalya and their children in grave danger. After all the publicity, should Mikhail lose the race, she knows Stalin would treat the family harshly

for bringing the shame of defeat upon the Soviet regime. Louise becomes desperate to repair the damage she's done. The story is riveting as it alternates between the actual race and the anguished and clandestine actions of the wives. Fraught with hope and pain, it's well worth the read.

Though fiction, it's also a history lesson. Marlantes' knowledge of Finnish culture and history is woven throughout the plot. You'll get a good sense of Finland's awkward and complex post-war position, and the Finns' willingness to stand up to anyone in order to maintain their independence.

Upcoming Calendar

MAY:

Monday, May 5, Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting

Saturday, May 10, Miss Finland Princess Tea

Monday, May 12, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

Monday, May 12, Scandinavian Festival Court Visit, 6:00 PM Strawberry Shortcake
Prepared and Served by the men of the Lodge

JUNE:

Monday, June 2, Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting

Monday, June 9, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

Monday, June 9, Member's Meeting, 6:00 PM Coffee, 7:00 Business Meeting

Fri-Sun, June 20, 21, 22, Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival

JULY:

Monday, July 7, Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting

Monday, July 14, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

Monday, July 14, Members Meeting, 6:00 PM Coffee, 7:00 Business Meeting

AUGUST:

Monday, August 4, NO Auxiliary Meeting

August 4-8, Suomi School 9:00AM - 12:00PM

August 10, noon, Friends of Suomi Hall Picnic, Cullaby Lake, first picnic area off the parking lot with all the playground equipment

Monday, August 11, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

SEPTEMBER:

Tuesday, September 2 Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting

Monday, September 8, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

Monday, September 8, Members Meeting, 6:00 PM Coffee, 7:00 Business Meeting

OCTOBER:

Monday, October 6, Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting

Monday, October 13, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

Monday, October 13, Members Meeting, 6:00 PM Coffee, 7:00 Business Meeting

Saturday, October 18, Laksloda Luncheon

NOVEMBER:

Monday, November 3, Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting

Sunday, November 9, Members Meeting, Thanksgiving Potluck, 1:00 PM, 2:00 PM Business Meeting

Monday, November 10, Trustees Meeting, 9:30 AM

Monday, November 10, Members Meeting, 6:00 PM Coffee, 7:00 Business Meeting

Friday, November 28, Sankta Lucia Festival, introduction of the 2026 court

DECEMBER:

Tuesday, December 1, Auxiliary Meeting, 10:00 AM Coffee, 10:30 AM Business Meeting and a Cookie Exchange

Saturday, December 6, Finnish Independence Day, Astoria Nordic Heritage Park, 11am - 1pm

Sunday, December 7, Members Meeting, 1:00, followed by Pikku Joulu

Board of Trustees for 2024

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Historian / Archivist

Eric B Williams

Historians

Liisa Penner
Arnie Hummasti

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Auxiliary for 2024

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