

# The MAINE FINN

July, August, September 2022

Issue #158



Finnish-American Heritage Society of Maine

## Special points of interest:

- Still Celebrating 40 Years
- Regular Meetings Resume
- Summer Activity Review

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*The Summer of 1982 was an exciting and eventful time, as recalled by Alma Mikkonen Dixon from her account of the first year in existence of the Finnish-American Heritage Society of Maine.*

June was the month of the Juhannus Dance with a touch of Finland provided by the birch trees and boughs, crossed Finnish flags, and a simulated bonfire capturing one's eye upon entrance. A real cozy effect! Records again provided the music. Ninety-two signed the guest book, including 3 visitors from Finland. The picnic in August, held at Matti and Sylvia Heikkinen's, in Hebron, was the highlight of the year and deserved an "A" rating. The Finnish and American flags, lazily billowing atop a tall pole, heralded the site of the picnic grounds. The surroundings were lovely and the day delightfully summery. The buffet tables were laden with all kinds of delicious foods - more than enough to feed the 236 who attended from a wide area, some from as far as California and Finland. Coffee and cold drinks were supplied all day long.



## 40 YEARS & STILL GROWING

As we look to the future we embrace the past and the impact our organization has had on our community and beyond. Let's take a moment to thank the family and friends who have worked tirelessly throughout the years educating the community and preserving our Finnish heritage.



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Karen Bennett

**President's  
Message**

Hei friends,

How was your summer? I know I always plan too much and never get half of it accomplished but I did take time to enjoy baseball games, cook-outs, and even a beach day.

Our Society was busy this summer too. Our yard sale (with pulla sales thanks to Jo-Ann Korhonen) in July was another great success. We had some wonderful donations! I like to say... " put the word out and the Finns always come through!" The yard sale continued throughout the summer during the Sunday open houses and continued to bring in more profit. Kittos to all who donated your treasures and to the hosts and hostesses during the Open Houses.

August was a very busy month. On August 5th Jo-Ann Korhonen, Melinda Herrick and I went to Searsport to take in the Kosti Ruohomaa photography exhibit at the Penobscot Marine Museum. We had a fun day exploring the museum and enjoyed a delicious lunch in nearby Belfast. The exhibit runs through October 6, 2022. If you can't make it to the exhibit there is a nice article on the exhibit and Kosti Ruohomaa in the September 2022 issue of Down East magazine.

On August 17th a number of society members and others from the general public enjoyed a concert by the Finnish band "Frigg." The event was hosted by Sarah Cummings and her husband Scott Thurston in their barn. The band is described as a "fusion of Western folk music styles leaning strongly toward Nordic folk music, for which the world music media has coined the term "Nordgrass", referring to the bluegrass influences of the group". The atmosphere in the barn with the twinkling lights wrapped around the rustic beams, combined with the stellar performance of "Frigg" and topped off by Sarah's Finnish culinary delights at intermission made the entire evening magical.

Melinda, Rosa, Joanne, Tim Bennett, Carter and Bennett Inman and I traveled roads we had never been on and enjoyed the scenery on a long trip to Monson on August 20th to attend their 200th



TOP LEFT Jo-Ann Korhonen, Melinda Herrick and Karen Bennett at the Kosti Ruohomaa Exhibit

BOTTOM PHOTOS Monson 200th Year Anniversary & Parade



Continued from page 2

anniversary celebration. We brought items from the museum as well as the tori. Their parade had over 55 floats and participants. Luckily, we brought an easy up tent as the day turned hot and humid. We then finished off the day with a delightful lunch in Skowhegan.

On August 21st the Society celebrated our 40th anniversary with our annual summer social held at the Mason's Lazy M compound in West Paris. We had beautiful weather for the 30 or so folks who attended. A mini tori was set up for everyone to browse. There was great food to share with the grill expertly manned by Stephanie and Walter Inman. A door prize of a cookbook by Soile Anderson was won by Rosa Herrick and a \$40 Visa gift card was won by Siiri Cressey. We all enjoyed sitting near the water with views of Mount Washington while the younger members played on the playground as Finnish music floated through the air via CD's.

Finally, a "last chance" yard sale including sales of pulla (kiitos again, Jo-Ann Korhonen) was held on Friday August 26th. The day passed quickly with steady traffic and a few more sales.

Autumn is quickly approaching with falling leaves, apple cider, crisp air and warm fires. I hope to see you all at our monthly meetings to catch up and to share a kuppi kahvia!

Thank you for your continued support.

Kiitos,

Karen Bennett, President



## BIRTHS

Mikael and Sanae Heikkinen are the proud parents of Ryan Nikolai Heikkinen born on August 24, 2022.

*Ryan's Mummu is Helen Heikkinen of Auburn, ME.*



## PRESS RELEASE



Sarah Cummings has authored a new instructional book and it can be ordered here: <https://sites.google.com/view/oksat/home> or through the Mel Bay website.

Sarah Cummings was raised in the Finnish American community of South Paris, Maine. Her grandparents (paternal - Komulainen and Mikkonen; maternal - Haverinen



Sarah Cummings

and Heikkinen) emigrated from the Kuhmo region of Finland at the turn of the 20th century. Musical from a young age, she earned a bachelor's degree in Music Education and a master's degree in Instrumental Conducting from the University of Maine. She has been teaching in Maine's public schools since 1989 and has drawn on her years' experience teaching instrumental music to write this book. Sarah's respect for her heritage and love of music have fostered her passion for the kantele and Finnish folk music. She and her husband, Scott, also a musician and teacher are working to convert their 1880s barn and property into a venue for concerts, workshops, and other events, including a future Maine Kantele Institute!

## HISTORY FLASHBACK

*The following is extracted from an article entitled "Glory to Ukraine", written by Jessie Lacey, and found in MAINERNEWS.COM by Natalie Parsons.*

"The term "Molotov cocktail" was coined by the Finns during the Winter War, which began in late November of 1939, when the Soviet Union invaded Finland. Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov had characterized bombing runs over Finland as humanitarian air-drops of food, which prompted Finns to sarcastically refer to Soviet bombs as "Molotov bread baskets." The homemade firebombs Finns used to fight back thus became "Molotov cocktails," a drink to accompany the Soviet propagandist's free "bread."

Recipe:

*An accelerant*  
*1 kerosene-soaked cloth*  
*1 glass bottle*

Fill bottle with accelerant, stuff cloth in bottle, light end of cloth and throw at vehicles of invading army. Repeat as necessary.

## RECOMMENDED READING

SUNPATH - The War Orphan Train  
 by Michael Maryk

*Author's Note —*

"From 1939 to 1944, over 70,000 Finnish children were sent to neighboring Scandinavian countries, mostly to Sweden, to escape the horrors of World War II. These were the "Finska Krigsbarn," or Finnish War Children. 1944 saw the evacuation of roughly 30,000 children, as the tide of war turned against the Germans and Finland found itself in the crosshairs of its long-time enemy, Russia, against whom it had stood with Germany.

By war's end, roughly 40,000 to 70,000 children had lost one or both parents - and of the waves of

children who sought safety in other countries, over 15,000 never returned to their native Finland.

Numbers. Cold statistics. But each digit represents human pain: the aching hearts of parents, who put a child or children on a train not knowing if they would ever meet again - or the confused minds of children, who didn't understand why they were being sent away.

I drew upon my time living in Sweden, interviewing survivors and visiting the sites described, to write Sunpath. Aimo and Anna Kekkenen, and the children like them, who you will meet in the story that follows, may be fictional constructs, but they are very real representations of the true victims of war."

*Available to be checked out from the FinnAm Library.*

## NEWS FROM AWAY

*Text and photos shared by Mikael Heikkinen*

While deployed to Lithuania in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve, myself and fifty other soldiers were invited to attend a 4th of July party at the base of the Gediminas Castle Tower. The event was organized by the Lithuanian & American embassies

with representatives from hundreds of organizations and many countries present including the Ukrainian ambassador. While at the event I was approached by an older gentlemen who asked me if my name was Finnish and how I pronounced it. He explained that he was formerly the Estonian ambassador to Finland and that he was quite fond of the Finnish people, language, and culture. After sharing a few exchanges about the unfortunate situation in Ukraine we parted ways.



ABOVE Vilnius, Lithuania  
 TOP Mikael Heikkinen in front of Gediminas Castle Tower

## IN MEMORIAM

Our sincere condolences go out to the families and friends of the dearly departed members of the Finnish-American community. More extensive information may be found in our genealogy department.

**Veikko W. Piirainen** passed away peacefully at Stephens Memorial Hospital in Norway on June 8, 2022 at the age of 99. The sixth of seven children born to Antti H. and Kaisa (Määttä) Piirainen, he was born on June 5, 1923, in West Paris at the family farm. He attended Hungry Hollow School and was a 1942 graduate of Paris High School. Upon discharge from the Army in 1946, he returned to the farm where he was to live for the rest of his life. Locally renowned as a woodsman, he was a one-man operation, finally retiring from commercial logging in 2020. Passionately interested in our Finnish American community, he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of local family histories, which he was more than willing to share. Veikko is survived by his nieces Dian Rainey of West Paris and Lillian Doughty of South Paris, and his nephew Dale Piirainen of West Paris, as well as innumerable friends and extended family. Lepää rauhassa setä.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

Monthly meetings are held at 2:00 PM on the third Sunday of the month. Programs for this Fall's meetings are as follows:

**September 18** - Kantele performance by the ladies of *Tunnen Iloa*.

**October 16** - Barbara Payne will present a history of the property on Maple Street which houses the Finnish-American Heritage Society.

**November 20** - Program yet to be determined.

**December 18** - Christmas Concert by *Tunnen Iloa*

## MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Donations in memory of Veikko Piirainen:

*\$100 from Ed and Leslie Rosenberg*

*\$500 from Dale and Loraine Piirainen*

*\$500 from Pirkko and Jim McBride*

*\$50 from Rosa Herrick*

*\$50 from Melinda Herrick*

*\$50 from Michael and Janet Slater*

*\$10 from Kathleen Scribner*

*\$100 from Jeffrey Chase and Cynthia Cushman*

*\$25 from Gene and Joyce Mitchell*

*\$50 from William Gibson*

*\$40 from Joanne Manfredi*

*\$50 from Larry and Carol LaBossiere*

*\$100 from Ed Kahkonen*

Donations in memory of Ed Hertell:

*\$50 from Rosa Herrick*

*\$50 from Melinda Herrick*

## DONATIONS

We are very appreciative of the following donations to our Society.

*\$1000 from Ed and Julie Daye to be used for furnace repair or replacement.*

*\$26 from Walter and Sylvia Kyllonen*

*\$500 from Pixie and Erkki Lamppu.*

### SUNSHINE LADY

Please inform Karen if you know of someone who is hospitalized, recovering, bereaved, or in some way in need of Sunshine.

**Karen Bennett 890-3773**





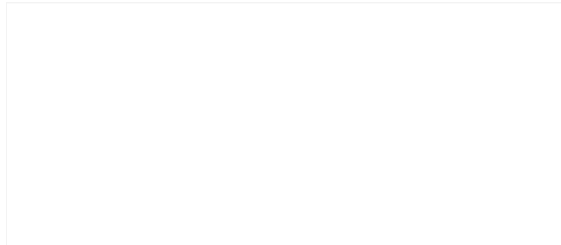
Finnish-American Heritage Society of Maine

The MAINE FINN

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West Paris, Maine 04289

The Finnish American Heritage Society was formed in 1982 as a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Finnish heritage, celebrating Finnish culture and educating the community about Finnish customs.



## DUES & NEWS

MEMBERSHIP - \$12 per calendar year per person (includes quarterly newsletter)

How do you want to receive your newsletter?

Please choose only one: ☐ \*EMAIL ☐ U.S. Mail

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Please make checks payable to: F.A.H.S.O.M.

Mail form and check to:

FINNISH - AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY OF MAINE,  
PO BOX 294, WEST PARIS ME 04289

## Tervetuloa!

Welcome new FAHSoM members!

Diane and Wade Rainey  
West Paris, Maine

Linda and Michael Liimatta  
West Paris, Maine

Siiri Cressey  
Lewiston, Maine

Angela Beckwith  
West Enfield, Maine